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PSIO PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION(S)

THE MAOIST INSURGENCY IN NEPAL

A COMPREHENSIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Shambhu Ram Simkhada and Fabio Oliva

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADBN	Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal
AI	Amnesty International
APF	Armed Police Force
CIAA	Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority
CCOMPOSA	Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties & Organisations of South Asia
CGDS	Center for Governance and Development Studies
CNAS	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
CPN (M)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CPN (UC)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre)
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist)
CRZ	Compact Revolutionary Zone
DDC	District Development Committee
DFAE	Swiss Department for Foreign Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EU	European Union
FAST	Early Analysis of Tensions and Fact-finding
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
HEI	Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva)
HMGN	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
IBA	International Bar Association
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRCON	Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal
ISDP	Integrated Security and Development Program
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization

IRD	Integrated Rural Development
NC	Nepali Congress
NC (D)	Nepali Congress (Democratic)
NDF	Nepal Development Forum
NDS	Nepal Development Service
NEA	Nepal Economic Association
NEFAS	Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NIS	National Integrity System
NSP	Nepal Sadbhavana Party
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PSIO	Program for the Study of International Organisation(s)
RIM	Revolutionary Internationalist Movement
RNA	Royal Nepal Army
RPP	Rashtriya Prajatantra Party
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFCL	Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd.
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
TADA	Terrorist & Disruptive Activities Ordinance (control & punishment) Act
TADO	Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Ordinance
TI	Transparency International
UF	United Front (Maoist political wing)
ULF	United Left Front
UPF	United People's Front
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank



FOREWORD

The Program for the Study of International Organisation(s) (PSIO) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) was launched in 1994. Over the past decade, the PSIO has functioned as an umbrella organization for a wide range of activities from conferences to publications to training programs to outreach activities. These activities are all related to the field of international organization(s) and serve in one way or another to promote the reputation of the Graduate Institute, Geneva and Switzerland.

The PSIO was founded with the aim of harkening back to the original mandate of the Graduate Institute of International Studies as a venue to contribute to peace and security. Geneva, as the world center for multilateral diplomacy and the Graduate Institute as the second oldest institution for the study of international relations in Europe, have a privileged vantage point from which to carry out numerous projects. The PSIO had been fortunate to be able to expand its activities geographically as it continues to be of special service to the Swiss Government and Geneva.

During the past years our activities have included projects in the Caucasus, Tajikistan, Algeria, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Much of this work has moved from merely academics, research and training, to work involving peace-building and, to some extent, even peace-negotiation.

In the last decade, the Kingdom of Nepal has been affected by a complex conflict. On 13 February 1996 the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) – or CPN (M) – launched a “people’s war” aimed at replacing the monarchy with a communist republic. In 10 years more than 13,000 lives have been lost, mostly civilians. Thousands of people have been displaced – either directly or indirectly – by the conflict. Cities have become overcrowded and the quality of life in the rural areas has deteriorated.

The Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography (CAB) is part of a larger inquiry. In June 2003, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) mandated the PSIO and the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) to carry out a study on the “Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal”. Before

embarking in the actual study, PSIO Research Scholar Fabio Oliva initiated – under the supervision of Visiting Fellow Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada – a preliminary overview of the existing literature on the Maoist insurgency in Nepal.¹ Initially regarded as another “unknown conflict”, the Maoist conflict in Nepal has attracted the attention of several analysts and has produced an unexpectedly vast body of literature. However, no single effort towards a rationalization of these sources has been done so far. This Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography attempts to fill that vacuum and seeks to provide an exhaustive overview of all the studies so far conducted on the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The work done by Fabio Oliva in the last two years has been remarkable and I’m confident that his efforts will greatly contribute to a better understanding of Nepal’s Maoist insurgency.

Practitioners and experts of Nepalese affairs will hopefully benefit from this comprehensive endeavor. At the same time, the general audience will also have the opportunity to know and become more familiar with the history, the actors and the dynamics of a very particular armed conflict that has yet to receive the deserved attention.

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INTRODUCTION

The research “Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Nepal a Case Study” completed by the Program for the Study of International Organisation(s) (PSIO) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) – Geneva is one among numerous academic works aimed at understanding and explaining the Maoist insurgency in Nepal and to contribute to the resolution of the ongoing violent conflict. This study presents a new analysis of the conflict which followed the declaration of the “people’s war” by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) – CPN (M). The Maoist insurgency can be explained through a new *Matrix of Change* with the three major actors the Monarchists, Maoists and advocates of Multiparty democracy representing resistance to change, radical change with violence if necessary, and advocacy of peaceful, progressive and democratic change respectively. The study came to the conclusion that in the post-1990 Nepal the democratic political centre has been squeezed by right-wing authoritarianism on one side and left-wing extremism seeking radical change on the other, both using *power flowing through the barrel of the gun*. Strengthening the democratic political centre ultimately represents the path to durable peace and a viable means of resolving the conflict. The conclusions of that study have been published by the Graduate Institute in its *PSIO Occasional Paper No. 3/2004* in August 2004 and will soon be published in a forthcoming monograph.

As part of this study, the research team undertook a review of the large body of literature already available on the subject. The team felt that a comprehensive annotated bibliography could be a useful reference material for all interested on the subject as well as a valuable tool for others wishing to undertake further work on it. It is with this intention that this document *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography* (CAB) is being published in the form of a book as well as presented electronically on the HEI-PSIO web site <<http://www.hei.unige.ch/psio>>.

This publication has been divided into four main sections – “Books and Monographs”, “Articles”, “Research Studies, Working Papers and Reports” and “Miscellaneous”. 34 Books and Monographs, 45 Academic Articles, 92 Reports, Research Studies and

Working Papers, and 9 Miscellaneous items have been included. Each section is organized chronologically starting from the latest publications.

In view of the widespread interest and publication of large number of books, articles and reports, updating the CAB has not been easy. I also know that including every thing that is available is virtually impossible. While an attempt has been made to include all available sources, it has not been possible to include newspaper articles as it would make the document too voluminous. That is why only a few articles have been included. At the same time, a large number of the so-called “grey literature” – i.e. the studies and reports commissioned by foreign governments and donor agencies – is generally confidential and often not easily available for inclusion in the CAB. However, the Research Scholar Fabio Oliva at the HEI-PSIO has worked extremely diligently to make the CAB as complete as possible. Meanwhile, a mechanism has also been established to update the document periodically both electronically and in printed form whenever possible. Any major work that may have been missed in the present volume could be included in the electronic version of the update as quickly as they are received or brought to our notice. I would thus be extremely grateful for any suggestions and feedback – both thematically and in terms of presentation – in making this work more complete.

Many people have given valuable suggestions and comments for which I am most grateful. PSIO Executive Director Dr. Daniel Warner has been following the making of the CAB with assiduous attention. I would like to thank Prof. M. P. Lohani for his editorial assistance. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Dev Raj Dahal for his thoughtful suggestions and his support in the search for bibliographic sources. The HEI-PSIO team is also grateful to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for their financial assistance in the initial study as well as for supporting the follow-up research work including the publication of this volume. SDC Director General Ambassador Walter Fust’s keen comprehension of the problematique for developing countries and commitment to assist them, especially in their attempt to come out of violent internal conflicts, which he describes as one of the main *development killers*, greatly impressed me and, in fact, inspired me to lead this research work at Graduate Institute of International Studies. The publication of the CAB is part of our common endeavour in

strengthening the democratic political centre and supporting the causes of democracy, development and human rights.

There are many others who are responsible for the successful completion of this publication. I want to thank them all. I am, of course, personally responsible for any shortcomings.

Shambhu Ram Simkhada
Visiting Fellow, PSIO-HEI Geneva

COMPREHENSIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

MONOGRAPHS & BOOKS

The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: A Monograph

Shambhu Ram Simkhada, Daniel Warner and Fabio Oliva

Kathmandu: November 2005

This **monograph** reproduces the findings of a two-year research project on the causes and the chances of resolution of the Maoist conflict in Nepal. The existing literature has mainly focused on socio-economic factors. Some see social inequality and exclusion of large sections of the population from the structures of political power and sharing of resources by the traditional ruling elites as the underlying cause of conflict. Others locate the rise of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and its violent campaign within the historical-structural conditions, Hindu religion-culture of caste-based discrimination, post-1990 constitutional and political practices as well as the regional and international context. Widespread poverty and underemployment, the magnitude of which has nearly doubled within the last thirty years, are undoubtedly some of the main contributing factors. Ethnicity, religion, language or greed and grievance partly explain the eruption of violence. Of course, some would argue that violence erupted not from areas of abject poverty and deprivation, but from areas with comparatively high per capita foreign aid flows. Although others could contest some of these assertions, they reflect, despite much research and studies, the theoretical deficiency in explaining how and why violence actually erupted in Nepal.

According to the authors, the current conflict in Nepal is best explained within a *Matrix of Change* in the exercise of political power. In the framework of this *Matrix*, the Maoist insurgency could be seen as the violent escalation of the conflict between the ruling dynasties along with the feudal beneficiaries that have monopolized for centuries political power and economic resources and popular aspirations for change represented historically by the Nepali Congress (NC) party with the dawn of the democratic awakening in the 1940s. The conflict took a triangular shape after the emergence of the Marxists-Leninists (ML) also as a major political force after the 1990 People's Movement which restored democracy in the country. As the ML represented by the

United Marxists-Leninists (UML) party also evolved towards the political center attempting to introduce its vision of change through competitive democratic process, the Maoists have tried to replace them as the main advocates of radical change with violence as a necessary means, in their view, of replacing the “old State” with their form of *New Democracy*. Dissatisfied conservatives, therefore, coalesced with frustrated revolutionaries with the shared purpose of destabilizing and undermining the new democratic exercise.

This book also presents the perspectives of six Nepalese scholars on the structural and proximate causes of the Maoist insurgency, the role of the media and development cooperation in times of conflict, and the analysis of 2001 and 2003 peace talks. Based on the analysis of the failure of previous attempts to resolve the conflict through a negotiated settlement, the authors outline a five-step “path to peace”: 1) Ending violence; 2) Confidence-building measures; 3) Participation of political parties and civil society in the peace process; 4) Addressing the constitutional principles; 5) Drafting a new national agenda for change and restoration of a democratic institutional process.

Conflict in Nepal: A Simplified Account

Lindsay Friedman

Kathmandu: Shtrii Shakti, 2005, 107 p.

This **book** represents a general account on the Maoist conflict. It is divided into three sections. The author begins with a description of the background of the conflict in order to introduce the basic premises leading to the violent conflict. The description of the conflict and its effects is followed by some proposals for integration between the needs of the population and the concerns of the actors involved in the conflict.

Following Galtung’s multi-dimensional approach to conflict and its different representations, Lindsay Friedman explains that the current state of ‘direct violence’ is the result both of ‘structural violence’ (i.e. the failure to provide “equal rights and opportunities” to its population) and ‘socio-cultural violence’ (i.e. regional, caste, ethnic and gender based discrimination) carried out by the state (p. 2). The rebels have cashed in on these distortions and have incorporated these widespread grievances into their political manifesto. Age-old grievances have been exacerbated by the unsuccessful conduct of the democratic political leaders after 1990. In particular, ethnic, caste,

regional and gender discrimination have not been addressed while the politicization of the bureaucracy has created a restricted elite of beneficiaries mostly concentrated in the Kathmandu Valley. On the other hand the contribution of foreign donors to the elimination or at least alleviation of poverty and the promotion of lasting development has fallen short of expectation. Throughout three decades different “aid mantras” have failed to address the basic needs of the population and basically donor-driven development assistance has only benefited the local elites. The issue of the exclusion of the younger generation has been given great emphasis in the study. A generational gap can be observed at any level. Political parties, for instance, offer no access to the youth and, according to the author, the current leadership of the two major political forces – the NC and the UML – lack innovative resources and the capacity to listen to the concerns of the new generations. The civil society has provided a modest access to the marginalized groups but only to a certain extent. The politicization of the NGOs is regarded as a major hindrance towards a better coordination of the civil society and has sometimes created bizarre anomalies with the NGOs acting as governmental agencies. These contradictions rebounded on the grievances of the “disenfranchised” groups and led to the rise of a powerful Maoist movement that has managed to capture the support of different social segments throughout the country.

The author’s major recommendations focus on different measures in relation to different actors. The international community is urged to put pressure on the political brokers in order to foster dialogue, generate a political convergence to end the conflict and establish a good governance-oriented regime. The prevention of further human rights abuses is part of that process of convergence. At the same time, the national government will have to pass the appropriate legislature to address the root causes of the conflict. The civil society will have the role of promoting empowerment and rehabilitation of the marginalized and traumatized at the local level. The employment of fresh social capital (women, youth) is considered a crucial element of the process. These are some recommendations which will be effective provided that it is a common understanding that in the process of resolution of the current crisis “there is no quick fix” (p. 79).

In Defence of Democracy: Dynamics, and Fault Lines of Nepal's Political Economy

Ram Sharan Mahat

New Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2005, 437 p.

This **monograph** seeks to identify the main dynamics of the post-1990 democratic experience. The author, former finance and foreign minister in the 1990's, describes the historical background of the current situation in Nepal from the very establishment of the Nepali state through the Rana and Panchayat experiences, till the decade long experiment of democratic governance. Dr. Mahat argues that, despite several shortcomings – which are partially due to institutional, political and socio-economic legacies from previous autocratic regimes – the multi-party democratic period has managed to deliver and promote the betterment of the Nepalese in many areas. One chapter of the book is dedicated to the Maoist insurgency (pp. 311-342). It states that the Maoist movement developed and gained momentum in the so-called “Red Zone”, i.e. those Western districts prevalently populated by *Magar* ethnic communities and known for their geographical remoteness and economic backwardness. The author also acknowledges the relevance of the grievance theory as explanatory framework for the Maoists' people's war. The economic cost of the conflict and its external relapses are also duly considered and located in the general context of the conflict dynamics of the South Asian region. Dr. Mahat concludes his analysis of the Maoist insurgency providing some suggestions on the possibility of mediation by the United Nations. He outlines six main points which should underlie any mediation efforts: a) restoration of the democratic process and the functioning of its institutions; b) a comprehensive and neutral human rights monitoring regime; c) pressure from the international community on the Maoists to negotiate; d) humanitarian assistance for the victims of the conflict; e) a more cautious diplomatic approach rather than high-profile and public negotiations; f) an open-ended peace process.

Dispatches from the People's War in Nepal

Li Onesto

London: Pluto Press, 2005, 256 p.

This **book** offers an alternative account of the Maoist people's war of Nepal. The author – a foreign journalist who visited and lived for some time in the Maoist-controlled areas of Western Nepal (Rolpa and Rukum) – attempts to relocate the analysis of the insurgency in the realities of rural Nepal. In the introductory remarks, she points out that many middle-class forces are sympathetic to the Maoists' demands but "the heart of this revolution is in the countryside" (p. 9). According to the author, the monograph provides an internal account of the people's war with the intent of allowing the voices of protagonists to be heard. The book contains descriptions and transcripts of the author's meetings with members of the Maoist People's Army and with common villagers who have witnessed the raids of the security forces or suffered physical harassment for no obvious reason. The author goes on to describe some of the events which occurred in urban areas: the clandestine propaganda and the typical general strikes (*bandhs*) called by the Maoists.

The problem of disinformation by state-run media and their effectiveness after 1990 is also addressed. Disenchantment with democracy is widespread in rural Nepal where the dividends of the political change had not been perceived. This prevailing sentiment of disillusionment and rising frustration has pushed large sections of the rural population to embrace the rifle or indirectly support the Maoists. The role of women in the insurgency and their increased awareness and leadership skills are discussed with particular emphasis in the last chapters of the book.

Nepal's Maoist Movement and Implications for India and China

Nishchal Nath Pandey

RCSS Policy Studies No. 27

Colombo: Manohar Publishers, 2005, 175 p.

This **monograph** looks into the regional impact of the Maoist movement from a geopolitical perspective. After a description of the internal and external dynamics of Nepal's communist movement from its inception until the post-1990 democratic period, the author explores the factors behind the rise and the growth of the Maoist insurgency. Political instability, unemployment, corruption and bad governance developed a widespread disaffection with the democratic political class at the central

level. Then, according to the author, the socio-economic marginalization of the Mid-Western population coupled with the “fighting spirit” of local ethnic communities – especially the “Magar clan” (p. 50) – triggered the armed uprising. Indeed, the ethnic factor is considered an important element of the Maoist movement. The 1990 change gave to the *janajatis* (literally the “nationalities” or ethnic groups) a “new-found sense of identity and legal ground (...) to appeal for their demands” (p. 53). The pro-poor approach of the Maoists has also be a magnet for the deprived groups. Nevertheless, the counter-insurgency measures adopted by the different governments have all exacerbated the conflict: two brutal police operations *Operation Romeo* (1995) and *Kilo Sierra II* (1998) demonstrated that the military approach was the inappropriate response to the problem in view of the fact that eventually those operations backfired against the same government who had launched them by alienating the support of the local population. The progress of the Maoist military techniques are reflected by the upgrading of the weapons employed by the rebels. They started with rudimental knives (*kukhri*) and then started to use different type of rifles that they managed to seize during their attacks against the police posts. The Royal Nepal Army (RNA) was only mobilized after the rebels attacked the army barracks in November 2001. The security dimension of the conflict is followed by a brief comparative overview of other communist insurgencies outside Nepal (Malaya and South-Vietnam, El Salvador and Peru) and the analysis of the previous negotiating efforts. The international dimension of the Maoist insurgency is described from three different perspectives: a) implications of the *September 11* events; b) implications for India; c) implications for China. According to the author the terrorist attacks against the US in 2001 have radically overturned the fate of rebel groups worldwide. Once recognized as “freedom fighters” most of the insurgent groups have now been labelled as “terrorists” and have lost the backing of their foreign supporters. India is the external power the most involved in the conflict. This is a consequence of the territorial proximity with the Nepalese Kingdom as well as the result of historical factors. Security concerns are dominant among Indian priorities with regards to Nepal. This is because of the close relationship between Indian Maoist groups active in the North-East of India but it is also due to the so-called “Gorkha connection” (p. 135), i.e. the presence of Nepalese soldiers in the Indian Army being regularly recruited from the Mid-West of Nepal where the Gorkha fighters usually come from. However there is a discontinuity in the attitude of Delhi towards the insurgency in Nepal. Whereas India has labelled the CPN (M) as a terrorist organization,

most of its leaders are hiding on Indian territory. China's approach has been more pragmatic and has given full support to Nepalese authorities against the Maoist rebels. Beijing is in fact believed to rely on "a slow, steady approach to changes around the region, often looking 10 or 20 years down the road" (p. 159).

Who's War? Economic and Socio-Cultural Impacts of Nepal's Maoist-Government Conflict

Arjun Karki & Binod Bhattarai (eds.)

Kathmandu: NGO Federation of Nepal, 2004, 188 p.

This **monograph** is the result of the fieldwork done in May and June 2003 during the seven-month truce between the rebels and the government. The first part of the work provides an overview of the conflict and then analyzes its main causes both at the national and regional levels. Analyzing the factors that prompted the Maoist rebellion, the authors observe that the conflict is a manifestation of "complex social and economic demands, intertwined with ideology and a history of discrimination on which the Maoists were able to capitalise" (p. xvii). Democracy and the subsequent unfulfilled aspirations are believed to be an important factor behind the outbreak of the insurgency. However, the study also identifies poverty, cast/ethnic discrimination, unemployment and illiteracy as primary causes of the Maoist conflict. The regional analysis reflects the conclusions of the fieldwork completed in five different districts of Nepal: Kailali (Far-Western region), Rolpa (Mid-Western region), Baglung (Western region), Dolakha (Central-Eastern region) and Sankhuwasabha (Eastern region). The field work reveals similar patterns of victimisation among local people in terms of geographical location, ethnicity, sex, age and political affiliation. The authors conclude that local resources should be mobilized in mitigating the socio-economic problems fuelling the armed rebellion. In their opinion, top-down efforts in peacemaking at the central level should be coupled with bottom-up approaches in peacebuilding at the grassroots level. The last sections of the book assess the economic, socio-cultural and human costs of the Maoist conflict. The economic cost is examined in terms of physical damages to infrastructures, disruption of development activities, disturbance of

communication system as well as in terms of decline in tourism-related activities, foreign investment, increase of migration and government spending for security, which has inevitably drained economic resources from other sectors. The social cost accounts for visible changes in the lives of ordinary people: widespread human rights violations either by security forces or rebels, fear, displacement and increasing vulnerability of children and women. Similarly, the authors underline some positive factors generated by the conflict such as promoting the cause of the deprived and most vulnerable sections of society (lower castes, ethnic minorities and women), increasing accountability of development agents and the government staff. The rebel's agenda and their claims also initiated the debate as to how to decentralize Nepal's administrative system so as to make it more efficient and representative.

Critical barriers to the Negotiation of Armed Conflict in Nepal

Ananda P. Srestha & Hari Uprety (eds.)

Kathmandu: NEFAS-FES, 2004, 175 p.

The **book** represents a contribution to the understanding of some of the most relevant issues involved in the Maoist struggle in Nepal. The volume is the result of a seminar held in Nepal in 2004. The first paper by M. R. Josse offers an overview of the historical foundations of the Maoist insurgency. It does not add any new analytical element to the already existing body of literature on the genesis of the conflict. Bishnu Uprety's paper gives an account of the available options to resolve the conflict. In particular, he analyzes the thorny question of international mediation in the context of the Maoist conflict since the debate over this issue has been particularly intense. Uprety explains that traditional mediation channels have long been used to settle disputes in Nepal. However, these approaches were locally-based and caste- or ethnic-specific. The Maoist conflict needs a broader framework. The author then explores the potential role of religious leaders. Considering the strong anti-Brahmin anti-Hindu rhetoric of the rebels, this option is not applicable. On the contrary, the position of the civil society and the business community has higher potentials. Referring to Zartman's concepts of ripeness of the conflict and timing of mediation, Uprety illustrates the current situation in Nepal. He argues that Maoists are keen on accepting third party mediation because they have no trust in the government, especially in the Royal Nepal Army. Secondly, international

mediation would grant the rebels a high degree of legitimacy and show the external powers that they are committed to a peaceful settlement. On the other side, the government is reluctant to accept third party mediation. The reason is that it would “bypass the powerful neighbouring countries” (p. 80), i.e. India and China who consider third party mediation as a controversial precedent in the settlement of their internal disputes (Kashmir and Tibet). The options for mediation range from bilateral mediators to inter-governmental or international non-governmental actors. After comparing some cases of external mediation in conflict, the author concludes by suggesting the establishment of a Nepal Peace Support Group, a body that, with the support of the UN, would focus on peaceful resolution of the conflict and act as peace advocate and facilitator with the concerned parties. Shrawan Sharma’s paper deals with the Nepalese experience in facilitation. In a situation of conflict the facilitator seeks to increase the performance of the negotiators and provides the main channel of communication. His actions encompass breaking the ice (for instance, contacting the parties), removing difficulties, making assessments of situations and redirecting the discussion. A facilitator also represents the public and enhances the overall performance of the dialogue paving the way to successful peacebuilding. Previous experiences in facilitation in Nepal failed, basically for the lack of expertise by the facilitators. The same mistakes should not be repeated, the author warns, while also suggesting that “a lot of homework is necessary on the part of the conflicting parties” (p. 132). The last contribution analyzes the economic cost of the conflict and its impact on the donors’ agenda and attitude. Gunanidhi Sharma provides an accurate assessment of costs of the Maoist struggle, including its political implications. The author contends that the donors face a dilemma as to whether they should continue their assistance in Maoist-controlled areas, in spite of the protracted threats posed by the rebels to their staff and to the effective implementation of their programmes. Such a stalemate exposes Nepal to the risk of state failure while the international community helplessly looks at the country’s relentless decline.

The Cost of War in Nepal: A Research Study

Bishnu Sapkota (ed.)

Kathmandu: National Peace Campaign (NPC), 2004, 93 p.

The **book** makes an assessment of the cost of the Maoist conflict in Nepal. The first section of the document is devoted to the analysis of the political aspect involved in the insurgency. The “regressive move” of the King, i.e the royal takeover on 4 October 2002, has seriously undermined any prospect to solve the armed struggle through political means and integrate the Maoists into mainstream politics. Earlier, the declaration of the state of emergency had suddenly escalated the conflict on the ground increasing the death toll along a pattern unseen. This situation has created a new power equation. After October 2002 “the King emerged as a key stakeholder into the territory of power politics of Nepal” (p. 7). Likewise, the political parties seem unwilling to cooperate and get united against the King’s doubtful constitutional intervention. The Maoists are taking advantage of such a divided front, even though it is clear that they cannot hope complete success, at least for the time being. Since the holding of elections has been postponed indefinitely, the state is dysfunctional and cannot perform its fundamental duties at the socio-economic level as well. The flaws in the 1991 Constitution are considered a source of the failure of the current institutional framework to satisfy the real needs of common Nepalese.

With regard to the costs and consequences of the conflict, the report first considers the human rights dimension: until October 2003 the insurgency has killed more than 8,000 people and cases of torture, rape, abductions, disappearances, and unjustified violence against civilians by the warring parties are reported on a daily basis. It is estimated that, by current trends, within five years there could be between 15,000 to 25,000 more deaths. The figure of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is in the order of hundred thousands, though it is difficult to evaluate how many of them are related to the conflict. The development sector has been adversely affected by the war. The achievements of the 1990’s, in terms of easier access to education and increased adult literacy, are likely to be undermined by the conflict. Education and Health sectors have been deprived of important resources which have been diverted for defence purposes while social disparities and marginalization have not been addressed. Similarly, the economy of Nepal has suffered a general decline, especially in its strong sectors (tourism and commerce). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been affected and, for the first time in 2002, the country has recorded a negative growth.

Despite its overwhelmingly negative consequences, the conflict has brought some positive impact such as a rethinking of the people’s war from anthropological and psychological perspectives, an enhanced consciousness of human rights and social

issues, and a stronger political awareness among many Nepalese. While there is “no possibility for an undoing of the war and its effects” (p. 48), the importance of dialogue and the necessity of political compromise need to be reiterated and accepted by the major actors involved in the conflict.

Nepal’s Conflict Economy: Cost, Consequences and Alternatives

Bishwambher Pyakuryal

Kathmandu: Nepal Economic Association (NEA), 2004, 78 p.

This **book** represents an attempt to assess the economic cost of the Maoist conflict in Nepal. It is the result of a seminar organized by Nepal Economic Association. The work focuses on the economic rationale of the conflict, the related activities and their impact. Pyakuryal emphasizes Nepal’s low Human Development Index (HDI) as a structural factor leading to conflict. He argues that no accurate assessment of the cost of conflict has been carried out so far. Therefore he suggests some guidelines so as to quantify the overall economic impact of the Maoist insurgency. He considers three categories of costs: 1) Direct cost from war (human cost in terms of deaths and wounded people as well as direct physical damages); 2) Indirect cost (loss of production, loss of sales and administrative costs of insurance); 3) Cost reflecting the government’s readiness to deal with conflict (security expenditure and preventive actions to reduce conflict-related costs). The donors’ approach is criticized by the author. Donor agencies are exhorted to assess their ongoing programmes and mainstream them in accordance with local capacity to sustain and participate in the projects. The government’s fiscal and monetary policies should be so designed as to give priority to economic growth. Similarly, the government should enhance the capacity of the most productive economic sectors and establish partnerships with the private sector in those areas where private enterprise has a comparative advantage. One interesting point in Pyakuryal’s writing is his proposal for a comprehensive effort towards the reduction of incentives for military recruitment. Indeed, socio-economic deprivation often drives young people to join either the army or the rebel’s militias. In his concluding remarks the author highlights the core problem of Nepal’s economy: because of the ongoing conflict, “there is a diversion of scarce resources from their productive use” (p. 35). The challenge ahead is to reverse this trend and maintain a minimum level of growth even

during the conflict. The paper presented in the panel discussion underlines the fact that, given the weak structure of the economic system of the country, the conflict is not sustainable for a long period. Emphasis is put on the fact that the current situation of Nepal's economy is both the result of the conflict and the inevitable consequence of decades of wrong policies made by the central government resulting in structural deficiencies.

Nepal Coping with Maoist Insurgency: Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Chuda Bahadur Shrestha

Kathmandu: Chetana Lokshum, 2004, 618 p.

This **monograph** represents a comprehensive account of the Maoist insurgency. Written by the Senior Superintendent of Nepali Police, the book thoroughly describes the multifaceted nature of the people's war, its genesis, major developments and the governmental response. Only after conducting an analytical and empirical assessment of the subject Chauda B. Shrestha explores the options for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The growth of the Maoist movement is examined in every detail relying on both primary and secondary sources. The Maoist people's war is explained as the emergence of unaddressed grievances (ethnic, caste, gender discrimination, regional disparities, political repression and economic distress) which have sought a solution in the Maoist ideology. The insurgency is compared to other rebellions and armed conflicts that have occurred in other places, particularly in the Asian region. The impact of the Maoist rebellion is quantified in economic, political, social and human terms without overlooking any aspect of the conflict. The management of the insurgency is observed from both the state perspective (military operations, efforts in governance and victims' relief) and the community approach (local networks, ethnic and caste-based approaches and civilian-military cooperation). The monograph provides a large amount of data and statistics while the amount of primary and secondary sources used offers a comprehensive description of the conflict.

People in the 'People's War

Centre for Investigative Journalism

Kathmandu: Himal Books, 2004, 104 p.

The articles included in this **book** deal with different aspects of the Maoist insurgency. They explain how the conflict is no more confined to the fighting forces. Local resources and ordinary people as well as the local economies have been hit hard by the loss of freedom following military operations. Traditional resources having been diminished, migration has been imposed on many in the countryside. The work highlights the worsening condition of the Dalit community and the deprived ethnic groups. This emphasis on the so-called janajatis or “nationalities” is a new feature of the research on the Maoist insurgency and follows some important developments taking place within the Maoist organization which has shifted its propaganda from class conflict to ethnic rhetoric in order to accommodate the growing dissatisfaction of the ethnic minorities of Nepal. The phenomenon of youth migration to India is also taken into consideration by one contributor who argues that the new generations – especially the students - move to India to avoid the forced recruitment by the Maoists or physical harassment by the security forces.

Himalayan People's War. Nepal's Maoist Rebellion

Michael Hutt (ed.)

London: Hurst & Company, 2004, 322 p.

The chapters of this comprehensive **book** reproduce the papers presented during a conference organized by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. The authors examine Nepal's developments from a variety of angles as they seek to explain one of the most powerful rebellions in South Asia.

The crucial aspects of Nepali politics and the general political context are thoroughly analyzed. Deepak Thapa presents the historical dimensions and the developments of the radical political landscape which allowed the emergence of a strong Maoist party. Sudheer Sharma traces the path of the internal evolution of the Maoist movement, the power relationships within the main components of the organization, i.e. the Party (the leadership), the People's Army (the military wing, after 2001 renamed People's Liberation Army) and the United Front (the political branch). Despite the apparent

failure of the central government to provide security and services to remote areas, the People's governments installed by the rebels have also disappointed the expectations of the local population which had welcomed the Maoists with great hopes. Krishna Hachhethu describes the strategy of the Nepalese government in dealing with the crisis. His dichotomy "state withdrawal/state reinstatement" clearly demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the ruling elite to address the major sources of grievance which fuelled the conflict and the shortcomings of the central government's approach to peace-making.

The book greatly benefits from the contributions of several anthropologists whose ethnographic studies of the Maoist conflict deal with different aspects of life in Maoist-controlled areas. Sara Shneiderman and Mark Turin illustrate the context and the local perception concerning the establishment of the people's government (*Jan Sarkar*) in the Eastern district of Dolakha in 2001. Besides the real (actually modest) consequences of such move by the rebels, this event is remarkable for its symbolic value indicating the actual capability of the rebels to establish their own governmental structures in their base-areas. Judith Pettigrew provides an account of what people normally do in order to survive in an environment dominated by violence while Marie Lecomte-Tilouine writes about the manipulation of ethnic demands and caste concerns by the Maoist rebels as a powerful means of mobilization and enhancement of their movement of armed opposition to the central state. The Maoist discourse has often drawn from local grievances; at the local level the rebels have affiliated their movement with indigenous organizations and national liberation movements, especially in Western Nepal (the Magars being the most relevant ethnic group affiliated to the Maoist struggle). On the other hand, Mandira Sharma and Dinesh Prasain deal with the gender dimensions of the people's war, pointing out the fact that the large participation of women in the conflict has been a vehicle of disenfranchisement and social awareness.

Pratyoush Onta conceptualizes the idea of "duplicity" and transplants it into the Nepalese political context after 1990. He argues that the Maoists and the other mainstream political forces have been fighting about different "representations of Nepali realities" (p. 137). Duplicity at the political level (from left parties) has been matched by a similar behavior in the commercial sector (public vs. private schools, alcohol consumption), in the civil society context as well as in the media. Denouncing the rebels or remaining silent when rivals are targeted has thus allowed the rise and growth of the Maoist movement in every sector of Nepali society. The concept of

“distributional coalitions” employed by Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka is useful to explain the legacy of the political system at the local and national level. The scarce interest of the Kathmandu-centric elites in the periphery can also provide an explanation for the modest counter-insurgency efforts committed by the central government in the initial stages of the conflict. Moreover, the lack of established democratic institutions has facilitated the penetration of the Maoist message among the frustrated population.

Saubhagya Shah and Philippe Ramirez describe the geopolitical dynamics of the Maoist conflict. Shah argues that, although the socio-economic factor (greed and grievance) is an important element of the Maoist phenomenon, however the conflict in Nepal and its rapid growth can better be explained by other factors such as the “acute disunity within the ruling parliamentary parties; the ideological and structural weakness of the Nepali state; the rapid ethnicisation of the Maoist movement; a long-standing culture of recruitment into foreign armies in the Maoist heartland; extra-territorial linkages; and, most significantly, the general retreat of the Nepali state during the initial phase of the conflict.” (p. 193). Ramirez is interested in comparing Nepali Maoism with its earlier manifestations in China, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Peru and the Philippines. Finally, Hari Roka writes on the state of emergency in 2001 and the polarization of the political landscape following the escalation of the conflict. His conclusion calls attention to the fact that the Maoist message is powerful and “highly political” (p. 242). In fact, it creates a dichotomy between “the people and the people’s enemy” which is likely to deeply affect both the socio-political realities and cultural outlook at the local level.

The Price of Neglect: From Resource Conflict to Maoist Insurgency in the Himalayan Kingdom

Bishnu Raj Upreti

Kathmandu: Bhrikuti Academic Publications, 2004, 446 p.

The **book** contains three sections. The first section mainly deals with the theoretical aspects of conflict: definitions of conflict, different perspectives and schools of thought on conflict, basic characteristics, potential positive and negative contributions of conflict and basic conflict management procedures. The second section focuses on the analysis

of relationships between resource governance, resource scarcity and conflict. It sheds light on political economy of resource governance and its impacts on conflict. Then it proceeds with documenting the dynamics of water, forest, land and natural resources conflicts in Nepal. The third section details the evolution and growth of Maoist insurgency, fundamental causes of conflict, impacts of development on conflict and vice versa. Then it elaborates donors' role in Nepalese conflict. It also examines the efforts towards negotiation and peace process and causes of ceasefire break. It argues that the Nepalese negotiation and peace process have numerous procedural weaknesses and structural limitations. The book proposes a negotiation strategy to restore peace in Nepal. (From the author)

Maoists in the Land of Buddha. An Analytical Study of the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

Prakash A. Raj

New Delhi: Nirala Publications, 2004, 209 p.

This **book** represents a general account of the Maoist insurgency. According to the author, from a peaceful place known as the birthplace of Lord Buddha Nepal became a war-torn country on the brink of self-destruction. The insurgency has caused a grave setback to the democratic process initiated in 1990. The author attempts to identify the roots of the "turbulence" affecting the country since 1996. The legacy of neglect and backwardness in which the country was immersed for centuries is regarded as one of the main causes of the Maoist conflict. At the same time, the ideological backdrop provided by Maoism and the peculiar and, in some way, "wrong interpretation" (p. 35) given by the Maoist leaders provided the ground for launching the people's war in February 1996. Prakash Raj also examines the socio-political implication of the Maoist movement, including the role of neighboring countries and their attitude regarding the conflict. In particular, the author believes that India did not take the Maoist uprising "as seriously as it should have" (p.122). On the contrary, the US devoted increasing interest to Nepal only after the 9/11 events and located the ongoing Himalayan conflict within the framework of their worldwide "War on Terror", labeling the Maoist rebels as "terrorists". One section of the book is devoted to possible solutions to the conflict. The

author regards institutional transformation, decentralization, right to self-determination, empowerment of women and other deprived people as the most pressing needs to be addressed in order to produce a positive change in Nepal. The book concludes with a provocative question: "Will the Maoists ever give up their arms or will Nepal turn into another Cambodia, Peru or Afghanistan?"

The Historical Path to Violent Destabilisation in Nepal: Elements of an Exploratory Framework

Tone Bleie

in Martin Scheinin and Markku Suksi (eds.) "Human Rights in Development Yearbook 2002: Empowerment, Participation, Accountability and Non-discrimination: Operationalising a Human Rights Based Approach to Development", The Hague: Kluwer International, 2004: pp. 373-415

This **chapter of a book** focuses on the historical events preceding the declaration of the People's War by the CPN (M) in 1996 and on the factors that motivated it. The author questions the merely internal nature of the Maoist conflict in Nepal. In fact, that conflict is the result of "the unravelling of the intricate interplay between internal and external structural conditions and of political and administrative practices over nearly five decades" (p. 1). In the last 50 years the old political regime underwent a peculiar reorganization achieved through the expansion of the bureaucracy and the introduction of some modern institutions in order to modernize the civil service. The author argues that in Nepal concurrently to the rise of some West-oriented democratic political forces another set of local actors representing dissenting voices inspired by the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist political thought emerged. The study explores the historical path of the contemporary Nepali state from its very creation in the late 18th century up to the 1990 People's Movement (*Jana Andolan*). This event is described as a "rebellion" and not a revolution, in view of the fact that the political outcome was a compromise between three different political visions (social-democratic, communist and traditionalist).

The democratic course initiated in 1990 proved elusive and could not come up to the expectations raised by the political leaders. At the same time, the reaction to the challenge posed by the emerging leftist movement (repression, state violence and non-

cooperation) convinced the communist leadership that armed struggle was the only option to realize their political manifesto.

Conflict, Human Rights & Peace. Challenges before Nepal

Bipin Adhikari (ed.)

Kathmandu: Rishikesh Shaha Memorial Lectures 2003, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 2003, 267 p.

The **book**, prepared by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), includes the lectures, views and opinions of several scholars, experts, professionals who have been dealing with human rights, peace and conflict situations. Bipin Adhikari provides an overview of the current conflict, its causes and attempts to overcome the crisis both by military and peaceful means until now. Sushil Pyakurel argues that the current crisis is caused by significant difference in perceptions held by the three main actors involved in the conflict, i.e. the monarchy, the political parties and the Maoist rebels. Dhruva Kumar analyzes the shortcomings of the two previous peace talks, while D.B. Gurung emphasizes the ethnic dimension of the conflict and its skillful exploitation by the Maoists. Johan Galtung suggests some ways to stop violence and seek a resolution of the conflict. In particular, he lays great emphasis on the process of conflict transformation that is needed in Nepal in order to transcend violence and push the main actors towards a peaceful settlement of the main issues. Besides some other more general contributions, of particular interest are the writings of Niraj Dawadi and Laksiri Fernando. While the first draws some lessons for Nepal from the peace process in Guatemala, the second provides some valuable insights into the conflict in Sri Lanka and its ongoing peace process underlining the need for the overall support of regional and neighboring countries for effective implementation of peace measures.

A Kingdom Under Siege: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2003

Deepak Thapa with Bandita Sijapati

Kathmandu: The Printhouse, 2003, 234 p.

The **book** is an up-to-date and extensive account of the Maoist insurgency. The work is divided into six parts. The first part deals with the historical evolution of Nepalese politics from the unification of the country in the 18th century up to the outbreak of the People's War in 1996. The authors devote particular attention to the evolution of the Communist Party of Nepal. The evolution as such from its foundation in 1949 to the launching of the People's War by the Maoist faction in 1996 is a sequence of splits and mergers triggered by dissident views among the party's leaders. These divisions proved fundamental in determining the political direction taken by different and competing communist factions in the aftermath of the *Jana Andolan* (People's Movement). The restoration of democracy following 30 years of autocratic Panchayat rule pushed some communist leaders towards accepting the principles of multiparty democracy. This trend resulted in the co-optation of the CPN (UML) into the new democratic system. On the contrary, the faction led by Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, reorganized as the CPN (M), and opted for a radical political course dismissing any possibility of participation in a competitive democratic process. The second part stresses the sources of disenchantment that led to the insurgency. It is the authors' opinion that a complex set of compelling factors can be found behind the conflict. Since the formation of a unitary state Nepal's rulers left a record of misrule indicating complete negligence of the people's needs. The new rulers of the democratic system established in the early 1990's did not bring this negative trend to an end. Rather they carried on the corrupt and selfish practices of the past. Socio-economic discrimination, pervasive poverty, rugged geography, political incompetence and leadership's inability can be regarded as the main causes of the conflict in Nepal. The early stages of the insurgency and the swift growth and success of the Maoist movement are analyzed in the third part of the book. Political *ad hocism* was the main governmental response to the insurgency. The reason has to be found in the political instability that afflicted democratic Nepal. What is more, the government's strategy based on harsh and violent repression inflamed even more the rebellion. The operation *Kilo Sierra II* first and the introduction of the "Terrorist and Destructive Activities" (TADA) acts later proved unsuccessful since they failed to address the underlying causes of the conflict. On the contrary, such initiatives pushed the local population towards the Maoists with many young people joining the rebels. Since 1998 the Maoists have started working on the establishment of a parallel state-like structure in areas under their control and launched many educational, development and

economic programmes at the grassroots level. The revolutionary structure set up by the Maoists originates from the "Three-in-One" principle: the overall framework consists of the Party (40% of representatives), the Army (20%) and the so-called Front Organizations (40%). Following Mao's military approach the rebels initiated the People's War adopting the concept of "protracted war": after the phase of strategic defence and strategic stalemate, the insurgency would have entered the fundamental phase of strategic offence paving the way to the establishment of a republic. The fourth part is devoted to the study of two "momentous years": 2001 and 2002. During this period the insurgency intensified pushing the country further into disarray. During the Second National Conference of the CPN (M) in February 2001, the so-called *Prachanda Path* became the guiding ideology of the movement vowing to continue the 'struggle until the end' and refusing any partial change through mere political reform. The military strategy underwent a similarly radical change: in 2001, for the first time, the capital Kathmandu became a target of the insurgents. The Palace massacre worsened the situation creating a widespread environment of political instability. Notwithstanding the inflamed situation, popular loyalty to the institution of monarchy prevailed when Birendra's enigmatic brother, Gyanendra ascended to the throne. Deuba's government approached the Maoists in a milder way than Koirala's and finally the two parties could agree on a ceasefire. This event gave the Maoists the opportunity to stop their underground activities and hold public meeting providing them great political gains and transforming the CPN (M) from a tiny extra-parliamentary force into a strong political force. Yet, the development coinciding with the *September 11* events and the increasing activities of the rebels against the population such as extortions and abductions undermined the consensus on the ceasefire. Formal negotiations got stalled because of the incompatibility of the political agendas of the two parties. After four months without hostilities clashes restarted in late November 2001. A few days later, the Maoists announced the formation of the so-called People's Government led by Baburam Bhattarai, confirming the suspicions about the strategic exploitation of the ceasefire by the Maoists in order to strengthen their political and military structures. The response of the government was the declaration of the state of emergency on November 26, 2001 and the deployment of the Royal Nepal Army against the insurgents. King Gyanendra's dismissal of Deuba from his post of prime minister almost one year later was the final act of a controversial relationship. Apparently, the prime minister's incompetence to hold elections led the king to step in and assume practically

direct powers. Surprisingly, in January 2003 another ceasefire was announced. The fifth part consists of an assessment of the costs of the conflict from *macro* and *micro* perspectives. Economic, social and human hardships related to the conflict have pushed the country into a precarious situation. Indeed, the Maoists, in the areas under their control, have stopped many development programmes. The last part consists of an analysis of the compelling factors that led, for the second time, to a ceasefire and to the beginning of a new set of peace talks. From the Maoist side, the little progress achieved both on the ground and at the level of popular support during the last year was a major element that convinced the party's leaders to accept the dialogue. The urban areas are still under the tight control of the government and the military balance between the two parties does not allow speculation as to whether the situation will change in the foreseeable future. In fact, a full-scale attack by the rebels is very unlikely at the moment. Then there are rumours about differences between Prachanda and Bhattarai within the Maoist party. From the government's side, pressures from the army and from a peace-loving population seem to have acted as important compelling factors. The authors also consider the "India factor" as one of the elements that led to the January 2003 ceasefire.

Conflict Resolution & Governance in Nepal

Ananda P. Srestha & Hari Uprety (eds.)

Kathmandu: Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies (NEFAS) in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), August 2003, 244 p.

This **book** represents a recent piece of scholarship on the conflict in Nepal. It is the result of two separate seminars held in September 2002 and April 2003 in Nepal. As a consequence, the book has been divided into two main parts: *Conflict Resolution in Nepal* and *Governance in Nepal*. In the first part of the work, Dev Raj Dahal deals with the theoretical dimension of conflict resolution. He analyzes different sources and types of conflict as well as the approaches to conflict resolution and the responses to such crisis. In addition, he examines the steps towards the normalization of war-torn societies (conflict settlement, transformation, resolution). Meena Acharya is more concerned with conflict transformation and the recent peace dialogue. Among the sources of the

current crisis, the prominent conflict seems to be political since it relates to the future political system of the country (monarchy vs. republican state). Yet, the author recognizes other causes of the conflict (ethnic, caste, religious and geographical discrimination, gender, inconsistent and ineffective socio-economic policies). The same paper includes a very interesting overview of the major political parties' approaches to conflict transformation. The analysis shows how positions differ on each issue relating to the conflict. At the same time, it emphasizes the common features which most of the political parties agree on. Krishna B. Bhattachan provides a sociological perspective. The author presents compromise and referendum as tools for conflict resolution. The originality of the paper comes out in the identification of several internal conflicts within the territory of Nepal. This analysis of the fields of conflict can be compared to the assessment of the causes of the conflict made by many other scholars. The areas of conflict are identified as ethnic, religious, caste, language, regional, gender and class-based political discrimination. Yubaraj Sangroula's essay offers a political standpoint on the people's war. Among the causes of the conflict the authors identify some *causative factors* (the split of the "United Front", the failure to recognize the Maoists as a political force by the government, the failure to develop integrative political-civil participation in governance, the influence of India, China and the United States, the lack of governance and the failure to manage the insurgency. Among these causative factors, Sangroula distinguishes between *mediate and immediate dynamics*. Mediate dynamics are those factors which "provide a solid background for the emergence and the growth of the crisis" (p. 105) - e.g. imbalance of power sharing, permanence of a societal feudal structure, inadequate education, inequitable taxation, etc. The immediate dynamics are factors acting as catalysts accelerating and intensifying the problems - political interference, corruption in the bureaucracy as well as in the political domain, economic hardship, unemployment, deteriorating security situation. Consolidation of the democratic process, people's involvement in governance, political compromise and the involvement of an impartial third party - e.g. the UN - in the peace dialogue are some of the solutions suggested. The second part focuses on governance issues. The analysis of public policy-making in Nepal undertaken by Hiramani Ghimire reveals that there exists an extensive gap between the theoretical expression of the fundamental policy objectives included in the constitution and the actual implementation of those directives by the government. Scarce communication and co-operation between administrative and political institutions as well as between different agencies is one of the main

obstacles to effective policy-making. Moreover, many constitutional arrangements are neglected while the civil society has proved ineffective in its public approach. "Policy evaporation" (p. 141) is the consequence of a decade of contradictory policies and planning. Chakramehar Vajracharya examines the potential role of effective governance in managing regional disparity in development. Decentralization is one of the major challenges the country faces. Empowerment of local governance units and the implementation of integrated development programmes are fundamental steps in that direction. At the same, time strengthening and supporting institutions like the Commission on Investigation of Abuse of Authority and the Office of the Auditor General can promote accountable governance. Bihari Krishna Shrestha analyzes another dimension of effective governance, i.e. its conflict resolution capacity. Spatial, economic and social tensions intensified creating the conditions for the outbreak of the Maoist insurgency. The author explains how two development programmes proved successful notwithstanding the alleged adverse environment in which they took place. The *Community Forest Programme* and the *Small Farmer Cooperative Limited* have shown that only all-embracing and inclusive projects can succeed in fragmented societies. Donors' activities are critically analyzed and blamed for lack of transparency, absence of a people-oriented approach and inconsistent long-term perspective. Finally, Raghav D. Pant's essay defines the three major political parties (NC, UML and NC-D) as unreliable actors because of wrong economic policies they have implemented during their tenure of office. The core issue seems to be the role of the National Planning Commission. The author, in fact, questions the efficacy, the usefulness and the future of this controversial institution entrusted with the task of designing the economic strategy of the country.

Threats to Nepali Democracy

Anuj Mishra

Kathmandu: Integrated Organization Systems (IOS), Forum "Open your Mind Plus Medium" 2003, 110 p.

The **book** provides comments from a web forum held in the first part of 2003. It consists of six papers which deal with different aspects of the democratic system in

Nepal and discuss its main shortcomings. The paper by Rajan Bhattarai evaluates the mistakes committed by the political elites of Nepal in the last decade. According to Bhattarai, poor governance is the root cause of the current political stalemate. Criminalization of politics and inadequate checks and balances, and insufficient decentralization are the main issues to be addressed. Hari Phyuwal's paper is devoted to an analysis of the constitutional aspects of the crisis in Nepal. His perspective on the 1991 Constitution is revealed in his suggestion to keep the constitutional framework alive by reaffirming the validity of the constitution, despite the presence of petty interests involved some political positions which deny any positive value to the 1991 document. Then a process of amendment should take place without undermining the achievements of the 1990 movement. Yolmo's contribution encourages the inclusion of ethnic groups in the political mainstream as well as in the state's structures and grant them a certain degree of autonomy through federal arrangements. The fourth paper urges the monarchy to become a transparent, constitutionally bound and people-oriented institution. King Gyanendra acted as an active monarch when he sacked then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 4 October 2002. Ever since, the role of the monarchy has become controversial. The author suggests that the monarchical institution should adjust itself to the new democratic framework and foster the process of democratization in the country. Manil Shrestha draws a parallel between contemporary Nepal and the Republic of Weimer created in Germany between the two World Wars, which eventually paved the way to the emergence of the totalitarian Nazi regime. Basically, the message is that economic distress and malpractices lead to political chaos and confusion. The last paper is about corruption. Manorama Adhkari argues that corrupt practices have undermined the legitimacy of the newly established democracy in Nepal with the result that rampant dishonesty poses a serious threat to the future of the whole political system. Interestingly, corruption is explained through the Darwinian law of the survival of the fittest.

Maoist Insurgency in Nepal. The Challenge and the Response

S. D. Muni

New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2003, 134 p.

The **book** is a recent overview of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The book provides an Indian perspective on the assessment of the causes of the conflict and the response of the main international actors. The insurgency is considered as the result of bad governance and protracted underdevelopment. However, the failure to integrate the Maoist movement into the legal political system that came into existence after the People's Movement of 1990 is regarded as an important element triggering the insurgency. The Maoist leadership went through a process of political exclusion encouraged by the mainstream political parties who became the greatest beneficiaries of the democratic change and felt threatened by the CPN (M) because of the support of the rural population. *Operation Romeo* in 1995 certainly acted as a trigger of the insurgency since it made clear to the Maoist leadership that the only way they could operate was from outside the system that had brought about their political marginalization. The support base of the Maoists was quickly enlarged by exploiting ethnic, religious, socio-political and economic variables according to the situation. In effect, the "Maoists have systematically structured, ideologically cultivated and consistently mobilized the diversified social support" (p. 18). The political goal of the insurgents is very clear: they want to seize the power and establish a People's Republic in Nepal, wiping out the old establishment. Their strategy has been rather flexible in order to guarantee the survival of the movement itself and allow its adaptation to the changing situation on the ground. The "short-sighted" response of both the Monarchy and the mainstream political parties has strengthened the insurgency and further alienated the old regime from popular support. Thus, the Maoists emerged as a formidable force all through the country, capable of coordinating military action with political moves. The international reaction to the insurgency has been rather tardy. Until 2001 few countries had shown concern about the conflict in Nepal. After the *September 11* events, the Maoist rebellion appeared on the agenda of many donors and strategic partners such as the US, the UK and some other European countries and, of course, India and China. The author stresses, in particular, the response of neighbouring India, criticizing its ambiguous attitude towards the conflicting parties. According to Muni, India should redefine its approach and reconsider its strategic interests in Nepal followed by a more comprehensive response to the crisis, including the promotion of stability in the Himalayan Kingdom. Notwithstanding the controversial nature of many issues that still divide the Maoists, the Palace and political parties, the possibility of a deal still exists and should be explored.

The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure of Nepal. A Marxist Analysis

Baburam Bhattarai

New Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2003, 540 p.

“Nepal, a small and poor country sandwiched between two super states of India and China, is for some time in constant focus of the international media. Great powers ranging from the United States, the European Union and neighbouring India and China are seen expressing serious concerns at the developments inside this so far generally neglected country. What is the reason? At a time when people thought the era of communist revolution was over after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites, a powerful Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement has broken out since 1996 in this tiny Himalayan country. A small rebellion thought to have been initiated by a radical faction of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), christened as CPN (Maoist), has now engulfed the whole country and serious strategic observers are predicting that the rebellion might usher in the first revolutionary state of the twenty-first century. What is the objective and subjective basis of this epochal upheaval?” This **monograph** – the doctoral thesis written in the mid-1980s by one of the leading figures and ideologue of the Maoist movement in Nepal, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai – “probes from a historico-materialist perspective and substantiates with a load of statistical data why the country of Nepal caught in the quagmire of underdevelopment generated by the interplay of a set of endogenous and exogenous factors, needs a revolutionary rupture from the past if it is to traverse the course of rapid progress and development in the twenty-first century.” The “foreword” to the volume has been written by Comrade Prachanda, Chairman of CPN (Maoist) and Supreme Commander of the movement. Prachanda highlights the significance of the book which according to him represents “a first and complete Marxist interpretation of the Nepalese history and economy, accompanied by a wide-ranging survey of Marxist theory of development/underdevelopment and spatial articulation.”

Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal

Deepak Thapa (ed.)

Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003, 395 p.

This **monograph** collects some of the most interesting articles written on the Maoist conflict up to date. Many of them have already been analyzed in this annotated bibliography. The collection seeks to encompass different views and perspectives on the conflict including the rebels' viewpoint. Among the contributions not yet included, the article by Mohan Mainali directly blames the programmes implemented by the donors' community, in particular, the fifteen-year long rural project of USAID launched in the same areas of Western Nepal where later on the insurgency was started. According to the author, there is a close link between development and conflict. Puskar Bushal raises the controversial question of the control of the RNA. The emergence of the army as a key actor in the current situation is nothing but the consequence of the chronic delay in resolving the abovementioned issue, so that the helplessness of the politicians has finally pushed the Army to step in. The "Letter from a Maoist activist" helps understand the silent dynamics taking place within the Maoist movement. The letter shows the disappointment of the so-called hardliners who did not want any compromise during the peace talks. Human rights violations are taken into account both by Kanak Mani Dixit and the report of Amnesty International. Dixit writes about the increasing involvement of armed forces in the insurgency and the culture of impunity that is eroding the sympathy of the population with the Army. This "culture" started when the Malik Commission's report was shelved, thus condoning several violations that occurred during the Jana Andolan in 1990.

Nepal: Politics of Stalemate, Confusion and Uncertainty

M. R. Josse

Kathmandu: People's Review Publishers, 2003, 36 p.

This **book** provides a succinct but lucid analysis of the situation in Nepal right before and soon after the King's controversial move on October 4, 2002, when the monarch sacked the prime minister and took executive powers. The author argues that the King's

decision had been supported, if not indirectly encouraged, by the main political forces. The prime minister nominated by the King, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, was instructed to seek a peaceful solution to the security problem posed by the Maoist insurgency. Peace talks were held and the rebels and the government agreed on a ceasefire and a code of conduct in early 2003. The author describes the external reactions to the installation of the new cabinet as positive. The role of the major international actors is also briefly described. The US and British governments not only overtly and actively backed the government and the King but also provided military assistance. China's position is softer: Beijing does not recognize the rebels as genuine followers of Mao and presents itself on the king's side, although it does provide little help to the government of Nepal. The most controversial and ambiguous role is played by India. While supporting the King, Delhi tries to influence the course of events to its advantage even by providing shelter to Maoist leaders and cadres. Political parties are blaming the monarchy for the current stalemate, but, according to the author, the present situation is the result of 12 years of bad governance and political misrule perpetrated by the traditional political parties that were excluded from the political arena of the country after the King's move in October 2002. The author concludes by presenting some issues (potential role of China, possibility of a military coup, attitude of India and USA) which should not be overlooked and proposing the implementation of late King Birendra's political dream, i.e. the conversion of Nepal into a Zone of Peace.

The People's War in Nepal, Left Perspectives

Arjun Karki & David Seddon (eds.)

New Delhi: Adroit, 2003, 494 p.

This **monograph** is a collection of essays and statements by various Nepali political activists and intellectuals on the "People's War" in Nepal. It was published in early 2003 right after the government and the revolutionaries agreed on a cease-fire and sat down for formal talks. The book aims at contributing constructively to the political debate "in the left" in Nepal. It contains a set of statements and commentaries on the People's War by the Maoist leadership as well as a number of critical analyses of the Maoists by members of other left groups, including the 'mainstream' United-Marxist-Leninist (UML)

Party, the major parliamentary opposition to the ruling Nepali Congress Party. Emphasizing the military aspect of the People's War would be misleading since it should not be forgotten that the insurgency is "a political movement first and foremost" (p. xi). In accordance with Clausewitz's characterization, the armed struggle is described as the extension of politics by other means. On the other side, stressing only the political dimension of the movement would overlook the socio-economic fault-lines that triggered the insurgency. Therefore, in the author's view, the crisis that Nepal is currently passing through is multidimensional and its root causes are both historical and structural.

The contributions of the first part offer an introductory historical and sociological view of the insurgency. The historical overview written by the two editors is an effort to put the People's War in the perspective of the ideological and political experience of the communist movement of Nepal. They make an effort to place that experience in the overall political landscape of the country. The sociological perspective of Mukunda Kattel's essay stresses the social context in which the insurgency emerged from February 1995 to October 2001. The contribution takes into consideration the positive side of the insurgency without neglecting the overwhelming negative consequence on the population of Nepal. One of the main consequences of the People's War has been the radicalization of Nepalese society. This fact is considered positive since it helps the emergence of civil society and the start of an actual debate over the underlying causes of the socio-political and economic crisis. Forging new synergies and mutual understanding and tolerance is one way out of the conflict but it is important for all parties involved to abandon their backward-looking, narrow-minded and egotistic attitude for a concrete commitment to human development in a peaceful context.

Part Two is made up of some statements, interviews and analyses given by the Maoist leaders. They deal with the origins and the evolution of the People's War, the strategy of armed struggle (Movement's leader Prachanda's interview), the political economy of Nepal (Movement's ideologue Bhattarai's contribution), the role of women in the conflict (Comrade Parvati's essay) and the possible future of the movement. Govinda Neupane presents a class perspective of the movement paving the way to the third part of the book. He emphasizes the contradictions of a Nepalese transitional society and the "total transformational agenda" of the CPN (M) (p. 313). The essay also highlights some deficiencies of the Maoist movement (i.e. lack of clarity on the class structure, absence of effective presence among the working class). Mohan Bikram Singh

highlights the tricky relationship existing between the Maoists and the Monarchy during Birendra's reign. Despite being antagonistic, the two forces seem to have some common features. Unfortunately, that relationship drastically changed after the Palace massacre in June 2001 and the enthronement of Gyanendra. Sujita Shakya provides an analysis of the Maoist movement from a women's point of view, while Pradip Nepal's contribution is an assessment of the impact of the movement on the population. He underlines the internal and external causes of the insurgency and comments on some mistaken ideological assumptions of the Maoist party. The recommendations outlined in his essay focus on a people-based multiparty political system, the commitment of the conflicting parties to the obligations set out in the constitution, the necessity of greater transparency and accountability, responsible political conduct by ruling parties, the commitment to a combined short/long term vision of "integrated, balanced, coordinated development" (p. 437), the importance of comprehensive land reform in a rural country such as Nepal, and the eradication of corruption. The closing chapter is written by one of the editors, Arjun Karki. His essay is built upon the belief that any progress towards an effective solution of the current crisis can be made only "on the basis of a firm and clear commitment on the part of the government of Nepal (and all other major players) to an agreed framework for radical reform" that meets the actual needs of the population. Political and economic grievances, regional, caste, ethnic and gender disparities are the major issues involved and represent the challenges the abovementioned actors will have to meet. Land reform, empowerment of rural institutions and population, decentralization, constitutional and administrative reforms and equitable development are the principal recommendations put forward by the author in his contribution.

Nepal: Economic Drivers of the Maoist Insurgency

John Bray, Leiv Lunde, and Mansoob Murshed, in: Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (eds.) "The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance", Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003, pp. 107-132.

This **chapter of a book** collects the main findings of a project of the International Peace Academy on the economic aspects of civil wars. The author focuses on the case study of Nepal. Unlike other case study of the book, Nepal is not rich in natural

resources. However, “economic drivers and social inequalities have played a key role in the inception and expansion of the conflict” (p. 107). The core question of the chapter is whether greed or grievance motivates the Maoist rebels. The authors suggest that grievances could be the major catalyst for the conflict. Yet the failure of the institutions in charge of conflict management is regarded as the main cause triggering otherwise latent conflicts. The judiciary is one of those institutions. The failure of democracy is thus considered as the major factor determining open and violent conflict in Nepal. Although the authors recall the fact that democracy is not “irredeemable” (p. 120), at the same time they warn future governments about the urgency of radical reform before the state structure collapses at all. Interestingly, some incentives for peace are pinpointed in the chapter. The risk of fragmentation and maintenance of internal discipline are some of the biggest challenges for the Maoist movement. On the government side, a pro-active rather than the current “reactive” approach to the insurgency is advocated. While military dynamics and costs of war are the main incentives that could push either party to come to a compromise, the authors tend to present a gloomy picture of the consequences of prolonged military confrontation. In fact, the authors mostly refer to Nepal as a would-be failed state.

Nepal Tomorrow: Voices and Visions. Selected Essays on Nepal

D. B. Gurung (ed.)

Kathmandu: Koselee Prakashan, 2003, 694 p.

This impressive **monograph** represents a collection of essays on several aspects and issues concerning Nepal. Some of the contributions are closely related to the current conflict. In particular, Dev Raj Dahal puts emphasis on the crisis of governance cropped up in the last twelve years in Nepal. The rise of the Maoist movement and the government’s failures and dysfunctions are interrelated. This structural crisis can be observed at different levels. As far as the institutional level is concerned, the constitution of 1991 failed to obtain a broad consensus whereas national politics has been highly affected by political parties with antagonistic and election-oriented manifestos. The stagnation of national economy is another facet of the current crisis. Nepal faces different conflicts at the same time with different manifestations. The

Maoist insurgency is a manifest conflict, whereas the ethnic and social conflict is latent and so far has been repressed. National security and stability, rule of law, participation and delivery of public services and goods are the four main goals Nepal needs to achieve to overcome the current crisis. Similarly, the rehabilitation process of a war-torn country should rely on new structures and fresh resources of conflict resolution. Constitutional reforms suggested in other two contributions focus on the three pillars of democracy, monarchy and federalism. The measures suggested to strengthen the country's institutions are the reform of the electoral system and the reformulation of the security strategy of Nepal. Among the contributors there is great consensus on the root causes of the outbreak and extension of the Maoist insurgency (crisis of governance, socio-economic marginalization and widespread frustration, inter and intra-party quarrels, politicization of the bureaucracy and rampant corruption). Meena Acharya refers to the erosion of basic economic institutions (i.e. household and village) and its primary role in the initiation of the armed struggle in Nepal.

Women & Children in the Periphery of People's War

Shobha Gautam

Kathmandu: Institute of Human Rights Communication Nepal (IHRCON), 2001, 170 p.

The **book** focuses on the situation of women and children in the areas affected most by the Maoist insurgency. Women, in particular, seem to have suffered from years of social marginalization, physical discrimination and economic exclusion by the state. The Maoist message has proved very attractive to them, since emancipation is one of the foremost demands spelled in the rebel's programme. But even before the outbreak of the people's war, the communist party used to be successful, particularly in the hills of Nepal, such as the poorly developed rural districts of Rukum and Rolpa in the Mid-Western region. Political persecution by the ruling parties (namely NC and UML) was perpetrated while violent police operations produced a situation of actual terror among the local population. Politically harassed, physically persecuted, socially alienated and economically distressed individuals found in the Maoist insurgency the only solution providing a practicable perspective of change. Thus men joined the rebellion leaving women with the burdensome task to run the family while children often had to abandon their studies to help the family. The military response adopted by the

government further escalated the conflict. In the families affected by the loss of one member due to the security forces' violence, a sense of revenge against the state arose among women and children. That is why they embraced arms and personally joined the guerrilla force.

The situation in those areas, some years after the inception of the rebellion, seemed to confirm that some changes had occurred. In fact, the rebels controlled nearly all the territory of the districts of the Western and Mid-Western districts whereas the presence of the government was confined to the district headquarters. In their stronghold, the rebels established their own judicial system, their development programmes and their independent administration as well as brand new political structures inspired by the Maoist ideology. While common social diseases such as gambling, abuse of alcohol and physical violence against women have been eradicated, negative events (e.g. extortion of money, forced donations, restricted freedom of movement, low quality education, cases of rape against women among Maoist ranks) have occurred as well. In conclusion, although the Maoist rebellion is a merely political movement it "has been strengthened by social, economic and political anomalies" (pp. 115-116). The response of the government should address and solve those anomalies, thus reducing the appeal of the Maoist movement.

Quest for Peace

Prakash Shrestha (ed.)

Kathmandu: South Asia Partnership Nepal (SAP), 2001, 224 p.

The **book** is a collection of contributions on the Maoist conflict. Six different perspectives are offered. The development perspective focuses on the failure of the government to ensure sustainable development based on equity. Poor governance triggered socio-economic and political exclusion, activating the conflict in some underdeveloped regions of the country. The socio-cultural and economic perspective is still linked to failed development: poverty alleviation programs have tackled only superficially the problem of poverty in Nepal since their replication was too costly and unsustainable. In such a situation, the poor have been forced to pay extra-legal payments since they have no access to many basic facilities because of their socio-

political marginalization. The myth of Nepal as a peaceful country is demolished if we consider that the unification process was undertaken by conquest and violence. Until the declaration of the People's War by the CPN (M), Nepal had been living in a situation of negative peace that was easily transformed into "positive war" in 1996. The human rights perspective pinpoints the violations that occurred during the conflict and multiplied by its further escalation. The civil society is encouraged to act as a defender of those rights and promote the resolution of the conflict. The gender perspective is based on recurrent issues such as the impact of the conflict on women, their high participation in the insurgency and the need to include them in any peacebuilding effort. The political standpoint is based on the analysis of socio-political factors leading to the eruption of violent conflicts. In the efforts to solve the conflict peace is understood as a process to be achieved gradually by prudently utilizing the socio-economic resources of the country.

Good Governance & Decentralization in Nepal

Dev Raj Dahal, Hari Uprety & Phanindra Subba

Kathmandu: Center for Governance and Development Studies (CGDS) & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2001, 98 p.

The **monograph** discusses various aspects of the concept of decentralization and good governance. "Rational allocation of decision-making is central not only to the efficient operation of a democratic polity but also to prevent an overburden of the decision-making load on a particular level of governance to its breakpoint and disintegration" (p. 1). The book, which is divided into two parts - good governance and decentralization -, discusses the concept of good governance, role of state, market, resource allocation, civil society and public space, building national integrity system and inter-linkages between good governance and decentralization. In the section on decentralization, the book attempts to discuss globalization versus localization, local-central government relationships as well as national political economy and donors' cooperation in decentralization and good governance. One of the objectives of the publication is to underscore the links between democracy and decentralization and support efficient decentralization measures from the government's side promoting local initiatives to

sustain them. Besides dealing with the theoretical perspectives on decentralization, the authors also attempt to analyze the historical context of decentralization in Nepal and its implementation at the grassroots level. As the country's policy-makers are obsessed with the centralization of authority, Nepal has not made any genuine effort towards decentralization.

The authors argue how decentralization and good governance are linked to each other in terms of community building, leadership development, social mobilization, conflict resolution and economic, political and social development. "After the restoration of multiparty democracy, people have been demanding more information control, greater accountability, responsiveness and ownership in the governance and development processes. The weaknesses and inefficiency of the centralized political and administrative superstructure that have come in the way of improving the quality of life of the majority of people are indeed a barrier to effective democracy" (p. 1). The work examines the provisions of the existing constitution and stresses the need for greater participation of the people in the political process. It also discusses the existing Acts on local self-government and other issues and discussions about the challenges and problems in the implementation of decentralization policies and their implications. Openness, fairness and predictability in the decision-making process are important elements of good governance and decentralization, which are missing in the Nepalese context.

From conflict management to fulfilling the aspirations of the people at the grass roots, decentralization is vital in a country like Nepal. Smaller the government, better the management. In this context, decentralization and good governance are very much interlinked.

Various aspects of good governance linked to decentralization are considered and analyzed. The book, among others, discusses the structures of Village Development Committees (VDCs), District Development Committees (DDCs) and their capability to exercise their limited power. Preconditions for an institutional framework leading to local self-governance in Nepal are: 1) regional autonomy; 2) political representation; 3) popular participation; 4) adequate financial resources; 5) transparency and accountability of governmental activities and practices; 6) local-based planning process; 7) development and enhancement of human resources; 8) improvement of service delivery and access to public services; 9) promotion of civic space as a vector of political culture and leadership building; 10) local context regarded as conflict negotiation and

resolution forum. In conclusion, the authors stress the importance of the constitution as a foundation for good governance. However, the process of “constitutionalization” of the actions of the state, the market and the civil society - the three pillars of governance - is hampered by some structural impediments. The first is the excessive influence of foreign forces on local institutions, culture and behaviours. The second is the weak support the current constitution enjoys from some political parties. The authors also focus on the necessity of further political institutionalization and decentralization in order to face regressive forces that benefit by retaining their privileges and are not enthusiastic about losing the power they hold.

The National Political Culture and Institutions in Nepal

Leo E. Rose

In Shastri A., and A. J. Wilson (eds.) “Post-colonial States of South Asia: Democracy, Identity, Development and Security” Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001: pp. 114-138.

This **chapter of a book** deals with the political culture in Nepal. Diversity is the fundamental norm shared by societies of the South Asian region. Particularly in Nepal, “a well-developed sense of tolerance and accommodation, based on the acceptance of divisions of responsibility and authority rather than integration” prevented any conflict between the ruling elite (centred in Kathmandu) and the other local cultural groups (p. 114). Nevertheless, this tradition of mutual accommodation began to shift toward open confrontation at the end of the 1980's as the ruling elite at the centre engaged in a process of forced integration. Traditionally, the family has remained the central political unit involved in the process of definition, enhancement and transfer of power. The national unification in the XVIII century brought about the emergence of a structured bureaucracy again based on inter-familial relations. The contemporary setting retained many traditional institutions and practices. As in the past, it is clear to the ruling elites that it is impossible to reduce the monarchy to a subordinate position in the political sphere. For instance, in 1961, right after the abolition of parliamentary democracy established only a decade ago, king Mahendra kept on selecting the cabinet's members “with regional and ethnic factors in mind” (p. 125). Bureaucracy has definitely been the “most important source of continuity and stability” and proved to be “the dominant

force in the decision-making process of the country” (p. 127). The military has always kept a low profile in the political disputes since 1951. With regard to the political parties, notwithstanding its several factions, the moderate centrist Nepali Congress (NC) has been quite successful in keeping together the party and avoiding internal splits. On the contrary, the Communists performed less well and resented the ideological controversies between China and the former Soviet Union. However, the restoration of pluralism and the establishment *ex-novo* of participatory democracy posed a quite difficult task. Political parties had no experience of legal politics since they had been operating underground for more than 30 years; bureaucracy had to adjust its functioning, while the police had to face a change of task and a limitation on its repressive faculty. Last but not least, the palace had to adapt itself to a more limited role in the political spectrum with the monarch compelled to identify its role within a democratic and constitutional framework. Today, the outcome of the opening to democracy that began in 1990 is still not clear and many issues have not been resolved, i.e. the position of the palace, the dominant role of the Brahmin-Chettri elite, social discrimination and economic development.

Domestic Conflict and Crisis of Governability in Nepal

Dhruba Kumar (ed.)

Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), 2000, 325 p.

The **monograph** is a collection of perspectives on contemporary Nepali politics. In particular, the contributions deal with issues such as the democratic framework, the Maoist insurgency, governance, political parties and ethnic issues of Nepal. Dhruba Kumar provides a critical analysis of the democratic system introduced in Nepal in early 1990's. Personal aggrandisement of political leaders has brought about the alienation between society and politics since popular expectations differ significantly and their relationship has become more conflictual. A process of privatization of state power has replaced the old Panchayat order by political forces.

The *Jana Andolan* conveyed a twofold message: while the absolute powers of the king were no more tolerable, monarchy remains an indispensable institution for Nepal. Thus,

the structural fragility of the democratic state “could only be overcome through the collaboration between traditional and modernizing forces” (p. 20). There are many issues that question the legitimacy of the democratic transition of the country. First, the quality of the democratic leadership, then the high politicisation of the bureaucracy and the criminalization of the political forces along with the malfunctions of the parliamentary institutions weakened an embryonic democratic system. On the other hand, economic stagnation and foreign assistance dependency further impeded the democratic consolidation in Nepal. These considerations show that the Maoist insurgency did not come out as a bolt from the blue. The premises were already there. The insurgency cannot be considered as a rural movement. Despite its grassroots base, the rebellion aims at replacing the central government. Thus, the real threat to Nepali democracy does not come from the Maoist insurgency but from the failure of the governments to control it. “[T]he Maoist insurgency is largely considered as a cause and consequence of governmental dysfunctionality. It is neither a cause of relative deprivation prevalent in the Nepali society nor the consequence of public disapproval of the democratic system” (p. 51).

Lok Raj Baral identifies two main controversial issues challenging the whole institutional system of Nepal: first, the split political culture of a country where traditional elements are confused by Western political concepts and second the steep decline in credibility of the country’s political institutions. As Krishna Hachhethu suggests, the key-problem still lies with the actors (especially the political parties and their leaderships) and not with the system. The class-struggle nature of the Maoist insurgency is analyzed in the paper of Krishna B. Bhattachan, while Maharjan reaffirms the necessity to examine and address the “root cause” of the conflict. Suman K. Sharma has analyzed the “cycle of external dependency”. The viable way-out suggested is the emergence of alternative views within the political class of the country.

People, Politics & Ideology. Democratic and Social Change in Nepal

M. Hoftun, W. Raeper and J. Whelpton

Kathmandu: Mandala Point Book, 1999, 423 p.

This **monograph** offers a lucid account of the political and ideological developments that occurred in Nepal since the 1950's. In particular, even if it does not directly analyze the Maoist conflict, the book provides a candid overview of the political conditions, opportunities and shortcomings created by the 1990 democratic movement in Nepal. Some of the causes of the eruption of the violent conflict are located in the inconsistencies rooted in the political set-up that originated from a compromise of the main actors involved in the 1990 "revolution", i.e. two highly divided and antagonistic political parties and a yielding monarchy. The new democratic system has been unable to deliver good governance to Nepalese and the reasons can be found in some specific constraints and structural deficiencies of the political arena. Personalization of politics was the immediate result of highly hierarchical political parties, whose political performance was prevented by the burdensome legacy of the past (e.g. the UML government, but also the Nepali Congress executives). At the same time the constitutional framework that was laid after 1990 proved highly divisive and inconsistent with most of the socio-economic and political priorities that emerged as a result of the political liberalization brought about by democracy after more than two centuries of autocracy. Such a frail political architecture further deteriorated because of the strong influence of the foreign powers. In particular India acted as a disruptive force in the country while China has considered Nepal as one of the theatres of contention with rival India.

Politico-Economic Rationale of People's War in Nepal

Baburam Bhattarai

Kathmandu: Utprek Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1998

<http://www.maoism.org/misc/nepal/worker4/worker4_5.htm>

This **book** presents the theoretical explanation of the People's War launched in 1996 by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). The document is written by the party's ideologue and offers an important contribution to the understanding of the insurgency from within the movement itself, even though the small volume provides only the official ideological standpoint of the movement. After observing that Nepal failed to achieve durable and extensive socio-economic and human development because of the

underlying feudal logic and interests, Bhattarai points out that “the solution can be found only by analysing the problem with a historical materialistic method” (p. 1). He argues that imperialist oppression and expansionism of external forces (United States and other western developed countries along with India) aligned themselves with internal forces. In particular, the adverse situation of the country has to be attributed to the semi-feudal relations in the extremely backward rural areas where agriculture is the only source of sustenance. In the last 20 years productivity and the exports have decreased dramatically. Unemployment, under-employment and bonded labour (i.e. the Kamaiya system) are serious realities that affect Nepalese people and this trend is not going to change in the forthcoming years. The author’s opinion is particularly negative about the so-called *Small Farmer Development Programme*, “brought forward by the imperialists through the World Bank” (p. 11). The industrial sector has witnessed a steep decline as well while supporting the petty interests of the imperialist forces within and outside the country. Lack of economic progress has increased social inequalities producing further marginalization of minority groups all through the country. As a consequence, regional disparities and ethnic divisions have intensified the socio-economic, let alone political, exclusion of large parts of the population. The Kathmandu Valley, where all interests are concentrated, has reinforced even more its tight control on the major activities of Nepal. The economic policy of the “New Democracy”, which the Maoists want to establish on the basis of Marxist-Leninist doctrines, is founded on the destruction of the old regime’s structures and production relations. Then, an independent, planned, balanced and self-reliant development will be executed by the new regime. This can be achieved through land reforms, nationally oriented industrialization, and regional balance. The political facet of the revolution is related to a process of destruction of the old structures and creation of new ones. Capitalism will be exploited as a transitional instrument coupled with a strategy of “protracted revolution” finally leading to *New Democracy*.

The Challenge to Democracy in Nepal: a Political History

T. Louise Brown

London; New York: Routledge, 1996, 239 p.

This comprehensive **monograph** aims at explaining the historical and political developments that took place in Nepal, approximately since its emergence as a unitary state. The work covers a period ranging from the 18th century traditional Nepal up to the modern democratic and constitutional kingdom. For our purpose, the most interesting part is the analysis of the period starting with the *Jana Andolan*, the People's Movement that apparently restored democracy to Nepalese after the three decade-long autocratic experience of the Panchayat system. The 1990 revolution was an unpredicted event. Actually, one should not underestimate the "snowballing" effect induced by the wave of democratization in Eastern Europe. Those events stirred up a sentiment of dissatisfaction with the existing absolute monarchical regime and triggered a significant popular movement led by the Nepali Congress party and the United Leftist Front. Professional people and students constituted the forefront of the *Jana Andolan* that, despite the impression that it was a people-based and nationwide movement, was substantially a middle class and urban-based manifestation of disenchantment with the regime. Only towards the end of the protests in April 1990, the movement witnessed popular participation. Yet, apart from some selected arrests and a cautious censorship, the palace did not truly suppress the *Jana Andolan*, although it had the military means to easily do so. In addition, the international political climate and the high dependency of Nepal on foreign aid prompted the King to endorse a soft line towards the People's Movement.

The anti-Panchayat front was a heterogeneous alliance that soon showed its limits. Although the parties had been working together, their ultimate goals differed. Mutual suspicion lingered on. The United Left Front (ULF) suspected that the Nepali Congress would compromise with the king, while the NC leadership feared that the communists might take control of the *Jana Andolan*. A compromise between NC, ULF and the king was agreed in April 1990. However, "the old order was not destroyed [but] it became a partner in the new political order" (p. 141). Afraid of a political landslide the NC took the controversial decision to compromise with the king by offering to the monarchy an important role in the future multi-party democracy.

Another fundamental phase of the democratic transition in Nepal was the interim government headed by the president of the Nepali Congress K. P. Bhattarai who was appointed on 19 April 1990. The composition of the executive proved that there had been no revolution in Nepal: besides 4 members from the Nepali Congress, 3 from the ULF and 2 independents, 2 nominees of the king were included in the cabinet.

Moreover, the old establishment still dominated the civil service and other main structures of the state. Because of King Birendra's ambivalence, the handover of authority from the monarch to the interim government proved rather problematic and controversial. The executive was able to restore law and order all around the country but it did not go further. Due to lack of a genuine mandate and continuous differences within the cabinet no domestic issue was duly addressed. The *Malik Commission* acknowledged that gross violations of human rights had taken place during the popular uprising but did not provide the names of the perpetrators of those crimes. The author puts forward three main reasons to explain the interim government's unwillingness to deal with the human rights issue. The first was the Nepali Congress's wish to preserve the monarchy, an institution regarded as a unifying and stabilizing force in a crucial transitional moment. The prosecution of the old regime officials would have undermined, if not directly implicated, the king himself. Second, the interim government needed to win over the police if it wanted to rule effectively; by prosecuting some police officers it would have surely alienated the police's support to the government. Third, the very nature of the democratic transition in Nepal (a compromise between two conflicting political forces and the old regime) prevented Bhattarai from taking action on the human rights question.

The new Constitution was another tangible example of the limits of the *Jana Andolan*. Only a very small number of several popular propositions were endorsed and included in the final draft and none of those related to ethnic, religious, linguistic and regional issues. Nepal was defined as a "multiethnic" and "multilingual" country. At the same time, the same constitutional provision recognized Nepal as a "Hindu kingdom" implying a monoculture background and preserving the ancient caste-based social structure. The constitution was genuinely democratic but its only deficiency was the lack of enforcement measures for the numerous reforms provisions outlining the country's needed reforms. The role of the king was rather ambiguous (e.g. the use of emergency powers) while he remained the Supreme Commander of the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). In the 1991 elections the NC won the majority of seats in the Parliament and formed a government led by G.P. Koirala. Yet, the expectations of the *Jana Andolan* were soon thwarted by the incompetence of the government whose "intra-party feuding" (p. 167) finally led to its fall in July 1994. A minority communist government was installed. However, obscure political practices, underground manoeuvres and extra-parliamentary activities did not cease. *Ad hocism* permeated policy initiatives and the governmental

conduct while political parties' influence could be found in all walks of life of Nepalese society. Highly centralized in their decision-making, the mainstream parties (the NC in particular), lacked inner-party democracy, and factionalism were perpetuated by the authoritarian behaviour of its leaders. Profiting from the unstable political situation and from the flawed governmental experience of the NC, the old guard, basically consisting of the former *panchas* grouped in the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), gained ground. The minority government of the UML proved equally helpless like the previous executive. Threatened by its own nature as a minority cabinet, the executive endorsed a survival-oriented strategy reflected in a low-profile political conduct. Finally, the first four years of democracy in Nepal analyzed in the book show that the administrative machinery of the country and all state structures are still based on the previous Panchayat experience. And this is the consequence of the nature of the democratic process itself: a compromise between traditional elites and the professional middle class from which the poor masses were excluded. Any elected government in Nepal should represent the interests of the people while appeasing the traditional elites by preserving the status quo. Only this "two-track strategy" could succeed in the difficult task of creating and promoting stable democratic institutions in Nepal.



ACADEMIC ARTICLES

Nepal at the Precipice

Brad Adams

Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005): pp. 121-134

This **article** provides a succinct account of the “people’s war” in Nepal. The author puts the emphasis on the declining popular support for the monarchy and the risk that Nepal may become another “failed state”. The first intervention by King Gyanendra in the political scene of the country – the October 4, 2002 “royal move” – managed to derail the emergent democratic process established in 1990. The second interference of the Palace – the February 1, 2005 “royal takeover” – has further reduced the political space for the democratic forces of the country. These actions have alienated the population and have benefited the Maoist rebels who control large parts of the territory. Unlike the *Khmer Rouge*, the author argues, Nepal’s Maoists have shown more willingness to reach a negotiated settlement since they “have a list of demands that can be discussed” (p. 129). King Gyanendra’s February move was planned and executed although the Palace had been warned by the most influential foreign powers – i.e. India, the United States and the United Kingdom – not to commit mistakes which could further strengthen the rebels. The reaction of these countries to the royal takeover was strong: India suspended its military assistance followed by the US and UK. The delivery of some non-lethal hardware has been resumed but the foreign powers’ stance has remained focused on the restoration of the democratic process.

The author also makes a brief assessment of the military situation. In fact, both conflicting parties are aware of the impossibility of an outright military victory. However, Nepal’s human rights record is extremely negative. The Royal Nepal Army (RNA) is particularly blamed for its human rights abuses and needs comprehensive training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The reform of the army is thus advocated as a preliminary measure to end abuses against civilian population, which is often caught in between the two sides. Besides offering better protection to the population, this would also allow the king to “win back public confidence” (p. 134), provided that he is willing to restore a civilian government and work with the political parties.

Evaluating Nepal's Integrated "Security" and "Development" Policy: Development, Democracy, and Counterinsurgency

Stuart Gordon

Asian Survey, Vol. 45, No. 4 (July/August 2005): pp. 581-602

This **article** explores the relationship between development, democracy and security policies in the context of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. In the first part of the article, the author analyzes the causes leading to conflict and the government's counterinsurgency measures. It is argued that, although poverty is often identified as the main factor generating support for the Maoists, the conflict is "the product of a complicated convergence of regional, ethnic, and economic inequalities and deprivations". These factors have been then reinforced by the consequences of "overpopulation, environmental damage, systematic corruption, political instability, social inequality and exclusion, uneven development, extreme poverty, and human rights abuses" (p. 582). Elite politics and greed for power have further escalated the conflict and initiated a power struggle between political parties and the monarchy. King Gyanendra has profited from the political vacuum created by intra-party and inter-party quarrels and has assumed direct powers first in October 2002 and then in February 2005. According to the author, the existing constitutional framework cannot lead to a genuine process of democratic reform. Only "general acceptance of limitations on the role of the monarchy and of the need to change the Constitution" would make the resumption of peace negotiations and the start of state reform possible. Nevertheless, the erosion of accountability of public officials and security forces and lack of transparency of governmental practices have been a landmark of the post-February 1 period. The media is under the tight control of the army whereas the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has not been put in the conditions to work efficiently and independently.

The government's response to the Maoist insurgency has been discontinuous. The police was tasked to quell the insurgency in its initial stage. The RNA was only mobilized in November 2001. However, its coordination with the paramilitary corps – i.e. the Armed Police Force (APF) – has been inadequate and has produced tensions within the security forces. Therefore in 2003 the government has created the "unified command"

of all security forces (RNA, APF and police). Despite this effort, the security strategy is still deficient. The nature of the terrain, weather conditions and the lack of efficient transport infrastructures have prevented the security forces to guarantee a 24-hour presence in many areas of the country. This situation has induced the government to create civilian militias at the village level, a move that has been condemned by many donors and human rights organizations. The “Integrated Security and Development Program” (ISDP) is defined as “the centrepiece of the government’s security strategy”. It involves the integration of the army in the domestic development agenda. The programme was started in Gorkha district in 2001. According to the author, the ISDP is a response of the government to claims of increasing militarization of the country and is intended to “win the hearts and minds” of local population and re-gain popular support. The programme is also “a mechanism to undercut the grievances that have enabled the Maoists to recruit members” (p. 599). However, the government had to discontinue the ISDP following severe criticism from international donors and NGOs regarding the lack of funds for development activities. After the collapse of peace talks in 2001, the government resumed the programme but only “as a face-saving measure”. Despite some limited results, the author concludes that the ISDP cannot be considered the appropriate response to the insurgency and its underlying causes. This is because the programme was conceived and implemented with the clear political purpose of appeasing the donor community and “obscur[ing] the domination of the security agenda over any reform agenda” (p.601).

Impact of Conflict on Security and the Future: The Case of Nepal

Dhruba Kumar

Journal of Security Sector Management, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 2005): pp. 1-25

<http://www.jofssm.org/issues/jofssm_sp_03_asia_kumar.pdf?CFID=652114&CFTOKEN=56965863>

This **article** argues that to understand Nepal’s conflict and security requires an understanding of the political structure of the state. Moreover, social exclusion and the centralised control of state power by elites have exacerbated conflicts, particularly in underdeveloped regions of the world. The article illustrates two of the most noticeable

trends for the future of security, stability and status of the Nepali state. The first is that the Maoists have discredited the state's exclusive authority over the use of force and delegitimised its sovereign control of its territory. The second is that the growing sense of insecurity of the state has led to the process of state militarization through the acquisition of a repressive capacity by legislative measures, such as the use of emergency powers, the anti-terrorist act and curfew. Integral to this trend is the state's withdrawal of social welfare and representation of the people. The paper concludes that effort in Nepal should focus on the need for judicial reform, since the extent of the conflict and how the military and the monarchy have responded has created wide and systematic human-rights abuses (abstract from the author).

Civil-Military Relations and the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

Prakash Nepali and Phanindra Subba

Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 16, No. 1 (March 2005): pp. 83-110

This **article** examines the relationship between the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and the civilian government during the last fifty years. Particular emphasis is given to the role of the army in the current Maoist insurgency. The article argues that the RNA role has often gone unnoticed until recently "when it has come to play an increasingly important part in the Nepalese national life" (p. 1). The process of political affiliation of the RNA to the royal palace during the Panchayat period described by the authors explains the loyalty of the army to the king today. The military has always been "taught to understand the country's history in a very different way than the civilian leadership" and this ideological divide has determined the disaffection by the RNA towards the democratic political parties which have been labelled as 'anti-national elements due to their constant relationship with India. (p. 6). The multi-party democratic experience has confined the army to an even more ceremonial role. This situation has been altered by the outbreak of the Maoist insurgency. In the early stages of the insurgency the army was not mobilized. Nevertheless, it observed a non-cooperative attitude towards the democratic governments. The eventual mobilization of the RNA in November 2001 has imposed a different political equation in Nepal. The structure and doctrine of the Maoist military wing is also briefly analyzed. To conclude, the authors argue that the army will be able to provide systematic security only if fundamental political reforms are

undertaken by the political leadership so as to “take the heat out of the insurgency” and let the army develop its own structures in times of peace.

Nepal and Bhutan in 2004: Two Kings, Two Futures

Michael Hutt

Asian Survey, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January/February 2005): pp. 83-87

This short **article** describes the political situation in Nepal and Bhutan in 2004. It is argued that, besides some apparent similarities (both are Himalayan kingdoms with a similar geographical and natural endowment), the two kings are heading toward opposite political directions: while King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan is gradually relinquishing some of his powers to an elected body and is, allegedly, set to become a constitutional monarch, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal has managed to assert himself as “constructive” monarch – *de facto* active – taking advantage of the Maoist insurgency and a political crisis affecting the political parties of the country. In 2004 Sher Bahadur Deuba, who had been sacked in October 2002, was reappointed as Prime Minister following large street protests organized by the mainstream political forces, which had forced the king’s handpicked Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa to resign. However, Deuba failed to form an all-party government, because the main political party – the Nepali Congress (NC) – refused to join what NC President Girija Prasad Koirala continued to see as a king’s government. On the other hand, with some violent attacks the Maoists have also demonstrated that their military capacity has not decreased. In addition, the rebels have adopted new techniques imposing blockades on some district headquarters and on the Kathmandu Valley thus causing serious problems to the population and raising the concern of the international community.

Democratic Middle Ground in Nepal: A Perspective from the North American Nepali Diaspora

Naresh Koirala and Anup Pahari

Liberal Democracy Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2005): pp. 1-7

Published by Nepal Study Center, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA

This **article** reflects the views of a group of scholars and academics living in the United States. The principal message of their contribution is that there can be no resolution of the Maoist conflict unless the democratic centre (what they call “Middle Ground”) is strengthened and allowed to play a central role. What the authors underline is that a necessary step in the conflict resolution process is the reinstatement of full democracy and the participation and “leading role of parliamentary political parties in shaping the future of the country” (p. 3). Although most Nepalis do not want to abolish the monarchy, King Gyanendra’s February 1 move has actually undermined the image and place of the monarchy in Nepal. The authors, at the same time, acknowledge the need for major structural changes in the nation’s administrative system and devolution of political and economic power. Accordingly, the RNA must come under the democratic control of the elected government and must be rendered accountable to the parliament. Furthermore, corruption eradication and an “action strategy” must be implemented to correct the centuries-old problem of ethnic, regional, social and gender exclusion.

Then Koirala and Pahari go on to analyze some crucial issues. The King’s role in the “future constitution” will have to be shaped after the European constitutional monarchy model while the future constitution is to be “framed by a constituent assembly elected for the purpose” (p. 4). An all-party interim government will then lead the country during the negotiations with the Maoists and run the country throughout the transitional period until fresh parliamentary elections can be held. The Middle Ground will also have to undergo thorough reform: internal democracy needs to be introduced within the political parties along with political accountability. In addition, the electoral system will have to be more representative and able to co-opt the so far excluded minorities and other deprived groups.

India’s Role in Nepal’s Maoist Insurgency

Rabindra Mishra

Asian Survey, Vol. 44, No. 5 (2004): pp. 627-646

This **article** examines India-Nepal relations in connection with the Maoist insurgency launched by the CPN (Maoist) in 1996. The author argues that the ongoing conflict in Nepal is greatly influenced by “transboundary links” (p. 628) and should also be considered in the light of the last 50 years of bilateral relations of the two countries. Mishra admits that domestic factors such as socio-economic deprivation are not enough to explain the persistence of the Maoist struggle and its apparent success. India’s role in Nepal’s domestic politics is analyzed from an historical perspective. Delhi has always adopted a pragmatic stance with regard to Nepali politics and has considered its own self-interests rather than its “public commitment to democracy in Nepal” (p. 631). The support to King Mahendra’s dismissal of the elected Prime Minister B. P. Koirala in 1960 has been an unequivocal example of Indian position. Even after the restoration of democracy in 1990, the attitude of the policymakers in Delhi has remained unchanged and, according to the author, “it still continues to carve the path of Nepali politics” (p. 634). The author identifies two separate periods during which Indian positions with regard to the Maoist insurgency have followed slightly different patterns. The “Period of Suspicion” has been characterized by the unconfirmed impression that Delhi was providing the rebels with both political and material support. Meetings between Maoist leaders and other senior Indian and Nepali left-wing politicians were allegedly taking place on Indian territory where the Maoist leadership was receiving shelter. The “Beginning of Revelation” confirmed the suspicions in Kathmandu and cleared Delhi’s real intentions in Nepal. Despite Delhi’s full support to the Nepalese government’s efforts against the “Maoist terrorists”, Indian military assistance given to the small neighbour needs to be regarded in the broader context of the “War on Terror” launched by the US in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In fact, Indian attitude towards Nepal remains “largely covert” and inspired by a “Machiavellian pursuit of self-interest, regardless of its effect on Nepal’s future or impact on India’s own image” (p. 645). At the same time, the attitude of Nepalese political leadership – especially its Foreign Ministry – with regards to its big Southern neighbour has largely been prejudiced and driven by nationalist sentiment which, in the same period, has some limited pay-offs at the national level.

Nepal: Context of Maoist Insurgency

Tapan Kumar Bose

South Asian Journal (Lahore), No. 5 (Jul.-Sep. 2004): pp. 114-124

The author of this **article** maintains that the armed conflict in Nepal is the indirect result of the restoration of democracy in the country. The return to multi-party politics deprived the royal elites of several economic and political advantages. Simultaneously, the newly empowered urban middle class was given a larger access to the state resources. In his account Bose stresses the achievement of the democratic change, especially in economic terms. In fact, during the first five years of democratic rule, the country witnessed “unprecedented economic growth” (p. 114). However, after the initial years of political consensus, the political parties were unable to guarantee a certain degree of political stability. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala from the Nepali Congress was compelled to resign in 1994. Intra- and inter-party fights inaugurated a volatile period. The political crisis in the parliament soon extended over the entire system. Democracy detractors have been keen on turning these internal squabbles to their advantage. When the Maoist rebels launched their people’s war in 1996, the government was already involved in harsh political quarrels. The discredited political leadership legitimized the increasing role of the monarchy in Nepal politics which ended with King Gyanendra’s removal of PM Deuba from office in October 2002. The monarchy had already stepped in indirectly when the Royal Nepal Army had been mobilized to tackle the spreading Maoist insurgency in late 2001. The author also explains the increasing role of the NGOs in development assistance and the related problem of loose accountability of these informal civil society networks which sometimes fuel the conflict itself and do not deliver service to the poorest people of Nepal. In fact, Bose underlines the fact that food has become an “instrument of war”, especially in the remotest areas of the country where 50 years of development assistance has failed.

Coping with Challenges to Sovereignty: Sino-Indian Rivalry and Nepal’s Foreign Policy

Manish Dabhade & Harsh V. Pant

Contemporary South Asia, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 2004): pp. 157-169

This **article** analyzes the different strategies pursued by China and India in their ongoing security competition in Nepal. Nepal's foreign policy responses to this competition are also considered. The question whether both China and India have accepted the status quo in Nepal is examined. First, the authors provide a theoretical framework of great power politics to examine the Sino-Indian power competition *vis-à-vis* Nepal. This is followed by an examination of Chinese and Indian foreign policy strategies in Nepal. It is argued that both India and China are actually seeking opportunities in the Himalayan Kingdom as long as their actions do not undermine the other neighbour's core interests. This is true, especially for the handling of the Maoist insurgency but not for the Nepalese government and the reaction of its neighbouring countries. This further confirms that Nepal's significance to its neighbours must be considered within the broader spectrum of the regional political-economic context. Nepal's foreign policy response to preserve its sovereignty and security has showed a wavering attitude towards China and India.

Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Radicalizing Gendered Narratives

Rita Manchanda

Cultural Dynamics, Vol. 16, No. 2-3 (2004): pp. 237-258

The **article** examines the gender dynamics of political contradictions in the Maoist revolution in Nepal. It probes the tension between a near critical mass of women in the Maoist movement and a male leadership ambivalent about redefining gender relations. Exploring the emancipatory potential of the participation of women in an authoritarian, militarized movement, this article comments on the transformation of cultural identities and the radicalization of the social agenda in Nepal. What does this mean for the development of freedom? How does it impact gender relations? What questions does it raise about accountability for human rights abuses? (From the author)

Relationships, Complicity and Representation. Conducting Research in Nepal During the Maoist Insurgency.

Judith Pettigrew, Sara Shneiderman and Ian Harper

Anthropology Today, Vol. 20, No. 1 (February 2004): pp. 20-25

This article looks into the consequences of the Maoist insurgency on the field work of anthropologists and other researchers. Although it explores the conflict only indirectly, the paper considers some practical and political implications of the changing context in rural Nepal. Shneiderman's analysis deals with the issue of 'complicity' with informants in the field, whereas Harper is concerned by the impacts on the researchers of their own countries' foreign policies towards Nepal, emphasizing how difficult it is for a US citizen to do fieldwork in Maoist-controlled areas. Judith Pettigrew explores the way the changed political context alters research findings as a consequence of the volatility of the security situation and the apparent political polarization.

Au Népal, la «Guérilla du Peuple» des Nouveaux Maoïstes - Révolte de la Faim dans l'Himalaya

Cédric Gouverneur

Le Monde Diplomatique (Novembre 2003): pp. 18-19

This **article** is a report on the situation in the Maoist-affected areas of Nepal, the district of Rukum in particular. The journalist describes how the population lives *de facto* under two different regimes: the Maoist-controlled areas where 10 of 23 million of Nepalese live and the areas under the control of the government, mostly the district headquarters and the capital valley: one country two regimes, like China and Taiwan. The power elites are not really concerned: to them Nepal is Kathmandu and its valley. Although the capital is not under immediate threat, the situation is worsening day by day. The rebels are attacking shopkeepers and trekking agencies. In fact, the author argues that the city is not the fortress it may seem: the seizure of two main roads, of the airport and of a gasoline deposit would be enough to force the capitulation of the city and, consequently, of the country. When dealing with some possible solutions to the

bloodshed, the author suggests that the political shift of the UML towards the centre (it is defined a neo-liberal party) has opened the left of the political spectrum to the Maoists.

The Consequences of the Militarized Conflict and the Cost of Violence in Nepal

Dhruba Kumar

Contributions to Nepalese Studies, Vol. 30, No. 2 (July 2003): pp. 167-216

The **article** assesses the economic cost of the ongoing violent conflict in Nepal and its consequences. The process of militarization initiated since the conflict escalated in 2001 proved extremely detrimental to the country's already bleak development. Resources have been drained by the military budget from other more promising sectors such as education and economic development as a whole. The anti-terrorist legislation limited some of the liberties enshrined in the 1990 Constitution and the country is undergoing great distress in every economic and social sector. In addition, the army has become increasingly assertive and influential in decision-making. In measuring the actual cost of violence, the author considers both direct and indirect costs, with the former intended as the actual damage and physical loss produced by the conflict and the latter as the cost in terms of loss of production, investment and income. Among the direct costs we find direct government security expenses, Maoists' military expenses, loss in terms of infrastructures, extortion and bank robberies by the Maoists. The indirect costs cover the business loss due to the Maoists' activities and strikes. There we can also find costs due to reduced earnings due to the decline in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), reduced flow of tourism and cost owing to displacement of people all through the country. The overall figure (still very tentative and hardly complete) is close to 220 billion Nepalese Rupees of total costs due to the conflict. Of course, the human loss cannot be quantified exactly.

Au Népal, les Maoïstes Gagnent du Terrain

Jean-Luc Racine

Le Monde Diplomatique (Juillet 2003): p. 18

This **article** is a brief review of the events that occurred in Nepal since the early 1990's. Emphasis is put on the anachronistic feature of the Maoist insurgency (“avec une génération de retard”). The crisis has three facets: the political component with the exclusion of the parliamentary forces from the political game, the insurgency itself and the socio-economic disparities in the country. The 9/11 events transformed the conflict and added a controversial international dimension. Until then called “insurgents” the Maoists have been labeled as “terrorists”. The strategic move of the king succeeded in gaining the support of Washington and London as they are concerned with their worldwide fight against terrorism. Furthermore, the regional consequences of the conflict in Nepal are significant. Instability in the Hindu Kingdom is a threat to the balance of power in South Asia and, above all, Delhi, Islamabad and Beijing have become anxious about it.

Role of International Community for Peace Initiation in Nepal

Padma Khatiwada

“Informal” INSEC Quarterly Human Rights Journal (April 2003): pp. 3-14

<<http://www.insec.org.np/publications/InformalAprilLayout.pdf>>

The **article** analyses the role of international donors in the peace building process in Nepal. The paper starts with the assessment of the performance of respective governments and then it moves on to the analysis of the contribution of international agencies and NGOs. The attitude of governments varies from country to country. While India is worried about any consequence that the Maoist insurgency could have on the regional balance of power, the United States regards the conflict as a struggle between a legitimate government and terrorists. The EU took keen interest in conflict analysis and prevention efforts in order to make an effective assessment of the causes that have triggered civil strife. Norway, Germany and Switzerland are states that have put Nepal in their “priority countries list” so that their involvement in the Himalayan kingdom is conspicuous both at the political and at the development cooperation levels. As for international agencies (UN, ICRC, Amnesty International and some regional human

rights organizations) and INGOs, their performance has been effective in alleviating some of the problems related to the conflict. In conclusion, the international community as a whole has been effective “in mitigating the internal armed conflict in Nepal” (p. 13). A greater commitment of the international community is needed, according to the author, as a pressure factor for effective peace.

Conflict and its Impact upon Youth

Prakash Bhattarai

“Informal” INSEC Quarterly Human Rights Journal (April 2003): pp. 34-36

<<http://www.insec.org.np/publications/InformalAprilLayout.pdf>>

It is a brief **article** assessing the impact of the conflict upon the younger sectors of Nepalese society. The major issue seems to be the vast youth involvement in terms of direct participation in the conflict. The causes of this increasing phenomenon are poverty, lack of development initiatives, difficult access to education and employment, lack of participation in the decision-making process, the political stalemate, the highly hierarchical selective and thus discriminating social structure, lack of responsibility of new generations after decades of bad governance and bad precedents. A major recommendation is greater involvement of youth in the political life of the country and effective measures addressing main youth-related issues.

Impact of Armed Conflict on Women in Nepal

Ranjana Thapa

“Informal” INSEC Quarterly Human Rights Journal (April 2003): pp. 30-33

<<http://www.insec.org.np/publications/InformalAprilLayout.pdf>>

The **article** clearly underlines the current condition of Nepalese women who “are categorized as second-class citizens and deprived from [economic, social and educational] development” (p. 31). What is more, the conflict has particularly targeted and affected them, violating their right to life and their freedom, besides making

miserable their existence. During the conflict, the common practices and its impact on women are the following: use of women in the war (it is reported that approximately one third of the guerrilla is constituted of women), or as human shields, rape and sexual harassment, migration and displacement, increasing responsibility for providing food, deprivation of school education, traumas and other mental disturbances, killing, abduction and disappearances. The main recommendations include: i) conflict analysis from women's perspective; ii) appointment of a woman negotiator or facilitator during the peace talks; iii) involvement of women in both peace and conflict transformation processes; iv) "Forgive but not forget" during the peace process; v) protection of widows; and vi) rehabilitation of traumatized subjects.

The Necessity of Choice: Demobilization, Demilitarization and Democratization

Dhruba Kumar

Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 2003): pp. 1-20

Under the framework of a negotiated settlement, the integration of the Maoist People's Army in the RNA leading to the creation of a National Army has been seen as the only valid response to the cooption of those who have been fighting each other for more than 8 years. This **article** offers an alternative remedy. Instead of promoting the integration of the armed forces and thus the quantitative extension of the military forces of Nepal, the author puts forward a three-stage solution: demobilization, demilitarization and democratization. Interestingly, this approach avoids the cumbersome disadvantages of integration. First, demobilization does not involve a further drain of resources, both human and economic, in the socio-economic context of a poor country such as Nepal. Rather, it promotes the reintegration of combatants into normal life. In addition, a reduced and more qualified army would enhance the sense of attachment to national issues by the armed forces on both sides, besides allowing the country to benefit from the peace dividends arising from a less burdensome military budget. The integration of armed forces that have been fighting each other for years is far from an easy task while demobilization and consequently partial demilitarization involve a sort of passive attitude, certainly less costly and more practical. The attainment

of this process of restoration of a peaceful order should go along with the promotion of a fresh and forward-looking political leadership. Indeed, “the Maoist insurgency has brutally exposed the failure of governance in Nepal” (p. 14) whereas the current leadership has lost all popular support after years of murky and corrupt politics that has virtually paralyzed the entire political system. Relying on military power, as both conflicting parties are doing, will not lead to any genuine process of democratization in the country. They will rather have to address the root causes of the conflict and uphold “civil virtue”.

Nepal: Forced Migration, Challenges and Prospects

Lok Raj Baral

Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 2003): pp. 51-66

This **article** is focused on the issue of forced migration. Although the topic is treated under a broad Nepalese perspective, some parts of the text are related to the Maoist conflict and its impact, particularly on rural populations. The “meteoric” rise of the insurgency confirms the psychological theory of migration. Fear of persecution and fear of the eventual establishment of a Maoist regime have pushed thousands of Nepalese from the Western and Mid-western Hills to leave their homes and move to the district headquarters and especially to Kathmandu whose population is already beyond the level of sustainability.

Understanding Nepal Maoists' Demands: Revisiting Events of 1990

Padmaja Murthy

Strategic Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Jan-Mar 2003): pp. 41-55

Published by the Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses - New Delhi

<<http://www.idsa-india.org/SA200301/JAN-MAR%2003.htm>>

The **article** attempts to examine the actual reasons that triggered the Maoist insurgency in 1996. The Maoists' core demands - an interim government, an elected constituent

assembly to draft a new constitution, a republican state - turn around issues which seemed to have been settled in the 1990 Constitution. The present constitution was promulgated following the People's Movement marking a transition from a partyless Panchayat system to a multi-party democracy with constitutional monarchy and sovereignty resting with the people. However, things seem to have followed the wrong path. Some crucial questions are raised: "Why are the Maoists opening these issues now? Why do they have a problem in accepting the 1990 Constitution?" To answer these questions it is necessary to revisit the events of 1990. The findings show that the Maoists' demands have similarities with the grievances articulated in 1990 by various political parties and ethnic groups. For instance, during the People's Movement many political groups agreed on a constituent assembly. They, finally, accepted the new constitution only with reservation. Some radical activists rejected the document arguing that the army was still under royal control and that feudal privileges had not been curtailed, let alone eliminated. The paper concludes that the Maoist insurgency is just one 'face' of instability. Unless corrective measures are taken, Nepal will witness more shortcomings and challenges to its already unstable democratic process. Secondly, the gap between the myth and reality of constitutional monarchy needs to be objectively examined - not just in the context of the Maoists' demands but also in the larger frame of the evolution and stability of the Nepali political system. It is not clear whether the institution of monarchy still effectively enjoys widespread support or it has lost its unifying role.

Nepal in 2002: Emergency and Resurrection of Royal Power

Karl-Heinz Krämer

Asian Survey, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2003): pp. 208-214

The **article** is an annual survey of the socio-political and economic situation in Nepal during 2002. Mounting violence, human rights abuses and political crisis marked the year. In addition, the Maoists changed their tactics by attacking more and more infrastructures with a growing number of attacks in the Kathmandu valley. Senseless killings and the destruction of poor-oriented development projects reduced the popular support for the insurgents who experienced a decline in the public participation in the

general strikes (*bandhs*) they called throughout the year. On the other side, the government abused the emergency regulations to regulate issues that were not concerned with the insurgency (i.e. demands from ethnic activists). Internal struggle within the Nepali Congress led to a serious split between Prime Minister Deuba's supporters and those backing the party's president, G. P. Koirala. On October 4, the king dismissed the prime minister because of "incompetence" in organizing the elections due in November. Thereafter the king formed his government made up of pro-royalist elements, and did not indicate any date for holding new elections.

La guerre populaire au Népal: d'où viennent les maoïstes ?

Philippe Ramirez

Hérodote, No. 107 (4ème trimestre 2002): pp. 47-64.

This **article** – which appeared in a French journal – examines the temporal, geographical and politico-ideological dynamics of the Maoist conflict. The author explains how, notwithstanding the rebel group's affiliation (Maoist), the insurgents have more links to India rather than China. In fact, like-minded armed faction in the southern neighbour has provided some logistic and ideological support to Nepal's Maoists (e.g. through the CCOMPOSA, the organization grouping Maoist rebels throughout South Asia). The historical reasons for the close link with India are also clearly demonstrated and analyzed along with the ethno-national context of the region.

Gyanendra's Test: Nepal's Monarchy in the Era of Democracy

Holley Gayley

Harvard Asia Quarterly, Vol. VI, No.1 (Winter 2002): p. 10

<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/haq/200201/0201a009.htm>>

The **article** is a brief survey of the role of the monarchy in Nepal and its "capricious relationship with democracy" (p. 2). The king has always been a symbol of unity: even during the period of domination of the Rana family. The institution has not been

abolished, although it has been deprived of power. During the Rana period a process of cultural unity was implemented. Hinduism became the tool of that strategy. The legal code issued in 1854 became an essential instrument of power consolidation and hierarchical organization. Of course, the king remained at the top of the society. The 1950 democratic experiment had been the result of the tripartite agreement between King Tribhuvan, the Rana prime Minister and the Nepali Congress: monarchy was restored and a sort of democratic system was established. Actually, the process of gradual democratization was slowed down if not hindered by the new king Mahendra, who dismissed the democratically elected government, arrested many members of the ruling Nepali Congress and declared the state of emergency, assuming control of the country. The controversial move had been justified by the supposed threats to national integrity that India and other neighbouring countries were posing. The concept of "Nepalism", i.e. the assertion of national identity, became the motivation for the replacement of parliamentary democracy with monarchy. The Panchayat system was to be the institutional framework for the monarchical rule. In practice, "Nepalism" consisted in distancing Nepal politically (through the Panchayat) and culturally (through the Nepali language) from Hindi-speaking India. Unfortunately, the imposition of Nepali as a national language, besides being a unifying factor, became also the means of domination of the existing elites and pushed the country towards a policy of assimilation. The People's Movement in 1990 restored democracy in Nepal after 30 years of autocratic Panchayat. The new constitution was a compromise between King Birendra, the Panchayat representatives and the revived political parties. Though it recognized the multicultural aspect of Nepalese society, the constitution declared Nepal a "Hindu Kingdom". To avoid political fragmentation, regional or ethnic-based political parties were constitutionally banned. Yet, during the 1990's, king Birendra proved to be a stabilizing force in the political arena of the country. Present King Gyanendra has the difficult task of reasserting that non-partisan and stabilizing role at a crucial moment in the history of Nepal.

The Resumption of History. Imagining the Global Consequences of a Maoist Victory in Nepal

Gary Leupp

Counterpunch, (21 October 2002): p. 7

<<http://www.counterpunch.org/leupp1021.html>>

This brief **article** is one of the few works that takes into consideration the possibility of Maoist victory in Nepal. It attempts to assess the consequences of a Maoist takeover. The Maoists were present in Parliament as a legal political party until 1996 when they repudiated the system and went underground launching a “People’s War”. The movement swiftly gained widespread popular support in the mostly depressed areas of the country and intensified its attacks against police stations, the Royal Nepal Army’s headquarters, governmental buildings and schools. In 2002 some British intelligence indicated that complete victory by the Maoists was only a question of time. The author’s analysis starts from this hypothesis and describes the international consequences of such an event. He argues that “[t]he radical left throughout the world would be heartened by a victory, *somewhere*; impressed to see the red flag planted (...) atop Mt. Everest, the roof of the world.” (p. 2). Depicted as a challenge to Fukuyama’s thesis of the “end of the story” as a clash of ideologies, and Huntington’s argument about the “clash of civilizations”, the Maoists’ victory is considered in the broad context of the war on terrorism initiated by the United States after the September 11 attacks. Many rebels around the world have seen their reputation changed overnight and have been depicted as “terrorists”. The Maoists have not yet been included in the roster of the international terrorist organizations. Their eventual seizure of power in Nepal would certainly push them in the terrorist quagmire. The article takes into account even the possibility of an Indian invasion. This move would definitely provoke a Chinese reaction in order to avoid an Indian influence in Nepal with evident implications for regional *equilibrium*.

Though officially a Hindu Kingdom, Nepal has been deeply affected by Buddhism. Interestingly, the comparison between Maoists’ vision and Buddhist thought reveals many common features, the most relevant being both the global perspective and the extraordinary break with the established social order epitomized by the two beliefs.

Nepal's Woes: Instability, Inequality, Insurgency and the IMF-World Bank

Mohan G. Francis

International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs) (October 2002): p. 5

<<http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/imf/2002/10nepal.htm>>

In this **article** the link between political instability and insufficient development is lucidly explained by the excessive centralization of policymaking and planning. This centre-based system is, thus, deeply influenced by frequent changes of government. What is more, changes in the composition of core institutions such as the National Planning Commission hamper continuity in the implementation of developmental policies and programmes. Thus, skewed human development and increasing inequality triggered the Maoist insurgency, which exploited widespread grievances to gain support. The paper provides arguments to explain the root causes of the crisis in Nepal. Besides the issues of political instability, social and economic inequality and the Maoist rebellion, the intrusion of *Bretton Woods* institutions into the economy of Nepal is regarded as a major shortcoming fuelling the current conflict. Economic reforms and structural adjustments neglected the realities of the agricultural sector of the country. Low fiscal deficit policies led to the curtailment of infrastructure development funds, while an efficient transport network was commonly regarded as a solution for the country's economic backwardness and human development. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) also failed to understand the structural problems of the country and considered them as mere "irritants". Actually, pre-1990 Nepal too was a poor country, but the Maoist insurgency did not emerge before 1996. Indeed, the author explains this phenomenon as something caused by dissatisfaction following the inability of the post-1990 democratic system to provide a better life to the population. The Panchayat "denied the common people of Nepal a political system of democratic representation" (p. 4), while multiparty democracy triggered the emergence of the Maoist movement.

The People's War of Nepal: Not Terrorism but Desperation

Tim Gill

Asian Human Rights Commission "Human Rights SOLIDARITY", Vol. 12, No. 5

(September 2002): pp. 3-5

<<http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/2002vol12no05>>

The title of this **article** is quite explicit about its content. The “terrorist” argument is ineffective if the long-term goal of the government is the establishment of a peaceful environment and sustainable economic development of Nepal. Poverty and discrimination are the root causes of the conflict and, even if monarchical and parliamentary legitimacy is a matter of political concern, it is “doubtful that anyone would be willing to go to war unless there was such a large degree of class and caste discrimination in Nepal” (p. 3). According to Gill, very little analysis of the reasons that led people to embrace violence against the governmental establishment has been done. The political leadership failed to achieve a more egalitarian society and introduce far-reaching economic reforms. Poverty and discrimination have not been addressed leaving dissatisfied the majority of the population and fuelling if not increasing inequality. Particular emphasis is put on the “Dalit issue”. The Dalits are the low caste “untouchables” who have no access to education, commodities and public services. Any chance of social uplift is denied, condemning them to a *de facto* apartheid. Governments and international donors share a part of responsibility for the current situation. They continue to ignore the caste system “increasing the prospects of war and violence as current inequities are only entrenched by such nearsighted efforts” (p. 5). The author concludes by recommending a caste analysis of Nepal’s society to ensure an effective response to the crisis.

Governance Challenges for Nepal

Dev Raj Dahal

Governance and Development, Vol. 1, No.1 (2002): pp. 1-15

<<http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/pdf/Governance%20Challenges%20for%20Nepal.PDF>>

The first part of the **article** deals with the context of governance in Nepal. Adherence to the principles of the so-called *Washington Consensus* (the assertive and almost dogmatic commitment to the idea that markets can solve everything) has further reduced the scope of national jurisdiction and the range of policy-making of Nepalese governments. Despite many appeals for *polycentric governance* (the decision-making permeating all levels, from the local to the national up to the international one), Nepal

is still a country affected by poverty, inequality, dependency, alienation and rebellion. According to the author, all these inadequacies are the result of poor governance. The causes of this situation are many and interlinked: 1) transnational factors such as economic globalization, environmental issues, information technology and terrorism have reduced governmental autonomy; 2) the imposition of neo-liberal ideology by the whole society and the political parties have minimized the advantages of multi-party democracy (i.e. pluralism of thought) and scuttled alternative visions; 3) global and regional powers have regarded Nepal as a useful area of influence for their “imperial purposes”; 4) excessive reliance on private economic growth and initiative. Finally, “the adoption of market radicalism in the face of a feudalistically segmented political economy has provoked the CPN (M) and anti-systemic parties to take up class radicalism” (p. 4). The reaction of the government has been largely inadequate and has focused on the effects of the insurgency rather than on its causes. Moderate political parties have found themselves reduced to irrelevant actors. In addition, their internal power struggles undermined their credibility urging a process of inner-party democratization in order to promote a culture of leadership accountability among the political forces of the country. Lack of accountability in the use of foreign aid has been another crucial shortfall of the political system in Nepal. Inflowing money has been drained from development programmes and used to sustain “the game of policy acrobatics” (p. 6). The second part suggests five crucial processes of good governance that Nepal should undertake in order to strengthen the “state capacity for governance”. First, the constitution should be considered as a foundation of good governance supported and respected by the political parties. Second, roles and responsibilities need to be institutionalized granting an acceptable level of effectiveness of the decision-making and accountability of performance. Institutionalization has to be promoted in the political arena, within the civil society and the media as well as in the centre-periphery relationship. Third, the political crisis has created a severe social crisis and widespread disillusionment among the youth. Therefore, building social capital or reviving it is seen as an essential step towards good governance. Fourth, respect for the “iron rule of democracy”, i.e. unrestrained political participation, is another crucial requirement. Fifth, a material basis (economic welfare) should be granted to the population of Nepal as well as the commitment of all strata of society to a common political, social and economic project guided by the principles of good governance. In its conclusions the author also points out that redistribution of the factors of production

should be coupled with investment in human capital through the improvement of access to education, health and employment. "Educating young people for political and social responsibility contributes massively to the creation of social opportunities and translating vision into reality" (p. 14)

Question of Nepal: Political Instability and Maoist Insurgency

Nabiha Gul

Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 2002): pp. 27-40

After a brief survey of the historical background and the political landscape of the country, the **article** provides a review of the Maoist movement's organizational structures, its funding, its support base and its external connections. Two bodies are responsible for the organization of the movement: the *political front*, in charge of creating awareness and disseminating Maoist ideas among the population, and the *military front*, which is responsible for organizing attacks against the police and the selected targets. Tactical defence, balance and attack are considered three stages of the military seizure of power. At the political level the formation of local units of power to train people to manage local administrations is seen as the prelude to prospective national governance. Extortion (they called it "contribution") and external financial support are the main basis of funding for the Maoists. Notwithstanding their name, the insurgents are closer to some extremist leftist groups in India rather than to China. In addition, the author argues, unlike Nepalese Maoists, Mao never used terror and intimidation. Yet, areas under Maoist control are functioning rather well. The party's cadres have succeeded in mobilizing local population for construction and developmental activities. Cooperative initiatives are seen in rural work as well. "The Maoist system of governance is based on equal access to resources and equal regents for all" (p. 38). The judicial system is fast and harsh for some kind of crimes. Unfortunately, no clear strategy is driving the policies implemented by the insurgents, even if they are proceeding in a very organized way. In addition, after a decade of political experiments and serious instability "Nepal is not in a position to undergo new experiment any more now" (p.39). Consensus building is necessary to foster and develop far-reaching and forward-looking reforms.

Understanding 20 Years of Change in West-Central Nepal: Continuity and Change in Lives and Ideas

Piers Blaikie, John Cameron and David Seddon

World Development, Vol. 30, No. 7 (2002): pp. 1255-1270

The **article** examines the significance of continuity and change both in theoretical approaches and in the dynamics of change affecting the lives of local people. Research into the political economy of agrarian change was undertaken in 1974-75 in West-Central Nepal, as part of a wider study of the effects of road construction in the region. The field research focused on a comprehensive income and expenditure survey in 667 rural households. An explanatory framework was developed in which class analysis was combined with dependency theory. Few signs were found of a dynamic which might lead to capitalist development in the rural or urban areas of the region. In a book, *Nepal in Crisis*, based on this fieldwork, this analysis was generalized to Nepal as a whole. A re-survey of rural households in the same region in 1997-98 confirmed that, indeed, very little capitalist development had taken place, and that the disposition of rural households within the social classes and forms of production identified 20 years before had remained remarkably stable. (From the authors)

Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Examining Socio-Economic Grievances and Political Implications

Smruti S. Pattanaik

Strategic Analysis, Vol.26, No. 1 (Jan-Mar 2002): pp. 118-130

Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses - New Delhi

<<http://www.idsa-india.org/jan-jan0102-6.htm>>

The **article** tries to prove that the Maoist insurgency in Nepal is the result of socio-economic grievances accumulated over many years. The restoration of democracy in 1990 raised Nepalese expectations regarding good governance but political instability

and frequent change in government gave little time to the parties to concentrate on issues such as economic development and social uplift. While political survival of the government remained shaky, corruption and mismanagement became the common features of the system. Since many leaders of the Panchayat regime have continued to occupy important positions in the democratic regime, common people have seen no real change. The Maoists “capitalized on these grievances and convincingly articulated the aspirations of the people”. Their political “pamphlet” of February 1996 demonstrated their political shrewdness. Moreover, the romantic ideology of Maoism appealed to illiterate rural masses. On the other side, the claim of autonomy for regional and ethnic groups gained the support of several minorities living in Nepal. Maoists established ‘People’s Governments’ in many parts of Nepal. Their ideology of a classless society appealed to the masses in these backward and remote regions. Backed by a strong and committed cadre, Maoists targeted local governmental units in areas under their control. According to the author, the “negotiations with the government in 2001 failed due to the uncompromising stand taken by the Maoists” (p. 1). Counter-insurgency method failed to stop the rebellion. Actually, police operations like *Operation Romeo* even intensified violence. In fact, the government has chosen to adopt a military solution rather than tackling the root causes of the conflict.

Nepal in 2001: The Strained Monarchy

Lok Raj Baral

Asian Survey, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2002): pp. 198-203

The **article** is an annual survey of the socio-political and economic situation in Nepal during 2001. The paper focuses on the Royal massacre described as “the first major disaster in [the country’s] political history” (p. 198). Popular suspicion undermined the institution of monarchichy because of the supposed involvement of the new king Gyanendra in the massacre. At the same time, political parties continued to be plagued by intra and inter-party conflicts and by problems created by the Maoist rebellion. Negotiations failed to produce a political settlement and violence escalated at the end of the year when the RNA was deployed for the first time against the insurgents. The wave of worldwide sympathy for the United States after the *September 11* terrorist

attacks helped the king to find a strong ally against the Maoist threat. The defence budget increased as a consequence of the conflict with more and more resources drained from development initiatives and re-allocated for military expenses.

Understanding Nepal's Civil War

Laxman Bahroo

Bharat Rakshak Monitor, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2002): pp. 1-9

<<http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/MONITOR/ISSUE4-4/bahroo.html>>

The Maoist insurgency started as an innocuous law and order problem largely ignored by Nepal's politicians. Over the last [9] years, it has transformed [itself] into a significant political and military force. The Maoists, in achieving their objectives, will undermine Nepal's government, fledgling economy, and plunge the nation into a bloody civil war. The article looks at the origins, influences, and supporters of the Maoist movement in Nepal. It traces the movement's evolution from a small band of agitators to the challengers of the Royal Nepal Army. The article also seeks to provide an insight into the national and regional dimensions of the Maoist insurgency (From the author).

Nepal: Government Fights War with Wrong Weapons

Bruce Van Voorhis

Human Rights SOLIDARITY, Vol. 11, No. 12 (December 2001) & Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 2002): p. 2

<<http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/2002vol12no01/2183>>

This short **article** discusses the governmental strategy for tackling the Maoist insurgency. The government of Nepal has managed to "sell" abroad the image of the Maoists as a terrorist group and has been able to gain financial support from some foreign governments, e.g. the US, the UK and Belgium which have provided Nepal with powerful arms to fight the "terrorists". The author argues that the government should respond to the insurgents' challenge by addressing the underlying causes that fuelled

the armed conflict. The declaration of the state of emergency is regarded as a further misuse of enforcement measures. Even if the government is militarily successful against the Maoists, the issues that triggered the revolt will remain unaddressed. The real problem is that “Nepal, like many Asian countries, has only established a *pseudodemocracy* where elections are held but the outcome is determined by intimidation and bribery with the goal of politicians being to serve their own interests once they are elected rather than those of the people” (p. 2).

La Situation au Népal

Jacques de Goldfiem

Défense Nationale, Vol. 57, No. 10 (octobre 2001): pp. 208-211

This brief **article** describes the situation in Nepal just before the declaration of the state of emergency. After an historical survey, the author discusses the different parties involved in the conflict. The massacre of the royal family in June 2001 is briefly analyzed. Interestingly, the death of King Birendra might have stopped the rapprochement between the monarchy and the Maoists. Indeed, in March 2001 both the king and the Maoists' leadership seemed to have agreed on the return to legal and open political competition by the insurgents. However, according to the author, the advent of king Gyanendra wiped out that opportunity.

Day of the Maoist

Deepak Thapa

Himal South Asian Magazine, Vol. 14, No. 5 (May 2001): pp. 4-21

<http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/conflict_resolution/day_of_maoist.htm>

This **article** combines a comprehensive description of the main events of the People's War until 2001 with an analysis of its structural and proximate causes. The article focuses, in particular, on those immediate factors leading to the outbreak of the insurgency. While the genesis of the rebellion goes back to the late 1960s when the

first democratic experience of Nepal came to an end and a temporary communist rebellion (the Naxalite movement) occurred, the post 1990 events are meticulously analyzed in the perspective of the insurgency. During the *Jana Andolan* the demand for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution was already one of the key demands of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre) considered as the precursor of the Maoist movement. But their demand was dropped and the Constitution was drafted by some representatives of the main political forces (NC and the left) and the king. In the first general elections in 1991 the United People's Front (UPF), the political wing of the CPN-UC, won 9 seats. However, bitter political rivalries between the NC and the Unity Centre, now CPN (M), arose in the Mid-western districts where the Maoists were particularly strong. The response of the NC-led government in 1995 was the *Operation Romeo* during which the police persecuted, arrested and even tortured local workers and alleged Maoist activists. "In retrospect, with the elite classes in the capital looking the other way, the police operation succeeded in thoroughly alienating the local population of Rolpa." (p. 4) Therefore, on the one hand, electoral politics was denied to the Maoists by the refusal by the Election Commission to accept their political faction; on the other hand, violent suppression was carried on by the state in Maoist strongholds. The consequence was that the Maoist leadership resorted to armed struggle and launched a people's war against the state in February 1996. The Maoists were able to identify the widespread discontent related to the ethnic situation and the caste system, and skilfully exploited it to their advantage adding some specific demands to their ideological programme of class struggle. The government's response was completely inappropriate. The police operation *Kilo Sierra II* in 1998 represents an example of a flawed approach. The violent repression carried out in eighteen of the most Maoist-affected districts precipitated the insurgency and intensified hostilities. On the Maoist side, at least until 2001, ideological rigidity had left no room for any negotiated settlement. In the author's conclusion, it is "up to the Maoists and the present polity to figure out what compromises can be made to bring the matter to a close" (p. 10).

Matching Democracy and Development Policymaking in Aid-Dependent Country: An Illustration from Nepal

Devendra Raj Panday

Harvard Asia Quarterly (Winter 2000): pp. 1-6

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/haq/200001/0001a001.htm>

Different dimensions of international aid and democracy in Nepal are discussed in this **article**. Although Nepal has been an aid-dependent country since the 1950's, the contradictions of external developmental policies became more evident and serious only after the 1980's. Actually, before that period aid policies were framed by the recipient government and the international donors were only concerned with bringing money on some conditions and providing consultative service. Structural adjustments by the IMF-World Bank changed this scenario with the sudden intrusion of the donors in the political scene of developing countries. In Nepal the consequences of this new trend have been the lack of policymaking initiative and a crisis of legitimacy of the state, deprived of some fundamental governmental capacities. Moreover, the country's economic scene shows a declining performance after the 1980's. Poverty gap and social strains increased. Political accountability became another thorny question because of frequent changes in policymaking centres. As a consequence, the process of policymaking itself suffers from lack of commitment by the political leaders. The solution would be to start a process of "endogenization" of policymaking that is linked with the concepts of ownership and accountability of developmental policies and programmes. International donors should not merely provide money but also should make available trained personnel by mobilizing the country's resources and stimulating local initiatives.

The Kham Magar Country, Nepal: Between Ethnic Claims and Maoism

Anne de Sales

European Bulletin of Himalayan Research, No. 19 (2000): pp. 41-72

<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/conference/pdf/nepal2.pdf>

The Kham Magar is a Tibeto-Burman population living in the western part of Nepal. Historically, because of their distinct cultural, religious and linguistic identity, they always considered themselves as a *nation* or as the inhabitants of *one country*. This

Kham Magar 'country' in the 1990's became the stronghold of the Maoist insurgency. The **article** explains why the region has been chosen by the Maoists to launch their People's War and also explains how local population reacted to the growing politicization of their life first in the aftermath of the restoration of democracy and then after the launching of the insurgency. The national legal code of 1854 defined the status of every ethnic group in the hierarchy of castes and regulated the life of citizens. A process of identity building in Nepal started after the installation of the Panchayat system. The process was, however, developed in a contradictory way. In order to avoid ideological splits in the country king Mahendra banned the political parties and repressed the media. On the other side, the improvement of educational standards played a crucial role in politicizing the population. Political awareness grew remarkably and gained momentum in 1990 with the People's Movement. Similarly, in the Kham Magar area a double process of reshaping of local identity and of political awareness had taken place long before 1990. Local people started feeling discriminated against because of their cultural identity, which was in contrast with the Brahmin practice of refusal of tribal excesses, rejection of alcohol and respect for vegetarian Hindu gods. Magars also considered themselves an exploited group unwilling to accept that situation any more and prepared to fight for its own rights. Finally, retired soldiers of the British army (the Gorkha soldiers) felt that people in the village did not appreciate their heroism during the Second World War. The *Jana Andolan* in 1990 raised high hopes for these discriminated and neglected groups. However, expectations concerning the recognition of their cultural diversity and their underdevelopment were frustrated by the new constitution and by the political ineptitude of changing governments. Dissatisfaction triggered the emergence of the Maoist movement. But besides this political awakening, the author emphasizes the role played by religion and tradition in the large support enjoyed by the Maoists in the Kham Magar area. Despite anti-religious rhetoric, communism has a mystic dimension. Many scholars have pointed out continuity between Hinduism and Buddhist tradition. "[T]he practice of Nepalese Maoism is hardly a secular affair" (p. 65). The traditional cult of martyrs is applied with reference to those who have been killed by the police during the insurgency. Moreover, Maoists follow local tradition like erecting commemorative pillars for those who sacrificed their lives for the Nepalese cause, or glorify particular places (i.e. Rolpa is described as an "immortal" place in the history of Nepal and identified with the country itself - "Rolpa is Nepal"). It is not clear whether the Maoists' use of tradition is only

strategic or it is a ritual and customary move. The link between religion, mysticism and Maoism should not be ignored. To be more precise, it is a fundamental feature of the movement which explains the reasons for its emergence, its fast growth and wide popular support.

Democracy and Civil Society in the Himalayas: Problems of Implementation and Participation in Multiethnic Societies

Karl-Heinz Kramer

Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 1999): pp. 37-48

The purpose of the **article** is to test some hypotheses about democratization and development of civil society in the multiethnic societies of the Himalayan region. The area has been the meeting point of two different ideologies: the western paradigm of democracy present almost everywhere in South Asia today and the communist model of China and the former Soviet Union. The experiences of the states of Nepal, Bhutan, and the regions of Sikkim and Darjeeling are taken into consideration. The article briefly suggests some conclusions, arguing that, although the western model of democracy did not solve the problems of conflicting societies of the region, it offers a viable solution towards the separation of politics and culture.

Political Transition in Nepal: Whither Democratization?

Ganga Bahadur Thapa

Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Apr. 1999): pp. 19-43

This **article** is concerned with the ongoing process of political transition in Nepal, considered a democratic state in which citizens are theoretically granted many rights to a reasonable degree. In practice, they enjoy little of what is conferred on them on paper. The population is not yet involved in a participatory political system and the low quality of democracy so far attained is "reflected by the absence of democratic culture when dealing with various national issues by the political parties" (p.21). This is,

however, a common feature of developing countries where democracy has been introduced in a context marked by weak political structures and decades, if not centuries, of authoritarian rule. In Nepal the Rana period can be defined as “the darkest age for democracy”. After that period a process of democratic awakening started. Unfortunately, political parties mushroomed and started absorbing the newly created institutions. Arbitrary and oppressive practices became the rule of politics, which remained an instrument for a few politicians. The coup of king Mahendra in December 1960 condemned the country to the autocratic rule of the Panchayat system. When democracy was restored in 1990, one remarkable difference was the great popular support enjoyed by the “Nepalese springtime”. A multiparty system, a new constitution, a powerful executive and an independent judiciary can be regarded as the main positive aspects of the “People's Movement”. Old practices and informal institutions, however, survived from the previous period preventing the new regime to build an efficient governmental structure. A brief survey of the main political parties and of their programs shows that the ideological factor “no more holds meaning” (p. 29). The link between democracy and economy is not so evident. Economic growth and democratic improvement are both uneven processes. In some contexts, they don't go hand-in-hand. The economic paradox in Nepal lies in the inadequate planning: devolution and a bottom-up approach are the remedies suggested by the author. Lack of political commitment has turned the policies of economic liberalization and development into ineffective measures. Permanent political instability has proved to be a further obstacle to economic progress. Social issues, such as caste and ethnic discrimination, are the other source of inequity and uneven distribution of national wealth. The central part of the article focuses on the direction that the political transition in Nepal will undergo in the foreseeable future. It is clear that many forces are working against democracy. Political representatives are still too narrow-minded and “the absence of vision and foresightedness” among them has hampered the emergence of some leaders who could act as a “mitigating and moderating force among the contending political forces” (p. 35-36). Intra-elite conflicts are the consequence of the undemocratic culture of leaders. In conclusion, the author sums up the factors that have uninterruptedly hindered the democratic process in Nepal: i) highly centralized social structure; ii) authoritarian culture; iii) ideological uncertainties; iv) personal ambition among the political class; v) limited pluralism; vi) underdevelopment of political institutions; vii) rise

of corporate and regional interests; viii) low economic growth; and ix) corruption, nepotism and patrimonialism (p. 42).

Nepal in 1996: Experimenting with a Coalition Government

Krishna Hachhethu

Asian Survey, Vol. 37, No. 2 (February 1997): pp. 149-154

The **article** is an annual survey of the socio-political and economic situation in Nepal during 1996. The issue focuses on the political strategies adopted by the coalition government (NC-RPP-NSP) headed by Deuba. Accommodation and appeasement of the opposition, non confrontation, low profile conduct and populist measures may have preserved the integrity of the executive but also contributed to a stagnant economic situation and to the inability to uplift living standards of the poor in the country.

Nepal in 1995: the Communist-Rule Experiment

Ananta Raj Poudyal

Asian Survey, Vol. 36, No. 2 (February 1996): pp. 209-215

The **article** sheds light on the socio-political and economic situation in Nepal during 1995. Since the restoration of democracy in 1990 the country has experienced every kind of political expedient in the process of government making: single-party rule, coalition executive and minority government. However, political instability is still a major concern. Political parties did not move toward the consolidation of the democratic system but preferred to embark on political expediency to preserve their own interests. The country is considered to be passing through a "crucial stage of transition" (p. 215).

Ethnic Factor in the Himalayan Kingdoms

Kapileshwar Labh

International Studies, Vol. 32, No. 3 (July/September 1995): pp. 283-295

This **article** discusses the influence of ethnic factors on the two Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan. In the section about Nepal the author clearly argues, “the task of identification of an ethnic group on the basis of objective cultural markers as race and religion is problematic because of the intermingling of racial and religious groups” (p. 284). Yet, according to Labh, the population of Nepal can be roughly divided into two main ethnic groups: the Gorkhalis (or Parbatias) living in the hills and belonging to a Nepali cultural branch and the Madhesis living in the plains (Terai) and deeply influenced by Hindu culture from neighbouring India. The former formed the ruling elites who have dominated every aspect of political and economic life of Nepal. As a consequence, the Madhesis have been discriminated against and excluded from the state apparatus, from political participation and have even been denied full citizenship. Until now, dilatory policies and lack of political will have been the rule in Nepali politics with regard to ethnic issues. However, any further delay is perceived as a possible reason for disruptive ethnic conflict in an already problematic context.

Communist Opposition in Nepal's Multi-party Democracy

Narayan Khadka

Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali, Vol. 6, No. 2 (April/June 1994): pp. 210-232

The **article** provides a comprehensive analysis of the Communist movement in Nepal since the foundation of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) in 1949. The Himalayan Kingdom has been the battlefield of Sino-Soviet ideological confrontation: Leninists and Maoists have been struggling to impose their own viewpoint on the establishment of a communist regime in the country. The former gives a fundamental role to intellectuals for launching a Communist strategy while the latter concentrates on a rural-based guerrilla movement in order to seize the power. Actually, the Maoist movement in Nepal has been influenced more by the Indian Communist movement rather than by the Chinese experience. Communist parties have a three-stage goal. The short-term goal is twofold: create instability and build a credible public image of communists. The medium-term goal consists in the establishment of a communist government. The long-

term goal is to “restrict freedom and democracy and impose a centralized one party authoritarian rule” (p. 219). Factionalism has weakened the efficacy and credibility of the communist movement of Nepal. Dramatic divisions, ideological splits and strategic reunions have been a ritual in the 50-year long experience of the communist movement in the country. The various factions can be grouped in three categories, each one suggesting its own strategy: 1) the true Maoists who believe that a genuine people's democracy can only be established through people's revolution; 2) those who believe in multi-party democracy as a means to introduce a new kind of democracy; 3) those who believe that the parliamentary system can be useful to move into a people's democracy. Finally, after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990, two main communist groupings emerged from the political disarray in the left: the moderate Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninists) (CPN-UML) and the extreme Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) - CPN (M). The main difference between them, beyond the diverse communist ideology and rhetoric they rely on, is that the UML is a *traditional issue-oriented opposition* (it aims at implementing its own policies and governmental strategies and goals) while the CPN (M) is a *system-oriented opposition* (it seeks to overthrow the existing system and replace it with another regime). The main conclusions of the paper focus on the role that opposition should have in a fragile democracy like Nepal: it should assume a responsible and constructive role in order to absorb “the resentment and the disappointment of anti-democratic political groups” that could challenge the whole system (p. 231). By consolidating political institutions constructive opposition paves the way to political change and enhances its credibility as a viable political alternative to the ruling party. Contemporary Nepalese opposition is different: radical initiatives, political confusion and ideological dilemmas dominate the practices of communist opposition.

Democratization and the Growth of Communism in Nepal: A Peruvian Scenario in the Making?

Andrew R. Nickson

Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1992): pp. 358-386

<<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/conference/pdf/nepal1.pdf>>

In this **article** Nepal is considered an exception to the global trend of early 1990's when democracy started being associated with the fall of communist regimes all around the world. The restoration of democracy in 1990 was the result of the common efforts of the moderate Nepali Congress party and the orthodox communist party, which forged an actual alliance in order to put an end to the absolute power of the monarchy. In addition, a virtually extinct movement like Maoism also emerged as a strong political force. The author draws a comparison between the Maoist experience of *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) in Peru and the rise of the Maoist movement in Nepal. The article has been written before the Maoist revolutionary movement started but most of the author's predictions have proved to be accurate. There are several similarities between Peru and Nepal. First, the human geography of the two countries is characterized by extremely high mountain areas (the Andes and the Himalayas) and at the same time fertile flat areas (Pacific littoral in Peru and the Terai in Nepal). Then, historically, both countries have witnessed militaristic societies such as the Inca and the Gorkha living in the mountain areas. Third, both Peru and Nepal have experienced the imposition of one national language (i.e. Spanish and Nepali) and the prohibition of the use of local languages in schools. Again, economic development has been highly centralized in both countries widening social and economic disparities between the centre and the periphery of the country. Therefore, all these factors coupled with the rapid growth of education opportunities led to a crisis in the mountain regions of the two countries. "The Peruvian experience suggests that economic and social frustrations experienced by graduates from ethnic minorities and other low castes could be translated into support for the all-encompassing political ideology of Maoism" (p. 381). In Peru the early stages of the armed conflict were widely overlooked by most of the political circles euphoric about the restoration of democracy. *Sendero Luminoso* started gaining popular support when it became evident that successive democratic governments had failed to address and solve the deep-rooted problems of the country. The similarities with Nepal are quite striking.

Decentralization in Nepal

Henry Bienen et al.

World Development, Vol. 18, No. 1 (January 1990): pp. 61-75

Although it is not up to date, this **article** clearly proves that the need for decentralization in Nepal is not a recent development. The debate about the empowerment of local administrative units was going on already in the last part of the 1980's when the end of the partyless rule seemed only a question of time. The principal reasons for decentralization are four: 1) Nepal's development record has been highly inadequate; 2) the country's development efforts are almost completely funded by foreign donors who are primarily concerned with the implementation of their political agenda and tend to underestimate and misjudge, if not disregard, the context in which they operate; 3) Nepal holds remarkable territorial and ecological differences (mountains, hills and plains); 4) finally, Nepal has a long history of autocratic rule that has always tried to keep a tight control over the country through a centralized structure of power and administration. Undisciplined politics has already hindered the implementation of a development-oriented governmental agenda. Critics contend that a process of territorial and economic decentralization is likely to lead to budget, planning and taxation inconsistencies, besides fuelling factionalism and local conflicts, while supporters argue that transfer of some governmental capacities to the local units would curtail the bureaucratic control of the centre in Kathmandu and enhance a "rural-oriented development process" (p. 65). A crucial obstacle to devolution is posed by foreign donors. They are increasingly uneasy about a certain level of decentralization since, in their view, it will cause a decline in administrative efficiency in the country. Some fiscal rules such as the "use it or lose it" provision are further hindrances to effective delegation of powers. The above-mentioned provision requires that "the ensuing year's budget allocation is to be adjusted downward by any unexpended funds held at fiscal year-end by any local [administration]". Instead of preventing the waste of resources, it has an adverse effect on compelling local governmental agencies to spend all the money they receive without a rational allocation. Then the author considers the policies of devolution attempted by the central government until 1990. Actually, those efforts proved ineffective. Rather, to some extent, they worsened an already precarious situation. In several cases devolution has slowed down the flows of information from the periphery to the centre and has hampered the process of economic planning. In addition, the stronger role granted to local political entities by decentralization has increased the politicization of projects and hampered the effectiveness of development assistance.



REPORTS, RESEARCH STUDIES & WORKING PAPERS**Nepal's Maoists: Their Aims, Structure and Strategy**

Asia Report No. 104, Kathmandu/Brussels, 27 October 2005, 51 p.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/104_nepal_s_maoists_their_aims_structure_and_strategy.pdf>

This **background report** provides a systematic overview of the goals, internal structure and politico-military strategy of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). After considering a wide range of issues pertaining to the rebels' organization, the report concludes that the CPN (M) is, in fact, a genuine political party. Their use of violence and terrorist tactics is instrumental to their political goals. According to the report, the political nature of the Maoist movement is confirmed by the fact that the military wing of the party is subordinated to the close political control of the leadership and all military campaigns are planned and coordinated by the political branch of the party. Internal unity, tactical flexibility and a pragmatic approach towards other stakeholders have characterized the rise of the CPN (M) as a powerful and influential political force in Nepal's political scenario. The CPN (M) has capitalized on structural grievances and more proximate deficiencies, whereas their agenda has managed to mobilize a remarkable popular support – more or less open – especially in the rural areas. Civilian casualties have been limited and “indiscriminate attacks avoided” (p. i). The rebels have also shown a high degree of sensitivity to the international public opinion; despite their ideology and anti-imperialist rhetoric the Maoists have avoided targeting foreign nationals.

The report describes in detail the CPN (M)'s political programme which is based on the ultimate goal of “new democracy” as well as its economic agenda described as “a hybrid model incorporating capitalist elements on a strongly nationalist frame” but still motivated by communist principles. The analysis of the organizational composition of the Maoists reveals the supremacy of the Party over the other structures, i.e. the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the United Front (UF). The primacy of politics is again clear when the leadership, command and control of the party is examined. The party supremo Prachanda is still the uncontested figure of the CPN (M). Although the leadership's unity was in some measure shaken by the temporary demise from the party

structure of the chief ideologue Baburam Bhattarai, the top leader seem to agree on the overall aims and strategy of the party. The membership and support base of the Maoists cannot be accurately defined in quantitative terms. However, the composition of the rebels' support base includes different sections of the society, primarily the poorest classes and deprived groups (ethnic minorities, women, low-caste and *Dalits*) and, to a lesser degree, elements from the petty and national bourgeoisie. The report also describes the sources of revenue which allow the sustenance and the continuation of the insurgency.

Whatever the assessment of their actual goals and means, the "Maoists have changed politics in Nepal irrevocably" (p. 30). Their major contribution has been the departure from the 1990 political compromise which had left large sections of society – especially women, ethnic groups and outcasts – disenfranchised.

In its conclusion, the report describes the political bottom-lines of the Maoists for accepting a negotiated peaceful settlement of the conflict. Land reform, cast and ethnic equality, regional devolution and, if possible, the reconsideration of the role of monarchy are among the main bottom-lines suggested by the International Crisis Group's report. The willingness by the rebels to enter the political mainstream will, however, depend on "Maoists' own calculations for entering electoral politics" (p. 30).

Nepal: Beyond Royal Rule

ICG Asia Briefing No. 41, Kathmandu/Brussels, 15 September 2005, 15 p.

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/b41_nepal_beyond_royal_rule.pdf

This **briefing report** from the think-tank International Crisis Group calls for a fundamental rethinking of the strategic approaches by all main stakeholders. The international community is urged to recognise that reconciliation between the king and the main political parties is not realistic and should not be considered as "the sole path toward stability" (p. 1). In fact, the sea change produced by the king's action in February 2005 has convinced the parties of the actual design of the king and prevented any rapprochement. The political parties have thus decided to turn to the Maoists to

forge an alliance against the palace. In fact, according to the report, the return to the status quo before the royal takeover is not feasible. The royal rule has failed on several issues. The palace did not win the support of the population and security has not improved while corruption has not been tackled. On the contrary, corruption charges have been used against the political parties as an excuse for a political vendetta. The actual plan of the palace is to dismantle the democratic system and replicate a Panchayat-type of absolute monarchy. In the report it is argued that the restoration of peace in the country is not the top priority of the RNA-backed King Gyanendra.

The Maoists, after an initial “quiescence” (p. 4), have stepped up military operations and have improved their capacity to launch large-scale attacks as their success in Kalikot in August 2005 has demonstrated. They also seem to have accepted “the short-term goal of what they term as bourgeois, parliamentary democracy” (p. 5). The mainstream political parties have become more assertive against the king. They have forged the “Seven-party Alliance” which has finally agreed on a common programme. The progress in the Maoists-parties talks are carefully explored. Besides an agreement that the demand for a constituent assembly is the point of convergence, the parties and rebels have had regular contacts and managed to create a suitable environment for systematic talks through some important confidence-building measures. The most important is the unilateral three-month ceasefire announced by the CPN (Maoist) on 3 September 2005. Despite these openings and the professionalism with which the dialogue is being handled, several doubts still remain about the sincerity of the rebels towards democratic practices.

The civil society has played an increasingly important role after the royal takeover. It has boosted the political movement opposing the king’s rule and has played a crucial role in getting the Maoists-parties dialogue started. However, as the report argues, “civil society cannot supplant organised political parties” (p. 6). Another section of the report explains how economic deterioration, development problems and humanitarian concerns coupled with the general political discontent with the royal rule have managed to put the palace under significant strain. Moreover, despite long-term differences, the international community has exerted a constant pressure on the monarch. The report goes on to suggest the establishment of a loose contact group including the EU, India, US and the UN. The latter could play a crucial role in the mediation or in the implementation of a prospective peace plan.

Nepal: Supporting Peace Processes through a Systemic Approach

Dev Raj Dahal

Berghof Foundation for Peace Support - September 2005, 30 p.

This **paper** provides a systemic analysis of the conflict and a structural assessment of the options involved in a possible peace process. As regards the source of violent conflict, the author considers the loss of the central government's "capacity to fulfil the sub-systemic demands of various groups" as the primary cause of violence (p. 3). Latent conflicts have been revived due to the inability to integrate the marginalized groups and co-opt the potential dissenters. In rural areas, the fragile government structures were incapable of responding to the Maoist challenge. The "retreat of the state" has thus propagated a security vacuum which has been filled by the rebels. The foreign donors have also played a role in this shifting power equation. Among the structural and proximate causes of the conflict the authors identify several issues: a) Neglect of the Midwest hills; b) Urban-rural disparity; c) Social discrimination; d) Institutional factors; e) Declining economic performance; f) Manipulation of ethnic and regional identities; g) Struggle for the control of state power; h) Proliferation of small arms; i) Regional and global conflict drivers.

The analysis of the key positions of the main stakeholders shows that each actor "claims to represent a unique self-image" with the king claiming patriotism, the political parties asserting democracy while the Maoists have appropriated the image of liberators of the oppressed. The author also examines the role of external actors. Regional powers such as India and China consider Nepal in the larger context of South Asian stability and their national interests both in economic and security terms. The situation has changed after the royal takeover: India has increasingly asserted the need to restore full-fledged democracy in Nepal while Beijing has considered the royal move as an internal affair, a position which has *de facto* endorsed the king's rule. The US and the EU have also condemned Gyanendras' move but their denunciation has assumed different tones.

The author has identified some gaps in the peacebuilding process. He explores the different options of the multi-track process of conflict resolution. *Track II* activities have become very relevant after the breakdown of *Track I* efforts (the collapse of the government-rebels peace talks in August 2003). The role of the civil society has

produced some limited improvements in building confidence, but this progress has not yet reached the main stakeholders. The transformation of the conflict is given particular importance. The issues of state reform, international mediation and commitment of the actors of the conflict to development activities are suggested as possible entry points for transforming the conflict. The paper concludes with some scenarios based on the strategic choices of the stakeholders: 1) The restoration of the state authority throughout the country is the first priority of the king, but this option seems unlikely to happen due to the peculiar nature of the Maoist insurgency and the limited results achieved by the counter-insurgency efforts carried out by the security forces; 2) Though it could represent a good option to end the conflict, the reconciliation between the political parties and the king “seems implausible” after the February 1 move of the palace. Durable peace could be attained through civil-military cooperation, and precisely if the political parties were ready to support the RNA’s role in national security and the army backed the democratic legitimacy of the political parties; 3) The strategic alliance between political parties and Maoists has gained increasing support from both sides. The king’s action has facilitated this rapprochement. However the author considers that a long-term understanding between the two forces would damage the reputation of the democratic parties in the eyes of the major donors; 4) Maoist takeover is regarded with great fear by the international community and especially from Nepal’s neighbours. However, this possibility is extremely remote and unlikely to occur considering the military capacity of the CPN (M); 5) International action would help the situation but would require Nepal’s donors to take a clear position in favour of certain actors in the conflict; 6) According to Dev Raj Dahal, the ultimate and most feasible option left would entail holding a comprehensive “dialogue of functionally relevant groups of the state for creative action” (p. 26). By transforming the political and economic structure of the conflict, this option would provide a broader basis to the call for a negotiated settlement and create the ground for negotiations. The “rational steps” suggested include the call from the king for a dialogue with the relevant political parties and the civil society in order to synthesize their perspectives and draft a roadmap for peace. Then a ceasefire should be called and monitored paving the way for a dialogue with the Maoists under the auspices of the international community which would provide assistance in the peacebuilding phase. This systemic approach is believed to be the most appropriate instrument of conceptualization of the conflict and the most successful means for its resolution.

The Strategic Dimension in Sino-Nepalese relations: A Chinese Perspective

Hua Han

Paper presented at the seminar organized by the China Studies Centre - Kathmandu, 14 August 2005, 6 p.

This short **paper** is one of the few works on the Chinese role in Nepalese politics today. According to the author, Beijing considers Nepal as a crucial country with regard to China's position and policy in South Asia. Nepal represents one of the cornerstones of the Chinese approach to regional stability. China's strategic consideration towards Nepal relate to 3 main issues: a) the tranquillity of the south-west border of China; b) the Tibet issue; c) the relationship with India. The increasing presence of the US in Nepal in recent years is tolerated by China because it adds stability to a volatile region and counters India's supremacy in South Asia. The author concludes by presenting two factors which might influence the prospects of Sino-Nepalese relations. The first is the policy priorities of the two countries. It is argued that political continuity will prevail since both countries' priorities are better served in the current situation. The second factor is the mutual strategic calculus of the two countries. In this regard both Kathmandu and Beijing have interest in pursuing good relations based on economic cooperation.

Towards a Lasting Peace in Nepal: The Constitutional Issues

ICG Asia Report No. 99, Kathmandu/Brussels, 15 June 2005, 50 p.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/099_towards_a_lasting_peace_in_nepal_the_constitutional_issues.pdf>

This **report** provides a comprehensive analysis of constitutional issues which have created some obstacles to the resolution of the armed conflict in Nepal. The call for a process-oriented approach constitutes the main thrust of the report. It is argued that,

despite the fact that the main actors (the king, mainstream political parties and Maoist rebels) concur on the need for some constitutional changes they disagree on a) the *substantive issues* of constitutional revision, b) the *vehicle* of amendment and c) the *process* to achieve those changes. The return to full democracy is the only viable channel of normalization in an extremely polarized situation. According to the report, the deadlock could be broken by one of these three options: a) All-party government without a parliament; b) a government formed after new parliamentary elections; c) a government formed after restoration of the parliament elected in 1999. The most desirable solution would be a common understanding between the King and the constitutional political parties. However, their relationship has never been as polarized as in the months following Gyanendra's coup on February 1, 2005. The Maoists, on their side, are calling upon the political parties to forge an alliance against the royal administration. However, the parties are uncomfortable with this option because they do not trust the democratic credentials of the rebels and have linked their support to the Maoists to the condition that they abandon violence and enter the political mainstream.

As for the instruments of constitutional change, the report considers different options. Constitutional amendment is one possibility envisaged by the same Constitution but would require the restoration of the Parliament and dodgy constitutional procedures. Holding a referendum on the political system (whether monarchy – active or constitutional - or republic – democratic or communist) could represent a breakthrough but could also inflame the conflict since it represents a zero-sum game. Support for the constituent assembly has been growing since 2004 and could represent a suitable way to end the current political deadlock. The report draws several lessons from the constitution-making experience which sanctioned the end of the *apartheid* regime in South Africa. The lessons learnt from the Indian constituent assembly are also taken into consideration in the report. The most significant message of these experiences is that the constitutional revision should be a long, open-ended and result-oriented process entailing interim solutions such as provisional constitution, inclusive and participative fora of discussion.

Nepal: Military Assistance Contributing to Grave Human Right Violations

Amnesty International Report, 15 June 2005, 31 p.

<[http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/ASA310472005ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA3104705.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/ASA310472005ENGLISH/$File/ASA3104705.pdf)>

This **report** by Amnesty International (AI) addresses the negative consequences of the prolonged military assistance provided by the United States, the United Kingdom and India to the government of Nepal. According to the report, continued and unconditional military supplies have contributed to the escalation of the conflict and to the grave violation of human rights perpetrated by the security forces. In particular, the study considers the employment of helicopters for unlawful bombing and shooting in civilian areas believed to offer shelter to Maoist rebels as well as the misuse of small arms which has raised the number of civilian casualties. Although India, UK and the US have discontinued their military assistance after the royal takeover on February 1 this move has been only a partial and temporary solution. The report urges for increased use of conditionality for future military aid and the implementation of the recommendations contained in the resolution passed under 'Item 19' during the last session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 2005.

The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Caste Discrimination and the Conflict in Nepal

Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ)

New York University School of Law, 2005, 66 p.

<<http://www.nyuhr.org/docs/Missing%20Piece%20of%20the%20Puzzle.pdf>>

The **report** is the result of a field-based research carried out in more than thirty districts of Nepal from July 2001 and May 2005. The aim of the report is to shed some light on the caste dimension in Nepal, its role in the outbreak of the Maoist insurgency and its potentially negative consequences. Human rights abuses have received a wide public exposure in the international arena. On the contrary, in their accounts of the Maoist people's war analysts and foreign donors have at least overlooked if not ignored the issue of caste discrimination. This "missing piece of the puzzle" is a combination of old and new grievances. Historically, the low-caste population – especially the Dalits ("untouchables") – has been victimized and has been denied access to the socio-economic and political structures of the country. Social exclusion based on the dogmatic prejudice of "intouchability" has gone along with economic marginalisation

(deprivation of land ownership, bounded labour, employment discrimination and educational obstruction), livelihood dispossession and gender discrimination. The launch of a people's war by the Maoist insurgents in February 1996 has produced a renewed sense of awareness among these deprived groups; the Maoists have been keen on exploiting long-standing grievances and giving a voice to politically marginalized individuals. The Dalits – who constitutes more than 20% of total population – have thus enthusiastically joined the rebels' ranks. However, the conflict has also created the basis for new patterns of discrimination. In fact, the Dalits have become the target of abuses by both the security forces and the Maoist militia. Sexual violence against Dalit women by both sides has increased whereas discrimination is carried out through different modalities as the "caste-based- profiling" by the army at the security checks demonstrates. The insurgency has also affected the economy of the Dalits communities and has prevented the Dalits youth to have access to education since schools have become a place of political contention. In addition, despite the Maoists' rhetoric about Dalits empowerment, the leadership of the rebel movement is still dominated by upper-caste Brahmins.

In the conclusions, the report urges the international community to put pressure on the conflicting sides to make sure that human rights obligations against caste discrimination - but also other human rights provisions against child soldiers and other basic human rights – are observed.

FAST Update Nepal – November 2004 to April 2005

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Semi-Annual Risk Assessment, May 2005, 11 p.

<<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Nepal%202%2004.pdf>>

FAST (German acronym for "Early Analysis of Tensions and Fact-finding") is the early warning project of *Swisspeace* created to set up a political early warning system for early identification of impending armed conflict and political crisis situations. FAST "aims to enhance political decision makers' ability to identify critical developments in a timely manner, so that coherent political strategies can be formulated either to prevent

or limit destructive effects of violent conflict or to identify opportunities for peacebuilding” (p. 8). This **report** affirms that the “Royal Coup” is “perhaps one of the most destabilizing events in recent times in Nepal” (p. 3). It is defined as the culmination of the King’s plan which started with the dismissal of the elected Prime Minister in October 2002. However, after the strong condemnation of the royal move, the most influential external powers are likely to resume military assistance. For instance the UK will probably resume non-lethal military assistance whereas India resumed weaponry which apparently was in the pipeline. The US is continuously revising its assistance but is also likely to yield to the King’s demand for increased military supplies to fight what the government considers as “terrorists”, i.e. the Maoist rebels. Nevertheless, the pro-democracy stance of the external powers, and especially India, came as a surprise even for the Palace. The two conflicts (the military and the political) are both very polarized and show no sign of future improvement. Voices of an internal split in the Maoist organization (with the alleged exclusion of the ideologue Baburam Bhattarai from the party structure) prove groundless or just short-term measure of the Maoist leadership aimed at ensuring party discipline. The issue of inner-party democracy is still a major concern for any future settlement. Reports from human rights activists have accused the Maoist of recruiting child soldiers and allegedly forcing them into combat zones. These facts, coupled with allegations of violence against ordinary people by the rebels, demonstrate the decline of popular support for the rebels in many districts.

Nepal: Dealing with a Human Rights Crisis

ICG Asia Report No. 94, Kathmandu/Brussels, 24 March 2005, 27 p.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/094_nepal_dealing_with_a_human_rights_crisis.pdf>

This ICG **report** is devoted to the widespread human rights violation occurring in Nepal and to the means to cope with an escalating crisis. The intensity of violations committed in the last year confirms that the soft line adopted by the 60th UN Commission on Human Rights was a failure. The abuses have prompted a climate of impunity, while the military is increasingly unrestrained and highly politicized. The watchdog agencies and

their activities have been constrained by greater intervention by the monarchy. Censorship has gagged the media and all dissenting voices in the country. Even more alarming is considered the so-called "Village Militia Plan". The government has, in fact, started to arm civilians in an attempt to deter Maoist attacks and respond to the increasing need of troops that the royal takeover has prompted. In fact, more troops have been deployed in the Kathmandu Valley in order to implement the censorship regime and the enforcement of the tight control over political activities as desired by King Gyanendra. The report calls for bold measures to be approved by the 61st Commission on Human Rights in order to deal with widespread violations. A strong condemnation of the abuses committed by both parties to conflict is the first step towards the creation of a sound regime of protection. The establishment of an effective UN human rights monitoring mission and the signature of a human rights accord by the Maoists and the government could lay down the premises for the resumption of peace talks.

Nepal: Responding to the Royal Coup

ICG Asia Briefing No. 36, Kathmandu/Brussels, 24 February 2005, 15 p.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/b036_nepal_responding_to_the_royal_coup.pdf>

This **policy briefing** represents an update on the situation in Nepal in the wake of the royal takeover orchestrated by King Gyanendra on February 1, 2005. The briefing suggests some moves that could constitute the most effective response to the royal plan. The policy priorities should focus on re-establishment of the constitutional rule and all democratic freedoms, the protection of human rights and the preparation of a broad-based action plan to quell the Maoist insurgency and address its root causes. With regard to these priorities set by the International Crisis Group highlights the actions which are needed in order to meet those aims: 1) suspension of military assistance; 2) suspension of bilateral and multilateral budgetary support to the government; review of development programmes; 3) open condemnation of the King's move; 4) support for a strong resolution on human rights at the UN Commission on Human Rights. The report shows that the King's plan cannot ensure peace because it

lacks the participation of the main political forces of the country. By seizing direct power and arresting political leaders Gyanendra has further deepened the divide between democratic forces and the palace, indirectly strengthening the Maoist rebels who can only benefit from a divided opposition.

FAST Update Nepal – February 2005

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Special Update, February 2005, 5 p.

<<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Nepal%202%2004.pdf>>

This special **report** focuses on the royal takeover of King Gyanendra on February 1, 2005. In a television message broadcasted to the nation the king sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assumed direct powers with the support of the army. Thereafter the King appointed a Council of Ministers under his leadership. This Council is formed of ex-Panchayat politicians loyal to the palace. The coup was planned and staged with great accuracy. The state of emergency was declared while all communication lines within the country and with the rest of the world were cut off and a strict and military-supervised censorship was imposed on all media. Politicians from the opposition parties have been arrested along with journalists and human rights activists. The external response to the royal proclamation has been strong: India has labelled the move as a “serious setback for democracy in Nepal” and later on stopped military assistance to the Himalayan country. The United Kingdom has followed a similar political line whereas the United States has adopted a wait-and-see stance of 100 days (i.e. the expiry of the state of emergency) to take a decision. According to the report, the royal move is unlikely to improve the chances of a negotiated settlement because the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) has been given a major role in state affairs and has received an implicit blank cheque for a military solution as the Army Staff is confident that the King will turn a blind eye to widespread human rights abuses.

Nepal's Royal Coup: Making a Bad Situation Worse

ICG Asia Report No. 91, Kathmandu/Brussels, 9 February 2005, 22 p.

http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/091_nepal_royal_coup_making_a_bad_situation_worse.pdf

The **report** constitutes a first reaction to the February royal coup. It is quite critical of the action carried out by the king and its close ally, the Royal Nepal Army. Rumours of a royal takeover had circulated in the capital since the end of 2004. On February 1 2005 King Gyanendra dismissed the government of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assumed direct powers. The King put Deuba, its cabinet's ministers and other major political leaders under house arrest and declared the state of emergency suspending most of civil rights and imposing complete censorship on the media. Telephone lines, mobile and internet connections were immediately cut off and were re-established one week later. In his royal statement King Gyanendra stated that he would restore "genuine democracy" within three years. In the following days the King formed a 10-member cabinet under his leadership. The cabinet members are mostly supporters of the monarchy with no political profile and little popular following.

With several senior political leaders under house arrest, the middle-rank cadres of the political parties have faced harsh repression, detention and many have decided to seek refuge in India while others have gone underground. Human rights activists, academics and journalists have also been put under strict control.

The Maoists have reacted to the royal takeover denouncing it as a "design to impose feudal autocracy" and changing their demands. They have argued that the rationale for their long standing demands – i.e. roundtable conference, interim government and constituent assembly – has ceased to exist and they would only focus on the abolition of monarchy. However, their military operations have not registered any intensification in the wake of the coup. Similarly, the government has yet to launch large scale operations in the Maoist-controlled districts. According to the ICG report, King Gyanendra "has backed himself into a corner" whereas the "Maoists stand to gain most from the king's move" (p. 15). The gamble of the monarch counts on the fact that, despite the authoritarian drift, foreign actors would not discontinue their support to the government "as long as the Maoist rebels are a threat" (p. 15).

**Rising Concern about Maoist Strength; Unease over Elections Prior to Peace:
Report on the Second Survey and Set of Focus Groups**

Mark Feierstein and John Moreira

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., 21 January 2005, 13 p.

<http://www.greenbergresearch.com/publications/reports/012305_nepal012305m2.pdf>

This **report** represents a nationwide survey on to the perception of ordinary Nepalese towards some important issues related to the Maoist conflict. The investigation shows increasing concern over the strength of the rebels and misgivings over the possibility of a negotiated settlement in the near future. Most of the people believe that the government's call for election before peace is a flawed strategy since elections are considered as "a product of peace and not a precursor to peace" (p. 1). Nevertheless, if elections were held the main political parties, i.e. the UML and the Nepali Congress would take most of the votes with the former having a slight edge over the latter. Interestingly, if the Maoists were to participate in elections, their share of vote would be close to 5% according to the survey. The research also shows that the population is convinced that a renewed leadership of the political parties would benefit both political organizations and the overall Nepalese political system.

Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Nepal A Case Study

Shambhu R. Simkhada, with Daniel Warner & Fabio Oliva

*PSIO Occasional Paper No. 3/2004, Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI),
Geneva, August 2004, 94 p.*

<http://hei.unige.ch/psio/fichiers/Nepal%20Occasional%20Paper%20_frutiger_%20.pdf>

This **occasional paper** presents the preliminary findings of a year long research study on the causes of the conflict in Nepal and the exploration of the possible means of resolution. The authors argue that the current conflict is the result of a combination of factors. However, the conflict is explained through the concept of "*Matrix of Change*" (p. 33). Within this *Matrix* the current conflict in Nepal could be seen as the violent escalation of the conflict between the ruling dynasties backed by their feudal beneficiaries and "popular aspirations for change represented historically by the Nepali

Congress (NC) party” (p. 32). The conflict became triangular following the emergence of the Marxist-Leninists (ML) as a major political force after 1990. “Dissatisfied conservatives obliquely coalesced with frustrated revolutionaries” in order to destabilize and undermine the restored democratic system (p. 27). The Maoists have in fact taken advantage of the political vacuum that occurred in the extreme left after the democratic awakening and have launched a people’s war so as to replace the existing political system with a Communist republic.

FAST Update Nepal – August to October 2004

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, November 2005, 7 p.

<<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Nepal%202%2004.pdf>>

This quarterly **report** states that inherent weaknesses of the Nepali state led the government to lose the momentum created a few months earlier by the appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as new Prime Minister. Conversely, the Maoists have shown their logistic and military capability through a successful blockade of Kathmandu in August. International media reported the success of the Maoists’ move as a sign of their increasing awareness of their capabilities. The response of the central government has been rather weak and has accordingly decreased popular support to Deuba.

Faith in Democracy Endures, In Spite of Disappointments: Report on the Baseline Survey and Focus Groups

Mark Feierstein and John Moreira

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc., 16 August 2004, 15 p.

<<http://www.greenbergresearch.com/publications/reports/nepal0904m1.pdf>>

This **report** provides an insight into the perception of Nepalese population about the issue of democracy. Despite several setbacks and shortcomings, faith in democracy is stable. Unemployment, corruption and violence are the major concerns of the

population. Most Nepalese have been enjoying more freedoms since 1990 but are actually worried over the increased assertiveness of the Maoist rebels and strongly oppose their violent tactics, although they support their goals and claims.

FAST Update Nepal – May to July 2004

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, August 2004, 8 p.

<<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Nepal%202%2004.pdf>>

This **report** deals with a positive trend generated by the growing expectations that the re-appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as Prime Minister would foster the peace process. However, the chances of peace talks have been frustrated by the fact that Deuba did not manage to create an all-party government and the biggest opposition party – i.e. the Nepali Congress – refused to join Deuba's government before the complete restoration of the parliament. The paper foresees that Deuba's government is doomed to failure if he is not able to bring the Maoists to the negotiating table. This failure would bring about an authoritarian rule in the country

Economic Policy and Civil War in Nepal

Kishor Sharma

Paper presented at the WIDER Conference on 'Making Peace Work', Helsinki, 4-5 June 2004, 24 p.

<<http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2004-1/conference%202004-1-papers/Sharma-1905.pdf>>

This **paper** argues that the failure to redistribute gains of economic growth has been the root cause of civil war that erupted in Nepal in 1995. Bias in favour of urban-based growth diverted resources away from rural areas where 86% of the population live. This resulted in a fall in agricultural productivity and exports. This, together with the lack of alternative employment opportunities particularly in rural areas, significantly increased

poverty and inequality with both political and economic dimensions. This unequal growth pattern forced disadvantaged young people from rural areas to join the radical left-wing forces (known as “Maoists”) to fight against the political system and economic policy. The costs of war have been high and rising day by day. The Nepalese economy is on the verge of collapse. International actors (donor community) can play an important role in bringing the country out of the current crisis through the peace process and development assistance. While military aid is important to maintain law and order in the country, it does not address the root cause of the crisis such as poverty and inequality which need to be addressed. This would mean additional investment in remote areas and development of a strong linkage between rural and urban areas through a well-developed transport network to generate income and employment for the rural poor. Destroyed institutions, infrastructure and social services should be built now rather than wait until the war ends, which can further aggravate poverty and increase human suffering. Foreign aid for social services and rural infrastructure can significantly mitigate the socio-economic costs of war, particularly in remote areas. Since foreign exchange earnings have been declining with the eruption of war, it will be very difficult for Nepal to meet its debt-servicing obligations. Suspending loan repayment by donors will help the country to allocate resources for the war-affected areas rather than use them for debt-servicing. However, this should be linked with the commitment to maintain (and gradually increase) public spending on health, education and other social services, particularly in the war affected areas. (abstract from the author)

FAST Update Nepal – February to April 2004

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, May 2004, 8 p.

<<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/FAST%20Nepal%202%2004.pdf>>

In this **report**, the author defines the increase in political stability as a “statistical mirage” since the conflict has become more brutal with an escalating number of casualties. The situation is regarded with increasing concern by the international actors,

while the two conflicts (government-Maoists and political parties-King) have become intractable leaving to the stakeholders limited possibilities for “face-saving exits”.

Opportunity, Democracy, and Political Violence: A Sub-national Analysis of Conflict in Nepal

Alok Bohara, Neil Mitchell and Mani Nepal

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA), Montreal, March 2004, 34 p.

In the **paper** it is argued that over the last decade Nepal has experienced both a transition towards democracy and the rise of insurgency. A new constitution established a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, legalized political parties, and permitted competitive elections. The 1999 elections generally conformed to international standards. Yet during this process of democratization, the Maoist insurgency spread to most part of the country by 2001. What explains the state's use of violence? How does it relate to the threat posed by the opposition? How does the violence spread? What role does democracy play? What is the role of the international system? The explanation advanced here emphasizes the strategic circumstances of both opposition and the government. From scholars analysing the conflict, the authors have garnered some ideas about the strategic conditions favouring insurgency, while from the human rights scholars there are ideas about how the government will respond as the insurgency escalates and international factors, specifically the post 9/11 war on terror, and domestic costs and restraints (democracy) are brought to bear. Opportunity is conceived geographically, politically, and internationally, and [the authors'] findings [provide] new evidence for the importance of geography but also of democracy in their effects on the levels of violence used by both government and opposition. The empirical analysis draws on fresh time-series Nepalese district level data for the duration of the conflict and includes theoretically important measures of government and opposition killing, political participation by district, terrain influences on insurgency, and a 9/11 measure. (From the authors)

Locating the "Causes" of the Maoist Struggle

Chaitanya Mishra

Paper presented at the workshop on the "Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal" organized by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Nagarkot, Nepal – 22-23 February 2004, 31 p.

This **paper** seeks to locate the "causes" of the rise of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) – CPN (M) – and the "people's war". The author admits that the identification of causes and effects – and the specification of their interconnection – is a difficult task. The paper does not aim to meet such a standard. Mishra argues that the causes identified, except for the cause related to worldview, do not necessarily lead to a "Maoist effect". In other words, the causes identified are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the rise of the CPN (M). Such causes have also laid the basis for the rise of political forces other than the CPN (M). The post-1996 "causes" identified for the rise of the CPN (M) have to be interpreted as correlates rather than as causes as such. On the other hand, the causes identified focus on the nature of the existing state and its agency-actions rather than on the agency-actions of the Maoists.

Proximate Causes of the Conflict in Nepal

Dhruba Kumar

Paper presented at the workshop on the "Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal" organized by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Nagarkot, Nepal – 22-23 February 2004, 43 p.

In this **paper** the author argues that the current conflict in Nepal can be tied to a low level of socio-political cohesion, high level of political violence and state repression, strong divergences over the organizing ideology of the state, major and recent changes in the political system, a small urban middle class, governmental unaccountability, rampant corruption, low capacity to absorb international assistance and high level of external influence. In the main body of his paper, the author concretises these causes within specific features of the 1990 Constitution and its political practice. He

emphasizes that the specific "structural incongruities" of the 1990 constitution which, despite its professed "democratic" nature, continues to uphold sectarian biases in relation to religion, language, caste and ethnicity. It segregated the peoples, contested their identity, obstructed democratization and, therefore, engendered conflict. The political compromise reached with the authoritarian regime during the framing of the 1990 constitution also inhibited democratization.

Dhruba Kumar argues that the single most important cause of the conflict was the nature of the post-1990 political party and governmental leadership. Incessant power struggle, he notes, is "primarily responsible for triggering conflict in Nepal". He notes that even as the 1990 transition "opened up the hitherto suppressed demands of the masses", the failure of the leadership of the political parties and government to respond "through mediation and sequential response" – as well as conciliation, rather than the employment of force – led to the escalation of the conflict. He further argues that monarchy is also implicated in this power struggle in as much as "monarchy has [been uncongenial] with the democratic process by exploiting the tensions persisting between ... political [party] leaderships". He argues that economic and social factors should only be seen as "conflict multipliers". Finally, the author argues that "the tradition of statecraft" is no longer a viable recipe for the future. Therefore, "retooling of the state should thus be recognized as a priority concern of all." The king can take the initiative to form an all-party government which will conduct the national elections. The elected government will then undertake negotiation with the Maoists. This negotiation, in turn, will decide the question of the constitution and constituent assembly.

The Role of the Media in the Context of the Conflict in Nepal

Bharat Dutta Koirala

Paper presented at the workshop on the "Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal" organized by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Nagarkot, Nepal – 22-23 February 2004, 26 p.

In this **paper**, the author analyzes the role of the media before and during the Maoist conflict. Koirala argues that, while the government in Nepal has never had a formal censorship organ, self-censorship has been widespread among journalists working

within the government media. Within the present context of conflict, however, the private media also practices some self-censorship. In addition, "pro-Maoist newspapers have from time to time been raided". Self-censorship in the private media was pronounced immediately after the "palace massacre", during the emergency period and following the "King's action on October 4, 2002". During the state of emergency, the Ministry of Information and Communication "requested" the journalists to observe a long list of "do's" and "don'ts" while the Royal Nepal Army "requested" that news be "confirmed" through them prior to its publication. During this period of conflict, both the Maoists and the government have been involved in attacking, killing and imprisoning journalists. Eight journalists have been killed and 10 remain missing. Sixty-five were arrested, out of which only 55 have been released. Two have been abducted by the Maoists. Threats have been a constant part of journalists' lives. In particular, reporters in the more sensitive locations have not been able to write freely because of fear of reprisals from the security forces and the Maoists. The "community radio stations [in particular] continue to walk a tight rope" and seek to enforce neutrality. Reporting of violence has often relied on government figures and been unverified. On the other hand, the private media was much more vocal during the ceasefires. It gave prominence to the Maoist news items during the ceasefire. Generally, the coverage was fair and objective. The reportage on the Maoist conflict is increasing. The quality of the stories, however, needs improvement. It must, in particular, go beyond the reporting of events.

Traditional journalism, which presents facts and viewpoints, "enables citizens to make sense of their world and [to] make choices", also helps to resolve conflicts. In addition, however, a peace-building media goes beyond disengagement and actively seeks to reduce conflict. This kind of journalism not only informs but also aims at "transforming conflict by shifting [the] attitudes of the parties involved in conflict". It is important that the media learns to take up this role.

Development Cooperation and Conflict in Nepal

Ratna Shamsher Rana & Sharad Sharma

Paper presented at the workshop on the "Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal" organized by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Nagarkot, Nepal – 22-23 February 2004, 38 p.

In their joint **paper**, the authors illustrate the role of development cooperation in the context of the Maoist conflict. The effectiveness of development cooperation has often been questioned both from the perspectives of effectiveness and "donor fatigue". In the case of Nepal also, "the immense hopes evoked by foreign aid (...) have not been fulfilled, and it appears that there is a sense of frustration and disappointment with regard to development achieved thus far". It has also been argued that "the Maoist insurgency is (...) [a] manifestation of deep social and economic grievances produced and sustained by failed development". It has further been argued that "there has been a fundamental flaw in the way foreign aid had been designed and dispensed". It is probably fair, therefore, to ask whether or not development assistance has played an intervening causal role in fuelling the ongoing conflict, particularly within the context of the fact that development involves both time and uncertainty. Development, in addition, also has unforeseen and unintended consequences. Development, while it resolves some conflicts, may at the same time lead to new conflicts. The multi-donor and large-scale nature of development assistance, including the large technical assistance component, in Nepal have implied that "Nepal's socio-economic problems were taken out of the realm of local policy and decision-making process ... and donor communities ... did much of the 'development thinking' for Nepal without perhaps realizing that the Nepalese would need to do the thinking for themselves".

Certainly there are salient differences between the perspectives of the donors and the government with respect to development assistance. The donors have expressed concern over weak ownership, weak leadership and sense of direction, poor supervision and monitoring, leakage of resources and unrealistic and top-down program planning and budgeting. Many donors, in reaction, have attached strong conditions to development assistance and have erected competing implementation mechanisms and institutions. The government, on the other hand, perceives a mismatch between development priorities and the donors' agenda. The government also feels that low effectiveness of aid is also attributable to inadequate project appraisal, ineffective donor coordination, high levels of technical assistance and donor insistence on specific technologies. It is likely that the government has, at times, been "wrongly-advised." There is also a widespread perception that donor-driven programs and projects have reduced aid effectiveness. The experience of development, however, is not only negative. There have been several successes as well. It is possible that this imbalanced

development has contributed to the conflict. Development has also changed our attitudes, destroyed the tradition of tolerance and generosity, weakened local economies and led to a widespread loss of employment and livelihood strategies, even as it has fuelled the "dreams" of an improved quality of life. Lack of realization of such dreams has led to a general distrust of the government. While development assistance has not directly contributed to the current conflict, "failed development" and intensification of inequalities may certainly have. "Mundane household economics ... and swift politicization of the countryside" have fuelled the conflict. Within such a context, development cooperation in the future should not abdicate moral responsibility and instead consider "how it would be possible to extinguish the flames of conflict rather than to leave the conflict areas, or [to] reduce the level of development cooperation".

Peace Process and Negotiation in Nepal: Revisiting the Past and Envisioning the Future

Bishnu Raj Upreti & Daman Nath Dhungana

Paper presented at the workshop on the "Causes of Internal Conflicts and Means to Resolve Them: Case Study of Nepal" organized by the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI) in Nagarkot, Nepal – 22-23 February 2004, 29 p.

In this **paper**, the authors analyse the reasons for the failure of the two peace talks between the Maoists and the government. In their assessment, the three-round peace talks (which took place between August and November 2001) failed because of differences over key political issues. The Maoist demand for an interim government, a new constitution, constituent assembly and a republican state failed to find resonance within the governmental claim that the multi-party system, constitutional monarchy and fundamental rights were non-negotiable. The government, in particular, did not agree to the demands of a republican state and constituent assembly. The government also effectively resisted the demands of the Maoists to release their cadre from jails and to pull out the security forces from areas under their control. The authors argue that the parties to the talks were not fully committed to peace to begin with. The Maoists, in particular, tactically utilized the period of ceasefire and the peace talks to weaken the

monarchy and to strengthen their own political as well as military position.

The second peace talks, which took place between January and August 2003, in comparison to the first peace talks were promising. Both the parties exchanged their respective political and economic agendas and deliberated on them. The government released three top-level Maoist leaders from jail. The parties agreed on the rules of procedure, established a peace secretariat, and organised informal consultative meetings. The parties also had done their homework and come prepared for negotiations. The talks, nonetheless, failed "due to the rigidity of both parties". "The stalemate on (...) constitutional assembly [during] the third round (...) could [have been] managed [successfully] if both sides had shown flexibility." While the Maoists stuck to their demand of an unconditional constituent assembly, the government was unwilling to relent. The "Doramba incident", in which the security forces killed 17 unarmed Maoists, further vitiated the atmosphere for negotiation. In addition, "lack of trust, fear and feeling of insecurity [on] both sides had severely constrained ... progress in negotiation". In addition, and going beyond the ambit of the negotiating rooms, the delay on the part of the government to finalise its representatives to the negotiation, controversy in the implementation of agreements, non-compliance of the mutually agreed code of conduct, unwillingness of both parties to agree to a human-rights accord, pronouncement of uninformed judgment by diplomats, the ambiguous role of the government of India, etc. also led to the failure of the second peace talks.

The authors note that since almost all political actors have already made their agendas public, it is an opportune time to come to a common understanding on how to restructure the state, including in relation to the issue of constituent assembly because "the existing constitution cannot deal with this conflict". Future negotiations should also adopt a multi-track approach, and the civil society, the political parties and others must remain engaged in the peace process. This process can be facilitated through the creation of a national "mechanism" which represents all stakeholders. This mechanism, "under the initiative and guidance [of] the king and headed possibly by a largely acceptable person committed to work for ... mutually acceptable national reconciliation", will "develop basic principles of negotiation, formulates national mandates, elaborate [the negotiation] framework and envisions^^ [the] state restructuring process".

Nepal: Dangerous Plans for Village Militias

International Crisis Group (ICG)

ICG Asia Briefing No. 30, Kathmandu/Brussels, 17 February 2004, 8 p.

<http://www.crisisweb.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/040217_nepal_dangerous_plans.pdf>

The **report** by the ICG highlights a recent development, if not a consequence, of the ongoing process of militarization in Nepal. Unable to quell the Maoist insurgency with the army recently, the government has launched a project for the creation of local civilian militias known as “Rural Volunteer Security Groups and Peace Committees”. The report is very negative regarding the idea of arming civilians since it may have serious consequences for the overall security situation in the country. The insufficient level of training, the scarce accountability of would be militias combined with the difficulty of disarming and controlling such militias are the main deficiencies of such a project. Although the government rejected the allegation that the plan was not yet being implemented, ICG reports that a pilot project had already been launched in Eastern Nepal in November 2004. Notwithstanding the government arguments about the necessity and appropriateness of the plan, previous experiences (Guatemala, Peru, India) suggest that the arming of civilian has always led to deterioration in the security situation and the lack of respect for human rights in the country besides proving detrimental to the resolution of the conflict itself, particularly during the implementation of the peace accords. The report encourages the donor community to engage in some particular steps including support to human rights education for the armed forces, human rights monitoring by the civil society, extended access for the ICRC and the pressure on political and military leaders to put an end to the environment of impunity existing within the security forces.

FAST Update Nepal – November 2003 to January 2004

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, February 2004, 8 p.

<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/fast/updates/Nepal1_04.pdf>

The **report** clearly shows that violence erupted after the end of the ceasefire with more devastating effect on civilian population. The process of militarization in the country is evident and has weakened the remaining democratic institutions of the country. The fact that the Maoists have not launched large-scale attacks against government positions had led the army to claim that they were able to put down the rebels. In fact, the military stalemate is evident on both sides. The government decision to form village militias and arm civilians is likely to increase the vulnerability of the population and blur the distinction between combatants and civilians. New negotiations seem far off and are not promoted by a polarized international environment. Particularly the US and India are openly supporting the government militarily against the rebels labelled as "terrorists".

The Potential for Political Transformation of Rural Nepalese Civil Society: a Case Study of a Maoist-run Village

Prabin Manandhar

Paper presented at the 2004 Annual Conference organized by the Political Studies Association, 20 p.

<<http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2004/Manandhar.pdf>>

The **paper** provides a detailed account of the situation in a specific context of rural Nepal. The author examines the political transformation achieved by a village under the control of the Maoist rebels. Before that, he briefly explains the emergence of the Maoist insurgents and the reasons of their support. Political, economic, social and administrative dimensions of the Maoist system of local governance are described. Through the so-called "people's committees" the rebels have established a social network based on some civil society institutions. The Maoists' aim is to establish an equitable socio-economic system. Their economic actions have encompassed the equal pay for women and men, a minimum wage rate, the imposition of a limit to the maximum interest rate on informal lending, and control over prices of commodities. The social dimension of their intervention included the sharing of the costs of cultural rituals, education campaigns, and improvement of gender relations. On the

administrative side, the rebels have created some People's Courts and have run their own development projects. In his conclusion the author argues that, despite their class struggle rhetoric, the Maoists have "quite forcefully emphasised the question of the rights of the ethnic groups and Dalits, and consciously mobilised them as the solid support base of their movement" (p. 18). The rebels have been "capable of applying a mix of participative and directive means of change to effect the status quo situation in Nepal if there is no violent external intervention" (p. 19).

Insurgency in Nepal

Thomas A. Marks

Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), December 2003, 40 p.

<<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssipubs/2003/nepal/nepal.pdf>>

According to the author of the **paper**, insurgency has been a common feature of Nepal for the last five decades, but it erupted in open conflict only after the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared a "people's war" in February 1996. Harsh geographic conditions, bad distribution of resources, power concentration, apparent unity and deep heterogeneity are elements characterizing the Kingdom. Democracy did not bear the expected fruit of development while the monarch, "who might have been expected to serve a mediating and leadership role similar to that played so effectively by King Bhumipol in Thailand" (p. 5), was killed in June 2001 in what is sadly described as "Royal Massacre" to be replaced by his brother, to many a king lacking legitimacy. Inspired by the guerrilla techniques preached by Mao Zedong and applied by the Peruvian rebels of *Sendero Luminoso* and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge, the Nepalese Maoists managed to take control of large portions of the country. The main goal is the return to "Year One" i.e. complete destruction of the existing structures linked to the old regime and the establishment of a brand new communist system. The author is very critical of the rebels portraying themselves as the advocate of a radical change but in reality indulging in the same practices of the old regime. The guerrillas seem to be numerically dominated by Magars, a deprived ethnic group living in the Mid-West region of the country, particularly in Rolpa district, the Maoist stronghold. The Integrated Security and Development Programme (ISDP) launched by the government to

counter, both militarily and politically, the insurgents was not fully implemented and lacked a broader perspective. "While it was understood with considerable clarity how socioeconomic-political shortcomings had produced the insurgency, it was not grasped how to respond" (p. 20). As a consequence, a small and ill-equipped insurgency was allowed to flourish and grow, mainly due to the mutual distrust between the civil police, the Armed Police Force and the Royal Nepal Army, and become a real threat to the existence of the establishment. With regard to the real intentions of the Maoists, the author draws two scenarios: the "Leninist Scenario" where the rebels would be exploiting the conflict between the King and the political parties in order to overcome both and establish their own political system, such as Lenin did in Russia, and the "PIRA Scenario" reflecting the instrumental use of violence made by the Provisional Irish Republican Army as a way to gain legitimacy and enter into political competition to reach a political solution. Yet, the derailment of the peace dialogue in late August 2003 opened up the doorway to violence once again. The recommendations focus on (a) the restoration of normalcy and security, above all, at the local level where violence started; (b) the speedy implementation of socio-economic reforms; (c) national mobilization; (d) improvement of intelligence and (e) improvement of the efficacy of military response.

Breaking the Barriers and Building a Bridge: A Road Map for Structuring Negotiation and Peace Process in Nepal

Bishnu Raj Upreti

Paper presented at the Seminar 'Management of Conflicts in Nepal: A Preparation for Negotiation', Centre for the Study on Democracy and Good Governance and Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES), Dec. 2003, Kathmandu, 24 p.

<http://www.fesnepal.org/reports/2003/seminar_reports/csdg_conflict_report.htm>

The **paper** was presented at a seminar in Kathmandu. It deals with the peace process in Nepal and the obstacles and constraints to its successful application. Recently, the debate has been focusing more on conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution. Political failure, structural inequalities, rampant poverty, geographical disparity and injustice are identified as the root causes of the conflict. So far, all approaches to resolve the conflict have proved unsuccessful (military campaigns, police

operations, state of emergency, anti-terrorist control acts). The peace talks failed on two occasions: in 2001 and 2003. In both cases, the issue of the constituent assembly seemed to have produced a stalemate, eventually leading to the breakdown of negotiations. Besides, many procedural delays along with the absence of trained negotiators and facilitators contributed to the failure of both dialogues. In 2003, the legitimacy of the government was questioned by most of the political forces of the country. In addition, both warring parties put forward conflicting political agendas requiring highly flexible positions, but it was not the case. The question of constituent assembly not only dominated the talks but also eventually polarized the negotiating parties. The government was not keen on recognizing the validity of that option until the Maoists accepted constitutional monarchy. At the same time, military activities were still going on while the two parties were holding talks. The author argues that both actors used the ceasefire as a time-gaining strategy in order to reinforce their military apparatus. In a future road map short-term strategies need to be coupled with long-term strategies and perspectives. Short-term measures would encompass: a) formation of a broad interim government; b) removal of all barriers to dialogue (distrust, unstable support to issues, inconsistent attitudes and behaviours); c) promotion of popular participation in the peace process; d) creation of a Peace Resource Centre engaged in specific research – basically on the causes of the conflict – monitoring negotiations and planning post-conflict transformation, while looking for external support in the peace process. Long-term strategies focus on: a) constitutional and legislative reforms, with conditional constituent assembly as a viable option; b) addressing the root causes of the conflict and promotion of social inclusion; and c) fostering conflict transformation based on the main issue at stake during the conflict.

Doramba Incident, Ramechhap. On-the spot Inspection and Report of the Investigation Committee

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Kathmandu, 2003, 13 p.

<<http://www.nhrc-nepal.org/docs/Reprot%20of%20Doramba.PDF>>

This **report** is the result of an investigation undertaken by the National Human Rights Commission in order to assess the responsibility for the killing of 18 unarmed Maoists and 2 civilians. The importance of the event rests on the fact that the incident was reported by the Maoists as one of the reasons for walking out of the peace talks. After thorough investigations, inspections and interviews the Committee could find out that the 18 Maoists and the 2 civilians had been virtually executed by the security forces after they were captured and thus their killing had been unlawful, besides the fact that it occurred while the two warring parties were formally engaged in a ceasefire.

Why Two Negotiation Processes Have Failed: Recommendations Towards Democratic Peacebuilding in Nepal

Thania Paffenholz

An Annex Report to "Peacebuilding in Nepal – The Role of the German Programme: The German Development Co-operation (GTZ) and other German actors", Bern/Kathmandu, November 2003, 25 p.

This **report** analyses the failure of the peace dialogues in 2001 and 2003. After the identifying the main causes of the conflict (i.e. domestic and external pressure for a change of the traditional feudalistic system of governance; socio-political and economic disparities characteristic of a society divided by caste, ethnicity and religion), the author presents some "aggravating factors" making the country more prone to violent conflict: poverty, regional disparity, corruption, political polarization, globalizing factors and human rights violations. The current situation in the country shows an escalating trend towards violence. The faltering peace process has gone through four different phases. The first stage has witnessed the beginning and failure of peace talks in 2001. Then during the second phase all through 2002), the parties were preparing themselves for another peaceful attempt that took place from January to August 2003 (third phase). Again, the dialogue broke off because of the rigidity of the parties as well as the lack of professionalism in the conduct of the talks. The fourth phase of the peace process is still going on and shows that the parties have gone for a military option, instead of looking for a new dialogue with the other part. While the factors triggering the immediate breakdown of the talks are manifold (i.e. the Doramba incident, the rigidity of the

Maoists on the question of the constituent assembly, the unwillingness of the government to negotiate the terms of the rebels' proposals), the lack, if not absence, of homework by both sides, the controversial and unclear role of the facilitators and the absence of a mediator are among the most remarkable reasons for the failure of these attempts to produce a peaceful settlement. Yet, some other relevant factors have been neglected in the peace process in Nepal. First of all, the question of *ripeness* of the conflict, the willingness of the main actors to seek a peaceful solution has not been taken into consideration. The conflict was not ripe since there were people on both sides who were not keen on engaging in talks and acted as spoilers. Moreover, the peace process has been highly exclusive: in the second set of peace talks (January-August 2003) the mainstream political forces have been sidelined together with the civil society. There was no national consensus and support for the peace process and no acceptance of the government legitimacy to engage in negotiations. While everyone wanted peace, nobody was ready to make concessions. Substantial visions of the peacebuilding phase were absent among the main stakeholders. International actors, instead of promoting a suitable climate for dialogue, acted as spoilers by further polarizing the political environment. The question of the poor handling of the negotiation process is also analyzed. The breakdown of the ceasefire was due to other shortcomings: no pre-talks were held and the parties went directly to the negotiating table, so that positions were not transformed into specific interests. The two teams were inadequately prepared, while both communication strategies and security arrangements were deficient.

The recommendations put forward in the report focus on the need for a radical change of attitude by all involved actors. A King which genuinely supports the dialogue would gain internal respect and international reputation. The political parties should actively participate in the peace process, while the civil society should be cooperative and should promote peacebuilding activities. At the other end, the international community should refrain from any direct political involvement and foster peaceful efforts. A Maoist party fully integrated in the mainstream political scene would have more opportunities to implement its agenda rather than pursuing the military solution.

Conflict and Food Security in Nepal: a Preliminary Analysis

David Seddon & Jannagath Adhikari

European Commission Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit, November 2003, 160 p.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/mission/nepal_food03.pdf>

This long **report** focuses on the food deficiencies caused by the conflict in Nepal. It can be considered a follow-up and update of a previous study on the same issue undertaken by the two authors (*Conflict and Food Security in Nepal: a Preliminary Analysis*, April 2003). The conclusions of the report are similar. Although a countrywide perspective cannot be presented, food production may have declined in Nepal as a result of the conflict and is related to involuntary migration. In some conflict-ridden areas livelihoods have been threatened by both actions of Maoists and security forces. The major consequence of the conflict has been a reduction in ordinary movement in the rural areas. An environment of insecurity has limited governmental and NGO-channeled food distribution. Generally those most directly affected have been the better-off citizens, rather than the poorest and the most vulnerable.

Many small farmers, landless people and unskilled urban workers are victims of food insecurity, but "it is less clear whether there has been a real decline in food security over the past five years, and whether any decline can be attributed to the conflict specifically" (p. 8). According to the study, in Nepal the crucial factors affecting food security and insecurity are linked to the emergence of new patterns of "claims and entitlements to food", a result of changing power structures and definitions of eligibility.

FAST Update Nepal - August to October 2003

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, November 2003, 9 p.

<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/fast/updates/Nepal_4_%2003.pdf>

This **report** acknowledges the increase in military actions and the decrease in political stability as a consequence of the breakdown of the ceasefire in late August 2003 after the Maoist rebels walked out of the peace talks. Political polarization has been the main

result of the end of negotiations and the country is undergoing a process of militarization hampering any prospect of the re-establishment of a dialogue in the near future. The king has been blamed for undermining the democratic course, an impression that seems to be confirmed by the establishment of the Raj Parishad, an advisory body functioning during the Panchayat era.

Maoist Strikes on Hydropower Plants: Any Policy Lessons?

Shyam K. Upadhyaya

Equitable Hydro Working Paper No. 3

Winrock International, November 2003

This **working paper** deals with a very specific topic, i.e. the reasons for the Maoist attacks against hydropower systems in the districts under their control and the consequences of these acts, especially on the local population. After a short description of the Maoists' people's war and its developments, the author provides first hand accounts of the Maoist strikes. The rebels have apparently avoided targeting community-based owned plants (p. 17) and have concentrated their attacks on larger state-owned systems or individual-owned plants. The reasons for the attacks are basically four: a) the destruction of state infrastructures is part of the political programme of the rebels who aim at rebuilding the state "from the scratch"; b) the management and ownership of the plants does not reflect communist principles of equal access and ownership of the resources; c) the electricity produced by the hydropower plants is normally used by the army and the police; d) most of the hydropower plants targeted were located in remote areas where there was a modest military presence of security forces. However, the destruction of the hydropower plants by the insurgents has hampered rural activities and disrupted the lives of the local communities.

Nepal Back to the Gun

International Crisis Group (ICG)

ICG Asia Briefing, Kathmandu/Brussels, 22 October 2003, 16 p.

<http://www.crisisweb.org/library/documents/asia/nepal_back_to_the_gun.pdf>

The **report** of the International Crisis Group analyzes the new situation that emerged in Nepal after the collapse of the dialogue and the unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire by the Maoists on August 27, 2003. The probable cause of the breakdown of the seven-month ceasefire was the Maoists' obstinacy and inflexibility concerning the issue of a constituent assembly. The collapse of the truce has, however, been the result of mutual mistrust of both parties. The ceasefire period cannot be regarded as a genuine commitment on both sides to a peaceful settlement of the main issues at stake. Both the government and the insurgents have repeatedly violated the code of conduct supposed to govern their activities during the ceasefire. The government was half-heartedly committed to straightforward talks while the RNA continued to be heavily present all through the country and in August 2003 summarily executed nineteen unarmed Maoists in the district of Ramechhap, thus violating international humanitarian law. On the other side, the Maoists did not stop recruiting combatants and extorting money, besides attempting to kill former prime minister Deuba. Another unfortunate event has been the deliberate exclusion of the political parties from the talks, a move that resulted in an obstructive attitude by those very political forces during the dialogue. In addition, the Maoist leadership appeared under pressure from the cadres who had become increasingly unwilling to allow protracted negotiations. The talks themselves have been improperly conducted. Largely inexperienced negotiating teams and facilitators failed to coordinate and adjust their agendas and ended up competing for political publicity in the mass media.

Right after the breakdown of the ceasefire, the rebels' strategy has changed: instead of conducting mass attacks against police or army headquarters, they switched to a more targeted approach attacking small cells while enlarging the geographical scope of their activities in the Terai and the Eastern districts as well as the Kathmandu Valley, so far virtually excluded from the actual fighting. The report expresses concern about the extension of hostilities leading to an increase in the intensity of the conflict. These fears are confirmed by the attitude of the actors involved: both the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and the Maoists believe that the consolidation of their position on the battlefield will provide them more influence in future negotiations, while the King is unwilling to come out and articulate his position as regards the restoration of multiparty democracy.

Finally, the five main “agitating” political parties have failed to present a joint position on some fundamental questions. With the end of the ceasefire, the army has assumed further importance, and its role has been enhanced so that it is emerging as a semi-independent actor. Unfortunately, Nepal’s current political situation finds itself in a vicious circle: “it will be difficult to restore stability and security while the [political] parties continue to feel alienated, but the government does not want to hold elections until calm is restored”. (p. 9) Nevertheless, according to the report, there is room for a broad, even if preliminary, agreement on many issues.

Profile of Internal Displacement: Nepal

Global IDP Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council

Global IDP Project-Norwegian Refugee Council 10 October, 2003, 122 p.

<[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/Nepal/\\$File/Nepal%20-October%202003.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/Nepal/$File/Nepal%20-October%202003.pdf?OpenElement)>

This long **report** is strictly related to the issue of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nepal. Although not all displacements are caused by the conflict, majority of those who have decided to flee their homes were somehow pushed by the war, directly or indirectly. When a ceasefire was signed between His Majesty’s government and Maoist rebels in January 2003, many hoped to go back to their native places but, for sometime, opted for a “wait-and-see” attitude. With the collapse of the peace talks and subsequently of the ceasefire in August 2003 fighting resumed. Since the conflict started in the mid-1990s, hundreds of thousands of people have been uprooted across the country. “No reliable figures exist on the current number of people displaced, but the most realistic estimates put their number between 100,000 and 200,000” (p. 6). The rebels have specifically targeted landowners, teachers and other government employees. Most of the displaced have either moved to the main urban centers or fled to India. So far the government has generally avoided the protection of IDPs and, in particular, those forced to flee by the security forces. The reasons for displacement are manifold. Those connected with the conflict have affirmed that forced recruitment of young people, deliberate killings, heavy extortions and other kinds of physical threats by the Maoists, are all valid reasons. The Maoists, with a policy of “one family one

member”, regularly recruit children as well. Civilians have also fled the actions of Nepalese government security forces in their operations against the Maoists. Although certainly underreported, many villagers have been displaced by food blockades, torture and killings by security forces. Civilians have been killed on suspicion of providing food, shelter or financial assistance to the Maoists. Many displaced were afraid to be caught in the crossfire and decided to quit their places. One main problem is the accurate estimate of those who fled as a consequence of the conflict as against those who are ordinary economic migrants. Many IDPs are now thought to be living in urban centres and district headquarters throughout Nepal, including Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, Bhairahawa and Pokhara. During the second half of 2003, the media reported some 200,000 displaced in urban areas across the country with 100,000 IDPs in Kathmandu alone. Unfortunately, thus far international aid has proved untargeted and has generally disregarded the problem of IDPs in the country, while the human crisis is dramatically increasing. It is difficult to envisage a return to the negotiating table, for the time being. The warring parties have “antagonistic political visions” and seem unwilling to compromise. The intervention of a third party is thus warmly encouraged in the report.

Nepal’s Multiple Challenges in Comparative Perspective

David Scott Palmer

Final report for USAID, 3 October 2003, 28 p.

This **report** seeks to analyze the internal conflict in Nepal, examines alternatives and possible scenarios and assesses the role and capacity of external actors (donors in particular) to influence the eventual outcomes. The breakdown of the peace talks in late August 2003 revealed the difficulty to establish a genuine dialogue between the King and the Maoists without the participation of the political parties who still deem the current government illegitimate. The poor conduct of the talks by the government reflected their reactive rather than pro-active attitude during the negotiations. The whole democratic system has been strongly affected by the two main events in 2002: the dismissal of the parliament by the then PM Deuba in May and the takeover by the King who sacked the PM in October and postponed general elections indefinitely. The absence of elected officials in the District Development Committees (DDCs) and in the

Village Development Committees (VDCs) further undermined the democratic process in the country. Among the key actors identified by the report, the Army and the Police forces seem to have reinforced their role and are exercising influence in the overall crisis. Their warfare capacity has increased since the declaration of the emergency in November 2001. At the same time, the armed forces are increasingly blamed for their excesses, especially against civilians. The author seriously questions the claim that the Maoists control 80% of the territory. Its stance is based on an analysis of the number of VDCs and DDCs effectively controlled by the government. The picture then, appears to be different with HMG still presiding over 70% of VDCs and more than 80% of DDCs. Unfortunately, the most skilful and educated civil servants are reluctant to go to remote areas and have the tendency to live in metropolitan areas, i.e. the Kathmandu Valley. Although the position of the Maoists is still strong, the movement shows signs of rapid fragmentation of its internal cohesion. Ideological and strategic differences are said to have occurred between the political wing (Prachanda and Bhattarai) and the military branch of the movement (Badal) where the former would be willing to pursue a negotiated solution whereas the latter is more inclined to the completion of the revolutionary process through armed struggle. The responsiveness of the cadres has been recently questioned after the increase of violent and extortive practices against local population in many Maoist-controlled areas. The position of the political parties is weakened by their “poor record in office over the decade of democratic governments” (p. 10). Calling new elections, despite the risks arising from a deteriorating security situation, is envisaged as the best solution to break the current impasse. The polls would set up an elected government more legitimate to engage in negotiations with the rebels. The UML is considered the most likely political force to lead a future government. The analysis of external influence in Nepal is almost completely confined to the role of India. In effect, the “big neighbour” influences all walks of life in Nepal and, willy-nilly, is a fundamental actor in the solution of the crisis in the Himalayan Kingdom. Another section of the report provides some relevant lesson learned from previous peace processes in Latin America. Besides being long and complex, peace processes are often influenced by external actors and need some adjustments over time. Mutual recognition of the stalemate can contribute to the search for a peaceful solution, provided that mutual mistrust by the parties is absent. A peace settlement with weak implementing mechanism is doomed to failure. In Nepal, the most likely scenarios resemble the Peruvian and the Colombian experiences. While the Peruvian case is based

on the government's strong military action coupled with heart-winning and people-oriented development policies, the Colombian experience is rather gloomy: after long peace negotiations failed (1998-2002) the conflict resumed with the government gradually taking advantage of the insurgents. Then the report lists some crucial issues on which a consensus is possible among the involved parties: 1) Interim government; 2) preparation for national and local elections; 3) change in electoral law and /or amendment to the constitution; 4) gradual demilitarization through disarming of rebels and reduction in size of security forces; 5) political decentralization and 6) fight against corruption. In the demilitarization stage the involvement of a UN peacekeeping operation would be necessary. The donor community (in particular USAID) should enforce some measures oriented towards the reinforcement of the peace process in the case of a peace-scenario; in the case of a war-scenario (present at the moment) the focus should be more on assisting the less insurgency-affected areas while providing military support to the government security forces. In the last part the author identifies the root causes of the conflict: apparently, more than socio-economic and political discrimination, the source of the rebellion should be ascribed to "ideologically committed and educated few with strong and charismatic leadership" (p. 28) who "galvanized" support for their cause and convinced many deprived persons that revolution was the only means to solve their problems.

Sowing the Wind...History and Dynamics of the Maoist Revolt in Nepal's Rapti Hills

Robert Gersony

Mercy Corps International, October 2003, 101 p.

<http://www.mercycorps.org/pdfs/nepal_report.pdf>

This **report** deals with the increasing concern expressed by the donor community about the possible adverse consequences of development cooperation in some countries. In particular, the study has its origins in some allegations against the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) concerning the projects implemented in Western Nepal (known as *Rapti Zone*) in the decade before the outbreak of the Maoist insurgency. Many critics of the US assistance in Nepal have pointed out that the Maoist

conflict emerged in the very districts where the USAID had poured over \$50 million in 15 years through its project of Integrated Rural Development (IRD). Therefore, the author had been mandated to assess the root causes of the conflict: why did the insurgency erupt in Rolpa and Rukum (the *Rapti Zone*), the intersection of the USAID programmes and the origin of the conflict, the conduct of the insurgency by the Maoists, the attitude of local population towards the rebels and the degree to which the policies implemented by the Maoists are similar to those of Cambodian *Khmer Rouge* and Peru's *Sendero Luminoso* movements. The root causes of the conflict are located in the increasing loss of economic revenues of the local population due to some generational and structural changes brought about by some of the government's controversial decisions and the peculiar socio-economic dynamics of the assessed area. The disappearance of traditional sources of income (sheep, iron mining, British Ghurkha service, hashish trade, hunting, etc.) has pushed the local population to seek economic redress elsewhere or to provide support to the emerging Communist movement that later evolved into the Maoist guerrilla. Thus, according to the author, USAID programmes in the area did not affect the process of emergence of the Maoist insurgency in terms of frustrated expectations or in terms of the creation of potential for violent reaction to the government's bleak performance in the region. The report gives emphasis to the general lack of infrastructures (particularly roads) as one of the impeding factors of socio-economic development in the *Rapti Zone*. Ethnic and social deprivation was widened by the violent and harsh response by the government in the aftermath of the democratic transition in 1990. Political persecution, widespread violence in the western region further pushed the local population towards armed rebellion. Finally, the methods of violence applied by the rebels and their ideological beliefs lead the author to compare the Maoist movement in Nepal with two previous tragic experiences of Maoist rebellion: the Cambodian *Khmer Rouge* and Peru's *Sendero Luminoso*.

FAST Update Nepal - May to July 2003

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, August 2003, 9 p.

http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/fast/updates/Nepal_3_%2003.pdf

The **report** reveals an increasing trend towards violence with more violations of the code of conduct agreed upon by the parties in March 2003. The trend is confirmed by the delay of the third round of talks. The resignation of Prime Minister Chand and the appointment of Thapa in that role also slowed down the process of mutual understanding that was initiated by the signing of a ceasefire in January 2003. The exclusion of the mainstream political parties from the peace dialogue is a severe threat to the overall process since the excluded parties are all potential obstacles to the peace process. Indeed, the agitations initiated by the so-called 'People's Movement' launched by five political parties resulted in rising popular discontent and disturbing the political environment. The report concludes that a break-off of the ceasefire is likely unless the parties reach mutual understanding.

Social Change in Conflict Affected Areas: A Study Report

*Mukta S. Lama-Tamang, Sumitra M. Gurung, Dharma Sornakar, Sita Rana Magar
(Consultants)*

*Report prepared for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), July
2003, 39 p.*

The **report** aims at a better understanding of the social change that has occurred in those areas of Nepal where the Maoist insurgency has taken root. The report considers the situation in the districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Dang, Sindhupalchowk and Ramechhap. The three branches of the Maoist organizational machine are the Party, the People's Army and the People's Government. Obviously, the army's task is to advance the guerrilla warfare, while the Party gives directives to the army itself and to the Government. The latter is in charge of the implementation of socio-political and economic policies. The process of insurgency and counter-insurgency created a situation of "staggered rule": in each district there is a Maoist-controlled area (called *base areas* - normally the peripheries and the centre's surroundings), a buffer and patrolling zone and an area under the control of governmental security forces (usually the district headquarters and other towns). The problem is that the process of evolution of the rebellion is not at the same stage in all areas. As a consequence, the condition of the

population greatly differs in relation to two variables: the level of process of insurgency and the actor they are ruled by (Maoists or Government). In the government-controlled areas there are rather isolated zones where the mobility of the population is strictly limited by the curfew that is in force during the night. Maoists' areas, usually non-accessible to outsiders, experience the launching of Maoists' programmes "that combine revolution and production" (p. 17). In the buffer zone ordinary people are subjected to the military operations of both forces and live through permanent insecurity. In the *base areas* local populace enjoy an improved social situation: religious, gender or caste discrimination is no longer practised while the members of the People's Government belong to different castes, different ethnic groups and gender. The government exercises administrative tasks e.g. tax collection, land registration. Cooperative methods are employed in the organization of production and labour while a common exploitation of natural resources has been put in practice. In general, people feel that a significant improvement of their social condition has been achieved, even though the sustainability of Maoist development programmes is in doubt. Interestingly, a sort of parallel judicial system has been set up in the affected areas. The People's Courts deal with local quarrels and small disputes and their punishments are sometimes symbolic and bizarre. In some cases, the Courts have, however, been accused of summary justice. The government's judicial system has become practically irrelevant since the establishment of the Courts. The changes that occurred in interpersonal behaviours based on gender, caste and ethnicity have been quite impressive as well. Women's condition has improved remarkably, due also to the huge participation of women in the guerrilla itself. Domestic violence, gambling and alcohol abuse have decreased steadily. Women's domestic burden has increased due to the absence of males being involved in the fighting. Similarly, the Dalits' condition has gained the attention of the Maoists who established a "Dalit Liberation Front" with the intention to promote Dalit political participation. Physical separation and untouchability are seldom practised among Maoists. It is also estimated that more than two-thirds of the cadres belong to indigenous communities. In the economic sphere, among the positive impacts, it is important to underline the reduction of interest rates for money lending. Access to credit has become easier and larger. Actually, some negative consequences of the conflict on the economy of rural areas can be registered, food deficiency being the most worrisome. In conclusion, the policy of the Maoists seems to have been inspired so far by the principle of *tabula rasa*: all existing infrastructures, institutions and capacities

are manifest evidences of the presence of the government and for this reason they need to be destroyed and new infrastructures and institutions have to be built in order to achieve the goals of the revolution. Unfortunately, development agencies are caught up in between, and their efforts appear to be vain before the obstinacy of the insurgents and the sharp repression of the security forces. Conventional development projects need to be removed and replaced by more inclusive, transparent and enduring programmes.

Social Exclusion and Nation Building – Assessment of Prospects for Enhancing the Role of Research and Research Institutions in Nepal

Lill-Ann Bjaarstad Medina, Mohan Das Manhandar, Michael Thompson, Alf Morten Jerve

Study Commissioned by the Norwegian Embassy in Nepal, Oslo, June 2003, 37 p.

The **report** is one of the few studies concerned with the methodological approach of a research study about Nepal. In particular, the report is focused on studies related to civil society and its mediating role in the “double burden” of poverty and social exclusion. It is evident that the emergence of the Maoist insurgency is only the most visible evidence that state and donor-led development policies failed to address and solve the aforementioned double burden. So far, academic efforts have been biased by the fact that the academic field is still dominated by the Brahman elite. Undoubtedly, a broader access to research resources and capacities would enable excluded sectors of the society to participate in the debate and provide a completely different perspective on the issue including different solutions. At the same time, a shift “towards a *more critical research agenda*” (p. 8) would provide a more comprehensive and objective analytical approach. Being “critical” does not mean to make *tabula rasa* of the point of view of the majority and dominant group – the Brahmans – and just speaking up for those who are excluded. It involves an attitude that respects all the voices concerned about the problem and combined with a constructive and positive approach.

It is evident that the “double burden problematic” has a strong – if not dominant – political dimension, which makes it an extremely complex issue. The complexity also arises from the fact that social exclusion is not always an involuntary situation. Cases of

voluntary exclusion are frequent. Moreover, there are different social categories: poor and socially excluded, poor but not socially excluded as well as non-poor but socially excluded. The problem of social science and research in Nepal is that it is practically “dependent on foreign funding” (p. 11). The side effect of this dependence is that external donors are merely interested in studies related to their development projects. Besides the question of unintended consequence of development aid, what emerged from the interviews conducted by the research team is the different reaction to various development approaches put forward by international donors. One interesting hypothesis that has been put forward is that the Maoist attitude “provides us with a sort of litmus test for distinguishing between those aid projects that are reaching the poorest of the poor – the one that the Maoists have left alone and even supported – and those that do not – the ones the Maoists have attacked and, in many instances, destroyed or stopped.” (p. 12).

The report acknowledges that current research agenda should be re-oriented towards approaches more consistent with current realities of Nepal and more responsive to the challenges the country is actually facing. This methodological shift should go along the following paths: 1) the topic of research should consist of the issue of “social exclusion”; 2) any research programme should focus on ‘structural inequalities and their implications for building a more inclusive Nepal nation state’ – that is the subject matter of the studies most needed at the moment; 3) excluded groups and advocacy civil society should be allowed to influence the research agenda (in order to avoid the double bias – elitist and developmental); 4) promotion of activities aimed at overcoming problems of communication between the research community and their objects of research as well as between researchers and policymakers. Further considerations encompassed by the report are: the need for preparedness to sponsor “researcher-identified” and long-term studies as well as the promotion of researches involving discriminated or minority groups. In addition, the findings of the study should be disseminated and made available to advocacy groups for a “take back” use.

Nepal: Obstacles to Peace

International Crisis Group (ICG)

ICG Asia Report N° 57, 17 June 2003, 44 p.

http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/asia/afghanistan_southasia/reports/A401009_17062003.pdf

This long **report** is a comprehensive assessment of risks, obstacles, challenges and breakthroughs involved in the peace process in Nepal. The main obstacle to peace is the self-interested and controversial attitude of the three parties involved in the crisis. “By turns conciliatory and confrontational, [the] royalist government, the Maoist insurgents and the recently ousted political parties have all proven capable of derailing the peace process if their concerns are not addressed” (p. i). The appointment of Prime Minister Surya Bhadur Thapa by King Gyanendra proved highly divisive and confirmed the mainstream political parties’ fears about the king’s designs to retain control of the government and his reluctance to accept the basic rules of constitutional democracy. The ICG considers the establishment of an all-party government as an “essential step” towards an effective peace process. At the moment, constitutional reform is the core question over which the contenders are sharply debating. A broad consensus is needed on several key issues: 1) a structured territorial, political and administrative decentralization; 2) the civilian control of the Royal Nepal Army; 3) a more representative electoral system 4) institutional accountability. Another priority is a more professional management of the peace process itself. Slow decision-making, changes of the negotiating team, lack of communication between the parties and inadequately trained negotiators and facilitators are all elements likely to disrupt any established peace process. International training of negotiators is the option suggested by the report. The role of international actors should also encompass the deployment of a small number of UN experts coming from neutral countries in order to monitor respect for the code of conduct governing the ceasefire signed by the government and the rebels. In fact, the report argues, “peace can only be made and secured by the Nepalese, but the international community can and should play an important supporting role”. At the same time, international donors should introduce some kind of conditionality in their aid policies and military support to the government as a consequence of the recent undemocratic stance of the king. Democratic elections, a fully independent government and fundamental rights should be restored as soon as possible.

In addition, recent street protests and nation-wide strikes have demonstrated the mobilizing capacity and the popular support of the mainstream political parties – in

particular, the Nepali Congress party (NC) and the United Marxist-Leninist party (ULM) – making clear that any “two-way” political agreement (Monarchy-Maoists) excluding those forces is doomed to failure. The Maoists have called for direct royal involvement and effective presence of the king himself during the negotiations. There is widespread belief that, in some way, the Palace will have the final say on any major issue. Somehow, rebels, political parties and monarchy agree on the fact that some amendments to the guiding principles of the state are necessary to achieve a long-lasting peace. Actually, the 1991 Constitution needs to be implemented or amended rather than rewritten. A fundamental challenge is the control of the Royal Nepal Army *de facto* under the tight control of the king. The issue of royal privileges is another thorny question. Maoists demand the status of *shree panch* (a full-fledged immunity) to be limited to the king, the queen and the crown prince and not to the whole royal family. According to the report, the Spanish and Belgian models of royal protection (with nominal inviolability but solely representative powers to the king) are a suitable example to follow. Social, political and economic exclusion appears to be the root cause of the current crisis on which the Maoists have built up their popular support. Proportional representation has the advantage of giving a say to minorities otherwise excluded by a majority rule system, the so-called “winner-take-all” formula. Proportional representation, however, tends to produce greater fragmentation in the political arena leading to further governmental instability. The ICG recommendation is to adopt a mixed system similar to Germany’s or New Zealand’s models. Electoral reform should go together with a genuine process of decentralization and empowerment of local governmental structures. Further breakthroughs are required in the definition of the Nepali state: the Hindu nature of the kingdom and the recognition of Nepali as the only official language (education in other languages is allowed up to the primary school) represent obstacles towards the establishment of a more inclusive state. A positive element is the willingness by the Maoists to reduce the range of their demands: the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a People’s Republic have been put aside, at least for the time being. Of course, the Maoists are reluctant to include the mainstream political parties in the negotiations since a three-way dialogue would diminish their “strategic advantage and their political share”.

National Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2003

National Human Rights Commission

Kathmandu, June 2003, 28 p.

<http://www.nhrc-nepal.org/docs/Annual%20Report%20Summary%202003.PDF>

The 2003 **annual report** of the National Human Rights Commission provides an overview of the activities of the Commission, the project implemented as well as the future challenges of the Commission. Among the projects the most important concern the capacity development of National Human Rights Commission, the preparation of a Human Rights Paper, the integration of Dalits, rights promotion and response to the ongoing human rights crisis in the country. The main body of the report analyzes the human rights situation in Nepal, violations, improvements and constraints of the regime. Indiscriminate use of torture by the security forces and the Maoist rebels, discrimination against women, Dalits and children, restriction on freedom of the media and above all a high level of impunity are the most recurring features described by the report.

FAST Update Nepal - February 2003 to April 2003

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, May 2003, 9 p.

<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/FAST/updates/Update%20Nepal%20May%202003.pd>

This **report** indicates that the country's instability decreased after a cease-fire was signed; the conflicting parties in March agreed on a "code of conduct" during the implementation of the ceasefire and finally started negotiations. Widespread optimism is a distinctive mark of the period under consideration. The government has been slow in preparing a political agenda to discuss even though the Maoists showed signs of flexibility in their position. Failure of negotiations would, however, plunge the country into a new spiral of violence.

Equality and Participation: Preconditions for Ways out of Crisis

Karl-Heinz Krämer

Paper presented at the conference on The Agenda of Transformation: Inclusion in Nepali Democracy

Organized by Social Science Baha, Kathmandu, 24-26 April 2003, 10 p.

<http://www.nepalresearch.org/publications/baha_conference_2003.htm>

This **paper** is based on the contribution to a recent conference held in Kathmandu about inclusion and democracy in Nepal. The root causes of the current crisis are not solely to be found in the developments of the last decade. The author argues, “[t]he reasons for the failure of the 1990 system have only in part to do with the developments and events of the past twelve years. For the most part, they are sought out in developments and conceptions that go back to the founding years of the modern Nepali state, i.e. the late 18th and early 19th century.” (p. 1) Political factors (thwarted democratic expectations, uneven political representation, bad governance and rampant corruption), social and ethnic factors (social inequality, discrimination, lack of education reforms, unemployment), regional factors (India, China, Indo-Pakistan conflict, Bhutanese refugee problem) and international factors (September 11 consequence and negative effect of foreign aid) are the main reasons for political instability in Nepal. The people’s war started by the Maoists in 1996 can be interpreted as an attempt to express dissatisfaction with this situation. King Gyanendra has his share of guilt but he should not be used as a “scapegoat for Nepal’s political disaster” (p. 5). Personal ambition, corruption and lack of professionalism marked the activities of the political parties. Indeed, the principles and the policies of the state expressed in the constitution (articles 24-26) have many points in common with the Maoists’ demands submitted to the government in 1996 before launching the people’s war. The way out of crisis focuses on some options: a new constitution (the constitution of 1990 is considered dead and impossible to revive); more culturally representative education programs and textbooks; the continuation of the monarchy seen as a unifying element of the country, but under clear constitutional restraint. More binding rules and intra-party effective competition should be the measures to render the political parties more responsible and accountable vis-à-vis the population.

The Common Agenda for Nepal (“CAN”)

Anup K. Pahari

*Paper presented at the conference “Andean and Himalayan Maoist Movements”,
Cornell University, Ithaca NY Einaudi Center, April 13, 2003, p. 3*

<<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/SouthAsia/conference/pdf/nepal7.pdf>>

The author of this **paper** puts forward the idea of a Common Agenda for Nepal (“CAN”) as an expedient to foster the 2003 peace process in Nepal. The proposal aims at selecting a set of concepts, ideas and issues that all parties involved in the conflict agree on, in order to speed up the consensus building needed for an effective and successful peace process. It can be observed that there is an emerging consensus concerning some issues, which can be considered as shared goals and common interests of the conflicting parties: 1) territorial integrity/sovereignty of Nepal; 2) domestic peace; 3) equity and social justice; 4) economic and human development; 5) good governance; and 6) representative democracy.

Nepal Backgrounder: Ceasefire – Soft Landing or Strategic Pause?

International Crisis Group (ICG)

ICG Asia Report N° 50, 10 April 2003, 38 p.

<http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/asia/afghanistan_southasia/reports/A400943_10042003.pdf>

This **report** provides an outline of the political crisis arising from the internal conflict in Nepal. Up to date and based on the developments in the 2003 negotiations between the government and the Maoists, the paper attempts to analyze whether the ceasefire signed at the beginning of 2003 was an effective move towards peace or it was a mere strategic move aimed at earning time before the launch of a new brutal military campaign. Interestingly, all the stakeholders (the palace along with the RNA, the Maoists and the mainstream political parties) are described as potential spoilers in the peace process. Pursuing the achievement of their self-interest, those forces are likely to influence – negatively more than positively – the embryonic peace process. Along with

internal and international political pressures, economic concerns seem to have pushed the conflicting parties to accept a ceasefire and agree on a “conduct code” as a precondition for further negotiations. As far as the causes of the conflict are concerned, the study identifies the failure to “embrace more open economic and political systems” as the root cause of the struggle. A crisis of governance is then considered as having opened up a *domino effect* triggering many latent or suppressed conflicts within Nepalese society.

Conflict & Food Security in Nepal: a Preliminary Analysis

David Seddon & Jagannath Adhikari

Report to Rural Reconstruction Nepal, Kathmandu, April 2003, 119 p.

<[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/FC24218498939D32C1256D2500358FCD/\\$file/eu-conflict.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/FC24218498939D32C1256D2500358FCD/$file/eu-conflict.pdf)>

This long **report** is an effort to fill the academic gap existing in the literature concerning the impact of the People's War in Nepal on the economy of the country itself, on rural livelihoods and, in general, on the poorest strata of the population. Most of the scholarship on the subject is considered inadequate to assess the real consequences of the conflict since it has been mostly reliant on “anecdotal evidence”. Apparently, the following features are to be considered key concerns in the Nepalese context: (a) decline in production; (b) diminution of stores and stocks; (c) reduction of movement of goods and services; (d) inefficiency of governmental and non-governmental food distribution; decline in food availability; (e) food deficit leading to malnutrition and hunger; (f) internal displacement and involuntary migration. Mainstream literature considers these issues as the direct consequence of the Maoist insurgency. The authors of this study, however, believe that such a conclusion is both inaccurate and vague. It would be hard to attribute all the diseases existing at the grassroots level to the current conflict. It undoubtedly has had an effect on the country's present situation, but the conflict cannot serve as a scapegoat for the fiasco of the government's development policies and the mismanagement and undesired effects of international donors' aid. Food security is in danger in Nepal. But it was so even before the Maoists took up the arms.

However, the Maoist factor has deeply influenced and worsened a nationwide crisis. The remote districts of Rolpa and Rukum were chosen as the platform to launch the People's War. Increasingly, after 1991, the districts of Rolpa and Rukum had become the targets of a double governmental campaign of political marginalization of Maoist representatives in order to exclude them from conventional politics and a kind of "forced conversion" of the voters aimed at eroding support to the Maoists. The brutality of the actions perpetrated by the police during the repressive operation, known as *Operation Romeo*, launched in the same districts further alienated the local population loyal to the state. "It could be justifiably argued therefore that the 'current conflict' began in 1995, even before the launching of the People's War, with *Operation Romeo* and the attacks on leftists authorized by the local Nepali Congress leadership (and with the support of the government)".

It is only since the declaration of the state of emergency that international donors and agencies started to produce studies linked to the conflict. But still a few of them were concerned with the impact of the conflict on the lives and livelihoods of people in the affected areas. Only after this, there began to appear some more considered studies. They were mostly commissioned by "bilateral and multilateral foreign agencies with their own programmes and projects in mind". It was mainly a work of conflict analysis. As for the economic impact of the conflict, the report argues that the war in Iraq, the SAARS and the *September 11* consequences have harmed the national economy more than the Maoist conflict has done. Maoist operations have especially damaged the infrastructures of the country and snatched away some economic resources in order to feed their revolt. The impact on the livelihoods has been uneven as it has been felt more in the West and Mid-West of Nepal. The impact has also been irregular on different sections of the population. The so-called "enemies of the people" - large landowners, money-lenders, corrupt officials, politicians, traders and non-Maoist political activists - have been heavily targeted by the rebels. Unfortunately, the situation of those "in between" is not better. They have suffered attacks from both the Maoists and the government forces.

Expected Model & Process of Inclusive Democracy in Nepal

Krishna B. Bhattachan

Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, April 2003, 23 p.

<http://nepalresearch.org/publications/bhattachan_inclusive_democracy.pdf>

The **study** deals with the democratic process in Nepal. So far, whatever democracy had been installed was only “exclusionary democracy” (p. 1) while a sound inclusive democracy is the only viable model for a multi-cultural country such as Nepal. The main socio-cultural and political fault line that until now hindered the development of a genuine democratic system was the “ideology, policy and practice of Bahunbad (Brahmanism)”. It imposed the “domination of one caste (Bahun-Chhetri), one religion (Hindu), one language (Khasa-Nepali), one culture (Hindu) and one region (the Kathmandu Valley)” (p. 4). Many other groups living in Nepal (Dalits, Madhesis, Muslims, and women) found themselves excluded from the process of power-sharing and from access to economic resources and social structures. The practice of the dominant group is significantly called “internal colonialism”. This situation is perceived as a source of tensions and as the main reason that fuelled the current insurgency.

Federalism – with this regard the Swiss experience is considered as extremely valuable for Nepal –, regional autonomy (partial self-government in the mountain, hills, inner Terai and Madhesi areas), proportional representation in the political sphere are regarded as the main options to promote inclusive democracy. The way to get there is, however, rather complicated. Although the right of self-determination usually implies secession, in the case of Nepal no organized group has ever exercised that option and even the Maoists are strong supporters of a unitary state of Nepal. As a consequence, tools like a constituent assembly, or a decision-making and decision-approving process made through the use of public propositions and referenda may be helpful to encourage an all-inclusive and forward-looking process of democratisation. Any other model of democracy that is not inclusive “would continue to breed insurgency based on caste/ethnicity, language, religion and region” (p.18).

Spatial-Horizontal Inequalities and the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

S. M. Murshed and S. Gates

World Bank, February, 2003, 22 p.

<http://www.worldbank.org/research/inequality/June18Papers/NepalConflict.pdf>

The **paper** examines the root causes of the conflict. The argument is built around the rejection of some common beliefs about internal conflicts. The paper suggests that *grievance* rather than *greed* is the main motivating force. In particular, the concept of horizontal or inter-group inequality is central in explaining the Nepalese strife. The same concept has both an ethnic and caste dimension. In addition, the spatial (or geographic) aspect contributes to the assessment of the causes of the conflict whose intensity is considerably higher in the mid and far western areas of Nepal where human development and asset (land) holdings are extensive sources of internal inequality and international concern. Significantly, the ethnic dimension of the conflict is examined in a broader descriptive framework. Ethnicity becomes a catalytic scapegoat since it “resolves the collective action problem of mobilizing groups to fight one another. Ethnicity, whether based on religion, language or some other form, is a powerful organizing principle, far superior to social class”. Grievance is rooted in some deep inter-group disparities encompassing: i) asset inequality; ii) unequal access to public employment; iii) unequal access to public services; iv) over-taxation; and v) economic mismanagement. According to the authors, development assistance has so far failed to meet the challenges of poverty and reduction of horizontal inequality; any related strategies are to be understood as complementary rather than competing.

Maoist Problem in Nepal. Its Genesis, Growth and Resolution

Dev Raj Dahal

Kathmandu, February 2003, 11 p.

The **paper** is an accurate but succinct exploration of the main issues at stake in the conflict in Nepal. The background of the current crisis is the post-1990 democratic opening: the gains of such a positive development were actually perceived only in urban centres, especially Kathmandu, while 80% of the population, living in the countryside, was excluded from the benefits brought by democracy. Lack of accountability of the new leaderships and the “ideological deviation” of the political parties contributed to disenchantment among the grassroots populace and the emergence of the Maoist

movement. The rebels' penetration in the remote districts of Nepal had been facilitated by the highly centralized system of decision-making mainly focused on the Kathmandu Valley. The long neglected Midwest areas provided the insurgents with a basis for launching their people's war. Their objective being the overthrow of the "feudal regime" and the establishment of a people's republic, the rebels have adopted conventional Maoist strategies coupled with other peculiar tactics aimed at demoralizing the enemy and discouraging any resistance from the local population to their disputed people-oriented political measures and socio-economic policies. Nonetheless, the Maoists won the support of a large part of the population, particularly of those who had experienced social marginalization, economic inequalities and political persecution from the state, especially during the early years of democracy. Unfortunately, the state response was anything but coherent and effective in addressing the actual sources of discontent that had brought about and nurtured the insurgency. Violent retaliation in the conflict-affected areas by security forces along with deceitful and dubious commitment to dialogue by both sides provoked an escalation of the armed struggle that by 2001 had spread in all 75 districts of the country. The best option for conflict resolution provided by the paper is the fulfilment by the government of some legitimate demands of the rebels and the settlement of the most debated issues by popular decision through a referendum.

FAST Update Nepal - October 2002 to January 2003

Swisspeace & Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Quarterly Risk Assessment, February 2003, 9 p.

<http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/Update_Nepal_jan03.pdf>

This brief **report** consists of an update of the situation in Nepal and a risk assessment throughout the period from October 2002 to January 2003. Political stability during the concerned period is rather precarious and marked by a high level of violence. The dismissal of both Prime Minister Deuba and the Parliament by King Gyanendra triggered a conflict between the monarchy and the main political parties about the interpretation of the constitution, the role of the Royal Palace and, what is more relevant, the direction of the democratic course in the country.

An appraisal of external intervention in Nepal reveals that foreign aid strategies have proved inconsistent and irregular, reflecting inadequate conflict analysis coupled with some positive longer-term policymaking. The response of international donors and governments has been highly incoherent “alternatively backing multi-party democracy, the king, dialogue and weapons supplies.” (p. 7).

Microfinance and Armed Conflict in Nepal: The Adverse Effects of the Insurgency on the Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. (SFCLs)

U. Wehnert, R. Shakya

Rural Finance Nepal (RUFIN) Working Paper No.3, Kathmandu, January 2003, 48 p.

<http://www.gtz.de/ffsd/Download/RUFIN_056.pdf>

The RUFIN (Rural Finance Nepal) is a joint Nepali-German project implemented by the Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal (ADB) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The purpose of this **working paper** is to present the situation of the grassroots micro-financial system in Nepal. The sector has been seriously affected by the Maoist insurgency, which has targeted many times the structures of the Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. (SFCLs) i.e. “multi-service cooperative designed to deliver primarily financial, but also non-financial services to its members in rural areas” (p. 1). The paper briefly reviews the root causes of the conflict and recognizes that the main causes of the conflict, all closely interconnected, are “bad governance and corruption, inequitable socio-economic and political access and resulting widespread poverty” (p. 5). The study considers the current crisis in Nepal as “relatively tractable” due to some reasons: (a) it is a conflict between two parties not complicated by a considerable war economy; (b) there is no significant international dimension or involvement; (c) neither the ethnic nor the religious identities have been exploited by the parties. Yet, at present the first two arguments seem quite weak, since currently the conflict shows a three-way confrontation (government, Maoists and mainstream political parties) while India and the United States are playing a significant role in tackling the crisis. In fact, there was a similar conclusion in a previous study also undertaken by the GTZ in 2002 (see “Nepal Country Study on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building – Executive Summary”). According to some surveys, the cost of the conflict so far has been 8-10% of Nepal’s GDP. In 2002 Nepal “registered for the first time in 19 years a negative growth in the

GDP” (p. 5). Economic paralysis is a nationwide disease. The banking sector, in particular, has suffered the greatest losses in the rural areas that are mostly affected by the insurgency. The reason for Maoist attacks against a pro-poor project, as the Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd. is the perceived link between this project and the Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal, which was one of the first economic targets of the insurgents’ campaign of violence. Maoists destroyed the documents related to loans to farmers, looted and burnt the head offices of 34 SFCLs. Since then the SFCL has suffered a decrease in the loan portfolio, the fall of financial margins and a general decline in performance. The strategies suggested in order to cope with the problem include: information campaigns, indirect dialogue with the Maoists, transfer of operations to headquarters offices and immediate reconstruction and implementation of new activities. It is clear that the maintenance of any development organization and project in Maoist-controlled areas “depends on effective communication with the local Maoist cadres” (p. 19). Another consequence of the conflict has been the reallocation of government resources (...) from the development cooperation portfolio to the conflict portfolio i.e. the police, the army and reconstruction services” (p. 23).

UNDP Support for Peace and Development Initiatives - Nepal

Thania Paffenholz

Swisspeace, January 2003, 14 p.

The lack of a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy involving all actors concerned with Nepal’s conflict is certainly the main reason for the failure of the peace process in 2001. The **mission report** of this Swiss NGO addresses the main needs of this war-torn country. At the political level (Track 1) an enhanced dialogue among the main actors can be fostered by a comprehensive national and international political and development-oriented action. At the civil society (Track 2) and grassroots levels (Track 3) action has to encompass an all-inclusive support to the peace process. The UNDP Peace and Development Trust Fund aims at promoting a “culture of peace” through civil society and human rights initiatives implemented by non-governmental groups. The report point out that, though among international donors it is a shared view that peace can be achieved only through dialogue, the way to get there differs significantly. Some

countries, especially the US, are mainly interested in providing military support to the RNA while other donors are more interested in peaceful support initiatives. As regards the “lessons learnt perspective”, Nepali ownership, neutrality and transparency towards the conflicting parties and local acceptance of peace building projects are the most important elements to be taken into consideration. The strategic direction of any future commitment to peace building in Nepal should consider a set of crucial recommendations encompassing support to the youth and to the victims of the war, but also targeted training for partners and an effective and coherent monitoring regime of objectives and results.

The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Dimensions and Outlooks for Peace

Anup. K. Pahari

Cornell University, January 2003, 31 p.

<<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/conference/pdf/nepal5.pdf>>

The **study** can be considered an alternative perspective on the subject matter. In the aftermath of the People’s Movement in 1990, Nepal entered a period of optimism. By 1996, the rise of the Maoists as an anti-systemic force, the extremes of violence along with the lack of cohesion within and outside the mainstream parties transformed the dream into a nightmare. No observer had predicted that six years after the restoration of democracy a bloody insurgency inspired by the teachings of Mao Zedong would have torn apart a country like Nepal, which is known for its tolerant and peaceful culture. The point of departure in the author's account of the insurgency is the description of the crisis from the Maoist perspective. The insurgency is explained as a “logical, necessary and inevitable historical development in which the class interests of Nepali 'oppressed masses' (...) are pitted against a constellation of feudal classes headed by the 'feudal Nepali monarchy'.” The revolt is largely justified as a way to foster revolution and overthrow the regime. The rationale of the Maoist insurgency can, however, be explained at two levels: the ideological agenda (overthrowing the existing regime), that is something very theoretical, and the practical agenda consisting of some measures and policies that are set forth in the 40-Point Demand the Maoists presented to the government in 1996. This document is definitely a “non-revolutionary” one. “[E]ven

though they have opted for revolution as a method, it is in fact reform that they are principally concerned with and motivated" (p. 8). The two main political parties (the NC and the UML) share the same evaluation of the Maoist insurgency: the success of the Maoists in gaining popular support can be explained on the basis of the exploitation of lack of education and rampant poverty among the youth. The Maoist cadres are in fact considered as "misguided rural youth" (p. 6) whose practices are alien to and inconsistent with concepts such as democracy and peace.

The originality of the author's approach becomes more evident in the section concerning the "root causes" of the Maoist insurgency. The conventional *root causes hypothesis* is largely criticized: according to Pahari, the combination of "widespread poverty, unemployment, bad governance, ethnic/caste discrimination and violation of human rights (...) [is] said to promote a sense of distance and disenfranchisement from the national social, political and economic mainstream" (p. 6). The Maoist insurgency is thus seen as the result of deep-rooted grievances of marginalized social groups. The problem is that this hypothesis fails to answer a simple question, i.e. if the Maoist insurgency is a reaction to old grievances, why did it emerge in the 1990's and not during the previous decades when inequalities that allegedly fuelled the revolt were more evident and acute? The argument advanced by the study is that "the MI [Maoist Insurgency] is rooted in the post 1990 political economy of Nepal rather than in distant historical events or grievances per se" (p. 10). Of course, some specific factors pushed the Maoists to embrace violence: (a) frustration of heightened expectations after the "Spring Revolution"; (b) political marginalization; (c) political deprivation - i.e. the 2 major political parties, NC and UML, gained 80% of seats in the parliament, thanks to the perverse effect of the Westminster electoral system; (d) persecution by the ruling parties - i.e. the attempt to "congressify" those areas where the Maoists enjoyed wide popular support; or the police abuses during the state's campaigns of repression such as *Operation Romeo* and *Kilo Sierra II*; (e) interpretations, strategies and choices of an extreme nature adopted by the leadership of the Maoist party in the post-1990 period. This last aspect is fundamental to understand the ability of the Maoists to convince themselves and the masses of the need for a violent revolt against the corrupt establishment. For a revolutionary option to be adopted the leadership role is decisive; iniquities and grievances are not sufficient. In the view of the author the best option is to negotiate a peace settlement first. It will account for 20% of the efforts to restore peace to Nepalese. Then the remaining 80% of peacemaking will involve respect for the

agreement, its implementation and the realization of structural reform in order to gradually return to normalcy.

The Green Roots of Red Rebellion: Environmental Degradation and the Rise of the Maoist Movement in Nepal

Jugal Bhurtel & Saleem H. Ali

University of Vermont (USA), 2003, 21 p.

<<http://www.uvm.edu/~shalii/Maoist.pdf>>

Most of the existing scholarship on the Maoist insurgency in Nepal is inclined to present the conflict as a political and socio-economic problem. The rationale of the present **study** is to provide an alternative outlook on the root causes of the conflict. Some scholars have argued that environmental degradation is the ultimate cause of civil strife in many regions, but they have failed to provide empirical evidences. On the other side, political analysts concerned with Nepal in their studies have missed the link between environment-related issues and poverty in the hills. The authors argue that environmental deprivation (i.e. deforestation, soil erosion and degradation, flooding caused by over-cropping, over-extraction of mountain resources) “coupled with demographic changes widened socio-economic disparities especially in the form of access to sufficient food and land among peoples in the Mid- and Far-western development regions of Nepal and indirectly led to the Maoist insurgency in these areas” (p. 2). Notwithstanding the rhetoric of Maoist leaders, the insurgency started in the districts of Rolpa, Salyan, Jajarkot and Rukum because these were areas threatened by environmental devastation which has to be regarded as the main cause leading to the “creation of the so-called 'revolutionary objective situation' in Far- and Mid-western regions for Maoist insurgents to grow and multiply” (p. 8). Ecological degradation had several consequences for mountain and hill peoples: food production did not keep up with population growth, families have been forced to abandon their farm terraces because of soil erosion, and devastating floods in the monsoon period caused forced displacements and made several victims among rural population. In conclusion, the authors suggest that ecological distress in an already fragile environmental equilibrium “could be the hidden and hitherto unnoticed cause of the Maoist rebellion in Nepal” (p.

18). Indeed, the progressive loss of livelihood rendered people vulnerable and prone to Maoist rhetoric and promises. One fundamental recommendation warns about investing in infrastructure development projects in the mountain areas since this would prove “economically expensive and environmentally hazardous”. More supportive actions should encompass the application of indigenous know-how and techniques to natural resources management.

The Crisis in Nepal: Opportunity + Danger

Johan Galtung

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 2003, 4 p.

<http://www.nhrc-nepal.org/docs/Galtung%20Report%20Crisis%20in%20Nepal.PDF>

This brief **report** is the result of a TRASCEND mission to Nepal in May 2003. Galtung objectively describes the current situation in Nepal. The country is facing a turning point: either toward opportunity (i.e. peace) or danger (i.e. resort to violence in tougher terms and the collapse of the whole system). The report focuses on the *conflict formation*: on one side there is a “basic change oriented party that uses direct violence”, while on the other side, there is a “status quo oriented party upholding major structural violence, adding direct violence”. Others are “scared, apathetic, inactive, waiting” (p. 1). Great emphasis is put on this third party depicted as “vast, amorphous, overwhelmingly majoritarian (...) underappreciated by violence-oriented journalists more inclined to report violence than to report peace” (p. 2) whose components are the mainstream political parties, the civil society, and the advocates of democracy. The Maoists and the King dominate the situation since the third party is weak and internally divided. Nevertheless, a mutual statement of allegiance to parliamentary democracy by the Maoists and to constitutional democracy by the king together with an all-inclusive roundtable could be a valuable initiative likely to put an end to the political stalemate.

The report considers eleven cleavages prevailing in the Nepalese crisis deriving from natural/ecological fault-lines to political rifts and from economic disparities to social and ethnic discrimination. The suggested remedies encompass an appropriate use of technology, a wider political representation, economic co-operation, and educational

and social reforms. All these concerns are acts of *commission* and *omission* to be considered as human rights issues and not “Maoist issues”. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is regarded as the most suitable body to initiate a Truth and Reconciliation process and promote a sound human rights regime in Nepal.

Seminar Report on Conflict Management in Nepal

Seminar organized by CSDG/FES, 17 December 2002, 5 p.

<http://www.fesnepal.org/reports/2002/seminar_reports/csdg_conflict_report.htm>

The **seminar report** summarizes the findings of four papers presented during the meeting and reviews the reactions by the audience. All the speakers agreed on the multiplicity of root causes of the conflict. Some interesting assessments, however, emerged from the discussion. Injustice at the political, social and economic level is the reason that pushed a considerable share of the population to give its own support to the Maoist insurgency. Moreover, the report underlines the fact that once the conflict has started it is useless to blame the past: only a correct analysis of the situation and a well-balanced commitment to peace by all involved actors can revive hopes for a robust and enduring solution of the conflict.

The Consequences of Conflict: Livelihoods and Development in Nepal

David Seddon and Karim Hussein

Overseas Development Institute, London, December 2002, 53 p.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp185.pdf>

This **working paper** is one of the few studies devoted to an assessment of the impact that the conflict has had on rural livelihoods. Abortive development and inadequate governance led to widespread poverty creating conditions for frustration among common people and triggering the Maoist insurgency. International donors failed to help in reforming the structures of the state and to promote a culture of change at the local level. The impacts of the conflict at the grassroots level have been manifold: 1)

rural migration by those sectors of the society most targeted by the Maoist guerrilla – local elites, government officials, other political party activists, business community; 2) decline in the mobility of persons and decrease of goods transport; 3) damage of productive facilities and disturbance of economic activity; 4) destruction of infrastructures; 5) growing insecurity and vulnerability as a consequence of attacks by Maoists and security forces against the local population and abuse of human rights; 6) severe food deficit and reduction of access to local livelihoods owing to previous causes. In addition, most of development projects implemented by international donors have been forced to stop or change their objectives and methods and have seen their functions of economic and social assistance largely reduced. Recommendations encompass formulation of a “practical guidance” for aid agency in order to respond to situations of multifaceted conflict including methods for conflict analysis, intervention approaches, livelihood protection and finally conflict resolution.

Nepal: A Deepening Human Crisis

Amnesty International

London, December 2002, 29 p.

<[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA310722002ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA3107202.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA310722002ENGLISH/$File/ASA3107202.pdf)>

This **report** is the follow-up of a previous study by Amnesty International in April 2002. In May 2002 Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba dissolved parliament and called parliamentary elections for November. In July the government disbanded local elected bodies, replacing them with government appointees. In October King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev sacked Sher Bahadur Deuba and took executive power. He appointed an interim government comprising people known to be loyal to him, and indefinitely postponed parliamentary elections. For the rest of the year there was a standoff between the King and the mainstream political parties. After the parliament was dissolved in May, the King imposed again the state of emergency for three months on the recommendation of the interim government. It was not renewed in August. The state of emergency was accompanied by the suspension of several fundamental rights, including the right to constitutional remedy (apart from habeas corpus), the right of

assembly, the right to freedom of thought and expression, and the right not to be held in preventive detention without sufficient grounds. In April parliament passed the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Act (TADA) to replace the Ordinance of the same name promulgated in 2001. It was to remain in force for two years. The TADA curtailed some of the powers granted to the security forces under the ordinance, but allowed preventive detention up to 90 days. Anyone arrested under the TADA should be brought before Special Courts, but there were delays in establishing these courts and in several areas they had not been constituted by the end of the year. According to official figures released in August, 9,900 “Maoists” had been arrested since the imposition of the state of emergency in November 2001, of whom 1,722 remained in custody. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in June sent fact-finding teams to 35 districts to verify reports of human rights abuses. Reports on their findings were submitted to the authorities and the leadership of the CPN (M) in October. The NHRC also made recommendations for the prevention of unlawful killings, “disappearances” and arbitrary arrests and detention. No responses had been received by the end of the year. About the widespread impunity in the country the report writes: “impunity in Nepal is an entrenched political culture dating back to the period before the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1990”.

Peace-building and Conflict Transformation In Nepal: Towards a Strategic Framework

*Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, TRANSCEND
GTZ, December 2002, 37 p.*

This document is a **mission report** prepared for the GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* – the German Technical Co-operation) containing a wide variety and large number of medium/long-term proposals. These proposals are geared towards many different actors at various levels. The notion of *conflict transformation* is a fundamental concern of the report. Once a political agreement is reached, it will be crucial for parties and actors to the conflict as well as international donors not to compare the end of military operations with a genuine state of peace. It is necessary to address the real causes of the conflict even before final negotiations and effective peace

and confidence building start. Any failure to achieve this preliminary goal will result in frustrations threatening future peace attempts. Training is regarded as the primary goal for any comprehensive understanding, transformation and resolution of the Nepalese conflict, and it is a recurrent concept throughout the report. It is understood as “building concrete skills, tools, knowledge, awareness and ability for peace building, conflict transformation, people-centred participatory development, and direct human rights work *directly relevant to the challenges and concrete situation in Nepal* [sic]” (p. 32-33). The targets of training are several: political party representatives, armed forces officers, Maoist insurgents, civil society members, journalists, etc. The empowerment of the main actors of the crisis and of Nepalese society itself is a basic requirement for the transformation of the conflict. Post-war reconstruction, reconciliation and healing should follow some basic guidelines: i) addressing the root causes of the insurgency; ii) broad-based participation and involvement in post-war peace building; iii) reintegration of former combatants; iv) transparent and genuine *Truth and Reconciliation Process*; and v) all-inclusive policy planning programmes.

Towards a Sustainable Approach for Poverty Reduction and Decentralization. A Note on Nepal's Proposed Poverty Alleviation Fund

World Bank - Private Sector Development Department, South Asia Region

Report No. 25019-NEP, 20 November 2002, 72 p.

<http://www-

wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/12/21/000094946_02120504013690/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf>

This **report** is a policy note addressed to His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) by the World Bank. Its primary purpose is to provide to HMGN the best approach for the utilization of the Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF). Another objective is to provide some guidelines to the World Bank itself and other international donors in order to face problems of poverty reduction and service improvement in remote and backward areas of the country. The report starts with an overview of the conceptual framework to analyze the issues: two peculiar elements of poverty - risk and vulnerability – are taken into consideration. The poor have to be regarded as a dynamic category; efforts should

then be made not only to solve poverty but also to prevent people falling into it. In this case, addressing HMGN's failure to provide basic services to Hill and Terai communities and to proceed towards the full empowerment of these populations is a fundamental element of the abovementioned preventive approach. The two strategies – improvement of service delivery and forward-looking decentralization – should be implemented simultaneously reinforcing each other.

Then, Nepal's situation is studied. International agencies and NGOs have sponsored many local development projects. Their experience shows that traditional patterns of public investment and service delivery – i.e. highly centralized planning, financing and implementation – perform less well than participatory and locally based and conceived projects. Indeed, the process of implementation determines the quality and efficiency of the programme. A striking example of this observation is offered by the success of community-based projects in the sectors of education and infrastructure. Decentralization is regarded as a means of reduction of conflict between fund efficiency and poverty targeting. PAF "has the potential to become an effective program to address risk, vulnerability and poverty in Nepal while encouraging decentralization" (p. 3).

Maoist War: Violence between Hope and Sorrow

Sanjeev Pokharel

Paper presented at the meeting of the Norway-Nepal Association in Oslo on 29 October 2002, 8 p.

<http://nepalresearch.org/publications/maoist_war.pdf>

The *40-Point Demand* submitted in 1996 to the then Deuba's government by the Maoists included demands some very concrete (declaration of Nepal as a secular state), some very abstract (inflation should be controlled), some very big (constituent assembly for the draft of a new constitution) and others rather small (ban on cars with Indian plates). This brings into question the real intentions of the Maoists. What is sure is that Deuba overlooked the claims of the movement, and many observed that this gross negligence was a fatal mistake of his government. A more understanding and conciliatory position might have prevented the people's war. In the **paper** author

expresses the opinion that the conflict is to be understood as the people's expression of their frustrations and dissatisfaction about recent political and economic situation of the country" (p. 8). Equally interesting is the analysis of the conditions that supported the emergence and consolidation of the conflict. One big issue put forward by this paper is the force behind training the Maoists whose guerrillas are considered among the most efficient in the world. Some argue that Maoist rebels are trained in India, while other experts advocate the involvement of British Army Ghurkha soldiers. The success of the Maoist movement lies also in the "huge amounts of wealth" accumulated during a 7 year-old conflict, through looting, donations and forced contributions. Another factor explaining the incredible strength of the insurgency has to be found in "some affinities between mysticism and popularity of the Maoist movement" (p. 7); fashionable, ambiguous and abstract descriptions of Maoist personalities appeal to the population. The conclusion deals with the dilemma between real commitment and strategic stalemate of the Maoists during the current peace talks. It is likely that the insurgents will not be satisfied even with a genuine constitutional monarchy and will not surrender to the idea of establishing a people's republic in Nepal.

Rise and Fall of National Service in Nepal. Politics of Service in New Democracies

Gautam N. Yadama and Don Messerschmidt

6° Global Conference IANYS, 3-6 September 2002, 29 p.

<http://www.clayss.educaciondigital.net/ianys/inform/sasia_eng.doc>

The **study** stresses the political dimension of national service programmes in Nepal. In particular, the experience of the National Development Service (NDS) is taken into account. The NDS ensured a surprising level of voluntary participation and has proved to be a vector of expectations and aspirations of the youth. However, the restrictions and shortcomings posed by semi-democratic systems (or "young democracies") such as Nepal hinder really effective outcomes. Notwithstanding this limit of the Nepalese experience, the NDS succeeded in catalyzing local participation into social and economic development projects. Despite some attempts from the state to undermine volunteer programmes, the NDS proved to be a valid vehicle of socialization between

discriminated sectors of the population. The programme highlighted the political dimension of civil service showing how close its link with democratic governance is. Though nominally apolitical, those movements progressively enter the political arena from the bottom and gain increasing legitimacy and unwavering support. The paper suggests further research on the following areas: impact of national service on local communities, the life cycle of national volunteer service projects, the understanding of such initiatives by different political regimes and their sustainability related to the degree of democracy achieved by the political system.

Nepal in Crisis: Justice Caught in the Cross-fire

International Bar Association (IBA)

London, September 2002, 68 p.

<<http://www.ibanet.org/pdf/HRINepalJusticeFinal.pdf>>

This **report** is the follow-up of a fact-finding mission to Nepal of an International Bar Association (IBA) delegation of jurists. The main goal of the mission was to examine whether the jurists can freely exercise their profession in Nepal. After negotiations between the government and the Maoist insurgents broke down in November 2001, the authorities declared a nationwide state of emergency. Right after the king announced the *Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Ordinance 2001* (TADO) and its enactment in 2002, the *Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Ordinance (Control and Punishment) Act 2002* (TADA) was approved. These Acts entail the suspension of fundamental rights and allow the authorities to strictly control the media and arrest whoever is suspect to be a terrorist, that is, a Maoist. The findings of the mission reveal that “it is virtually impossible for lawyers to carry out their duties without harassment and intimidation” (p. 3). Threats to lawyers usually come from Maoists but the authorities interfere in their activities as well – for instance, they discourage lawyers from representing Maoist clients. Some lawyers have been arrested but the authorities did not provide any official reasons.

In addition, the so-called 'People's Courts' recently established in Maoist-controlled areas lack the internationally recognized standards of a fair trial (severe sentences like “giving 100 or more lashes of a bamboo cane” - p. 30). On the other side, Nepal's

District Courts are affected by endemic corruption. In their recommendations the delegation of jurists has pointed out those measures which need to be carried out: 1) respect for international legal standards, 2) independence, integrity and impartiality of judges 3) end to interferences by State authorities, 4) training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for the RNA, 5) respect for international treaties on torture and prisoner treatment.

Developing Conflict Solution Strategies Using the Local People and Their Ideas as a Guideline

D. M. Singh, S. H. Dahal, S. Sharma, P. M. Dixit, P. Dixit

Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESOD), July 2002, 101 p.

This comprehensive **report** deals with a set of strategies for conflict resolution put forward by local people in Nepal's conflict-affected areas. A result of extensive fieldwork, the report focuses on different aspects of the people's war launched by the Maoists in 1996. The emergence of the armed struggle is attributed to the crisis of governance arising from the negligent attitude of the political elites of the country. Especially economic disparity, political frustrations, poverty and injustices led to an escalation of the conflict. Unemployment and poverty along with impunity for the abuses of governmental officials are the main reasons for the local people to join the insurgency. The impact of the war has been devastating for the livelihoods of ordinary people living in the countryside. Many of them have been forced to migrate in other safer parts of the country or have gone abroad scared by excesses carried out by the conflicting parties. The issue of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is deeply analyzed to understand the reasons lying behind the choice to move to another place. The conclusions of the interviews undertaken during the fieldwork, however, do not bring out exactly the causes of displacement, since most of the interviewees refused to answer fearing retaliation from one side or the other. One chapter of the report deals with the role and condition of women in conflict situations. Despite their marginal role in the society, women have asked for a more pro-active role and participation in conflict resolution. Positive emotional attitudes can be exploited to overcome sensitive issues involved in the conflict such as abuses of human rights and other abuses by the state.

The recommendations of the report are interesting: besides the denial of any military solution, the authors suggest the creation of village peace councils to draft a “people’s agenda” and put forward proposals about poverty alleviation, rural economy improvement, human and social development as well as good governance.

The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolutionary Theory and Practice

David Seddon

Paper presented to the ‘Symposium on South Asia – Conflict in South Asia’, organised by the Research group on South Asia in the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, 18 June 2002, 45p.

The **paper**, first, explores the events of the last 20 years in Nepal in a historical perspective. The People’s Movement and its premises are accurately analyzed and linked to the outbreak of the People’s War in 1996. The Maoist insurgency underwent six different phases, called “plans”. The first plan corresponds to the initiation of the rebellion. The second plan aimed at developing the insurgency in an organized way. Extension of guerrilla warfare and boycott of local elections underscored the third plan, while during the fourth and fifth stages (until mid-1999) the creation of base areas emerged as the rebels’ priority. In February 1999 the People’s Army was established while the leadership decided to launch the sixth plan in order to raise the people’s resistance struggle and extend further the insurgency. During this stage the announcement of *Prachanda Path* marked the beginning of a new revolutionary strategy that involved “the fusion of the Chinese model of protracted people’s war with the Soviet model of armed insurrection” (p. 7). After 2001 the government’s response became tougher. King Birendra’s reluctance to deploy the Army was reconsidered and a more active approach was undertaken. The Integrated Internal Security and Development Programme (IISDP) marked the official involvement of the RNA. The state of emergency in late 2001 intensified the conflict. Maoist base areas are considered important for they allow some military successes and enhance self-reliance of rebels. The Maoists did take some concrete steps towards the creation of a valid alternative to the present establishment in Nepal. Nevertheless, measures so far implemented in some base areas (i.e. law and order, social redress, local development, etc.) have not been

given a high priority compared to the armed struggle. On the contrary, the insurgents started levying taxes in the form of “contributions”, actually extortion. The pressure and the violent manner used to collect money have changed and created a negative impression of Maoists among ordinary people, especially in the Mid-West. The IISDP was the framework adopted to legitimize the intervention of the Royal Nepal Army in late 2001. This move has not only marked the bold involvement of the government in the management of the crisis but also its increasing authoritarianism.

The Ethnic Dimension of the Maoist Insurgency

Sudheer Sharma

DFID, May 2002, 42 p.

This **report** focuses on the elements of ethnicity and caste to provide a broad explanation of tensions and the widespread discontentment existing among the Nepalese population. The core concepts of the contribution are *ethnicity* and *caste*. They do not refer to the same group even if, in some cases, there is a certain overlapping. Cultural hegemony from the state is one of the main concerns of the population: in the constitution of 1990 Nepal is described as a Hindu Kingdom while Nepali has been declared the official language, though it is the mother tongue of only half of the population. What is even worse is that “the disparity in education and economic status has a correlation with caste hierarchy”. Conflicts between Aryan and non-Aryan groups, misunderstanding between Hindus and other religious minorities, inter-linguistic tensions, unequal caste-based judicial system, scarce political representation of low-caste elements and all consequent social injustices are the main sources of grievances among the population of Nepal. The Maoists were keen on exploiting those anomalies to gain popular support for their demands. Ethnic and linguistic issues appear among the *40-Point Demand* presented to the government by the insurgents in February 1996. The Maoists have taken up the ethnic argument to legitimize their demand for territorial decentralization. “The ethnic movement has not taken to the violent path so far”. The strength of the work rests on the assumption that the ethnic element is *one* of the dimensions of the Maoist insurgency. The study does not claim to be an all-embracing assessment of the current conflict. Indeed, the scope

of the analysis is limited to the Maoist movement and the relation between its ideology and ethnicity.

Nepal: A Spiralling Human Rights Crisis

Amnesty International

London, April 2002, 48 p.

[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA310162002ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA3101602.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA310162002ENGLISH/$File/ASA3101602.pdf)

This Amnesty International **report** shows the impact of the internal conflict on the population of Nepal. Political instability at the national and local level has escalated the human rights crisis. Fighting in the context of the “people's war” continued to escalate, with heavy casualties reported among army and police personnel. The Maoists have remained in control of several districts in the Mid-Western region, where their “people's governments” run parallel to the government's local administration at district level. Similar bodies have continued to function at ward and village level in many other districts. The Maoists' “people's courts” appear to become less active in some areas. In February the state of emergency declared in November 2001 was extended with all-party support. The security forces continued to carry out unlawful killings. It was estimated that of more than 4,000 “Maoists” officially declared as killed since November 2001, nearly half might have been unlawfully killed. Those unlawfully killed included civilians suspected of providing shelter, food or financial assistance to the Maoists. They also included members of the CPN (M) killed in circumstances where they could have been taken into custody or where they had already been taken prisoner. People continued to “disappear” after arrest by the security forces; more than 65 people had “disappeared” since late 2001. “Disappearances” were facilitated by the TADA, under which people were held incommunicado for prolonged periods in secret and illegal detention at army camps. Torture by the army, the paramilitary police force (the so-called Armed Police Force – APF) and the police was reported almost daily. The APF, which was established in 2001, was increasingly cited for its involvement in allegations of torture as it became more active during the year. The army systematically held people blindfolded and handcuffed for days, weeks or even months. Thousands of

people were arbitrarily arrested and detained. They included lawyers, students, journalists, teachers, farmers and other suspected members or sympathizers of the CPN (M). District Coordinating Committees decided who should be arrested, detained or released often on the basis of information provided by mainstream political parties. Victims of human rights violations failed to gain redress, and official accountability was widely lacking. The judiciary was largely bypassed or failed to assert its authority or observe the rule of law. Habeas corpus remained an ineffective remedy in relation to “disappearances” and for those detained under the TADA. The Maoists stepped up attacks on members of mainstream political parties in the run-up to the elections set for November. Members of the Nepali Congress (NC) party were most often targeted for deliberate and unlawful killings, but there were increasing attacks on members of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) as well. The Maoists also tortured captives, linked their release to certain demands and recruited children into their ranks. They were also responsible for the summary execution of members of the security forces taken captive during attacks, particularly at police stations.

Coping with the Crisis - Revisiting the Role of Nepal’s Media during and after Emergency

Anand Aditya

in “Reporting in times of emergency in Nepal” - National seminar on “Media & Constitutionalism” Organized by the Federation of Editors & Publishers of Nepal with cooperation of Friederich Ebert Stiftung – 14 March 2002, 22 p.

<http://www.fesnepal.org/topics/2002/topic_april02.pdf>

This **seminar report** aims at giving an assessment of the media in Nepal. The test of genuine media efficiency and freedom comes in critical moments such as the state of emergency currently in force in Nepal. As for the conflict analysis the report argues, “all three causes of disputes [for the occurrence of a military takeover] are now present - weak assimilation and hostility to the ruling elite, tension between the groups, and insurrection by armed political extremists” (p. 1). Two kinds of Nepal are emerging: the rural Nepal of remote areas where people's everyday life is made of fear, violence and suspicion and the urban Nepal, principally that of Kathmandu, where many are rushing

in search of a better life. The role of the media is also controversial: which Nepal should it represent? If it follows the government side, it “risks becoming an official propaganda tool” (p. 2). If it follows the Maoists, it will be accused of backing what the government considers as “terrorists”. The major concern of both the government and the population is to cope with the crisis. “Defiance has replaced deference to the sacred cows of yesterday. Disbelief reigns supreme over traditional beliefs. Icons are missing from the public mind. Ideals have evaporated. Opportunities have been squandered. Habits have been seduced. The unanticipated and the unthinkable has become daily warfare.” (p. 2) This quote effectively describes the current erosion of social and political resources existing in Nepalese society. This situation is visible in the media sector as well. Newspapers circulation, radio diffusion and TV programmes are suffering a drastic reduction. Many journalists are under arrest allegedly for having backed the Maoists. The insurgents for the opposite reason have killed other reporters. Freedom of expression and information delivery are considered basic principles of good governance as well as core elements of constitutional democracy which is guaranteed by the presence of the so-called “Five R’s” (Restraint, Responsibility, Representation, Responsiveness, Rule of law). A society where mass media are not operating in free environment cannot be considered fulfilling the “five R’s” test. The media was the vanguard of the Spring Movement in 1990 and it was still very active in the later phase of institutionalization of democratic rules. The press in particular is now facing the most difficult and crucial moment in the last decade. The report encourages the mass media to adjust itself to the new situation. Crisis journalism unlike conventional reporting has to face more challenging tasks. Impartiality is a goal hard to achieve. The media sector must be able to redefine, if not reinvent, its role. Currently, Nepalese media suffer some constraints and weaknesses such as: politicization, power bias, partisanship, individualism, profiteering, persistent sensationalism, lack of objectivity, inability to be a vehicle of social change and asymmetry in the management of information. Nevertheless, opportunities for the sector are equally great. If we exclude the period of the insurgency and the state of emergency, mass media have operated positively. The government has to play an active role in order to encourage the media in training and monitoring. Civic education should also be a task of the media. In a longer perspective, wide investigation about what fuelled the Maoist insurgency would help to foster the process of post-conflict rehabilitation and healing in the country.

Report of the EC Conflict Prevention Assessment Mission Nepal

J.H. Van Locke, L. Philipson

European Commission Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit, Brussels, March 2002, 65 p.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/mission/nepal02.htm>

The European Commission is deeply involved in the resolution of the conflict in Nepal. This detailed **report** refers to a mission accomplished in January 2002. It aims at a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of the "People's War" (i.e. uneven development, endemic corruption, controversial role of the King, poor governance, excessive politicization of the society, ethnic and caste discrimination) and to a clear assessment of the position of different actors involved in the actual conflict. Besides the CPN (M), the Royal Palace, in particular, is a fundamental actor. Notwithstanding their controversial role, King Gyanendra and the Royal Nepal Army will be crucial actors in the peace process. The political parties and the civil society are no less important actors likely to determine future political developments in the country. Nevertheless, as the Conflict Prevention Mission argues, "Nepal is now in the first stages of a protracted civil war" (p.13). Indeed, the declaration of the state of emergency had the double effect of radicalizing the armed confrontation and polarizing the political scene. Human rights abuse and impunity became widespread as well. Besides some recommendations offered to European Commission initiatives, the study focuses on the opportunities and risks for development co-operation. "Working around the conflict" and withdrawing from conflict-affected areas proved an inadequate emergency strategy while failing to address the root causes of the conflict. More resources need to be allocated in the training of the personnel in "conflict dynamics and negotiation" (p. 28). The proposed long-medium term conflict prevention strategy is concerned with both strategic and operational objectives. As for the strategic objective, the "conflict containment and groundwork for progressive resolution" should be realized through sustainable development of underprivileged populations, the decrease in discrimination and repression, and increase in capacity and opportunities for peacemaking. The operational goals should encompass the effectiveness and visibility of the EC involvement, coordination and some short-term interventions. (p. 33-36). The strength of the report

lies in its multi-disciplinary analysis and in some original findings that allow for a composite solution to the problem. The most interesting aspect is the rejection of any tentative response to the conflict. Only straightforward and targeted initiatives can lead to a genuine solution of the main issues. The report indicates some key sectors where peace building efforts need to be made: the judicial system and the radio broadcasting. Constant conflict analysis, improvement of capacity and analytical ability of the international organizations and co-ordination of donors' activities are other elements contributing to a successful resolution of the crisis.

Security and Risk Management Report

Huntington Associates Security and Development (Consultant: Dan Huntington)
DFID Nepal, February 2002, 28 p.

The **report** is an assessment of the risks related to the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The situation on the ground does not allow one party to win over the other. While the security forces are reluctant to engage in direct fighting in rebel-controlled areas, the Maoists face increasing pressures from within the movement, and splits are considered likely in the future. According to the report, the conflict is unlikely to see any strategic winner in the next two years while the worsening economic situation will bring the country almost on the verge of collapse. While in the Hills the overall risk is reputed "high", in urban centres, especially Kathmandu, the level of risk is "low-medium", although it is destined to increase over time. In areas under their control, the rebels largely accept development projects considered "effective, pro-poor and accountable to local communities". Infrastructures are a major target of the Maoists and the risk involved with their construction is relatively high. On the contrary, agricultural, social and health programmes are tolerated, although some of them are linked to governmental structures (e.g. health projects).

Conflict and Peace in Mountain Societies

S. F. Starr

Thematic Paper for Bishkek Global Mountain Summit – UNEP, February 2002, 8 p.

<<http://www.mtnforum.org/resources/library/starf02a.htm>>

This **paper** appeared during a web conference organized by UNEP in 2002. The author focuses on the peculiarity of internal conflicts erupting in the mountain regions of several continents. The Peruvian Andes, the Balkans, the Afghan Hindukush, the Nepalese Himalayas, Karabakh and Chechnya in the Caucasus, the Colombian highlands, the Atlas Mountains of Algeria, and the Pamirs of Tajikistan have all witnessed serious fighting, which has endangered human conditions in already fragile areas. Few observers agreed to acknowledge the existence of a “mountain problem”. Those who have it have suggested that the root causes of these conflicts were merely local ethnic or religious tensions. Although such factors frequently have played a role, it happened that in many cases the warring parties had previously managed to coexist with one another for decades. Only recently, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, historians and political scientists have all started studying the different aspects of mountain conflict from specific angles. There are several common features between the mountain conflict contexts. An important commonality is that mountain regions are “neither totally isolated from the modern world economy nor fully integrated into it” (p. 2). Then, poverty in these peripheries is the result of increasing dependence on the centre rather than a consequence of the harsh environment. Moreover, the governments of the concerned countries proved ineffective in reducing this poverty and promoting political participation of mountain populations who started being aware of their conditions following the increase in media diffusion (radio, television, press). Somehow, government responses exacerbated the sense of discrimination and led to the polarization of local political leaderships who found it easier to engage in violent protest against the central establishment. Possible remedies for such conflict should encompass the following approaches: 1) mountain conflicts are to be considered as an international issue and not a local far-off reality to be overlooked; 2) monitoring of mountain regions situation; 3) selection of specific issues to address and resolve; 4) identification of successful practices; 5) address of security questions and socio-economic concerns at the same time; 6) people-oriented initiatives; 7) local-based activities; and 8) providing education and training to local people.

Nepal Country Study on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building –Executive Summary

Uwe Kievelitz, Tara Polzer

GTZ, 2002, 14 p.

The paper is the executive summary of a **study** undertaken in October 2001. At the level of *conflict analysis*, the study considers the current crisis in Nepal as “relatively tractable” for the following reasons: (a) it is a conflict between two parties not complicated by a considerable war economy; (b) there is no significant international dimension or involvement; (c) neither the ethnic nor the religious identities have been exploited by the parties. The main features of the current conflict are the following: 1) Political level: it is a struggle for political power caused by two different conceptions of legitimate authority and representation (i.e. constitutional monarchy in a multiparty democracy on one side and people's republic on the other). 2) Economic level: the Maoists blame the government for having neglected the interests of poor sectors of the society leading to an unequal distribution of resources. 3) Ideological level: the liberal/capitalist beliefs as opposed to a Maoist political system. The root causes of the conflict are: i) inequitable socio-economic and political access; ii) bad governance and corruption; iii) widespread poverty. The conflict has had some indirect positive aspects (pressures exerted on politicians to start social reforms, containment of corruption at the local level and control of social problems like alcohol abuse and gambling). The negative aspects of the armed confrontation (massive violence, fear, extortions, breakdown of public services, increasing poverty), however, considerably exceed the benefits. The “stakeholder analysis” shows that many people are likely to be involved in the conflict transformation and resolution: the business community, the media, selected NGOs, young people - women in particular, and some international donors (GTZ, SDC, DFID, the Norwegian Embassy and UNDP). The last part of the study focuses on the recommendations for future GTZ activities in Nepal.

Crisis of Governance and Modes of Conflict Resolution in Nepal

Dev Raj Dahal

2002, 8 p.

http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/modes_conflictresolution.html

This is a comprehensive **study** that relates the crisis of governance to the emergence of internal conflicts. Three structural causes of the current conflict in Nepal are encompassed: 1) the failure of the Constitution of 1990 to become a “consensual document” among the political forces of the country; 2) zero-sum political game adopted by national political parties which “evoked and provoked” the aspirations of people without solving their real problems and eventually undermined their own reputation. Furthermore, political programmes tend to emphasize and exacerbate cultural differences in the society producing a “fundamentalist gap” and undermining the culture of tolerance; 3) economic stagnation following the process of democratization of the country at the beginning of the 1990’s. Tentative economic reforms failed to achieve the social welfare the population needed. On the contrary, the shock therapy brought by radical neo-liberalist economic policy undermined traditional economic structures fomenting social unrest, uneven access to social and economic structures, marginalization and rebellion. The patterns of conflict in Nepal are grouped into three levels: a) structural conflicts – i.e. the contrast between the government and the Maoists – which are deeply rooted in structural problems of the country and face actors with adversarial and incompatible goals, means and payoffs; b) manifest conflicts – i.e. the conflict between the government and the opposition parties – based on competition (different goals) but also co-operation (a common commitment to multi-party democracy); c) latent or suppressed conflicts – i.e. divergences between government and civil society or inter-group discrimination – where some forces call for the implementation of their long-time claims and rights. What all these conflicts have in common is the existence of widespread grievances that gave birth to conflicts. The author advocates a multi-level strategy to solve multi-level conflicts. The system’s inherent drive to survival acts as a hindrance to a genuine resolution and “prescribes the deadlock to indefinite duration”. For this reason, governance is seen as the only accessible resource to reach an extensive conflict resolution since “good governance and conflict escalation are antithetical”. National security, the rule of law, inclusive popular political participation and the provision of public goods and services are the four goals of governance, obviously giving priority to national security. Conflicts become intractable when they are rooted in some structural deficiencies and the parties are not

willing to stop violence. In this case, the only alternative left is to address the underlying needs that sustain the claims of the conflicting parties through genuine governance.

Violence, Emergency and Human Rights

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 2002, 20 p.

*<[*nepal.org/docs/HR%20and%20State%20of%20Emergency%20Final%20Report.PDF>*](http://www.nhrc-</i></p></div><div data-bbox=)*

The document is a **monitoring report** issued by the National Human Rights Commission in Nepal. The commission is active in the protection and promotion of human rights and is a body created by the parliament of Nepal in 1997 (Human Rights Commission Act) Explaining the background of the crisis the report refers to “structural discrepancies prevalent in the society that had perpetuated *for centuries*”(emphasis added, p. 3). After the declaration of the state of emergency, the NHRC underwent a change as the respect for human rights and abuse monitoring became the main concern of the Commission. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Act passed by the government had devastating consequences for the human right situation. The police committed abuses and individuals enjoyed widespread impunity for acts carried out in their official capacity. The monitoring report reveals some interesting figures concerning the human rights situation in the country. Both sides have committed abuses, even though the types of crime are different. The killings by the Maoists have mostly targeted police and army personnel, political workers, farmers and teachers. On the other side, the police and the army have killed many alleged Maoist activists but many “people have been killed particularly due to the negligence of the security forces, fear psychosis, retaliation” (p. 11) Rape, torture and other criminal actions have been inflicted on the civil population by both parties. The recommendations of the NHRC's report focus on: (a) IHL training of security forces, (b) incessant monitoring of respect for human rights by NGOs, governmental and international agencies, (c) ICRC inspections in jails, detention centres and camps. In any case, the report concludes, “the suppression of rebellion cannot be made by going beyond the limits of law. A culture of respecting the law and human rights should be developed” (p. 20)

Nepal Human Development 2001 - Poverty Reduction and Governance

United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)

Kathmandu, 2002, 156 p.

<<http://www.undp.org.np/publications/nhdr2001/NHDR2001.pdf>>

The UNDP **report** focuses on two main concerns: poverty reduction and governance. The parallel processes of political democratization and social normalization that started in 1990 initiated the first step in the right direction but left many challenges unmet. People have been defined as both the means and beneficiaries of the government's efforts towards genuine human development. Despite some modest improvements in the per capita annual income, access to health and education services and the management of public resources, Nepal remains one of the poorest countries of the world. Effective ownership of the governance process by the citizens and the actual participation in decision-making are the only means to attain the overarching goal of human development. The growing assertiveness of the poorest strata of society has stimulated a fruitful debate all over the country but many factors still hamper the launching of a viable action plan for development. The incidence of poverty has remained high because of "disparities in the ownership of productive resources - both capital and non capital - and access to them." Ineffective ownership is a reflection of improper allocation and misuse of the resources and absence of transparency and accountability.

Besides an overall low human development, Nepal is also witness to large disparities in human development within the country (mid-western areas are the most backward). Around 42% of the population live in poverty, while policies of poverty reduction have proved inadequate. Poor governance pervades the entire state structure, thus thwarting any development effort. Inappropriate fiscal policies of the government cannot secure an efficient public spending directed to poor people. Effective decentralization should be a fundamental goal of policymakers. Authority and responsibility need to be moved downwards in order to stimulate major participation at the grassroots level. Public service delivery and people's empowerment will benefit from decentralized governance

as well. The involvement of all stakeholders will strengthen governmental efforts directed towards the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life.

ICRC Annual Report 2002 – Nepal Chapter

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Annual Report 2002, pp. 161-164

<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/ar_2002?OpenDocument>

The Asia and Pacific section of the ICRC 2002 annual **report** underscores the extent of the crisis in Nepal. The intensity of the conflict has grown since 2001 (when the state of emergency was declared). The “death toll doubled in a single year and by the end of 2002 had reached over 7,000”. The ICRC action focuses on the protection of civilians, trying to assess economic security and humanitarian relief. After the involvement of the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) in counter-insurgency operations, the importance of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has gained relevance. Consequently, an important achievement of the ICRC has been the acceptance by the RNA of IHL training of some of its elements. 22 officers of the newly created Armed Police Force (APF) have been included in the IHL training programme as well. Training is not limited to the armed forces. The ICRC is also concerned with the strengthening of civil society. Around 100 persons have been trained in first aid in 2002 while the capabilities of the Nepal Red Cross Society have been significantly enhanced.

Amnesty International Report 2002

Amnesty International

London, 2002, 3 p.

<[http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/bed8009ca83e16c780256a4f00344f2f/95ebc4fe3d3cf a1b80256bc0003b3906/\\$FILE/nepal.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/bed8009ca83e16c780256a4f00344f2f/95ebc4fe3d3cf a1b80256bc0003b3906/$FILE/nepal.pdf)>

The 2002 Amnesty International **report** covers the period from January to December 2001. The section about Nepal depicts a deteriorating trend concerning the situation of

human rights in the country. Unlawful killings, real executions, mysterious disappearances from each side and torture, arbitrary arrest and detention by police and the army were reported in almost all parts of the country. The declaration of the state of emergency in 2001 worsened an already critical situation with impunity emerging as a major concern: official accountability is still lacking and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was hampered by a shortage of funding and staffing.

Nepal: A Nation in Search of Peace and Development. Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of Swiss Development Co-operation in Nepal

Bishnu Raj Upreti

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bern, June 2002, 58 p.

This long **report** reflects the need of the donor community to understand the interrelation between conflict and their development cooperation programmes. The so-called Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) is the tool the author adopts in order to assess the impact of SDC's programmes on the violent conflict in Nepal as well as the impact of the conflict itself on Swiss assistance. The conflict analysis provides an overview of the political, geographical, socio-economic, ideological and international arenas shaping the conflict situation in Nepal. After the identification of the major actors involved in the conflict (primary, secondary and external actors) Upreti examines its causative factors. While "rampant poverty, structural inequality, political oppression, social discrimination...failure of the public administration, widespread corruption" are considered as the background reasons of the conflict, political, ethnic, regional and caste affiliation has been regarded as the channel of violence triggered by some catalyst factors such as inter and intra-party quarrels, bad governance from democratic leadership as well as the Royal Palace massacre and the *September 11* events. With regard to the impact of conflict on development programmes the following are some positive impacts: increase of transparency among development actors, utilisation of resources, increased awareness of lower caste people, ethnic groups and women, reduced gambling and alcohol abuse in villages, active monitoring of government expenditures, introduction of various community decision-making mechanisms and positive feedback to make projects more effective and pro-poor. The negative impacts

are: increased security expenditure reducing the HMG funding for development programme, stop to NGO work in some areas, reduced development service in conflict affected areas, worsening of security situation and increased sense of insecurity and fear, decrease of field visits and field activities, impediment to education, forced participation in the Maoist activities and rallies, disruption of market and loss of farm labours due to migration of people, inability to maintain farms and loss of productivity, increased extra legal activities, destruction of development infrastructures, decline in trusts, reciprocity and local leadership, gross violation of human rights and arbitrary arrests by security forces. On the other hand, development programmes had the following positive impacts: Programmes directly dealing with communities contributed to empower rural people, some programmes attack the root cause of the conflict (e.g., poverty), the Peace and Development Trust Fund contributed to reducing violence and promoting peace, strengthening of civil society, advocacy and network organisations, strengthening of urban rural linkages, institutional strengthening of local government such as DDC and VDC, promotion of access of rural poor to legal services and support to protect them from human rights abuse, development of rural infrastructures, delivery of basic facilities (e.g., health, education, etc.) to rural poor. Its negative impacts encompass: involuntary transfer of resources to rebels, financial support to the government's structures and processes without visible improvement in their performance, creation of high and unfulfilled expectations of people in the project areas, increasing perception of inequality and grievances due to the use of expensive vehicles, computers, better pays and expensive life style of project and office staffs, distortion of existing incentive systems.

Contributing to New Strength: an Analysis of Threats and Opportunities in the Development Co-operation between Nepal and Switzerland

Ruedi Högger

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bern, October 2001, 55 p.

This **report** focuses on the opportunities for the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) in Nepal given the situation of insecurity caused by the Maoist conflict. The situation in Nepal is described through the voices of local people, especially

in Dolakha District where Swiss contribution to development has been particularly strong. While some marginalized communities endorse the rebels' views, the Maoists are blamed for their violent methods, i.e. forced recruitment and popular gatherings and extortion. Moreover, the gap between the Maoists' rhetoric and the political feasibility of their demands cast a doubt about their real commitment to the welfare of people. The consequences of a volatile security situation for SDC development programmes are duly taken into consideration. It is plainly stated that SDC must be ready to adopt some drastic measures such as withdrawal of personnel or (temporary) discontinuation of its activities. As far as the security of personnel is concerned, a set of basic guidelines framed along with other donors are put forward in the annex. Governance is considered an area where the SDC can contribute most to the improvement of the situation in the country. As a parallel, the contribution to the peace process is regarded as something of minor priority and major sensitivity. In this perspective, Switzerland should limit its support to initiatives and efforts of good-will, while refraining from direct involvement. The discontinuation of assistance to Nepal is regarded as totally unnecessary and a measure adding further and unjustified suffering to the Nepalese population. The differences between Nepal and Rwanda are drawn in order to prevent any similar decision. The need to communicate this message to the Swiss public is considered crucial.

Nepal's Monarchy: Symbol of a Single National Community?

Dev Raj Dahal

13 June 2001, 3 p.

<http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/monarchy_symbol.html>

The **paper** discusses the political symbols attached to the monarchy in Nepal. The king is a symbol of unity of the Nepalese nation and "its ideological glue is the *raison d'être* of modern nation-state" (p. 1). The monarch embodies spiritual and temporal authority. At the same time, he is supposed to be non-partisan and performs the so-called *Rajdharm* (statecraft) dispensing justice and preventing the country from external invasion. The monarchy has been a determining factor in assisting the country during the difficult political transition to democracy. However, recent developments in the

Palace (the royal family massacre in June 2001, the challenge to the monarchical institution by the Maoists and the recent institutional hiatus between mainstream political parties and king Gyanendra) undermined the prestige of the monarchy, which is no more regarded as a non-partisan institution by critics. The author concludes by saying that only a return to the *Rajdharm* will allow the monarchy to regain its prestige and its role of referee in Nepalese politics.

Nepal: Maoist Insurgency

Chitra K. Tiwari

*South Asia Monitor No. 31 – Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS),
March 2001, 3 p.*

<<http://www.csis.org/saprog/sam31.pdf>>

The **paper** underlines the rapid expansion of the Maoist Insurgency and the wide support it enjoyed by a big chunk of the population. In the districts under direct Maoist control provisional governments have been established. Maoist officials are raising taxes, administering quick justice, managing local agriculture and preserving security: they “have established a Robin Hood image, and their method of governance is being cited by critics of the government as an example for Kathmandu government”. The government policy at the beginning treated the insurgency as a law and order issue and tried to resolve it with police operations. Widespread human rights abuses have heightened the intensity of the conflict while impunity has become the rule. The article also takes into account the regional scope of the conflict. Balance between the two powerful neighbours (China and India) is the consolidated policy of the government in Kathmandu, notwithstanding some occasional departure.

Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Internal Dimensions

Chitra K. Tiwari

South Asia Analysis Group, Paper No. 187, January 2001, 7 p.

<<http://www.saag.org/papers2/paper187.htm>>

This **essay** analyzes the Maoist “People's War” from different perspectives: the policy of the government towards the insurgency and its counter-insurgency methods, the insurgents' strength, their political background, peculiarity and uniqueness from other communist armed experiences. In relation to the strength of the insurgents, their success in the field has transformed itself into a political asset. Therefore, the author argues that the CPN (M) is “an undeniable political force” that has overshadowed the mainstream political parties. The wide popular support the insurgency enjoys should be considered in the light of the helplessness and decision-making incapacity shown by the orthodox and moderate Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) during its brief governmental experience in 1994. Internal splits in the UML have helped the emergence of the Maoists and “polarized the communist movement into Maoist and anti-Maoist blocs” (p. 3).

Concerning the background of the Maoists, the Naxaliite movement in the Nepalese district of Jhapa in the 1970's is regarded as an important but not decisive factor in the rise of the Maoist movement. Past communist experiences were a rather exclusive affair restricted to intellectuals with non-ruling elite challenging the ruling elite. The Maoist experience changed the scenario. It transcended the horizontal pattern of confrontation and inaugurated a new phase, which co-opted grassroots politics and recognized the importance of popular-based political resources. Another degree of the distinctiveness of the Maoist insurgency is given by women's participation in the conflict: women constitute around one third of the guerrillas. The conclusion of the essay points out the core problem of the current crisis: an “entrenched coalition of corrupt politicians and bureaucrats that profits from the Maoist war” at the political and economic levels (p. 6).

Conflict Prevention Initiative: Setting Priorities for Preventive Action in Nepal

Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research - Harvard School of Public Health, 2001, 18 p.

<http://www.preventconflict.org/portal/nepal/nepal_finalreport.pdf>

The document is the final **report** of the web conference that took place from 25 January to 1 February 2001. Contributions to the “e-forum” bring out the multiplicity

of factors that increased the level of dissatisfaction of Nepali people. Among *political and legal factors*, unfulfilled expectations, unequal political representation, extensive corruption and human rights abuses by the police all played a determining role in the rise of the Maoist insurgency. As for *social and ethnic factors* we should consider the historical roots of social inequality, the ethnic desire for autonomy and gender issues. *Economic factors* such as rural poverty and lack of confidence in financial institutions increased popular resentment towards official economic structures. Finally, *regional and international factors* such as the role of India and international interference further complicate an already fragile framework. Evidently, all these factors “should not be considered in isolation, but as an interrelated stimulus for mounting unrest” (p. 4). Participants in the web conference identified some recommendations for a sustainable peace process. Dialogue among political actors, a constitutional reform, the maintenance of public security, respect for human rights, educational reform and a process of territorial devolution empowering local government are seen as the most important needs in the political-legal domain. Long-term planning, regional development and equitable taxation should be the economic priorities of the government of Nepal. Finally, international intervention should be limited to the support of negotiations between the conflicting parties but should not overshadow the role of national structures and local resources.

National Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2000-2001

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Kathmandu, 2001, 52 p.

<http://www.nhrc-nepal.org/docs/NHRC-Annual%20Report%202001%20-%20en.pdf>

A major portion of this **report** is concerned with the National Human Rights Commission itself. Goals, scope of activities, composition and legislation of the Commission are deeply analyzed. Activities range from prison inspection to women's situation assessment, from human rights abuse surveys to human rights monitoring. The main recommendations focus on some proposal designed to enhance the effectiveness and functioning of the Commission: i) major funding, ii) efficient personnel management; iii) training; and iv) further assistance from the government.

National Integrity Systems - Country Study Report: Nepal 2001

Rama Krishna Regmee, Devendra Raj Panday

Transparency International, 2001, 51 p.

<http://www.transparency.org/activities/nat_integ_systems/dnld/nepal.pdf>

Transparency International (TI) is an organization set up in 1993 and engaged in the study of the effectiveness of national bureaucracies, governmental agencies and state-run institutions. Good governance is regarded as the main goal every state should seek. The 2001 **country report** analyzes the process of implementation of a National Integrity System (NIS) in Nepal. The result of the nationwide survey points out “a rather unfortunate contrast between the presence of the country’s National Integrity System and the actual performance of the same.” (p. 40) Executive, parliament, political parties, judiciary, civil service, police and public prosecutors, watchdog agencies, media, civil society and local government, all suffer from incomplete implementation of the basic norms and provisions set forth in the Constitution. *De jure* Nepal is one of the most liberal and democratic states in the region. *De facto* it has failed to achieve the basic principles of good governance. Political instability has not permitted the executive to work efficiently during the past decade. Confusion about the distinction between responsibility and accountability is rampant at every level. Normally “elected representatives are politically accountable to the electorate. The executive is collectively responsible to the [Parliament].” (p. 5) Scarce representation of some sectors of society in the parliament is a frequent source of grievance. Moreover, after the elections there is no follow-up between political representatives and voters. While the role of political parties as opposition appears “effective, pro-people and appealing (...), their role as ruling party [is] always weak, partisan, inept and, in some cases, anti-people.” (p. 6). Most of the existing parties have operated underground since the 1950’s. However, though working underground strengthened their role as opposition, it prevented them from developing decision-making capacities and governmental skills. A large rift divides nominal rule of law from its concrete empowerment. The police do not seem to be truly independent and the public prosecutors’ lack of impartiality fuels impunity for human rights abuses. Public procurement is an area where corruption is rampant and almost

irredeemable. Corruption has a strong impact on the country: it “has spoiled the working atmosphere (...) making governance poor and inept. Economic growth and development have been affected adversely while the cost of development has gone high due to the bribe culture” (p. 44). The situation of the media is slightly better. Although in the report they are described as “(a) urban based, (b) with low circulation, (c) too politicized, (d) full of sensationalism, (e) highly polarized, and (f) too elitist in nature” (p. 12), they played an important role in the process of establishing a multi-party democracy in 1990. They, however, failed to play a similarly effective role in cultivating the democratic culture. Civil society, the Election Commission and the Parliament are considered as the most advanced sectors in the National Integrity System. To sum up, the last decade has a remarkable feature: “transition to democracy, emergence of civil society, vibrant political parties, formulation of democratic constitution, impartial handling of elections and practice of free media, local self-governance, and macro-economic stability” (p. 5).

Resistance and the State in Nepal: How Representative is the Nepali State?

Karl-Heinz Krämer

South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. Presented to the panel on Resistance and the State in Nepal at the 16th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Edinburgh, 6-9 September 2000, 13 p.

<<http://nepalresearch.org/publications/resistance.htm#01>>

The **paper** raises a question about the efficacy of the Nepalese state in representing a highly fragmented and heterogeneous population. The 1990 constitution recognized this diverse composition of the society declaring Nepal a “multiethnic” and “multilingual” country. The same constitutional provision, however, recognizes Nepal as a Hindu kingdom imposing *de facto* Hindu religion as well as Hindu political thinking, the way of living and its peculiar system of values. The democratic experiment in the 1990's proved that “even the younger party politicians are deeply rooted in traditional thinking” (p. 3). The root cause of this situation has to be found in the educational system of Nepal, which inculcated the belief in a Nepali-Hindu monoculture. As a consequence, the leadership was unable to understand the

grievances coming from the non-Hindu population, and this misconception has been reflected in their policies. The lack of democracy within the parties themselves has exacerbated the inadequacy of their political programmes that sought to preserve only high caste interests. Bahuns (Brahmin) dominate the high levels of the Nepali Congress and they impose their own men and views. Grassroots democracy is practically absent in Nepal's political parties. Even the local cadres are chosen in Kathmandu and usually come from different constituencies. The opinion survey's results incorporated in the essay show that the degree of minority awareness depends on the level of education. In fact, education plays a double function: while being a vector of ethnic awareness, it is also a means to preserve the political status quo by the ruling elite. The exclusivist attitude of Nepalese traditional parties left some political gaps that could not be filled by regional or ethnic parties since they had been banned by the constitution. The Maoist movement turned this situation in its favour and presented itself as a political force rooted in rural areas and concerned with grassroots issues. The paradox is that ethnic composition of the Maoist leadership is very similar to that of mainstream parties, with the dominance of Bahun and Chhetri elements. According to the author, the CPN (M) has still "to prove if it offers more than hope for the disadvantaged sections of the society" (p. 10). At the same time, provided that the ban on ethnic political organizations is lifted, there is no certainty they will be sufficiently representative. For example, the Dalits (the so called "untouchables") are still excluded from the *janajatis* system.

Corruption as a Problem in Nepal: Effects on the Economy, Polity and Morale

Devendra Raj Panday

Helsinki, 2 March 2000, 9 p.

<http://www.tinopal.org/contents/documents/pdfs/02_by_devendra_raj_panday.pdf>

The **study** explains the effects of corruption on the economy, polity and morale in Nepal. Corruption is viewed at a macro-level, that is, as a factor that acts against the democratic rules, the political agenda and the development perspective of the country. Corruption in Nepal started as a phenomenon present in many developing countries where public officials used to take bribes for some services provided to their clients and

for preferential treatment in official competitions and selections. The adverse impact of this kind of corruption was rather limited. Then, the increase in foreign aid for co-operation development unleashed big amounts of money that were misused by more and more corrupt officials. In a third stage “grand corruption” emerged: the economic impact of these practices increased and with the establishment of democracy in 1990 corruption became a more intractable issue. Bribing has become a widespread and rampant phenomenon and a means to ensure access to political power. The effects on the economy of the country are serious: decline of productivity, lack of long-term planning, poor quality of infrastructures and inability to attract foreign investment. In the political sphere, corruption has degraded the process of democratization and rendered political decisions opaque and inexplicable to common people.

The paper also analyzes the nexus between dishonesty and public morale. The “feeling of helplessness” is perhaps one of the worst consequences of corruption when no perspective of change materializes in the foreseeable future. This feeling leads every citizen to defy the existing rules and to indulge in corrupt practices. Respect for law has deteriorated, efficiency has gone down, bad governance protracted even further, while “every problem is regarded as a personal problem”, not a social issue to address jointly (p. 8). The challenge for the future is to help Nepal abandon the current *mutual accusation system* and promote a *mutual accountability system* in order to discourage wrong practices at every level. Transparency International's slogan, *coalition building*, should be the starting point for this process of economic, socio-political and cultural redress.

Consolidating Democracy in Nepal

International IDEA

International IDEA's Capacity-Building Series, Stockholm, 1997, 65 p.

This long **report** – based on a study undertaken by a six-member team of experts who visited the country between January and April 1997 – is an assessment of processes and prospects for democracy in Nepal. The document presents Nepal's political and socio-economic background, and further analyses its democratic structure and system in terms of its elements and culture. It examines some of the obstacles hampering the

democratic process and focuses on possible solutions being sought by the Nepalese politicians. Specifically, it explores the issue of polarization between political parties, politicization of the civil service, and areas where the civil society could be strengthened to safeguard the democratic process. A chapter is also devoted to the role of donors, before turning to concluding observations. The report suggests that “the consolidation of democracy would involve the following: (a) in the short-term, Nepal’s politicians intend to take their own initiatives aimed at a consensus building about democratic principles and issues of national interest; (b) in the medium-term, strengthening of already established institutions; (c) in the long-term, meaningful participation of the people through civic education.

Return of the Maoists: Midnight Knocks and Extra-Judicial Killings in Nepal

South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre

April 1996, 54 p.

<http://www.hrdc.net/sahrdc/resources/return_of_maoist.htm?>

This **report** represents one of the first accounts on the Maoist conflict in Nepal. It describes the background of the insurgency, the factors leading to its emergence in two specific districts of Western Nepal (Rolpa and Rukum), i.e. the fact that the Rapti region had been subject to repeated human rights abuses. In particular, leftist politicians had previously been made political targets by the security forces. Extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment and unfair trials were unconstitutional means employed by the ruling parties in order to contain political opposition in remote areas. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) exploited local inequalities and ethnic/caste based grievances to launch a People’s war aimed at replacing the constitutional monarchy with a People’s Republic. However, the same rebels have committed widespread human rights abuses especially against the civilian population. The report’s recommendations suggest measures to deal with human rights abuses through preventive means as well as through scrupulous employment of the existing human rights instruments.



MISCELLANEOUS

(Dissertations, Official documents, Statements, Newspaper articles, Newsletters, etc.)

Inside Nepal's Revolution: Who are the Maoists, and Why Have They Turned This Himalayan Kingdom into a Killing Zone?

National Geographic Magazine

November 2005: pp. 46-65

This **magazine article** provides a journalistic account of the “people’s war” in Nepal. The reporter has undertaken an inquiry among the rural population, which is the most affected by the conflict. The stories of some villagers, Maoist combatants and children offer a overview of the impact of the Maoist insurgency, both in positive (increased awareness of indigenous peoples and marginalized groups, such as women and low-caste) and negative terms (cost in human lives).

Challenges to Leadership

Shambhu Ram Simkhada

The Kathmandu Post – 20 April 2005

This **newspaper article** seek to mobilize the democratic political leadership of Nepal in order to stop the ongoing violence and engage in a serious programme of reconstruction of the country and radical restructuring of the state capable of addressing the root causes of the Maoist insurgency. This challenge will require a “collective reflection” which will have to reconsider past mistakes and avoid new ones. The author urges the leaders to “come up with a clear vision” for the future of the country. Democracy, pragmatism, ethics, entrepreneurship, social justice and a foreign policy of friendship will have to be the pillars of this new vision.

UN Role in Resolving the Conflict

Shambhu Ram Simkhada

The Kathmandu Post – 8 August 2004

This **newspaper article** addresses the issue of the role of the United Nations in the mediation of the Maoist conflict. After a short historical description of the legal foundations of the UN and its role in the international arena, the author recalls the idea of “responsibility to protect” and the right to intervene in cases of grave human rights abuses. However, only political will can genuinely address Nepal’s problems. The persistent lack of political will is considered as “a real impediment” to the ultimate resolution of the conflict.

The Role of Foreign Military Assistance in Domestic Conflict Resolution: The Case of the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

Francesca Elizabeth Stidson

University of Birmingham - School of Public Policy, International Development Department, 2003, 58 p.

This **Master’s dissertation** is an attempt to rationalize the role of foreign military assistance to war-torn countries. The central focus of the paper explores whether foreign military assistance to Nepal speeded up the 2003 ceasefire and negotiations. The study shows that increased foreign military assistance was a factor that encouraged the Maoists to enter into negotiations but that it also had several negative impacts, e.g. the RNA has been encouraged to seek a military solution to the conflict while the human right situation has dramatically worsened as a consequence of abuses by the security forces and the increasing militarization of the society.

Ethnic Nationalism in Nepal

Bal Gopal Shrestha

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) Newsletter No. 30 (March 2003), p. 22
<http://isim.leidenuniv.nl/iiasn/30/IIASNL30_22.pdf>

In this **newsletter** the author expresses his concern about the situation of the majority of ethnic groups excluded from participation in the state. So far, ethnic uprising has

been peaceful even if oppressed nationalities have started supporting the Maoists' armed revolt. In a way, this dynamic has prevented an ethnic insurgency in the country. Indeed, these populations are aware of Maoist methods in the management of nationalities issues (i.e. Tibetan minority in China). The ethnic issue needs to be managed carefully if Nepal wants to avoid the Balkan pattern.

Negotiating an End to Internal War in Nepal

Anup K. Pahari

The Kathmandu Post, 3, 4, 5 February 2003

<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/conference/pdf/nepal6.pdf>

Through this **collection of newspaper articles**, the author emphasizes the necessity to provide a peaceful solution to Nepal's current crisis. The conflict has become even more unique since 2002. By dismissing Prime Minister Deuba through a doubtful constitutional move, the King alienated the support of the mainstream political parties, creating a "three-way conflict" with three different actors fighting each other: the Monarchy, the political parties and the Maoists. In fact normally internal conflicts present a two-way struggle, facing the government and a group of rebels. The only option is a negotiated resolution which includes all stakeholders. No alternative solutions are viable (military response, revolutionary course, monarchical solution). Political will is the fundamental response to the crisis.

Remarks by Rt. Hon. Nayan Bahadur Khatri at a Roundtable Meeting on Human Rights and Conflict in Nepal, January 18, 2003

Nayan Bahadur Khatri

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 2003, 4 p.

<http://www.nhrc-nepal.org/docs/chairspeech%20jan18.pdf>

These **roundtable remarks** recall that the "root cause of the conflict in Nepal is a complex web of interacting factors which include uneven development within the country; endemic corruption; ethnic and caste inequalities; intense politicization; human

rights abuse; social exclusion and deprivation, and inadequate infrastructure development.” Two major challenges are underlined by the remarks: 1) the protection of people from human rights abuses and 2) the restoration of peace. Conflict-reduction actions are recommended as the most suitable initiatives in order to address the underlying causes of the insurgency.

A Crisis of Governance

Mieko Nishimizu (Vice President, South Asia Region, The World Bank)

Opening Address Nepal Development Forum, February 2002, 4 p.

<[http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Attachments/Speech/\\$File/MiekoNDS.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Attachments/Speech/$File/MiekoNDS.pdf)>

Based on the assumption that the conflict originated from a crisis of governance, this **speech report** by the World Bank responsible for South Asia at the Nepal Development Forum, basically argues that continued political instability is no more acceptable. Nepal needs political and economic continuity as well as accountability. The conclusion focuses on the call on new political leaders with popular support and sufficient authority who can break the vicious circle of bad governance and start up a new course in the country.

Statement of the Support from the PLA (Popular Liberation Army of Peru) to the Communist Party of Nepal for their Revolutionary Efforts in Nepal

2000, 1 p.

<<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southasia/conference/pdf/manifesto.pdf>>

This **official statement** is a declaration of support by the Popular Liberation Army of Peru to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the people's war. After the assessment of the situation in Nepal, the statement condemns the restrictions on the press, the harsh methods of repression by the police and the army and the involvement, if not intrusion, of the United States and India in the country's domestic affairs.



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The creativity with which *The Maoist Conflict in Nepal: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography* has been prepared sets a standard reference for those who are interested in political research in Nepal. The authors have meticulously summarized books, monographs, research papers and commentaries written both by Nepali and foreign scholars about the roots of Nepal's ongoing Maoist insurgency, counter-insurgency operations by the state, street protests by political parties and civil society, conflict cycles, internal and external drivers of conflict, conflict escalation and efforts toward peace process. The mass of information available in this work is not available elsewhere. It is a valuable work to a difficult but significant subject.

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