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SPOTLIGHT

Nov 17-23, 2006



MDGs Promises To Fulfill!

Politics : Prolonging Instability
Viewpoint : Kuber Sharma

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POLITICS: Prolonging Instability

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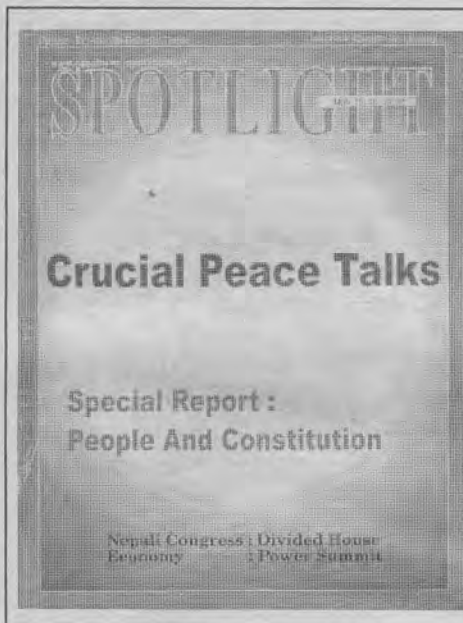
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The recently concluded midterm elections in the United States of America did not produce any surprise. As expected for a long time, the American people have totally rejected President George W. Bush's Iraq policy. Bush, indeed, has become a real "Lame Duck" president and how is he going to pull on for two long years would be a good question. Don Rumsfeld, the Defence Secretary in the Bush Cabinet has rightly quit and a new man has taken charge. It also seems they are thinking of giving a new twist to their Iraq policy. But, will it undo what has already been done? Can they bring back thousands of American youths who have been massacred to satisfy the whims of one man? Can they restore the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis for no fault or crime, only to fulfil the interest of an alien power? Indeed, Saddam Hussein might have murdered thousands of Iraqis and now has been meted out a death penalty. But what kind of penalty is the person going to get who has been the cause of such a huge massacre of innocent human lives? And the deaths and destructions continue unabated. Pray, who is going to judge who is accountable for this. Of course, history will be the judge and what kind of place will be reserved for him in history is difficult to imagine at the moment. But we can say this much for sure that Bush's Iraq policy has not only devastated Iraq and the Iraqis but alienated the world Muslim community — more than one fifth of the world population, and bought the threat of persisting terrorism against America and the Americans for a long time to come.

* * *

If Bush's Iraq policy has proved to be a big folly, his Nepal policy seems to be a big enigma. Since the United States, being the only super power, defender of democracy, benefactor to all poor countries of Asia and Africa and a dependable friend who would help to preserve their integrity, Nepalis too were lolling under the same impression. But when it started to follow India's lead as far Nepal's affairs were concerned, Nepalis seem to have received shocks that have awakened them from their deep sleep. To think that the U.S. is not fully aware of India's attitude towards Nepal and other smaller countries of south Asia would be nothing but naive. The way the U.S. gave a blind eye to India's double standard regarding the Nepali Maoists have made all Nepalis really concerned for their safety and survival. The U.S. might have its axe to grind with Indian cooperation. But that does not mean it should desert smaller countries of the world to be bullied by bigger and powerful neighbors. The way the U.S. ambassadors accredited to Nepal keep on hopping over to New Delhi to take instructions from the Indian statesmen makes us wonder whether the U.S. ambassador in New Delhi is only a showpiece. And we would not like to say anything about the U.N. diplomats doing the same as we think, the U.N. is only an extension of the U.S. Because we remember how a former U.S. Secretary of State had reprimanded the U.N. Secretary General not to forget from where he got his pay check. As such, if the smaller nations cannot rely on the lone super power to defend their rights and privileges, they have to make their own arrangements. And what can the poor smaller nations do? Here I would like to relate a small anecdote of my college days: When a professor recommended to us a certain book to read he used to say, "if you can't buy it, beg, borrow or steal." And this dictum applies to all smaller countries to preserve their integrity. Since the only dependable weapon that can be used as deterrent is a nuclear bomb and since they cannot make it, they have to beg, borrow or steal. This is sure to proliferate the nuclear weapons enhancing the possibilities of a nuclear conflagration in the world. If the super power wants to avoid that situation, it cannot sacrifice smaller and weaker nations at the altar of its own interests. Better learn the lesson quick.

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Welcome Deal

After one long decade, the Nepalis can now expect to breathe a little easier ("Midnight Achievement: SPOTLIGHT November 10). Thanks to the agreement between the seven parties and the Maoists, there is now a real possibility of peace returning to this nation. But the Maoists would need to implement the agreement and stop all their violent activities and cease intimidating tactics that have terrorized naïve people across the country. Lets hope this deal will indeed usher in a new era and a new Nepal can born out of it.

Jeevan Bista
Sanepa

Be Vigilant

Amid the euphoria, Nepalis people need to remain vigilant lest this new found opportunity be squandered by foolish acts by our leaders ("Midnight Achievement, SPOTLIGHT November 10). The agreements, by themselves, cannot bring in peace or normalcy. It depends on how they are implemented. The sincerity of leaders, parties and particularly the Maoists would determine how this agreement will be implemented. For the time being, the Maoists have agreed to send their combatants into cantonments. But there are thousands of unarmed Maoist militia roaming around the villages terrorizing the people. These militia can browbeat a common person into casting votes for particular party or candidate during the Constituent Assembly elections. It is too early to say how the Maoists will rein in their militia. If they do not work to create a totally free atmosphere, the CA will be a useless exercise. It will lack credibility in the eyes of general public as well as the international community. Therefore, the Maoist leadership has the biggest responsibility of successfully landing their rebel movement into the runway of free and fair multiparty competitive politics. But are they prepared to jettison their excess baggage when they prepare to land? The baggage of history and anachronistic ideologies would make it difficult for them to have a successful landing. They will have to throw all kinds of baggage like their

outdated economic principles. This is the 21st century and the age of economic liberalization. Concepts like collectivization of agriculture, ceiling on private property, excessive interference on individual liberty, backtracking from the reform measures would hurt the country. The Maoist may have their own idea of how they want to develop Nepal. But the experiences and examples of past century tell us that any attempt to thrust communism and its outdated concepts would result in a major disaster for the country and the people. The Maoist leadership must have learned lessons from the collapse of Soviet Union – a one-time most powerful nation in this earth – and China. The Chinese leaders were wise enough to replace Mao's policies by liberal economics and now they are witnessing the greatest economic revolution seen by mankind. There are many other examples for the Maoists. Now that they have signed a peace deal with the seven parties, they need to demonstrate their sincerity in joining the mainstream politics – the mainstream politics does not mean their one-party rule. It means accommodating with the plural character of this nation and achieving the goals of economic prosperity of this poor nation. Maoist chairman Prachanda likes to say that Nepal can become the most developed nation in the South Asian region within next ten years. It is still unclear how he wants to achieve that vision. Is it through his party's ideology

or is it through the tried-and-tested concepts of modern economics? We are all watching very closely.

Kiran Gautam
Manbhawan

On Arms Issue

The peace deal of November 8 is historic ("Midnight Achievement: SPOTLIGHT November 10). But I think all should be alert about the successful management of arms of the Maoists. When the leaders talk about the need to restructure the army of the country and merge Maoist combatants into the state army, they must not lose focus. Look at the example of East Timor and other countries around the world. If the restructuring of the army is not done carefully, then the country will have to face another conflict soon. When merging the Maoist combatants into the state army, care must be taken to identify only those who can fit with the norms and practices of professional army of a state. Politically indoctrinated, ill-trained and wayward combatants would only do harm to the army organization. In fact, since the UN is involved in helping in the management of arms here, I presume they will be expert enough to advise the government and convince the rebels about the pitfalls that they must avoid. In fact, Ian Martin who leads the UN team here was posted in East Timor before. So he will definitely have the firsthand experience of how not to go about the arms management.

Bikas Lamsal
Gaushala

Eyes On Power

In a matter of few months, two major Power Summits were held in Kathmandu (Power Summit SPOTLIGHT November 10). One was held at the initiative of Indians and another at the initiative of Americans. It is positive development. Now the time has come for Nepalese planners and policy makers to identify proper projects for foreign investment. They must keep the interest of Nepal uppermost in their mind when reaching any deal with interested foreign investor. It is true that without foreign investment, the huge water resources of Nepal cannot be tapped. Therefore, the job for Nepalese is clearly cutout – try and negotiate best bargain with the investors.

Sitaram Adhikary
Kopundole

Dispute In Dividing 48 Seats

There are lingering differences among the seven parties and the Maoists in the division of quota when nominating 48 representatives at the interim parliament. As the seven parties and the Maoists prepare to divide the seat among themselves, the civil society leaders have said they cannot join the parliament as representatives of any political party. As per the November 8 agreement, interim parliament will have to be formed by November 26. This interim legislature will have 330 members including 209 members of the seven parties and others who are members of the present lower and upper house (excluding those who opposed the people's movement). Since the Left Front does not have its representation in the current parliament, its representation in the interim parliament would be determined based on understanding. The Maoists will nominate 73 members and 48 members will be nominated from among the sister organizations and professional bodies, oppressed ethnic communities and regions and political personalities. Meanwhile, 11 sitting MPs of Lower and Upper House will not be nominated to the new structure given their "pro-regressive" positions in the past. According to news reports, the eleven MPs will include two each from the Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), along with three MPs of the Upper House who were nominated by the King. The unfortunate eleven MPs include Narayan Singh Pun and Prakash Koirala (of NC); Prem Bahadur Singh and Nav Bahadur Budhathoki (of UML), Buddhiman Tamang and Brajesh Kumar Gupta (of RPP), Badri Mandal and Mrigendra Kumar Singh Yadav (of NSP) and Roop Jyoti, Yangkila Sherpa and Dev Narayan Chaudhary (royal nominees). Among the 11, most of the MPs were also appointed ministers during the royal regime. *Compiled from reports.*

Blame Game Continues

Days after the signing of the November 8 agreement, rifts are being seen within the Seven Party Alliance (SPA). The general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Madhav Kumar Nepal has blamed Nepali Congress (NC) for sabotaging his party's efforts to ensure that a referendum would be held to determine the fate of monarchy. He said that although all other parties in the SPA had agreed for referendum and for holding elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA) on the basis of Proportional Representation (PR) system, it was due to the refusal of NC that both these proposals were shot down. That is why, he said – speaking at the meeting of UML parliamentary party – the UML had to write down Note of Dissent on both these points in the November 8 agreement between the SPA government and the Maoists. In the agreement, the SPA government and the Maoists have agreed to determine the fate of monarchy through the first meeting of CA by a simple majority. Likewise, they have also agreed to hold the CA elections based on Mixed Proportional System. Likewise, Nepal also criticized the Maoist leadership for "spreading baseless rumors that the SPA and the Maoists have agreed to let Prime Minister Koirala continue as the head of the forthcoming interim government as well." Maoist chairman Prachanda had, on November 8, stated that changing Koirala's leadership before the elections to the CA could sabotage the whole process. Meanwhile, reacting to Nepal's criticism, Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai asserted that – "If it was alright for the UML to accept Koirala's leadership after April 24 when we had called for the continuation of the movement, it is now a shameless act (for Nepal) to raise these issues. We have accepted Koirala as the leader of SPA." On the other hand, NC (Democratic) president Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that the issue of leadership of interim government has not yet been discussed among the SPA and the Maoists. *Compiled from reports.*

Boucher To Visit Nepal

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher will be arriving in Kathmandu on November 15. The same day an EU troika mission will also arrive in the capital. They are visiting Nepal with the aim of observing the recent agreement between the government and the Maoists. The US and EU delegations would meet with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, senior government officials and political leaders. After the change in April, the western countries, particularly the US, have sent a number of officials, political leaders and ministers to visit Nepal. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Lawyers Hail Provisions Of 1990 Constitution

Lawyers and political leaders have praised provisions of the 1990 Constitution, which is now being replaced by an interim constitution soon. Addressing a talks program to discuss the contributions of 1990 Constitution to the constitutional development of Nepal, Nilambar Acharya, a senior leftist leader who was Law Minister during 1990 when then interim government promulgated the 1990 Constitution, said that the seminal elements and values of the 1990 Constitution will continue to guide all future constitutions that will be promulgated in the country. Speaking at the program organized by Constitutional Lawyers' Forum (CLAF), on Thursday (November 9), he called on all to remember the history. "Without remembering and celebrating history, we cannot build future," he said. Likewise, Shambhu Thapa, president of Nepal Bar Association (NBA), termed the 1990 constitution as "extra-ordinary." He said its spirit and even some sentences were included in the draft of the interim constitution. Thapa was a member of the interim constitution drafting committee. He said that one of the major weaknesses of the 1990 constitution was its lack of flexibility on amendment issues. Dr. Surya Dhungel, a constitutional expert, added that constitutions are generally

formed to accommodate political aspirations of the day. He rejected notions that the constitution invited conflict in the country. *Compiled from reports.*

Restructure The Economy: Experts

Senior economists and leaders from business community have stressed on the need for economic restructuring in a post-conflict period as the nation awaits economic revival after years of fumbling and feeble performances. Prof. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal, president of Nepal Economic Association (NEA), stressed that political parties need to move towards effective economic restructuring in a bid to boost national economy. Addressing a program titled "Role of Private Sector for Economic Development, Economic Policy and Impact to the Private Sector" organized by the National Business Initiative (NBI), former finance minister and UML leader Bharat Mohan Adhikary said there should be reconstruction and rehabilitation for sustained economic advancement, placing a great emphasis on the private sector. Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, former finance minister, said that big businesspersons who have access to politicians and top administrators have exploited scarce resources of the nation and are delaying repayment of loans to the banks. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Three Kids Killed In An Explosion

Three children were killed when a bomb they were playing with went off at Aatharai Sankranti bazaar in Tehrthum district on Thursday (November 9). Rupan Kandangwa, 9, Rasmita Kandangwa, 4, and Sujan Phumbo, 4, were killed after the bomb exploded. They had found the bomb lying in the nearby field. *Leading dailies report.*

UN To Send 200 Monitors

The United Nations is preparing to send around 200-member taskforce

including camp monitors and military experts to help in the peace process. Following the November 8 agreement between the seven parties and the Maoists, the UN has informed about sending such taskforce soon. As per the agreement, the Maoist combatants have to be sent to cantonments, their weapons collected and sealed in a cache and all of these verified, recorded and monitored by the UN by November 21. The UN team is expected to arrive in the country next week. This week, a meeting was organized by Secretary General Kofi Annan in New York to discuss this issue. Sources said the expenses of bringing in monitors will be borne by the respective countries from where they will come. The UN's bureau of peace establishment will select the monitors. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Martin For Detailed Pact On Weapons

United Nation's Secretary General Kofi Annan's personal representative in Nepal, Ian Martin, said, on Thursday, the UN monitoring teams will come here and begin their work once a detailed agreement on the modality of management of arms and combatants is reached. "We need a detailed agreement on the modality of management of arms and armed personnel," said Martin at a press conference. "Trained international observers having military background will be involved in the monitoring," he said, adding that the observers will be unarmed. Martin further added that the UN's job is to help maintain confidence and put the monitoring teams in place to carry out their job of "credible monitoring" and added that the UN does not have a mandate to enforce the agreement. Any breach of the agreement will be notified to the international community, he said. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

US Condemns Maoist Intimidation

Along with various human rights organizations and Members of Parliaments, the US government, too, has

condemned Maoists for forcefully seeking food and shelter for their cadres from valley residents. "The United States fully supports the ongoing peace process and hopes that it will lead to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Nepal. Given this support, the U.S. Embassy must condemn ongoing Maoist extortion and violence, especially illegal demands that Kathmandu residents house and feed cadre before and on the day of a large-scale Maoist rally planned for Friday, November 10," states a press release issued by the embassy. "Like a large number of other Kathmandu residents, a number of employees of this Embassy, as well as several American citizens, have been the target of such demands. This extortion, accompanied by violence or threats of future reprisals if the demands are not met, directly contravenes the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) Central Committee press statement following the August 27-31, 2006 Plenary Meeting in Kamidanda Village, Kavre district, as well as a number of other statements by senior Maoist leaders," the release further states. The press statement further states that "Nepal's transition to democracy only be damaged if one party feels it is free to advance its political agenda through violence and threats, despite its commitments to the contrary." "By demanding that Kathmandu residents involuntary house and feed cadre in their homes, the Maoists call into question their willingness to participate in good faith in Nepal's political process," the statement writes. "The U.S. Embassy stands with the people of Kathmandu in demanding that the Maoists abide by their promise that donations from average citizens will be strictly voluntary and that any violation of this commitment will be swiftly punished," the statement adds. The Maoists have claimed that they are not using force to seek shelters for their cadres ahead of planned public address by their party chairman Prachanda on November 10 in Kathmandu. The cadres have been brought from various districts to attend the public meeting. *Leading dailies report.*



Launching of the World Human Development Report

Gorkhapatra

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UN KOFI ANNAN, ON Wednesday, has called on all sides in Nepal to "maintain the momentum of the peace process." "The Secretary-General heartily welcomes the agreement reached yesterday between the Seven-Party Alliance and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). This agreement offers the people of Nepal a historic opportunity to end the armed conflict in their country, and to build sustainable peace within an inclusive and democratic state," Annan said in a statement attributable to his spokesman. "The United Nations has been asked to help in key areas of the peace process. The Secretary-General intends to respond promptly, while emphasizing that both sides must maintain the momentum of the peace process by fully carrying out the commitments they have made," Annan is quoted as saying by the UN news website. In August Nepal's Government and the Communist Party (Maoist) sent letters requesting UN help in areas ranging from human rights monitoring to electoral observation. This move followed a 10-day UN assessment mission to the country, during which time the Maoists also announced they were extending a three-month ceasefire.

THE US EMBASSY IN KATHMANDU HAS WELCOMED THE announcement that the Government of Nepal and the Maoists have reached agreement on addressing key political and security issues. "We especially congratulate the Nepali people, who have supported this process and who deserve a lasting peace and a transparent and democratic system of government," said the statement, adding, "The success of any final agreement will depend on its details and their implementation. The agreement must diminish the fear of violence, intimidation, and extortion that the people of Nepal have endured over the past 11 years. In this regard, effective monitoring that includes penalties for violators will prove essential. Like other friends of Nepal, the Embassy will follow developments here closely." Meanwhile, talking to journalists on Wednesday, US ambassador James Moriarty said that although he considers the agreement as "first good step," the future actions by the Maoists will determine the US policy. "Future will tell how good this agreement will be. And this, largely, will depend on the actions of the Maoists," he said.

THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT between the SPA and the Maoists. "The decision taken by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on behalf of the alliance and the Maoists in the early hours of Wednesday is a victory for the Nepali people," Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said in a statement on Wednesday. "We welcome this important move towards peace and prosperity of the people of Nepal and for democratic progress. We hope these decisions will take Nepal on the path of reconciliation, peace,

stability and economic prosperity," the release said. "New Delhi would be looking forward to the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement between the government and the Maoists on November 16," he said. "The people of Nepal must have the right to freely choose and decide their own destiny and future without fear of the gun," the minister said.

COMMUNITY IRRIGATION WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN 35 districts of eastern and central region from this year. The total cost of this project will be Rs 2.67 billion (US\$ 38.2 million). Of the total, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide \$ 20 million. OPEC will provide \$ 7 million; the government will chip in with \$ 9 million and the remaining (just over \$200,000) will have to be borne by local farmers. The Department of Irrigation has informed that the project will benefit 270,000 poor farmers. At a time when the government has been unable to generate resources for building mega irrigation projects, it has launched the community project. By this project 22,000 hectares of land in Terai and 12,000 hectares of land in hilly region will be irrigated.

THE GALLERY MEETING HALL OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives is being restructured to fit in all the members of the interim parliament. According to Surya Kiran Gurung, general secretary of the Parliament Secretariat, the efforts have started to fit in all the proposed 330 members of the interim legislature in the building. He said these works will be completed by November 19. At present, the hall has been housing 205-members of the Lower House. However, as per the November 8 agreement, an interim parliament with 330 members will be formed by November 26.

NEPAL HAS FALLEN DOWN TWO RANKS IN THIS YEAR'S World Human Development Report 2006 launched by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Even though Nepal improved its Human Development Index (HDI) from 0.504 last year to 0.527 this year, it fell down to 138th rank from 136th rank a year ago, according to the report, which was prepared after studying the situation of 177 countries. This year the theme of the report was the water crisis. The HDR with the sub-title 'power, poverty and global water crisis' underlined that the inequality in water provision relates not just to access and expenditure but also price. According to the report Norway has the highest HDI at 0.965 followed by Iceland.

THE WORLD BANK PLANS TO UPSCALE THE POVERTY Alleviation Fund (PAF) from the existing \$ 15 million to a whopping \$ 100 million. The fund was set up in 2004 for financing projects aimed at alleviating poverty in seven districts. While the fund now reaches nine districts, the bank is aimed at extending it to about 25 districts. The decision to upscale the fund was approved by World Bank board of directors on November 9, according to bank spokesperson Rajib Upadhyaya. The PAF is being managed by an independent board. Meanwhile, the bank plans to renew its budget support operations for which it is likely to allocate another \$ 100 million, annually. This will help finance schemes announced by the government during the budget. "It is a unique instrument whereby the government can go on spending money on various development projects and get them reimbursed till the last day of the fiscal year," added Upadhyaya.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER KP Oli appealed to the Indian business community to invest in Nepal's hydropower, service, manufacturing and tourism sectors. Addressing a meeting hosted by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in New Delhi on Tuesday, Oli said environment in Nepal is favorable for foreign investment in a mutually beneficial manner. "The conflict is ending and appropriate environment for investment is building in Nepal," he said. ■

"This agreement is the foundation for new Nepal."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, briefing the House of Representatives about the agreement with the Maoists.

* * *

"Nepal can become richest country in this region within ten years."

Prachanda, Maoist chairman, at a press conference.

* * *

"We are willing to work together with the seven parties for at least ten years to develop the nation."

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, spokesperson of the Maoists, in Nepalgunj.

* * *

"Iurge the Maoist leaders not to spread baseless rumors. There has not been any agreement among eight parties to let Prime Minister Koirala continue in the office during the interim government as well."

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), talking to journalists.

* * *

TRANSITION

RETURNED: KP Sharma Oli, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, after a brief visit to India. He cut short his weeklong visit due to political developments within Nepal.

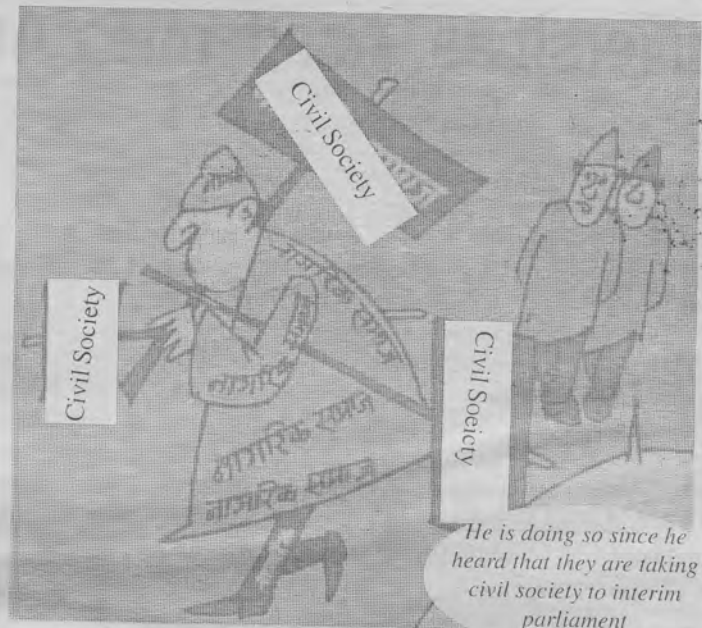
TAKEN OVER: The management of troubled Nepal Bangladesh Bank (NBB), by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). The central bank has appointed a four member team led by its director Maha Prasad Adhikary to look after the NBB.

RESIGNED: All board of directors and the management of Nepal Bangladesh

Bank (NBB), following financial troubles.

APPOINTED: Usha Nepal and Dr. Nilkantha Upreti, as Election Commissioners at the Election Commission. They were appointed by the government after their names were endorsed by the Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee (PSHC).

RELEASED: Seventeen managers of Simra factory of Surya Nepal Private Limited (SNPL), after they were held captive for 34 hours by workers belonging to Surya Nepal Mazdoor Union who demanded raise in their wages.



"If it was alright for the UML to accept Koirala's leadership after April 24 when we had called for the continuation of the movement, it is now a shameless act (for Nepal) to raise these issues. We have accepted Koirala as the leader of SPA."

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior leader of the Maoists, reacting to Nepal's comments, in Nepal FM.

* * *

"We need a detailed agreement on the modality of management of arms and armed personnel."

Ian Martin, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's personal representative for Nepal, addressing a press conference, in The Himalayan Times daily.

* * *

"Future will tell how good this agreement will be. And this, largely, will depend on the actions of the Maoists."

James F. Moriarty, American ambassador to Nepal, reacting to the November 8 agreement between the SPA government and the Maoists.

* * *

DISSOLVED: Fifteen national sports associations including the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) by the Nepal Sports Council (NSC). The NSC has asked them to conduct fresh elections and have turned their executive committee as ad-hoc committees for the time being.

SUSPENDED : A police inspector and two constables by the government on the charges of illegally allowing two Tibetan to Nepal.

PRESENTED : Chairman of Public Service Commission Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala its annual report of 2005/06.

Universities, Academies And Kosi Problems

By DR. AB THAPA

Universities and academies are seen playing in most of the countries very important role in shaping national policy on socio-economic development. They are usually in forefront in helping to resolve complicated problems facing the country. Nepal is now going to confront with a new type of problem. It is the Kosi flood problem. The Kosi river is on the verge of abandoning its present course and shifting to the east far away from its present position, hence the life and property of millions of peoples in our region are at great risk.

The Kosi river flood control problem, beyond all doubt, has emerged as the most important task before us requiring immediate attention of the whole country. Unfortunately only very few of us are aware of it. The Kosi problem is too complicated and vast to be handled solely by a single institution in Nepal. It need not be explained that universities, academies and various national and international institutions involved in the field of water resources development of our country and other socioeconomic sciences should come forward to help to resolve the Kosi flood problem.

River of Sorrow

The Kosi river known as the river of sorrow of the Bihar shifted from east to west over 120 km in the last 200 years. In the past about 8000 sq. km. of lands had been laid waste as a result of the sand deposit. In course of shifting, many towns and villages were wiped out, and heavy losses of property, cattle, and human life were inflicted. Fortunately the embankments built few decades ago temporarily helped to check the lateral shifting of the Kosi.

All the elderly people living in the Saptari district not far away from the Kosi river would not have much difficulty to recall that some 50 years ago the channel of the Kosi river flowing across the Sunsari district from north to south was gradually shifting laterally from east to the west. The river was already quite close to Hanumannagar. It is reported that by that time the Kosi. River debouching into the Terai plain at Chatra and joining the Ganges River near Kursella in India had already laid waste about 500 square miles of lands in Nepal alone. People living in the eastern part of the Saptari district were panic stricken. They were leaving their ancestral homes in thousands to find shelter at safe places far away from their villages carrying with them whatever few things they could take with them. The headquarter of the Saptari district at Hanumannagar

was swiftly moved to Rajbirag which was at a safe distance away from the Kosi River. Fortunately the shifting of the Kosi River course to the west was held in check by the embankments built on either side of the river some 50 years ago. Now all those who are involved in the Kosi River study are saying that the embankments built to protect the life and property of millions in India and Nepal might have already outlived their usefulness. What is going to happen the next? Every common man would be expecting to get an answer. Perhaps it is of interest to all of us to know why the Kosi River changes its course.

Sediment Deposition

The Kosi River brings every year an enormous quantity of sediments from its catchments in the mountains. Sir Claude Inglis an expert on Kosi had attributed the shift of the Kosi River channel to excessive sand load

Data published in the American Society of Civil Engineering in March, 1966 indicate that in the period between 1938 and 1957 every year on an average about 100 million cubic meters of sediments used to be deposited on the Kosi River bed. The maximum such deposition was around Nirmali in India not far away from the Hanumannagar. There was a very big change in sediment deposition pattern immediately after the completion of the Kosi barrage in 1963.

carried by the river. Leopold and Maddock considering Kosi behavior had stated that a braided stream will tend to shift laterally at a rate dependent on the rate of accumulation of material being deposited. As one course becomes higher than possible adjacent paths, the river would shift.

Data published in the American Society of Civil Engineering in March, 1966 indicate that in the period between 1938 and 1957 every year on an average about 100 million cubic meters of sediments used to be deposited on the Kosi River bed. The maximum such deposition was around Nirmali in India not far away from the Hanumannagar. There was very big change in sediment deposition pattern immediately after the completion of the Kosi barrage in 1963. The results of the Kosi River channel study for post barrage period have been published by V.C. Galgali, Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune (India), and Gohain & Prakash of Roorke University. All the past studies confirm that the Kosi River bed just upstream of the barrage has significantly aggraded due to sediment deposition. On account of ponding, sediment deposition had occurred, flattening the bed gradient. The bed slope of the river in the pond area was about 0.61 m per km in the year 1956 prior to construction of the barrage, which became flatter to about 0.42 m per km in the year 1969, ie in six years of the functioning of the barrage. Studies were made to determine the sediment deposition based

on post flood 1963 and 1970 surveys. These studies indicated that about 35 million cu.m. sediments had deposited in the pond length of about 10 km upstream of the barrage, giving an average depth of about 0.4 m in about 8 years with a rate of bed level rise at about 0.05 m per annum.

Alarming Situation

All the past and present studies and the very recent observations indicate that the Kosi is quickly turning into a hanging river and we are heading for an unprecedented flood disaster. Such flood disaster would not be just one time event. Like the Yellow river floods disaster in China in the past, the ferocious floods of the Kosi would also be frequently hitting particularly our Sunsari district and the North Bihar wiping out towns and villages, and laying vast area of lands bare with sand deposits. The eastern and the southern boundaries of the flood-affected area could extend upto the Mahananda river and the Ganges respectively. India's railway and roadway linkages with her northeast states could also be severed. In a similar type of China's Yellow river's latest flooding in 1938 the number of persons killed alone was about half a million. After this flooding big storage dams were built to control the Yellow river floods. The river is now completely regulated. There are no more flood damages. It is stated in CHINA DAILY (October 16, 1998) that the Yellow river dams have helped to save flood damages as of now of about US \$ 50 billions.

Few years after the commissioning of the Kosi barrage there was a big flood in 1968. A discharge of about 25,000 cumecs was recorded. The flood at that time did not pose any serious threat. At present the conditions might be altogether different. It is said that whenever the discharge exceeds 9,000 cumecs which is fairly common the whole area between the embankments is submerged. Such observations raise the fear that a flood similar to 1968 flood in magnitude could prove to be catastrophic. It should be further remembered that the 1968 Kosi flood is not exceptionally rare. A flood of this magnitude has already been observed twice within the last 50 years. Fortunately in course of the last 35 years the maximum flood discharge of the Kosi River has not exceeded 10,000 cumecs.

If the Kosi River changed its course to the east, the flood-affected area of the Kosi in the past estimated at about 8,000 sq. km could again be laid bare with sand deposits within a certain period by the combined effect of the Kosi floods that bring big quantity of sediments and the shifting of the main river course from one channel to another. The changing of the river course is the distinguishing feature of braided rivers like the Kosi.

In Conclusion

Mr. F.A. Shilling Feld, a renowned expert on Kosi study, had made a chilling forecast a long time ago "The westward movement of the Kosi oscillation (in the past) is slow and is in a series of steps, each of which is attended with damage to property of temporary nature. The eastward movement (in future) of the oscillation will

probably be accompanied with great loss of life and property." The Kosi floods control problem has already emerged as the biggest challenge facing our country.

Indeed, the Kosi River is posing a serious threat to life and property of millions in Nepal and India. Solutions to the Kosi floods problem should be quickly found. Our universities and academies should direct their activities to help to resolve the imminent Kosi flood problem.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

WFP Appeals For Free Passage Of Food Aid

The United Nations World Food Program has appealed to members of the Nepal Transport Union to allow the free passage of WFP convoys attempting to deliver food assistance to over 50,000 drought-affected people in Mid- and Far Western Nepal and over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees. The Nepal Transport Union has been disrupting the flow of transport trucks across Nepal for the past week.

"Over 50,000 hungry people in Humla, Jumla, and Dolpa are waiting for our helicopters to arrive so that they can receive desperately needed food rations," reported WFP Representative, Richard Ragan, "Both the refugees and the people of the Mid-West have suffered enough. We need those trucks through – and our helicopters full, so that we can continue to provide humanitarian assistance to hungry families."

WFP is in its third phase of emergency operations to provide a two-month ration to over 225,000 drought-affected people in Mid- and Far- Western Nepal. Over 265 helicopter flights are planned out of Surkhet to deliver 730 metric tons of food to these remote communities. In the east, WFP provides food for all 7 of the Bhutanese refugee camps.

"WFP provides food assistance to the most vulnerable men, women and children. Without the ability to freely transport food aid across Nepal over one million people could go hungry," reported Ragan.

With an annual budget of nearly USD \$30 million dollars for Nepal, WFP will provide food assistance to nearly 1.78 million Nepalis, and over 106,000 Bhutanese refugees at the close of 2006, according to a press release by the WFP office in Nepal.

WFP's humanitarian support targets the most vulnerable populations living in 31 food deficit districts across Nepal. In addition to food aid for the Bhutanese refugees and drought-affected families, WFP's program provide: school feeding to students, nutritional support for pregnant and nursing mothers and their young children, and livelihood support to poor, food-insecure households, through food for work activities.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency: each year, we give food to an average of 90 million poor people to meet their nutritional needs, including 56 million hungry children, in at least 80 of the world's poorest countries.

POLITICS AFTER PEACE ACCORD

Prolonging Political Instability

Despite signing of peace accord between the Maoists and the seven parties, Nepalis may have to wait for a long time to see peace and stability

By KESHAB POUDEL

Less than twenty four hours after signing the historic accord to bring the peace, a group of politicians and intellectuals burnt the copy of accord saying that it did not address the problems of terai.

Along with other ethnic groups, Jantantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), a rebel breakaway group which killed RPP leader Krishna Charan Shrestha in September, criticized the treaty for not addressing problems faced by people of terai. Morcha also warned to intensify their violent acts in terai in case ten of its demands are not met.

At a time when political parties and some Nepalese are celebrating in euphoria for peace after signing the mid-night agreement, these reactions show otherwise. The dream of Nepalis to have long lasting peace and stability still seems far away.

"There will be complete peace in Nepal as it addresses all the problems," said CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Even foreign minister of Nepal's southern neighbor, European countries and United States of America welcomed the peace agreement. However, looking at the geo-strategic position and history of Nepal, everybody has to be a skeptic over whether the deal will bring permanent peace and political stability.

Despite his statement that all are victorious, Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala warned the people against regressive elements. In the same spirit Prachanda was aggressive in his tone while speaking against the same reactionary force. But Prachanda included CPN-UML also as a foe, which he accused of having worked for the preservation of feudal interest in Nepal.

Even among the eight parties there were no love, respect, faith and trust among the negotiating parties. It was reported in

press that the UML leader Nepal and Nepali Congress Democratic leader Sher Bahadur Deuba threatened to dissociate from the negotiation but they did not have the guts to do that. In response, prime minister Koirala retorted angrily to them that his party and Maoists would complete the negotiations if others didn't join.

"Peace will be there but there is no sign of getting stability in any political process in the country. From the moment they signed the document, the distrust and hostilities among themselves are coming to the public through the press. Between



PM Koirala: Difficult task

Prachanda and UML leader Nepal and Sher Bahadur Deuba against Koirala, there are lingering hostilities," said a political analyst. "Even a step forward for peace is welcome thing but the way it had been done and the attitudes of persons who were involved in the deal don't give room for optimism. Let them complete the present course of negotiations."

The word peace is in everybody's lip in Nepal. It is the first topic whenever persons meet others. Now what will happen? Will there be peace in the country? They don't give much importance to the persons, procedures and their deliberations much. Peace is the fist and last concerns of common people in Nepal whether it is the urban elites or persons from remote rural areas.

"The conflict was of unique character in Nepal. It was a controlled and guided

conflict. Nowhere in any conflict area, has such a stage-managed violence been seen. The settlement for the peace of last week was also unique in its form. No such drastic and dramatic settlement has been reached anywhere in the world. The way it has been declared neither enthuse any of the participants in the deal nor it has inspired optimism in the masses like all previous dramatic events. This also has been shrouded with mystery," said the analyst. "One must work for peace and remain optimistic. It will be self-defeating attitude if one does not take account for pitfalls and lacunas in the deal. A design of destabilization has continuity since long and it uses different forms of radical leftists against rightists and rightists against leftists."

The great hero of Maoist revolution reached into the peak of the publicity. Any leftist upsurge has a limit in the historical trend in this country. Now a rightist upsurge is knocking at the door of the seven parties. The JTMM has nothing to do with communist or Maoist ideology. Its mobilization is against the people of terai against the hill.

"It requires an in-depth study to analyze the behavior pattern of Nepalis. Generally, people in Nepal in normal time have tendency to live in a community spirit with adequate tolerance and patience. If that character is allowed to prevail in the politics of the country. This country has an appropriate character of the people to work with multi-party pluralistic democracy despite high percentage of illiteracy. But the innocence and unawareness of the people involved them all the time in extreme radical movements and agitations as an instrument of destabilization - whether it is left or right as long as it motivates the agitators with vigor and energy of adolescents and youth radicalism. There is not a center point for extremists. Even if there is really a centrist looking establishment one can see this trend in Nepal since 1951," said the analyst.

Looking at Nepal's geo-strategic position in the Himalayas, it seems a long way to go before Nepal has a long lasting peace and political stability. Although two forms regionalism from terai and ethnic groups in the hills have appeared as new phenomenon, it is yet to be seen in which form the new process of political destabilization will appear. ■

PEACE ACCORD

Promises of Peace

The government and the Maoists prepare to sign a comprehensive peace accord declaring officially the cessation of decade-long internal conflict

By A CORRESPONDENT

Moving in line with the time scheduled fixed by the November 8 agreement between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) government and the Maoists, the Peace Committee has submitted a draft of comprehensive national peace accord to the government on Sunday.

Although Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has criticized the government for making the draft public without consulting with them, he has assured that the Maoists and the government would sign it by November 16.

Coordinator of the Committee Ram Chandra Poudel, who is also a general secretary of Nepali Congress (NC), submitted the draft to Home Minister and coordinator of government talks team Krishna Sitaula.

Sitaula later informed that the government itself will submit a copy of the draft to the Maoist leadership. As per the November 8 agreement, the government and the Maoists have to sign the comprehensive peace accord by November 16.

The draft of the peace accord includes provision about formally declaring the end of armed conflict in the country. The draft covers all aspects of ceasefire, human rights and peace.

Likewise, other provisions of the draft include the ones that propose to ban all kinds of activities such as extortion, abduction and movement of Maoist cadres in combat dress and public display of their arms. It also proposes to return properties and

lands seized during the conflict and create environment to ease the return of displaced persons, among others. The draft also has provision as per which anyone found violating it would have to face punishment as per the state law.

The Peace Committee, which is headed by general secretary of the Nepali Congress (NC) Ram Chandra Poudel, includes representatives from seven parties as well as other parties represented in the House of Representatives such as Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP), and other faction of People's Front Nepal (PFN).

If it is signed, the draft peace accord will formally bring to end the hostilities

that existed in the country for the past one decade. This will be an eagerly awaited accord for the millions of Nepalis who have been yearning for the quick end to the bloody conflict that had cost not only the lives of 13,000 people but also destroyed precious infrastructures worth billions of rupees.

The Peace Committee is said to have prepared a ten-point draft of the accord, which have been widely discussed by various political parties.

Civil society, human rights organizations and international community have been calling for such a peace accord along with human rights agreement. According to Minister of State Ramesh Lekhak, who is also a member of government talks team, the peace accord will have provisions about protecting human rights. "It is quite a comprehensive document," said Poudel.

Following the November 8 agreement, there have been rapid developments in the political situation. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala briefed the parliament about the agreement. He stated that the agreement

was aimed at restoring peace and consolidating democracy. "This provides opportunity to the Maoists to become a part of nation-building process," he said. Koirala claimed that the international community was also surprised with the agreement.

Addressing the parliament, UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal stood by his party's decision to write note of dissent. "The May 18 declaration of the parliament proves that our note of dissent against the Constitution of 1990 was correct," he claimed.

The cabinet meeting has already adopted the November 8 agreement between the SPA government and the Maoists. The cabinet also instructed the government talks team to carry forward works related with its implementation. The talks team will have to coordinate with the Maoist talks team to implement the agreement. ■



Agitators: Hoping for durable peace

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Promises

To

Fulfill

For millions of poor and disadvantaged children of Nepal, who had seen dreadful life in the last 12 years of intensive violent conflict, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promises many things to them including the access to education, getting enough food, eliminating gender disparities and living a healthy and prosperous life. After getting easy access to primary education in the last five years, millions of children have already benefited from MDGs but there are still many millions who are yet to go to schools. As the year 2015 is less than ten years away, the challenges before Nepal is to reach to all the children living in different parts of Nepal. Despite limited progress, the road ahead is bumpy

By KESHAB POUDEL

For 15-years-old Suntali Sunar, a dalit girl (untouchable), resident of Chandanpur village of Lalitpur district 50 kilometer south of capital, completion of primary level education (grade five) turned to be a boon as the education brought tremendous changes in her family life. Just simple ability to read and write has been enough for her to salvage from so

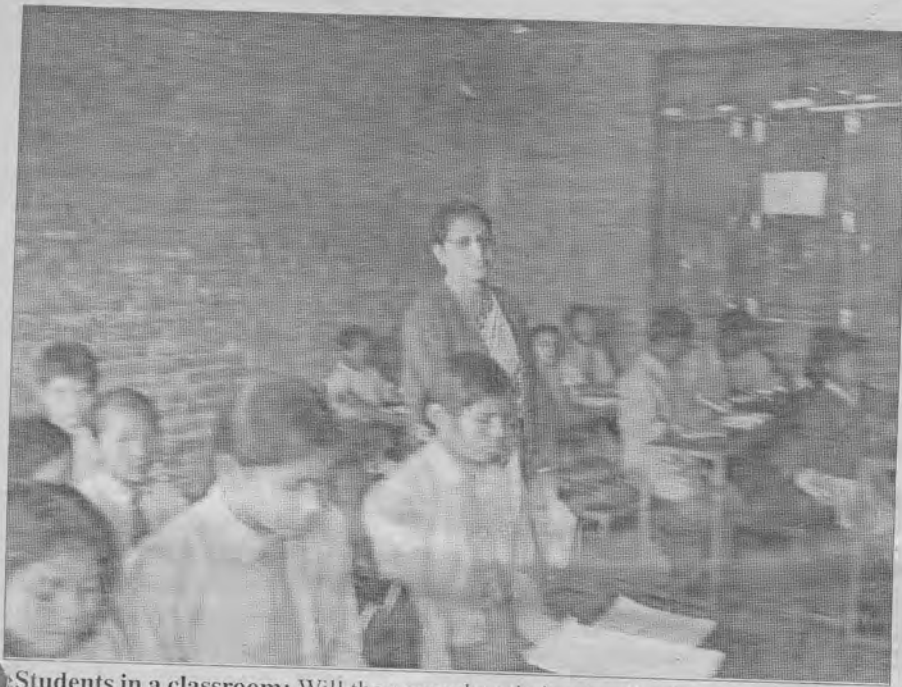
many social and economic discriminations.

Living in isolation for centuries, going to school for dalit children like Suntali is a recent phenomenon. But her completion of primary level education has not only changed their social status but also helped them to achieve self reliance. Being an illiterate woman is a curse in rural Nepal where a woman has to marry in earlier age as well as early pregnancy causes death threat during

child birth. Being a disadvantaged Dalit and girl adds more miseries.

Suntali is the third daughter in her house and one of her elder sisters died a couple of years ago due to complication at the time of giving birth. Her second sister who is now sixteen, has a six months old daughter.

"I am a few lucky girls in our community who go to school and complete primary education. I want to complete at least secondary level



Students in a classroom: Will they complete their schooling?

education," said Sunti, who is helping her family members in household works. "We used to be cheated by middlemen while making deal to sell our milk. Now I am able to calculate all things."

This happy story is not for all. Even the dalit and disadvantaged children living in capital has to face all kinds of discriminations and disparities. The students, most of whom are children of disadvantaged people and Dalit, of Sarada Lower Secondary School a few meters away from Tribhuvan International Airport have many painful stories to tell. Constructed 15 years back, the classroom and school building are in miserable physical conditions.

"I am not sure whether I will continue my school or not. If my mother wants me to be in home to complete the household chores, I will have to give up education," said Sarla Nepali, whose mother works as a sweeper in Kathmandu Metropolitan.

Lying just opposite the Royal Nepal Gulf Club, where most of Kathmandu's elite and diplomats gather almost every day, nobody seems to notice miserable schools building. At a time when Nepal is pursuing its effort to attain the MDGs by 2015, these children are reminder about how the situation looks like.

Following the preparation of its first progress report on the MDGs in 2002, a

number of steps have been taken since then to align the MDGs with the national planning process targeting girls like Sunti and Sarala. Under a special program, the government allocated a huge amount of money to attain the universal primary education by 2015 focusing more on backward, dalits and girls.

Among the disadvantages group of children, Sunti is among tens of thousands of girls who are benefited by this program. Although programs related to MDGs were initiated a few months after the intensification of conflict, these targeted programs have brought tremendous changes in education sector in rural parts of Nepal.

While the importance of MDGs has been recognized and most of the targets and indicators have been incorporated in the Tenth Plan/ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002-2007), the government investment in education sector has also gone up. Reaching out to children of poor and disadvantaged community, the government has been launching enrolment campaign through Welcome to School Initiative and recruiting more female teachers particularly from Dalit and disadvantaged communities. All these efforts have led to encouraging results:

net primary enrolment rate has reached 86-87 percent in 2005/ 2006, less than one percent below the official target.

According to the Ministry of Education and Sports, the overall primary cycle completion rate improved from 50.4 percent in 2003/04 to 68 percent in 2005. "Despite certain achievements, given the recent progress of the net enrolment rate in primary education, it seems less likely that Nepal will achieve the target of universal primary education by 2015. Furthermore, unless special initiatives to reach children from disadvantaged families are introduced, it will be difficult for Nepal to maintain the same pace of improvement and reach 100 percent- the MDG target.

MDGs is world's time bound and qualified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, exclusion – while promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability.

"Significant challenges remain in increasing equity in access and in improving the quality and efficiency of education at all levels. The adult literacy rate is still only about 43 percent and some 20 percent of eligible children are not enrolled in primary school. Among out of school children, the largest proportions are girls and children from poor and disadvantaged families living in remote areas," states Asian Development Bank's Country Strategy and Program Nepal 2005-2009.

With the student of 200 children including 100 girls, Sarada Lower Secondary School is not only the example, there are many other schools around the country where children of dalits and other disadvantaged communities have yet to get entry.

"We have high drop out in the school but some of our students even completed the secondary education after completing lower secondary from here," said Saraswati Vaidya, assistant headmaster of the school. "Most parents did not send their children to school to work as household workers."

Students who get the opportunity to continue their study feel proud for completing the education. "I am first child

in my family to complete the grade seven. I can read and do all transactions myself. Our family used to rely on others for all transaction till few years back but now I can do all those things for my family," said Geeta Nepali, whose two elder sisters dropped their education after completing grade five. At a time when the government is planning to narrow down the education disparity between the boys and girls at all levels, the reality at the ground shows dim results.

Other problems, too, are coming together including huge demands of money. Produced by the National Planning Commission, an apex government's development body, and the United Nations Development Program, the Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal 2006 shows that the government must make a public investment of US\$ 12.6 billion over the next decade if the goals are to be reached. More than half that money must be channeled to reducing hunger, improving education and developing infrastructure.

The total cost of attaining the MDG on education for 2005-2015 amounts to NRs. 334.5 billion (US\$ 4,778.9 million). The average annual cost amounts to NRs. 30.4 billion rupees (US\$ 434.4 million). Although many donor countries are pumping a lot of money, the resources are still inadequate.

"We must focus on key challenges identified in the Needs Assessment: project development space, significantly improve infrastructure, especially in rural areas and invest heavily to reduce hunger and boost education, especially for girls. The climate of uncertainty must be addressed if Nepal is to secure greater confidence within the international community, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals within nine year," said UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP

Resident Representative Mathew Kahane.

Published by United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the Millennium Development Goals Progress and Challenges in South Asia 2006 points out that Nepal has made rapid progress towards universal primary education and gender parity, but there are persistent gender, caste and ethnic disparities, and girls from low income and marginalized groups are doubly disadvantaged. According to the report, Dalit girls are almost twice as likely to be excluded from school as higher caste girls.

Among children in poor households, the percentage of 6-10 year olds and 11-15 year olds out of school is 36 and 42 percent, respectively, and more than two-thirds of these are girls.

"We must think of MDGs, not as abstract concepts or statistical aggregates, but as the lives, the opportunities, the futures, of individual children, women, and men, of our

daughters and sons. When I visited a village, not at all remote, in Saptari district last month, I was struck by the women telling me that, after only a few years experience of a social mobilization effort, they now thought that their daughters should not be married off at the age of 12- but at 15 or 16; that perhaps primary and some secondary schooling might be good for the girls," said Matthew Kahane UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal.

Nepal has achieved much progress in education sector in the last fifty years and the progress in the last fifteen years has been remarkable. When Nepal entered into a modern world in 1951, Nepal could boast a literacy rate of only 2 percent, 321 primary schools and 11 high schools constituted the whole of its public educational establishment.

According to Economic Survey 2006, which was published by Ministry of Finance, by 2005, literacy rate had mounted to 60 percent, the number of primary schools (1-5 grades) 23,435 with enrolment of 4.5 million, lower secondary schools (6-8) 7097 with 1.3 million students and secondary schools (9-10), 4102 with 586,177 students.

"The government is ready to invest additional money to the education sector. Since we need to invest huge money in reconstruction and rehabilitation, we need support from international community to attain the goal," said finance minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat.

With an aim to improve the lives of people like Suntali and Sarala, the world leaders unveiled MDGs in 2000. In September 2000, world leaders set the key goals and target in the Millennium Declaration. There are eight major goals and 18 time bound



Children: Haunted by instability

targets to be achieved by 2015. Universal primary education is one of the target set by MDGs. According to the target, by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

"Despite such devastation in the last 12 years, we have made many progress and the country is in a position to attain the MDGs in all front including in universal primary education," said Dr. Jagdish Chandra Pokhrel, vice chairman of National Planning Commission. In universal access to primary education, the enrolment ratio is on track at 84 percent. The ratio of children completing up to fifth grade has also increased to 60 from 38 percent in 1990."

The Tenth Plan/ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002-2007) envisaged the extension of education in the spirit of Education for All (EFA) at par with MDGs. The EFA program 2004-2009 is expected to cope with the country's low literacy and the low access of girls, dalits, ethnic communities, disabled persons and people living below the poverty line – and to achieve the goal of education for all by 2015.

"Despite some progress, Nepal's education system has been unable to enhance the access of women, disadvantaged indigenous communities and Dalits. Less than half of all children complete the primary cycle and only 10 percent of those entering grade 1 reach 10 even after repeating several times and less than half of the secondary level students pass the School Leaving Certificate (Grade 9)," writes Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress report 2005.

Conducted by Central Bureau of Statistic under the assistance of the World Bank, Nepal Living Standard Survey 2004 found the most noticeable association is seen between literacy rate and per capita household consumption. According to survey, 75 percent of the population in the richest quintile is literate while only 25 percent is literate in poorest quintile. In the urban areas the literacy is higher than in rural areas.

In the last few years, the enrolment of girls has increased drastically but the number of literate women is still low. According to the Ministry of Education,

65 percent of Nepal's women are illiterate, making it difficult for them to participate in decision making. It seems that the goal of eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015 appears hard to achieve.

In rural parts of Nepal, efforts are going on to eliminate the illiteracy. From formal education to informal literacy

camp, people are taking initiative. The women of Jeevanpur Village Development Committee of Dhading District have shown how communities are actively taking part in eradicating illiteracy campaign.

As soon as they complete the household chores at eight in the evening, women carry their books to nearby community house. As soon as Kanchhi Tamang, 35, a local teacher lit a kerosene lamp, group of women of different age groups joined the class. Launched by a local non-governmental organization, many women - who have never got opportunity to go to school, are literate now. The government is currently spending about Rs. 317 million (US\$ 4.5 million) annually on adult literacy as the number of primary school children.

"My eye is now open and I can read and write. I can run a bank account," said Kanchhi Tamang, mother of three children. All other women, too, have similar feeling like myself."

Suffering from prolonged conflict for more than a decade, Nepal, one of the poorest countries of the world, is still far behind to attain MDGs in universal access to primary education and in eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education in stipulated time.

Recent studies have shown that education is key for the transformation of society. From improvement of health to sanitation and poverty alleviation and to end the gender disparities and other social discriminations, increasing the access to education is the must.



School building: Poor infrastructure

However, progress in Nepal's education sector – a key to attain Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – is too slow and Nepal is not in a position to achieve MDGs to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015. Lack of education perpetuates poverty and poverty keeps children out from schools.

Although a peace deal has already been signed to end the decade old conflict, it will take a long time for the stabilization in the education sector. This is bad news for millions of Nepalese because education is basically concerned with their everyday problems of producing enough food, enlightening their children and of living healthy and peaceful life. MDGs are closely linked with all of these causes that helped in exacerbating the situation of conflict like social disparity, exclusion and gender discrimination. Therefore, attaining the goal in education is crucial for least developed and conflict-torn country like Nepal.

"In the last decade, Nepal has seen a rise in people's income, life expectancy, and literacy levels but over half the adults in Nepal are still illiterate. I believe that Nepal can still attain the MDGs and Asian Development Bank along with other international communities have shown interest to support Nepal," said Sultan Hafeez Rehman, country representative of Asian Development Bank.

Provided the internal peace and proper environment, Nepal's friends have shown willingness to support education efforts to alleviate the poverty for women like Suntali, Sarala and Kanchhi. Education is the key to transformation and salvation. ■

"All Of Us Are Happy That We Are Able To Restore Peace In The Country Through The Accord"

— MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL

"I would like to see how much Nepalese people have gained from the accord. After the agreement, the terror and intimidation have come to an end. This was what people were expecting for quite a long time. Nepali people want to see the end of feudalism and guarantee of absolute change. People want durable peace, consolidation of democracy and progress."

MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL, general secretary of Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), is a politician who has been constantly in the center of his party leadership for more than a decade. In his long political career, Nepal, leader of second largest party in the House of Representatives, has seen many ups and downs. He was deputy prime minister during the nine month of minority government formed by his party. At a time when he is facing very crucial time for his own leadership, he spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on Monday evening regarding the current political development. Excerpts:

Despite his ill health and not actively taking part in negotiations, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala got what he wanted in the seven party Maoist negotiations. But your party had to write note of dissent on two points. What did CPN-UML really secure in the negotiations?

There is nothing to gain or lose. All of us are happy that we are able to restore peace in the country through the accord. In other words, we succeeded to fulfill the wishes of common people who want to live in peace. People wish to see peace and end of ten years long violence. I don't want to comment on what prime minister with ill health got or what our party got. I would like to see how much Nepalese people have gained from the accord. After the agreement, the terror and intimidation have come to an end. This was what people were expecting for quite a long time. Nepali people want to see the end of feudalism and guarantee of absolute change. People want durable peace, consolidation of democracy and progress. The agreement signed on 8 November, 2006 has important contribution to fulfill all those wishes of people. It was a milestone in the history of Nepal.

What about your two demands?

Although we signed in the agreement, we have also written note of dissents on two major issues: to hold referendum to decide the fate of monarchy and adopt proportional representative system in the election for Constituent Assembly. Our argument is that only through the referendum, can we solve the fate of monarchy forever and only through the elections based on proportional representation, can we make the inclusive democracy possible. Had all others accepted our two demands, the result would have been much better. Other parties - who agreed on our two proposals earlier - gave up their stand but we carried on with the genuine demands of people. We are proud of that.

As it is reported in newspaper that prime minister Koirala went to bed at 9:30 pm, who took part in such an important negotiations on behalf of prime minister, after that?

Before going to bed, prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala accepted our two demands but he backed out later on. Even other seven parties had agreed on our demands but they, too, could not stick with it. We stuck to our stand and wrote note of dissent on the final agreement. We have put our views but we did not disturb the peace process. We were very much flexible in the negotiations following the principle of 'agree to disagree.' But flexibility is not our weakness.

It is reported that prime minister Koirala even threatened you that his party and Maoists would sign the peace agreement in case your party insisted on your two demands?

Of course, we argued with prime minister Koirala and we have made agreement with him and other parties that UML should be given right to write note of dissent. There is no question of anybody's threat.

It means you had heated arguments with Koirala before signing the document?

I don't want to comment on this issue. It is not proper now to play blame game against each other. Now our only one target is to hold the elections for Constituent Assembly before May, 2007. For this we want unity and good relations among all national political parties. Writing difference of opinion does not mean that UML wants to break the unity. Our party has a long-term policy to maintain harmonious relations with other parties on the basis of unity, struggle and unity. Our party has clear policy: unity for constructive change and struggle against bad practice. Under this philosophy, there will be unity as well as struggle with all political parties.

Every political party has its own ideology. How could you make unity with all? Is not it contradictory?

I did not mean that there will be unified stand on all national issues. There needs to be struggle on many fronts. We want to maintain dialectical relations. It means struggle and unity. We will never compromise on bad practices but always unite on common interests.

According to newspaper reports, prime minister Koirala went to bed at 9:30 pm then who participated in the negotiations on behalf of prime minister?

Because of ill health of Girijababu, we had to consider him. Prime minister Koirala, who is old and sick, required frequent inhaling of oxygen, authorized his representative who consulted Koirala whenever his consent was needed.

How did you settle when there were major differences over political issues?

During the negotiations, there appeared many differences. Whenever there were crucial disputes, prime minister's representative went to his bedroom to consult him. Prime minister's representatives got consent from him

before settling those issues. We did not peep inside his bedroom door so I don't know how his representative convinced prime minister Koirala. Several time the meeting had reached deadlock and Koirala's representative visited his bedroom several times. When we stood on our stand, prime minister agreed to allow us to write note of dissent as part of agreement.

Was it delayed due to political differences?

- Yes, the meeting was delayed for more than two hours because of our two demands. When we could not resolve differences, all of us decided to convey this to prime minister at midnight through his representative. Following hour-long discussions, Koirala's representative came out at around 2 with the consent of prime minister to allow us to write note of dissent. Finally, we put signature on the document.

There were so many Congress leaders representing Nepali Congress Party. Who was the real person on behalf of prime minister to deal with you all the time?

We conveyed our differences in meeting and some Congress leaders went to prime minister. I told you that we did not peep inside his room to know who were inside prime minister's bedroom.

What role your party has in preparing the final draft?

Our party has played an important role in the process of preparation of final draft. It was our insistence that the agreement needed to be signed within Monday and Tuesday. Our party believed in peace.

You mean the UML got what it wanted?

Our two major demands were rejected by other parties and we gave up some of our other demands on the basis of compromise. As I earlier said that all of us got permanent peace in the country.

Why other parties did not agree on your two demands?

Because of insistence of the major party, our two demands were rejected. Even other parties, which supported our demand earlier, backed out. Finally, UML was the lone party to stick to its two demands.

As the Maoists still will have their militias in cantonment and their arms will be stored nearby in a single lock system, how do you assure people that there will be no more violence now?

Since the United Nations has already sent its experts to monitor and supervise Maoists, we don't have to worry about the Maoist militia and their weapons. After placing sensitive electronic surveillance equipment like alarm siren, CCTV cameras by UN, I don't think it will be possible for Maoists to use their arms. Whether it is single lock or double lock, nobody can break if we can develop effective supervision mechanism.

At a time when you are hailing the agreement as historic to bring the permanent peace in Nepal, how do you see the reactions coming from ethnic groups and regional groups from terai threatening to launch another rebel against state?

There are certain lacunas in the agreement. We can improve at the final stage including the grievances raised by Janjatis and Madhesis. As per the demand of terai people, we will issue the citizenship certificate for all



who do not have it. For Janjatis and people of terai, there will be adequate representations.

Even after all eight parties agreed to change the cut off date from 1962 to April, 1990 to obtain citizenship as per the demand of Terai's party, what prompted them to oppose the agreement now?

There is a force in terai which wants to create troubles misusing sentiments of people. We need to assure the people of terai that their genuine demands will be addressed. In the past, the people of terai were betrayed by various regimes. This time we will address the problems and nobody will have opportunity to play on sensitive issues like citizenship.

On what basis all eight parties agreed to change the cut off year to April 1990? Do you think changing cut off year will resolve the citizenship problem?

We have decided to take this decision to resolve the issue of citizenship forever. As a member of parliament representing terai, we know there are many genuine people who are denied citizenship. This cut off year will be there forever. There were growing pressures to resolve the citizenship issue before the elections for CA. CPN-UML was first party that decided to issue citizenship on the basis of voters list of 1979.

How do you develop mechanism to check the misuse of citizenship certificate by foreigners?

Our stand is that all the genuine Nepalese should be given citizenship and no foreigner should be allowed to get our citizenship. For a small country like Nepal, the issue of citizenship is very sensitive but we also need to distribute citizenship certificate to genuine Nepali. We will pass the act which will bar the misuse of citizenship certificate by foreigners. Our aim is to resolve this problem forever.

Was there any emissary of third country influencing the negotiations?

So far as our party is concerned, no emissary of third country influenced us in the course of negotiations. I cannot say anything about others. ■

"Because of insistence of the major party, our two demands were rejected. Even other parties, which supported our demand earlier, backed out. Finally, UML was the lone party to stick to its two demands."

ARMS MANAGEMENT

Evolving Process

As the government and the Maoists are engaged in attaining credible arms management with the help of UN experts, the key word is sincerity

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

According to the November 8 agreement between the SPA government and the Maoists, the latter have agreed for a unique model of arms management. Its arms will be stored under a single lock system and the key will remain with Maoist commander.

Although many see this would hurt the credibility of the whole process, it all depends on the sincerity of the Maoists. "If they are sincere, even putting it under a single lock will suffice. If they are not sincere, even ten locks would not work," said a military analyst.

The agreement states that as per the commitments expressed in the letter sent to the United Nations by the Nepal government and the Maoists on August 9, the combatants of the Maoists would be sent to seven main cantonments. The United Nations would do the necessary verification and monitoring of them. The main camps would be located at Kailali, Surkhet, Rolpa, Palpa, Kavre, Sindhuli and Ilam. There would be three smaller camps located in the periphery of each of these main camps

"All the arms and ammunitions would be securely stored in the camps except those needed for providing security of the camp after the Maoist combatants are sent to the cantonments. They will be put under a single lock system and the concerned side would keep the key of this lock. For the UN to monitor it, a device with siren as well as recording facility will be installed. On completion of cantonment of the Maoist combatants, Nepal government would

take up the responsibility for providing ration and other facilities to them," states the agreement.

Likewise, it states that the interim cabinet would form a special committee to carry out monitoring, integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants

Regarding the Nepali Army, the agreement states that they would be confined to the barracks as per the commitments of the letter sent to the United Nations. "Guarantee that its arms would not be used for or against any side.



Joint team inspect proposed sites: Start of difficult process

Annapurna Post

Keep similar quantity of arms of the Nepali Army in the store, seal it with single-lock system and give the key to the concerned side. For the UN to monitor it, a device with siren as well as recording facility will be installed," it further states.

The government, the Maoists and the UN team have already started visiting the proposed locations for cantonments. "A UN team led by General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen has traveled with a joint team of Government/Nepalese Army and CPN (Maoist)/People's Liberation Army representatives to inspect cantonment sites proposed by the PLA. The joint

team traveled to Ilam on Saturday, to Sindhuli and Kavre on Sunday, and on Monday visited Rolpa and Palpa, and will continue to Kailali and Surkhet on Tuesday," states a press release by the office of Ian Martin, the personal representative of Kofi Annan.

The teams have inspected Chulachuli area in Ilam; Dudhauri (Ratmate) area in Sindhuli; Kamidanda in Kavre; Chirithung in Palpa and Dahaban-Nuwagaon in Rolpa district. They will finalize the sites under mutual understanding.

Meanwhile, the UN officials have called for a tripartite agreement. Secretary General Kofi Annan's personal representative in Nepal, Ian Martin, has said the UN monitoring teams - which is reported to be around 200-member strong - will come here and begin their work once a detailed agreement on the modality of management of arms and combatants is reached. "We need a detailed agreement on the modality of management of arms and armed personnel," said Martin at a press conference. "Trained international observers having military background will be involved in the monitoring," he said, adding that the observers will be unarmed.

"Negotiations have begun on a tripartite agreement - between the UN, the Government and the CPN (Maoist) - on the modalities for management of arms and armed personnel. UN experts in logistics and communications have arrived in Nepal to assist planning for the UN mission to support the peace process, and joined the teams visiting proposed cantonment sites on Monday. Urgent discussions are taking place in New York to mandate and prepare the mission," the statement by Martin's Office on Monday reads.

As efforts intensify to meet the deadline of sending Maoist combatants to cantonments by November 26, sincerity on the part of signatories of the agreement, particularly the rebels, will determine whether the peace process will move ahead successfully. ■

Politics By Proxy

By KUBER P. SHARMA

How much time is enough for a regime to crumble. No political pundit can forecast because history has not recorded any time schedule to repeat the revolution. In Nepal's context, we had upheavals in 1950, 1958, 1960, 1980, 1990, 1997 and 2006. India had played active role in all those events. Monarchy as an institution failed to give stability.

For the Peoples Movement II of 2006, agreement was reached between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and CPN-Maoists in New Delhi at the initiative of Shyam Saran, then India's ambassador to Nepal. The movement reached the climax when about two hundred thousand Nepali youths and women came out in the streets to overthrow the monarchy. The movement subsided like airpillow after the visit (April 21-22, 2006) of scholar politician Karan Singh (former Raja of Kashmir related to King) Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of India's Parliament. On 24th April at midnight, the King announced to reconvene the date-expired Parliament conceding the demand of agitating parties. The movement was withdrawn. Between November to April, Nepali leaders were flying back and forth to New Delhi like any troubled provincial chief minister to Delhi. Leaders of Indian political parties (except BJP) were also coming to Nepal to meet GP Koirala, Madhav Nepal and others. Indians arranged meetings in New Delhi so frequently that Nepali leaders were seen going in the morning and returning the next day. Nepali leaders met important ministers, including Sonia Gandhi and PM Manmohan Singh many times. As if that was not enough moral booster, even American ambassador to Nepal made frequent trips to New Delhi to meet influential officials and senior politicians. The UN officials of Nepal also made frequent business trips to India.

Nepal's Peoples Movement of 2006 showed India as a regional power south of Himalayas. To be the regional power is the long-cherished wish of India. Late PM Indira Gandhi, Iron lady of Indian politics, tried hard to get US recognize India as regional power. Her ambition was fulfilled after 22 years after her assassination by a Sikh guard posted at her official residence in 1984. To the disappointment of India, China has become strong enough to secure a permanent seat in UN with veto power. Pakistan has built up dependable friendship with China by negotiating border demarcation amicably.

After the success of movement, GP Koirala as the eldest leader of movement was made Prime Minister of six party coalition Government. Other than foreign powers, the most dominant partner of the movement Maoists have not joined the government. It is true that without Maoist participation, the massive demonstration was not possible. Prime Minister Koirala knows he is sitting on a volcano. He has the delicate

task of managing the post 'Movement' transition. If Maoists do not accept the multiparty democracy, the agreement reached on November 7, 2006 will turn into a toilet paper. That kind of revolt can topple the coalition government and ruin their party's base. There can be countrywide violence. Maoists also know that if they do not accommodate themselves in ballot's politics they will have to face India, US, EU, UN and international community's displeasure. On the other hand, Girija Prasad's chair is so loose that it changes its direction even at gentle push by the Maoists. India and the US, Koirala also cannot afford to displease the King, Nepal army and bureaucracy. One of the reasons for keeping the ceremonial King could be that if the throne is vacated, the vacancy may be filled by Prachanda. Here, I would like to quote Professor Johan Galtung, of University of Hawaii (Editor's note of Spotlight Nov 10, 2006) who commented "It is really very sad your Prime Minister is not accountable to the Parliament and the government. He is accountable to New Delhi and the US." GP Koirala himself has become ceremonial, as it appears, because he acts only at the advice of ambassadors James Moriarty and Shiva Shankar Mukherjee. The King is ceremonial because he is stripped off his powers and, therefore, cannot act. Here I am reminded of famous statement of wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill who said about giving independence to India, "I have not become of the Prime Minister of His Majesty to preside over the liquidation of British empire." On the contrary, in my country His Majesty Gyanendra B. Shah, became King by fluke and is reigning to liquidate 237-year-old institution of monarchy. Six time prime minister Koirala has just signed an agreement (all seven parties) with Maoists to constitute an interim parliament. There are 330 seats proposed of which GP's party gets only 75 (24.75%). Together with 48 seats of NC-Democratic, total seats given to democrats are 123. Under the new arrangement, Koirala's party will be in weak minority. That will put him under moral obligation to quit his job honorably. If that happens our prime minister will also be like our King who is presiding over liquidation of his party and his style of democracy.

As per plan of action in the agreement, the interim constitution will be prescribed and nominated parliament will be constituted before November 26 and interim council of ministers will be appointed before December 2006. What is commendable about Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai is that they have announced not to hold any ministerial assignment in the interim government. Unlike other communists, they have resisted the temptation of luxury and glamour of the office. Perhaps they are angling for top level jobs after elections of constituent assembly. They are confident of winning by

thumping majority. After that they can bid farewell to monarch and dump their nearest runner up Nepali Congress and CPN (UML). Their corruption, misuse of authority, rigging of elections and mismanaging multiparty democracy, which led to boycott of elections of 2051 by Maoists (then Jan Morcha) will be some of the charges to punish them. The story of rags to riches, luxurious lifestyle of Congress and UML leaders will be favorite subject of speech in Maoists' public meetings. Once in majority government, they will flash their economic system. In an interview, Prachanda said their economic program will pass through socialism to communism. They will also start social revolution to wipe out feudal elements of bourgeoisie democracy. That will be the end of honeymoon of bourgeoisie intellectuals, businessman, journalists and politicians. The lawfully elected government will have high morale and enthusiasm to introduce radical economic programs. The foreign governments will be uncomfortably watching demolition of institutions of society. Maoists will have better options to accept generous support from northern neighbor. They will also get enthusiastic support from co-partner communist parties of south. Their economic model would be like that of West Bengal of India where CPM is ruling for last 30 years. The middle class farmers' lands are given to tillers. The non-communist bourgeoisie in villages are terrorized and many of them migrated to cities. Professor Surendra KC, author of "History of communist movements of Nepal" comments – communist movement in Nepal started with classical Marxist revolutionary slogans to establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat by armed struggle. Slowly it drifts to right to compromise with bourgeoisie democracy. We have to wait to see Maoists' course of faction once they are in government.

How super power will deal with the Maoist government? It will be interesting to note from the memoir "My Life" of former US president Bill Clinton – America had spent trillions of dollars in defense to win cold war; we could not risk reversal of over less than 2 billion. Yeltsin (Russian presidential candidate) was in the fight of life against the old communists and other reactionaries. Finally – I got an assistance program I could support: \$1.6 billion in direct aid to help Russia stabilize its economy, including money to provide housing for de-commissioner military officers, positive work programs for now under employed and frequently unpaid nuclear scientists and more assistance for dismantling enacted Nunn-Lugar program food and medicines for those suffering from shortages; aid to support small business, independent media outlets, NGOs, political parties and labor unions, and exchange program to bring thousands of students and young professionals to the United States.

At the end, Nepali people have right to know the source of funding of People's War and Peoples Movement of 2006. ■

(The author is a former minister and the Chairman of Green Nepal Party).

UNICEF Underscores Children's Interest In Peace Process

While welcoming the inclusion of children's issues in the draft peace accord, UNICEF urges all parties to the peace process in Nepal to abide by international instruments and to put the interest of children first during all stages of the peace accord, states a press released by the UNICEF office in Nepal.

"Many issues regarding children's protection have been included in the draft peace agreement. This is a positive indication that children's concerns are being addressed," said Dr. Suomi Sakai, UNICEF Representative today. "However, there are still many issues regarding the protection and welfare of children involved in armed conflict that still need to be included in the final agreement."

The armed conflict has taken a toll on children. They have been exposed to violence, whether directly or indirectly, and they have been deprived of their protective environment. They have been separated from their families, and their education has been disrupted.

"We are extremely concerned that children below 18, who have been associated with armed forces and armed groups in Nepal, have not yet been returned or reintegrated with their families and communities," said Dr. Sakai. "The removal of children from armed forces and armed groups is imperative from a legal, human rights and humanitarian perspective."

"The CPN-Maoists have agreed to disarm and be contained in cantonments, and the Nepali Army likewise have agreed to be confined in their barracks. At this stage, the peace agreement should specify special provisions for handing over children associated with armed forces and armed groups to child protection agencies. This should be initiated from the very early stages, when the children are brought into the cantonments and camps."

UNICEF urges all parties to focus on the return and reintegration of all children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

"All children should be reached, whether they are boys or girls, irrespective of whether they were combatants or non-combatants and whether they were conscripted or had joined voluntarily," said Dr. Sakai. "Girls, unaccompanied and disabled children associated with armed forces and groups need special attention."

UNICEF encourages all the political parties and the government to develop appropriate mechanisms and programs for the children to be returned and reintegrated in their families and communities and proposes. ■

PRACHANDA'S PRESS MEET

Rebel Rousing

In his first press conference in the capital, Maoist supremo claims November 8 agreement as a victory for his party

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Less than 15 hours after he signed the agreement with the seven party leaders in Baluwatar, Maoist chairman Prachanda – accompanied by his trusted lieutenants including Dr. Baburam Bhattarai – made a striking entry into the premises of Hotel Yak N Yeti.

Welcomed by hotel workers with red vermilion marks (tika) on their forehead, the visibly pleased band of Maoist leaders held their first official press conference in the capital.

Addressing the packed hall, Prachanda made a lengthy remarks touching upon all issues and agenda.

He, however, emphasized that his party termed the agreement as "victory." That is why, he said, the Maoists decided to cancel the planned mass meeting in Kathmandu and instead go for victory rallies across the country.

It seemed that the Maoists had to wait for over six months to celebrate the success of People's Movement since other Maoist parties had celebrated it on April 25 itself.

In a barrage of criticisms against the monarchy, Prachanda said that the November 8 deal between the SPA and his party has, in essence, put the monarchy virtually under the state of suspension until constituent assembly polls and made clear that the Prime Minister of the interim government would be the de facto head of state.

The rebel leader said the agreement, which states about

keeping the King powerless till the elections of Constituent Assembly, has suspended the institution.

Demonstrating his party's willingness to abide by the agreement, Prachanda said efforts to establish cantonments for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would begin immediately.

Prachanda also seemed pleased that he was invited to speak at a program organized by The Hindustan Times in New Delhi. He said he intends to travel to New Delhi to attend the Leadership Summit on November 17-18. When asked if he would meet with Indian leaders there, Prachanda replied, "As

Indian PM Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi will be in the same panel, I am likely to talk with them."

In a characteristic flamboyant style, Prachanda also made a blistering attack against what he called "a section of international community" (referring to the United States). He accused the US of looking at the problems of today through "the glasses of 20th century."

He said there could still be conspiracies to sabotage the peace process by the feudal elements and those who are unhappy with the SPA-Maoist deal.

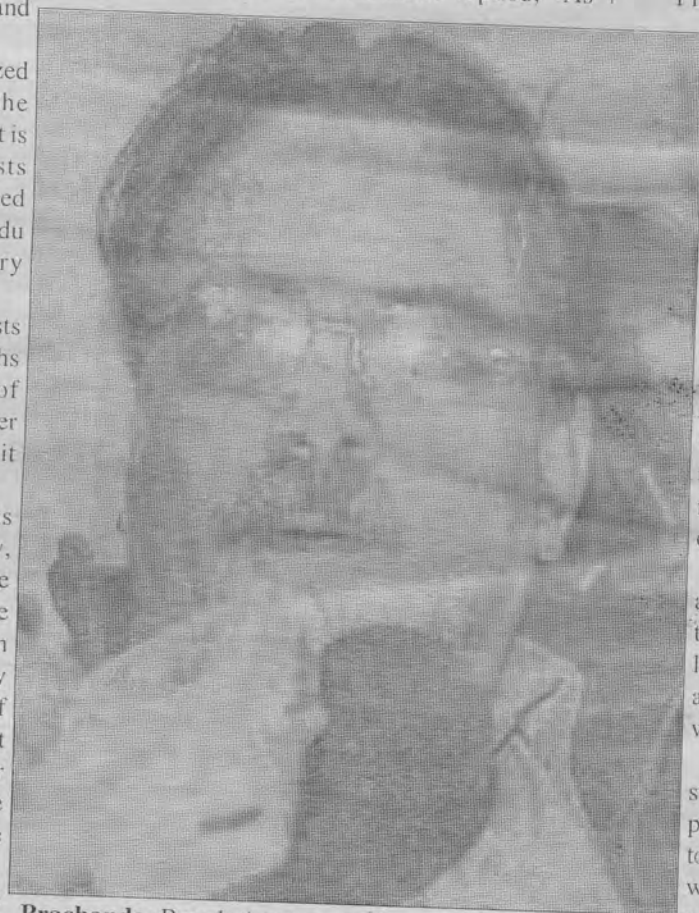
He, however, praised the cooperation of India. The leader of the party, which started the People's War in 1996 after its 40-point demands were not met by then government and whose major demands then included terminating 1950 peace treaty with India and all other unequal treaties with India, was heaping praises on the facilitation accorded by New Delhi in bringing the 12-point agreement to fruition last November.

Prachanda, addressing the press meet, also lent a glimpse about what agendas his party would pursue in the forthcoming CA elections. "We will campaign for republic. We will advocate federal system, as well as radical socio-economic transformation along with land reform and inclusion."

And, with the aim of winning the heart of Nepalis, Prachanda stated that Nepal can become developed country in the region within 10 years if the political forces become able to change their mindset and utilize the "historic opportunity."

"We have abundant human and national resources and we can take Nepal on top of South Asian level within 10 years if we adequately mobilize the resources we have," he said.

As he seems to be taking first steps towards participating in open politics, Prachanda will have tough days ahead to translate his words into actions. He may then realize that picking up gun was easier. ■



Prachanda: Revolutionary transformation

BOOK

Nepal's Transformation

Quentin W. Lindsey discusses how Nepalese society has been transforming from subsistence-based to modern one

By KESHAB POUDEL

After the country was opened up in 1950s to the outside world, many western experts, diplomats and others visited Nepal. But only a few of them have written a book observing various process of Nepalese society. Quentin W. Lindsey, who came in Nepal in 1962 as an advisor on Land Reforms, has come out with a new book.

Lindsey has seen all transformation that have taken place in Nepal in last 44 years. He came in Nepal at a period when Nepal was still not too open to outside world and there was virtually no link between different places within Nepal. From currency to other economic activities, India was dominant economic force in Nepal. Feudal society was resistant to transformation. As an advisor to land reform, Lindsey saw all resistance from powerful landlords.

He again came to Nepal following the political change of 1990 as an advisor on decentralization. In different circumstances and different scenario, Lindsey worked to develop a strategy for decentralization. Lindsey observed Maoist movement and a series of political instability in Nepal. Lindsey tried to explore ways to improve the life of millions of poor living in Nepal.

From former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa to former foreign minister Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa and former vice chairman of Nepal Planning Commission Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, former chief secretary Kul Shekhar Sharma, former member of National Planning Commission Dr. Ram Prakash Yadav and Shree Krishna Upadhaya, Dr. Bal Gopal Vaidya and Dr. Hari Krishna

Upadhaya, Lindsey has long list of working with planners and policy-makers of Nepal.

When author Lindsey arrived in Nepal, Nepalese society was in a great shock following the dismissal of elected government led by B.P. Koirala. Along with political shock, the implementation of land reform programs was rocking the society as upper class land lords were fighting tooth and nail with the government.

Lindsey, a young economist who had acquired a Ph. D. from America's

renowned Harvard University, had hardly realized that he has to work in a country with a very limited knowledge about the globe. As an advisor to Nepal government on land reforms, Lindsey faced a number of challenges.

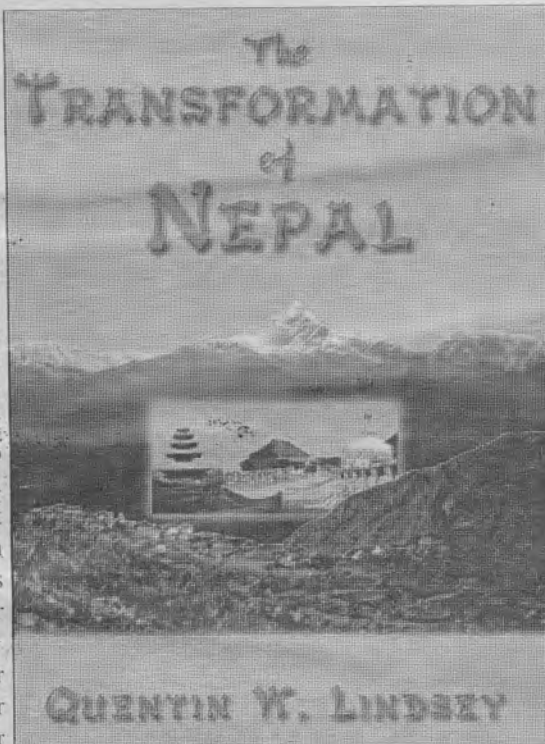
Written as a narrative, fundamental ideas in the book are easily understandable in the reality of Nepali politics and religion. The scholarly book focuses on how to improve the life for all Nepali; the story follows eight fictional characters- who described as misfits by the prime minister- as they explore innovative ways to develop this small country nestled in the Himalayas.

One of the most important aspects of this book is that it defines the development as a transformation of people, society and the environment. According to the author, the transformation brings change in a aspect of life. Development can appear good or bad, depending on the purpose and who gains and who loses.

"This book is not a grandiose of ideas but it offers real solutions on how to make life better in a small country plagued by big problems, including over population, illiteracy, corruption and political instability," said Lindsey. "This is a very challenging period in the history of Nepal."

A scholarly work focusing on how to improve life for all Nepali and the story unfolds through the eyes of a small band of misfits – a servant, professor, two virtual monks, a medical doctor, a country lad and two foreigners. According to author Lindsey, the purpose of development should be the pursuit of an equitable, productive, peaceful society for all Nepalis within a sustainable environment.

Transformation is always a painful process and Nepal, too, has to encounter similar crisis. For the past fifty-six years, Nepal has been facing all kinds of painful situation. Author Lindsey records and explains all of them. This book deals with development and its challenges. This is eye-opener to all those who are involved in development process of Nepal.



The Transformation of Nepal

By: *Quentin W. Lindsey*

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Distribution in Nepal: *Mandala Book House*

Price: *US\$ 24.95*

NRB Takes Over NBB Management

Dissolving its board of directors and management, the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has appointed the new management under its control to oversee the troubled Nepal Bangladesh Bank (NBB).

After taking this decision, the NRB has appealed to depositors not to panic. Following news reports of grave financial situation due to bad debts and irregularities in the NBB, there have been mass withdrawals by depositors. The new management team appointed by the central bank includes central bank director Mahaprasad Adhikary (as coordinator) and Bhisma Raj Dhungana, Keshab Bahadur KC and Sachin Jung Rayamajhi as members.

"There will be no problem in the management of NBB now," said deputy governor of NRB Krishna Bahadur Manandhar. According to Adhikary, "The NRB had to take this decision to take over NBB's management in order to guarantee the interests of the bank, depositors and general public." Reports say the NRB could soon appoint a team of experts to take over the management of NBB.

After the scared depositors rushed for mass withdrawal following news reports about financial problems in Nepal Bangladesh Bank (NBB), its management was handed over to the central bank.

The problem started after Patan Appellate Court intervened and issued an order urging NRB not to take any action until further notice against the NBB management, which had knocked the court's door sensing strong action by the central bank on issues of irregularities and bad debts. However, the news reports, on Friday (November 10), of the court action triggered panic among the depositors who started queuing up in all branches of NBB across the country. Consequently, the NBB management wrote a letter to NRB on Saturday requesting to take over its management. The board members of the bank have resigned on the same day. The NBB also withdrew its case from the court. Once the NRB takes over, action could be initiated against two major defaulters of the NBB – the NB group, which in fact is its largest shareholder also, and the Memento Apparels. The NB group (Nepal Credit and Commerce Bank and NBBBL are members of the NB Group) has to pay back Rs 1.5 billion while the Memento Apparels – which is owned by Chandi Raj Dhakal, the president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) – has to pay back Rs 450 million to the NBB.

Earlier, the Patan Appellate Court, on Wednesday (November 8), issued a stay order to Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), directing it not to take action against Nepal Bangladesh Bank Limited (NBBBL). A single bench of judge Keshav Prasad Mainali issued the stay order following a hearing. The bench also asked the central bank not to order the NBBBL to stop its activities. The bench said it came to know the central bank was planning to take action against the NB Group at a time when the tenure of Bank and Financial Institutions Ordinance 2005 has expired. ■

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Open Appeal to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala

By MADHAV KUMAR RIMAL

Mr. Prime Minister Koirala, after a nearly six-decades-long political career you have arrived at the fag end. The Jana Andolan I of 1990 did welcome you as a savior and in the course of twelve years you became prime minister for four times. A person who had not been able to impress his own illustrious brother, you did impress Dame Luck and she kept smiling on you despite your miserable failures. Your misrule pushed the poor country into a state of civil war and the people got utterly disillusioned with you and your class. Had King Gyanendra been wiser and listened to saner counsels when he succeeded his brother King Birendra after the gruesome carnage in the Palace during your Prime Ministership in 2001, political situation in the country would have been different and you would not be where you are at the moment. King Gyanendra's unbridled ambitions, highly anachronistic in this twenty first century, ignited the April demonstrations which contributed to catapult you for the fifth time to this prestigious position. We know and perhaps, you also know there were other invisible forces also who helped you. Now, you have arrived at a stage where you need to be proud that you are a part of the glorious tradition of our ever independent nation. You know fully well that some extraneous forces are trying to play with our country's integrity. As the Prime Minister, it is your bounden duty to crush such activities. People across the world are accusing you of not being accountable to your own country but to alien forces. They even have started blaming you that you have turned Nepali democracy to U.S. -India cracy. We are sorry to see that neither you nor your advisors have reacted to such charges.

Mr. Prime Minister, during your earlier stints as the head of the government, situations were not that uncontrollable like now. You could ignore your responsibilities, make mistakes or even betray the people. But not any more. Perhaps, this is your last opportunity to repent, to mend matters and to earn the respect and regard of your countrymen. This small poor country has given you name, fame and opportunities to make millions, much more than you deserved. As such, you do owe her some gratitude. And as an honorable man you cannot deny her what is her due. It is a very critical time in her life. She is at the crossroads of survival or annihilation. And your hypocritical friends are looking for opportunities to turn her into Bhutan. You must be aware of all the pitfalls the poor country is facing. Like all other patriotic Nepalis it is also your most sacred duty to preserve her integrity and safeguard her sovereignty. More so as the Prime Minister. You cannot do anything or become party to any plan that would endanger our country existence. You should not rush with the Citizenship Bill or the Extradition Treaty. They need more thorough national debate. Enemies of the state or pliant politicians or quislings would pressurize you to give them a quick pass in the House. You must resist such pressures.

Mr. Prime Minister, your long experience as a politician and a decade and half long experience as statesman and administrator must have endowed you to see through Designs, Grand or Mini. You too used to talk about a certain Grand Design. Past experiences have proved that Grand Designs are generally limited to dreams and imaginations. But they should not make us complacent. We must make appropriate preparations even to face imaginary

dangers. Mr. Prime Minister, you must have been informed what India's Foreign Secretary Shyan Saran (now retired) had said addressing the Indian Council of World Affairs on September 9, 2006. I will quote it for your benefit "What we have been able to do with Bhutan, we would certainly like to do with Nepal as well." How do you interpret it as the Prime Minister of Nepal? We don't think it is a manifestation of pious and friendly feelings. Why your government did not do anything to counter such remarks? We know, we don't have a strong and robust foreign policy and when India is concerned we become totally submissive. Why do our politicians crouch before the Indian statesmen? Why do they become spineless? Why can't they behave as proud citizens of a sovereign independent nation? It is time you put our derailed relations, with India on track. At least you can try. Don't you think we are not paying enough attention towards building up and strengthening relations with our northern neighbor - China? Especially when economic developments in Tibet are opening floodgates of opportunities for Nepal to mitigate her India - lockedness. May be you are not in a position to do anything right now.

Mr. Prime Minister, you, indeed, did well to come to an understanding with the Maoists. It has opened the doors for negotiating a lasting peace and end of violent insurgency. But the crux of the matter is whether forces who are interested in keeping Nepal destabilized would permit peace to prevail. This can be possible only when political parties stop looking beyond the national frontiers for attaining power. Even the Maoists seem to have come under the alien influence. They enjoyed their warm hospitality for a long time despite being branded as terrorists and now seem to have entered into normal relationship without the tag being withdrawn. It seems politics in Nepal is sharply taking twists sidelining all traditional leaderships. And you will not be able to do anything except being a silent spectator. Your long time colleagues too don't possess the charisma that is indispensable to win the hearts of the people. On top of that a communal force - the Terai Janatantrik Mukti Morcha is rising in the horizon with ominous propensities. And again it is not very difficult to guess who is behind it. So, Mr. Prime Minister, challenges you are facing today are not only Himalayan but also almost insoluble. And need of the hour demands that you rise above yourself, your party and all other personal considerations. We know, this is a very tall order. Power and pelf greedy politicians that surround you are your biggest obstacles. We can expect you to turn a new leaf and do hope you will do it. But can you bring all other dissenting voices under your umbrella? This is a time when you urgently need sincere cooperation from every Nepali. So sink all differences and all prejudices. Forget about the past and start afresh with the best of intentions to serve the country and the people. People will forgive you and you may still succeed to pull the country out of the fire. But you cannot afford to resort to discrimination. And you must not forget that the patriotic Nepalis' force is too strong and cannot be ignored. And the most important thing you must always remember is never humiliate Nepal's security forces and give them the honor they deserve. They will defend their motherland at all costs. And you do need them. We can only wish you good luck. ■

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