CHAPTER FOUR

Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Ideological and Strategic Dimensions

Maoist insurgency in Nepal emerged in February 16th 1996 as a protest against issues such as autocratic nature of the monarch, oppressed nationalism, social disparities and political economy of the state of Nepal. Starting from the year 1996 until 2006 (when the Maoist joined the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), the Maoist went through different phases of what they called the ‘People’s war’ (PW). And they gradually succeeded in establishing a parallel government/authority in Nepal. The violent struggle that started in 1996 claimed many lives and destruction of property and caused not only political instability but brought the social lives of the Nepalese to jeopardy. More than a decade of the insurgency saw the Maoists extending their organization almost nationwide. The military branch of the Maoists, i.e. the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) grew from strength to strength reaching the impressive numbers of ten thousand cadres. Thus, taking into account of such a strong position of the Maoist of Nepal, through the PW, the Maoists have emerged as a political force to be distinctly reckoned with, thereby causing a visible shift at the political spectrum of the nation.

When an insurgency movement of Maoist in Nepal had such an achievement and success in waging a PW, it is believed to have an ideological affiliation. The whole movement must be guided by an ideology or set of ideologies. Since issues concerning ideology are involved a brief statement on term ideology is on order. A notable definition is that of Hamilton who defined ideology as “an ideology is a system of collectively held and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of
social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of
conduct, which it proponents seek to promote, realize, pursue or maintain”¹. Definition
given by Richard C. Snyder and H. Hubert Wilson states “an ideology is a cluster of
ideas about life, which originates in most cases as consciously advocated or
dogmatically asserted social, political slogans or usage and preaching gradually
become the characteristic beliefs or the dogmas of a particular group, party or
nationality.”² According to Dictionary of Politics, any comprehensive and mutually
consistent set of ideas by which a social group makes sense of the world may be referred
to as ideology.³

From the above mentioned definitions it can be said that, ideology, being the sum
total of ideas, warrants a fixed direction through which proclaimed ideas related to
politics, economy, culture, religion and other facets of society are constantly and
consistently pursued. So far as the ideological affiliation of the Maoist insurgency of
Nepal is concerned, it has borrowed from Marxism. It has also been deeply inspired by
the ideology of Lenin and Mao. Marxism through the elements like ‘Dialectical
Materialism’, ‘Class struggle’, ‘Materialistic Interpretation of History’ and so on
constituted the core of the Marxian thought. This classical heritage of Marxism was
modified by Lenin and gave a concrete shape in Russian Society. Lenin organized a
Communist party on basis of ‘democratic centralism’ and brought an alliance between the

¹. See Malcolm B. Hamilton, “The Elements of the Concept of Ideology, Political Studies, as cited in,
P.773.
². See Richard C. Synder and H. Hubert Wilson, Roots of Political Behaviour, (American Book Company,
peasants and workers to incite mass insurrections. Since it was successful in Russia which was a less industrialized society, Lenin defined ‘imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism’. Thus, Lenin’s ideas of revolution refined Marxism with new ideas like imperialism, Democratic centralism, and peasant-worker’s alliance as his main ideas that constitute ‘Leninism’. When the ideas of Marx and Lenin were suited to the industrial societies of Europe, the ideas given by Mao during ‘The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution’ were suited to the third world countries because the theoretical premises were based on Peasantry. The political ideas like, People’s New Democracy, protracted Guerilla war, permanent Revolution, and Great proletariat Cultural Revolution, were Mao’s important contribution towards the revolution in third world countries. Most of the time it is felt that, the Nepali Maoist have gone more after Mao than Karl Max and Lenin. Because the Nepali Maoists claim that the basic tenets of Maoism, mentioned above, are applicable to Nepal unequivocally for carrying out a communist revolution. Looking into the whole period of Maoist Insurgency in Nepal, one would find, the Maoist of Nepal have applied both Mao’s idea of protracted war and Lenin’s idea of armed insurrection. Hence before discussing the ideology of the Maoist of Nepal, it is necessary to discuss the ideas of Lenin on Revolution and Mao’s ideas on protracted war and permanent revolution.

Lenin’s ideas for a violent revolution came first during the period between the years 1897-1905, when there were political disturbances in Russia. Absence of parliamentary institution was not existent during that period. Under the back drop of this

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4. For Lenin’s ideas on revolution and how to prepare for the revolution see Lenin, V. I., *What is to be done*, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973).
political disturbances Lenin talked about a violent revolution in order to bring an end to
the bourgeoisie in Russia. By advocating a violent revolution, Lenin not only broke down
from Marx and Engels’s ideas of revolution but also criticized the Social Democrats of
Russia seriously. Criticizing the methods of political struggle by the Social Democrats
Lenin wrote,

To the Narodovoitsi, (theoreticians of the group of Narodnaya volya led
by P.L. Lavrov) the term political struggle is synonymous with the term
political conspiracy… The Social Democrats, however, are not guilty
of such a narrow outlook; they do not believe in conspiracies; they
think that the period of conspiracies has long passed away, that to
reduce political struggle to conspiracy means, on the one hand,
immensely restricting its scope, and on the other hand, choosing the
most unsuitable methods of struggle. 

Hence, for Lenin, any struggle without a violent one, during that period of Russia,
by the Social Democrats, was nothing but falling into the trap of political conspiracy of
the bourgeoisie. Lenin had a fundamental breakdown with the ideas of Karl Marx and
Engels on destruction of bourgeois state apparatus after the proletariat had seized power.
For Lenin, the liberation of the oppressed class was impossible not only without a violent
revolution but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was
created by the ruling class. Here a violent revolution was given primary importance to
destroy the state apparatus caused by the ruling class. Contradicting Marx’s views, where

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5 For details see Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol-4, (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1960),
p.276.
he talked about destroying of the bourgeois state apparatus after the proletariat had seized power, Lenin viewed that, Marx had excluded Britain from this kind of pre-condition. Lenin said, Marx’s assumption of Britain as a democratic country, therefore a peaceful capture of power was therefore possible, was misleading. In contrary, Lenin’s argument was, the Britain of 1817 was not without its military and bureaucracy nor had the Britain of 1917, fundamentally departed from democratic values and traditions.\(^6\) So Lenin always maintained his stand asserting that the bourgeoisie could not be overthrown without the use of violence especially in the context of Russia which at no time had a fully democratic system.

While speaking about the violent aspect of his revolution, Lenin made it a point that, this violence was not directed against the mass. Lenin gave primary importance on action over propaganda and building of a party at the first place. The party, that Lenin proposed, would be used in two spheres to use the violent methods. One, the existence of a ‘central body’, directing the operations and second, strong local revolutionary organizations. Speaking on why revolutionary seizure of power for working class, Lenin, in a criticism to the editors of ‘The Economist’ newspaper said,

The working class would, of course, prefer to take power peacefully… but to renounce the revolutionary seizure of power would be madness on the part of the Proletariat… It is very probable- even most probable- that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the

defense of its privileges. In that case no other-way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its own aim but that of revolution.\(^7\)

The Maoists of Nepal claimed to have followed the ideas of Lenin in relation to revolution against the state apparatus. According to them to compare the political situation of Russia during the period of 1871-1905 and the political situation of Nepal during 1990s, one would find many similarities. Like Russia was ruled by a Czar and there were no democratic institutions, Nepal was ruled by a King. Although there were some similarities between Russia and Nepal in this context yet there were some differences in the case of Nepal. For example, the parliament elected by the people was in the place but the Nepali king enjoyed absolute political power. One can say that the parliament and other democratic institutions were there for the namesake. The Maoists of Nepal had the similar kind of stand against the political parties like Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), the way Lenin criticized the Social Democrats of Russia. For the Maoists of Nepal, political parties like Nepali Congress, believed in political conspiracy with the political elite of Nepal led by the Monarch. CPN (UML) was viewed as a revisionist and reformist with no exact goal to achieve for the peasants and working class. So far as, violent struggle was concerned, the Maoists of Nepal were of the opinion that, the liberation of the proletariat was not possible in a peaceful means in Nepal. Initially the Maoist of Nepal tried to influence the king and the political elite of Nepal on certain demands from the peasants and workers peacefully. They did not succeed in their efforts. Maoists of Nepal also tried to join the political mainstream by contesting the elections held in 1991. But they failed to get recognition as

a political party in 1994 when the elections were held. The Maoists were not only not given the recognition of a political party but the government tried to suppress the demands of the Maoists. This prompted an armed insurgency, which the Maoists claimed was in the tune with the Lenin’s idea of revolution.

There are mainly two aspects of protracted war and concept of New Democracy advocated by Mao. First, Mao advocated and practiced a unique strategy of protracted revolution an economically backward country beset by foreign imperialism relying on rural base areas and a peasant Red Army. Secondly, his attempt to promote a ‘Chinese road to Socialism’. Once political power had been achieved after 19498 Mao on his way to establish a Chinese road to Socialism in a peasantry based rural society of China had a break down from the Soviet modes of Socialism propagated by Lenin. Mao criticized the Moscow trained communist rivals of China as dogmatic and by referring to the ‘Sinification of Marxism’ he asserted his ideological as well as military and political leadership. In a way Mao wanted to keep the Chinese Communist Party independent from Moscow. As the communist forces of the rural hinterland of China poised to take over the Guomindang-held cities in the civil war of the late 1940s, Chinese communist leaders also hailed the Maoist strategy of protracted rural revolution as a model for the colonized regions of Asia and Africa, thus implying that the Soviet Union should not be regarded as the as only source of guidance for the world communist movements.9

9. ibid.
In relation to the role of the Communist Party of China in response to meet the Japanese colonization and economic blockade imposed on his Yunan base area by the Guomindang, Mao emphasized self-reliance, which implied local economic initiative. He also emphasized on the need to mobilize the entire population in a genuine ‘people’s war’. While talking about the people’s war Mao was very much dependent on the mass. The doctrine of Mao’s people’s war called for an agrarian revolution led and dominated by a Chinese-type Communist Party. In this war / revolution, the peasantry provide the ‘the main force’, comprising the bulk of the troops and serving as a principal source of supplies, security and intelligence. So this kind of revolution was no longer a Marxian Proletarian revolution: rather it was a communist-led peasant insurrection. While talking about the people’s war Mao advocated four basic elements for the success of it. First, the organization of a Lenin’s party; by a Lenin’s Party the Communist mean a highly organized, indoctrinated and disciplined party of revolutionaries who demand leading role in the revolution. Secondly, people’s war needs mass support and a united front. Mass support is meant to come primarily from the poorer peasants who are to be won over by promises and material incentives. The doctrine also calls for winning over or at least neutralizing other important but smaller classes or groups, whose support is to be sought through united fronts and appeals tailored to each groups. Thirdly, for the victory of the people’s war, it needs an army. The army is organized by the party (Communist Party). It must be loyal to the party, willing to fight its countrymen in a civil war, and professionally capable of ultimately winning for the party. And the last element needed for the people’s war is the creation of rural revolutionary base areas or strategic bases of operation. The bases should be sufficiently self-supporting to maintain the local

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population and to support the party and the party army. However, Mao’s main objective through people’s war is the seizure and maintenance of political power. Apart from the four basic elements of a people’s war, Mao, continued to stress the political mobilization and indoctrination of the people as a basis for military mobilization. Mao gave great stress on human will. Mao de-emphasized the role of space-the utilization of a vast area-which originally played a major role in his doctrine. Because Mao mentioned that victorious guerilla wars can be fought in small countries which do not have the vast terrain of China. While mentioning about the ‘people’s war’ Mao mentioned a protracted war, through which the people’s war would be brought as victorious. One of the major contributions of Mao vis-à-vis people’s war was he advocated three distinct stages of protracted war. He developed the idea of the three different stages of protracted war during the early years of Sino-Japanese war. According to Mao, the conflict would being with a period of strategic defense and retreat. Secondly the protracted war follows a long period of stalemate, during which the people’s war army would build up its forces. Thirdly, a strategic counter offensive stage, where the people’s army would attack the enemies and would achieve victory.

Mao also advocated some strategies and tactics for a protracted war. Mentioning the tactics of a protracted war Mao said, “The enemy advances, we retreat. The enemy halts, we harass. The enemy tires, we attack. The enemy retreats, we pursue”\textsuperscript{12}. So far as Mao’s ideas on the tactics of the protracted war were concerned, they stressed on deception, ruses and ambushes. Commenting on Mao’s idea on the above mentioned

\textsuperscript{11} ibid. P. 249.
\textsuperscript{12} This slogan is mentioned in Ralph L. Powell, No. 9, Pp. 251-52.
tactics Ralph. L. Powell says, “there is nothing essentially new in any of this tactics: but they do constitute sound guerilla and insurrectionary techniques. Their adoption by dissident elements in developing nations to overthrow established governments presents real challenges”\textsuperscript{13}. Many a times it has been considered that, the type of war Mao advocated consisted of solely of guerrilla warfare. His doctrine also calls for conventional mobile war, even positional war, depending on the stage or the phrase of the conflict.

The Maoists of Nepal were influenced by the doctrines of Mao besides Lenin. This is confirmed by the fact that, for thirteen years the insurgency in which the Maoists were involved made use of the strategy and tactics given by Mao for revolutionary war. The Maoists of Nepal believed that, the Maoists ideas were extremely suitable for Nepal in the Maoist literatures of Nepal, it has been constantly and consistently maintained that, Nepal is an agrarian society where the mode of production is overwhelmingly feudal. A majority of the Nepalese population were dependent on agriculture. There existed small scale business and source of income other than agriculture. Given the situation the Nepali Maoists characterized Nepal as a semi feudal country. Mao’s revolution through a people’s war was directed against Japanese colonialism, comprador bureaucratic system, feudal lords and the reactionary classes of China. Similarly, the Maoist of Nepal claimed to fight against the Indian colonialism, reactionary class/elite led by the monarch, supporters of the comprador bureaucratic class like Nepali Congress and against the revisionists and reformist communists of Nepal like Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist). Nepali history experienced colonization by the British during the Rana regime. British withdrawal from India in 1947 ultimately put an end to its colonization

\textsuperscript{13} See ibid. p-252.
over Nepal. Since then Nepal has not been colonized by any country ever, physically. But according to the Maoist leadership, though Nepal was no longer a colonized country they regard Indian influence as colonization. As examples the Maoists mentioned, 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, various water projects dominated by India, India’s big brotherly attitude in interfering internal affairs of Nepal. The Indian manipulation on these aspects is characterized by the Maoists as colonization by India. In addition there exists a great social, cultural and historical similarity between India and Nepal which according to the Maoists of Nepal India uses them for its advantage. For example India characterizes Nepali monarch as the incarnation of Vishnu- the god. They regard Nepal as the only Hindu kingdom in the world. They want the Nepalese to believe in this logic and obey the monarch and show deference to him. Thus, according to Maoist, a semi feudal and semi-colonial country like Nepal, with agrarian societies dominated by the rural society, exploited by both colonial power like India and the feudal power is suitable to apply and follow Mao’s doctrine of class struggle against these.

**Maoist of Nepal and Ideological Stands**

The interaction of Maoist insurgency by the CPN (Maoist) in Nepal as an armed struggle emerged as a challenge to not only the political forces like monarchy and the political parties like Nepali Congress but also as a criticism towards the other communist movements and parties of Nepal prevailing at that point and time. The Maoist leadership, defending the struggle by CPN (Maoist) as the most genuine for the cause of the Nepalese, viewed that, the foundation of the communist movement had inadequate revolutionary maturity in applying the universal truths of Marxism in the historic
particularity of Nepalese society. At the same time CPN (Maoist) alleged that, instead of
advancing towards in fulfilling its revolutionary goals, the initial communist movement
in Nepal, badly sank into the swamp of reformism and legalism. As a consequence of it,
according to the Maoist, for a long time Marxism, was so vulgarized and distorted by the
reformists that it was degenerated into petty bourgeois reformism in general. In a way
comrade Prachanda, throughout his writings on ‘people’s war’ in Nepal, has been a
critique of the reformists and reformist ideas. Giving importance to Marxism and Maoism
as the highest summit of science of revolution he said:

In today’s world, nobody can be a revolutionary Marxist if he separates
the highest summit of science of the revolution attained by the
proletariat or underestimates universal character of Maoism. Generally,
in the history of communist movement, the reformism has been always
running its reformist business by rejecting the supremacy of
development of revolutionary ideology. The reformism has been
attempting to cover its anti-revolutionary essence by opposing Marxism
at the time of Marx, supporting Marxism but opposing Leninism at the
time of Lenin, and supporting Marxism-Leninism but opposing
Maoism in today’s world. All those who talk of so-called Mao-Thought
but do not accept the contributions of Mao as a new, third and higher
stage of development fall under the reformist camp.

14. For details see Com. Prachanda, “The Problem of Ideological Deviation in the Nepalese People’s
P.14.
15. Ibid.
Thus, according to the Maoist leadership in Nepal, Mao’s doctrine on class struggle is higher and third stage of revolutionary development of Marxism. While adopting Mao’s thought as universal principle, the Maoist of Nepal, thought, that a revolutionary movement cannot be developed unless petty-bourgeois reformism is completely divorced on the basis of proletarian revolutionary principle. In a state like Nepal, petty bourgeois class plays a challenging role in the way of the proletarian revolution. And this class, to the Maoist, is one of the classes of ideological deviation in a revolutionary party. Justifying the above argument, Prachanda said:

Petty-bourgeois class has no scope virtually because it lies between to naturally contending classes, proletariat and bourgeois. Its life is pushing it down every day, on the one hand, but it is haunted by a dream to be a capitalist, on the other one part of it is already transformed into proletariat economically, but its consciousness is to be a capitalist at any cost. Therefore, this section of the petty bourgeois class is, by nature, frustrated, resentful and impatient. Another section is making some earnings in life and how and views a possibility in the horizon to upgrade itself into a bourgeois class. This section naturally does not want the statuesque disturbed. This conservative, unstable and vacillation life condition and nature of the petty-bourgeois class are the reason of ideological deviation and disorder16.

Prachanda also viewed that the petty bourgeois class in Nepal is a major historical source of rightist reformism in Nepal. Communist movement in Nepal was

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16. Ibid. P.16.
deeply influenced by the communist movement in India. So, the Maoist of Nepal see the communist movement in Nepal prior to their movement as, the way Indian communists have adopted parliamentarism, same way the communists in Nepal, except the Maoist have also easily accepted parliamentarism. And also the impact of Hindu fundamentalist culture has been a causing factor for reformism. Thus, the initial ideological stand of the Maoist of Nepal was, accepting Marxism-Leninism and Maoism as the universal principle of revolution. By doing so the Maoists tried to wipe out the reformist ideas prevailing and sponsored in Nepal. Reformism defines Marxism in such distorted way that there all other things are accepted but the revolution is opposed. In the ‘Marxism’ of reformist, quantity is never transformed into quality, there is only quantity. So, according to the Maoist of Nepal, Communist Party of Nepal (United-Marxist Leninist) is the proper example of reformists.

As the Marxism says, the dialectics of history is such, that in the development of every process, another contradictory aspect emerges inevitably. Existence of positive element in the negative and vice-versa is a universal law of contradiction independent of the will of human being. Accordingly, as the Maoist claimed, against the treacherous old reformist Marxists, a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party has inevitably emerged with in the communist movement in Nepal amidst the struggle against the old leaders and renegades of the party and revolution. Another important ideological aspect of the Maoist in Nepal was, it adopted the doctrine of Mao-Tse-Tung not as a ‘thought’ but as an ‘ism’. Because, as the Maoist supremo of Nepal claimed, the terminology of ‘Mao-Tse-Tung Thought’ has been used on the one hand, by the reformists in the sense of a hypothesis according to
the actual weightage of the world ‘thought’, and on the other, by the communist revolutionaries in the sense of a universal principle. In this context, Prachanda viewed, to continue with the usage of misleading terminology ‘thought’ despite having the scientific terminology of ‘ism’ with the weightage of expressing a universal principle is nothing but to provide loophole for Right revisionism. Hence, according to Prachanda, it is essential for communist revolutionaries who have already been grasping Mao-Tse-Tung’s thought as today’s Marxism- Leninism to use the terminology ‘Maoism’ readily and firmly. However, an ‘ism’ takes shape when a thought develops to guide a revolution of a global scale. Thus, acceptance of Mao’s ideas as an ‘ism’ by the Maoist in Nepal was to accept it as a universal principle for revolution and Maoism as today’s Marxism and Leninism.

**Maoist Insurgency and Adoption of ‘Prachanda Path’**

‘Prachanda Path’ (PP) was adopted by the Maoist of Nepal in the year 2001 in order to overthrow the Monarchy and the reactionaries in Nepal. PP, as the name suggests, was advocated by Maoist leader, Prachanda, to fight the people’s war keeping in mind the specificities of Nepal. In fact Prachanda’s revised version of set of ideas on people’s war was an amalgamation of the Chinese model of protracted people’s war and Russian model of urban insurrection. The aim of the PP was to use the people’s war in order to expand the Maoist base in rural areas and to use this as a platform from which to invoke a mass uprising at the urban areas in order to overthrow the existing government in Nepal.

at that time.\textsuperscript{18} On the eve of the adoption of the PP, in the Second National Conference of the Maoist, it declared, “The party in this conference has taken up PP as an inseparable dialectical unity between international content and national expression, universality and particularity, whole and part, general and particular, and has comprehended that, this synthesis of experiences of Nepalese revolution would serve world proletarian revolution and proletarian internationalism”\textsuperscript{19}. On the process of development of PP and its phases, Com. Prachanda declared that, “This synthesis of experiences, according to the theory of knowledge of dialectical materialism, has been acquired from the process of practice, knowledge, again practice and again knowledge. MLM (Marxism- Leninism-Maoism) has taught us that, this cycle goes on moving up to infinity”\textsuperscript{20}. PP, according to the Maoist was advancing in its third phase during the year 2004-2005. The first phase was political and military line of Nepalese revolution that was adopted in the Third expanded meeting of CPN (Maoist), held in 1995. The second phase was the ideological synthesis of the rich experiences of five years (1996-2001) of Great People’s war that took place in the historical Second National conference of CPN (Maoist) in 2001. And the third phase was the process of development following the second national conference of 2001.

One of the important aspects of PP was that, it synthesized Marxism-Leninism-Maoism keeping in mind the specificities of Nepal. Once Prachanda path was adopted in the second national conference in 2001, Prachanda prescribed some twelve synthesized revolutionary ideas of people’s war which would be suitable for Nepal. first, emphasis in


building correct line on basis of the concept of ‘correctness of the political line decides everything’ and through that to educate, organize and make millions of masses agitate. Secondly, accepting MLM as a guiding ideology and being firm in the starting point of ‘masses are the creators of history’ to be prepared for back and forth and right and left. Thirdly, to launch the historical initiation of people’s war with its own originality and country wide shock and in a rebellion-like way. Fourthly, to centralize rebellion on the question of political power from the very beginning. Fifthly, to centralize main attacks upon feudal, comprador and bureaucratic bourgeois class as the enemy class and its guardian, the imperialism. Sixthly, to centralize and handle all the things with the understanding that main form of organization is army and main form of struggle is war. Seventhly, considering local power and the question of base area as the fundamental question, to continue in regular practice of mass agitation and central political intervention. Eighthly, to place ideology and man in principal position and weapon in secondary position and handle them correctly in a dialectical way. Ninthly, acceptance of inevitable role of use of force in history and use of mass line for the capture of state power through revolutionary violence, and under which emphasis upon building an armed sea of masses by developing people’s militia from millions of people. Tenth, to achieve technical superiority of low tech over high tech through quantity to quality, human bravery and people’s initiative. Eleventh, to apply offense and defence and centralization and decentralization scientifically. Twelfth, correct application of total war through ideology, courage and war of masses\textsuperscript{21}. Another important aspect of the PP was that, it accepted mass line in its ideological, political and military sphere. According to

\textsuperscript{21} These ideas of Prachanda have been cited from Com. Prachanda’s writing, “People’s War in the 21st century and Prachanda Path”, in Problems and Prospects of Revolution in Nepal, Janadisha Publication, Nepal, 2004, P.165.
PP, the mass line is based upon the understanding of organizing aspirations of oppressed nations, indigenous, lower class and downtrodden people and women, developing people’s war with the goal of making masses politically powerful. Through mass line as Prachanda path suggests, revisionism has been strongly opposed. Putting stress on the above mentioned mass line Prachanda declared:

By grasping the famous Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principle of ‘masses are the creators of history’, the party is developing overall mass line according to the particular situation of Nepal. By synthesizing the historical process of rebellion of the masses, the party has been emphasizing upon the question of organizing aspirations of people’s revolt. Without a goal of seizing people’s power through people’s war, to talk of mass mobilization and mass line is revisionism22.

From the above discussion, it may be deduced that, like Mao’s stress on mass line and political parties than weapons, in a people’s war, Prachanda also followed the same to a great extent in his ideas of people’s war. Like Mao’s idea of a party to carry out the protracted war in a people’s war, Prachanda path also gave stress on a party that would bring victory for the people. The way Mao advocated two-line struggle in training the revolutionary party, Prachanda path also followed the same. Prachanda emphasized on the question of identifying correctly the contradiction, on the basis of materialist dialectics, inside the party and going on resolving them. Starting from Mao’s General Cultural Revolution to the Prachanda path, two-line struggle inside a communist party, has been considered as protracted in accordance with the protracted nature of class

struggle in the society. In fact, Prachanda viewed that, the two-line struggle inside the party, was a synthesis of MLM. And this two-line struggle was a process, that would not appear and disappear in time, but it was that existed constantly. Two line struggle, according to Prachanda, when it is not developed and expressed in its higher form, then it is within the limit of non-antagonistic struggle and resolved through the method of criticism, self-criticism and disciplinary action. But when, it develops and appears in higher form then that is expressed in antagonistic way, which is resolved through a qualitative method.²³

Prachanda path prescribed some ideas on tactics of the Maoist revolution in Nepal. PP while mentioning about the tactics of Nepalese revolution, gave primary importance to the matter of ‘balance’ between political and military offensive. It also talked about the balance between local and central intervention, balance between people’s war and mass movement, balance between main and secondary force, balance between centralization and decentralization, and balance between struggle and two line struggles. Adding to these, Prachanda path also talked about political slogan, people’s government, new people’s power, handling of different contradictions with tactical importance.

Prachanda path also claimed to have developed a theory of development of democracy in the twenty first century. According to Prachanda path, this theory is based upon the question of development of democracy in party, army and people’s power. In this way it presented a concept that guaranteed to democratize and to revolutionize the party, army and power continuously and ensure the right of rebellion. Democracy through

a revolution, to Prachanda path, were to go on proletarising the communist party and ensuring the right to initiate another communist party by rebelling against the earlier one if it went wrong. For this Prachanda path proposed to participate one section of the party in power and involve the other in people’s service. Discouragement of use of force in two-line struggle, making the army to reach people, ensuring allied classes to take part in power are given importance in the theory. Prachanda path criticized the formal kind of democracy and parliamentarism and declared:

Here the question we have raised does not have any relation with treachery of those revisionists and liquidationists of different colors of the world, who by opposing people’s democratic dictatorship or dictatorship of the proletariat have been entrapped into formal democracy of bourgeoisie. Here our question is centered in the objective of developing state power as an institution that can organize the continuous flow of revolution. The real democratic dictatorship of the proletarian dictatorship can ultimately be consolidated in the process of wide and lively democratization of the seizure of power. There can be no other meaning of democratic centralism, a great scientific theory, than this. Why the parties, which succeeded to seize power by correctly exercising democratic centralism before capturing it, turned lasted to be victims of formal democracy and bureaucratic centralism? The logic that revisionism had been dominant inside the party does not answer it fully. The weakness of this or that form that
came into effect in the application of dialectical materialism also are responsible for it\textsuperscript{24}.

In a way the idea of democracy in twenty-first century by Prachanda was an amalgamation of Marx’s idea of dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin’s democratic centralism and Mao’s concept of let’s hundred flower blossom.

Prachanda path not only prescribed ideas for the people’s war in Nepal, but also it spoke about world revolution by the proletariat in general and unified strategy of the South Asian countries against Indian expansionism and Indian imperialism. Concept of imperialism was taken both positive and negative was by Prachanda. Talking on the present day imperialism and its impact, Prachanda said, it has positive aspects, since imperialism has guaranteed the acceleration of the people’s consciousness to move from world of necessities to that of freedom. At the same time imperialism with globalization has made the whole world to a small rural unit so that, an event in any place would have its good or bad impact over the world. Production and distribution of arms through imperialism has been indirectly playing a role for the technical preparation for the people’s war on a world scale. And imperialism by intensifying the class struggle, principally the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed countries and people to the maximum, has been preparing a revolutionary objective situation for eighty percent of the people of the world.

\textsuperscript{24} For details see Com. Prachanda, “Present Situation and our Task” in Com. Kiran, No. 18, P.56.
On the negative side of imperialism in the present days, Prachanda mentioned, it has only an evil intention to grab profit. For this reason the imperialist forces use and misuse the resources of the poorer countries and extract profit out of it. Against imperialism, according to Prachanda, an objective base for preparation of world people’s war and establishment of communism has to be developed in the midst of globalization. To the Maoists of Nepal, Prachanda’s ideas on imperialism, have widely understood new particularities of economy of the era of imperialism and inaugurated proletarian revolution.

While focusing on the proletarian revolutions in the context of South Asian countries Prachanda made expansionism of India responsible for their failures. According to him, since Indian ruling class of monopoly bourgeoisie and their agents are there in every country, it is inevitable for the communist revolutionaries of the South Asian countries to develop a unified strategy as a common responsibility against them. Here Prachanda proposes the necessity of turning this region into a new soviet federation of the twenty first century.

Prachanda path as mentioned above is considered by the Maoist of Nepal are the indigenous achievement of the people’s war in Nepal. But to analyze the ideas and theories given by Prachanda through Prachanda path, one would find, it is a fusion of the Lenin’s idea of general urban insurrections and the Mao’s idea of revolution of the protracted war in the country side to encircle the cities. Moreover, the idea of democracy in the twenty first century in Prachanda path does not really provides any real space for
democracy. Baburam Bhattarai (Com. Laldhewaj) in an interview answered some of the questions on the Prachanda path, its originality, its applicability and differences between Com. Prachanda and Laldhewaj on various issues. According to Baburam, Prachanda path is a result of collective thinking of the vanguard of the Nepalese working class. On the universality of Prachanda path, he said that, Prachanda path has not yet attained a universal character. Moreover, to him it would be wrong to call it as a ‘path’-way. It has already been mentioned how Prachanda path said about to maintain a balance between centralization and decentralization, in two line struggle in a party. But it was on the question of centralization of army, party and the state, there were differences between Prachanda and Baburam. Focusing on the above said differences, Baburam said in the interview that, the CPN (Maoist) in a resolution in 2003, categorically mentioned, the party, army and the state would not be centralized in one person. But contrary to this resolution, in the central committee, army and the state in a single individual. Hence, the differences.

Not only Baburam who made the intra-party conflicts and the drawbacks of CPN (Maoist) but also Prachanda himself admitted of indiscipline in the party and of not providing proper ideological and political training to the new recruiters. Thus Prachanda path as a theoretical development lacks originality. Rather it is a modification of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism. And when it comes to applicability inside the CPN (Maoist) there are many loopholes found.

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Maoist Insurgency in Nepal and Political Economy of Nepal

While Prachanda path focused on the ideas and theories of the people’s war in Nepal, Baburam Bhattarai in his, writing, *Politico-Economic Rationale of People’s War in Nepal* gave an ideological background to the political-economic of the state of Nepal, which has been responsible for the people’s war in Nepal. Nepal is the second poorest country in the world in terms of physical and cultural developments, with 71% of its total population fall below absolute poverty level. And 10% of the total population of Nepal possesses 46.5% of national income. 60% of its total population is illiterate and more than 90% of the population live in the rural areas with 10% of the total population engaged with full employment and 60% are either under employed or disguised employed. Foreign debts constitute more than 60% of the GDP. It was under this background, according to Baburam Bhattarai, a people’s war and a New Democratic Revolution was initiated with the proclaimed aim of establishing a New Democratic Socio-Economic system and a state by overthrowing the old ones. In addition to establish the New Democratic Socio-Economic system, the people’s war was also directed against ‘the reactionary state’ which had been promising to solve the above mentioned problems through various plans for last fifty years.

According to Baburam, in a state like Nepal, “since the development of the productive force is faster and the development of production relations takes place at much slower pace, at some stage of development of society, the production relations block the development of the productive forces and this leads to retardation and distortions in society. Under such a situation it becomes necessary to smash the old
production relations and to develop new production relations in their place\textsuperscript{27}. For this Baburam prefers a ‘revolutionary path’ to that of a ‘reformist’. Because reformist path will only remain so long as there is possibility of developing productive forces within the old production relations where as the revolutionary path would smash the old production relations where as the revolutionary path would smash the old production relations and bring about a new productive system.

Besides the inner contradictions with in itself of a society (between productive force and production relations) the interference of external forces also plays decisive factor in development in that society. Here, Baburam mentions about the influence of imperialism upon the poorer countries. In present world order, imperialism, according to Baburam, affects the countries worse where the social formations are primitive and backward. Especially in societies which are on the eve of transition from feudalism to capitalism, the alignment with imperialism distorts the internal production relations by promoting the growth of comprador and bureaucratic capitalism instead of industrial capitalism\textsuperscript{28}. So in a state like Nepal Baburam proposes to smash the relationship with external imperialism while bringing progressive transformation in the internal production relations through revolutionary means. So the external influence by Indian supremacy, and the reformist attitude of Nepalese upper class in the name of development which are otherwise known as semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature of the state of Nepal to be abolished through a people’s war.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
In his writing Baburam discusses how India’s expansionist oppression has deteriorated the economy and political life of Nepal and how it has been one of the causes of people’s war. In defense of his argument he says, Nepal has slipped down from the 13th position of the poorest country in 1970s to the second position in present days. India has been accused as the principal country responsible for economic deterioration in Nepal. Accordingly, India’s expansionist policy started from the period of the British in general and after the sign of Treaty of Sagauli in 1816 in particular. It was the British-India that oppressed Nepal till 1950 and after that India oppressed Nepal through the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950. The Maoist leader claims, once Nepal was tied to Indian imperialism after 1950s through trade, finance and other means, the process of under development, distortion and dependency became all the more intense.

Expansionism, according to Baburam, “is the process of exploiting and oppressing the smaller and the weaker economy by a stronger economy, which has not developed to the level of imperialism but derives its strength from the backing of external imperialist forces and its own state. Similarly, because its hegemony cannot be maintained on purely capitalist competition the expansionist power uses extra-economic coercions (e.g. military, political, cultural etc.) to maintain its economic areas of influence or the market”29. Accordingly, India has been alleged of using its cultural, religious and geographical advantages over Nepal as part of its expansionist policy.

Nepal, according to Baburam, prior to the Sagauli treaty (which made Nepal a semi-colony) was self-sufficient in its basic industrial production. Nepal was self-

sufficient in producing cotton fabrics, copper and brass utensils, domestic instruments, military armaments, sugar and food grains. But with the penetration of factory made goods from India and concomitant decline of Nepalese industries, Nepal was made dependent on India. The process of expansion by British India that started in 1816 was again intensified by Nepal-British-India trade agreement of 1923 and again by the Treaty of peace and Friendship of 1950. In a way the above mentioned treaties between India and Nepal have made Nepal as a common market of India. More than this, the open boundary between India and Nepal gives scope to many informal and illegal trade and transactions. So the size of trade India have with Nepal given by the official statistics is much higher than this.

Another important aspect of Indian expansionism is employment of Nepalese youths in mercenary services and other sectors as cheap labour. In this way the semi-feudal agriculture of Nepal becomes ever dependent on India. This process of exploitation of labour and temporary and ‘relay’ (i.e. taking the father’s place by his son) migration that started after the Sagauli Treaty has had a disastrous effect on the historical development of the industrial proletariat and indigenous capitalism in Nepal30.

Finally, uninterrupted semi-colonial relation with Indian expansionism is alleged to have negative and destructive effect on the class relation and socio-economic structure. Thus, it was one of the most important objectives of the Maoist of Nepal to break the chain of semi-colonialism.

30. Ibid, P.64.
Another aspect of Nepal’s political economy, that, the people’s war would fight against was ‘semi-feudal Relation and Retardation in agriculture’. Nepal basically is an agrarian economy, where 81% of the labour force of the country is engaged in agriculture. This indicates, there are, very traditional methods of agricultural production in Nepal, 99% of the total investment in Nepalese agriculture is made in land, human and animal labour and primitive equipments. On the top of it, as the data suggests up to the year 1991/92 only 13% of the total cultivated land had permanent irrigation facility. this is important to mention here that, the lack of irrigation facility was not due to the shortage of water but due to the failure of successive governments in doing so, lack of irrigation facilities, use of traditional methods and some other reasons have made Nepal to export food grains from countries like India and falling into its trap.

There are many factors, that responsible for the retardation in agriculture. First, inequitable land ownership and; land distribution. According to the statistics, 65% of the poor peasants possess only 10% of the land, 25% of the middle peasants possess 25% of the land and 10% of the rich peasants possess 65% of the land. So this way the land ownership also determines the social status in the society. And ultimately this determines social class. And ultimately this determines social class relationship and finally social relations of production. Accordingly, the principal mode of surplus extraction in Nepal agriculture is semi-feudal relation and the same relation plays the principal role in the underdevelopment and retrogression of the Nepalese agriculture\textsuperscript{31}. In addition to this issues like bonded labour, entrance of the imperialist capital through feudal lords into agricultural sector, migration to India, unemployment and under employment are

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, P.68.
important causes of backward agricultural production in Nepal. Different regimes and different government have taken various measures for the development of the agriculture in Nepal. Important measures in this regard, like ‘land reform’ in 1950-60, ‘green revolution’, ‘small farmer development programme’ in 1970s, were introduced in Nepali agricultural sector. But as Maoists say, without destroying the old feudal structure.

Thus, one of the major ideological commitment and rationale of people’s war is to smash the reactionary production relations and to develop productive forces in agriculture. Decline of industry and expansion of comprador and bureaucratic capital in Nepal, is another aspect of Nepal’s political economy. Baburam, by criticizing the imperialism says, “after the rise of world imperialism, the merchant capital and usury or financial capital of the third world’s feudal and semi-feudal societies have turned themselves into comprador and bureaucratic capital as against of imperialist capital. their expansion plays doubly negative roles in the oppressed nations, through, one the one hand blocking the development of free industrial capitalism and on the other hand, by transferring third world’s capital to world imperialist centers as super profit in trade and as interests”. In this line, factory made goods from India was the major cause for decline of traditional industry in Nepal. Other aspects like free trade between India and Nepal, joint venture by ‘Nepalese comprador class and Indian Marwaris, impact of liberalization have affected the industrial growth in Nepal. At the same time it has given birth to comprador and bureaucratic capitalist class in Nepal. Thus, the people’s war by the CPN (Maoist) aimed at destroying the comprador and bureaucratic capital and paving the path of self-reliant development by breaking way with dependency.

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Another aspect of Baburam’s work is to solve the problem of oppressed regions and nationalities by giving regional and national autonomy. As it has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, 81% of Nepal’s total population live in rural areas (see page no. 27). And most of the time these people, are ones from whom the surplus has been extracted by the people living in the urban areas like Kathmandu, etc. These oppressed regions of Nepal are primarily the regions inhabited by the indigenous people. And these people have been reduced to most backward kind of people due to internal feudal exploitation and the external semi-colonial oppression. The regional oppression of Mongol dominated eastern, central and the western hilly regions or the Austro-Dravid dominated Inner Terai and Terai region are manifested in the form of national oppression. Apart from the above mentioned examples, there are many oppressed regions and nationalities in Nepal, which are to be solved through a people’s war.

The foregoing account provides the rationale of the people’s war by the CPN (Moist) in Nepal. These are used as ideological backwards by the Maoists of Nepal in their struggle against the reactionary state and semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism and world imperialism.

**Strategic Dimension of Maoist Insurgency in Nepal**

One of the most important and vital objectives of people’s war, as advocated by Mao, is the seizure and maintenance of political power. In a people’s war the role of right kind of strategies and tactics, play important role. Because through strategy, tactics, techniques only an originally inferior force can expand and ultimately can defeat larger and better
equipped military forces it would fight against. Originally, Mao followed guerrilla warfare, to fight against the Japanese colonial army. Guerrilla which literally means ‘small war’ was originally used to define the resistance activities of armed Spanish civilians who hurried the French occupation army during the peninsular war of 1808-1814. But the usage of this term in English language describes all non regular military like combat that has accompanied partisan activities in civil wars, revolutionary wars and popular resistance to foreign invasion and occupation. A guerrilla force is usually viewed as an irregular tactical adjunct or supporting arm of the professional army. however, Mao’s struggle through people’s war was initiated by a guerrilla warfare tactic later as the people’s war developed and progresses to the later stages it advocated a full-fledged conventional warfare against the enemy forces.

For the success of the people’s war, Mao prescribed some strategies and tactics, when we talk about a strategy and tactics, it can be viewed as, a tactic serves strategy. A strategy is permanent and fixed when a tactic is a working policy. Tactics, however, are highly flexible and are prone to change as politics change its course. But, an ideologically formed tactic has no room for deviation from the proclaimed purpose of its strategy. According to Mao, as it has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, the people’s war passes through three strategic phases for its success. First, strategic defensive, in which the people’s army would defend themselves and retreat. Secondly, a long period of strategic stalemate or balance in which the people’s army would build up its forces and thirdly, a strategic offensive stage, when the people’s army would attack the enemy and cause victory for the people’s war. Like any other Maoist movement elsewhere in the

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world the Maoist of Nepal also followed the above mentioned three strategic stages in Nepal. It is important to mention that most of the communist movements, that went through the stages mentioned, could only successfully passed through the first two stages, i.e. strategic defense and strategic balance. Peru’s shining path can be cited as an example in this regard34.

Strategic defensive Phase and Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

In a strategic defensive phase, the people fight against the enemy, the ‘reactionary state’ under the leadership of a revolutionary party. Seizure of weapon from the security force by the ‘grievance guerrillas’ formation of a people’s Liberation Army (PLA) and creation of a base area are the primary objectives of this strategic phase. And the base area that is created would be the centre of the revolution and people’s political power. Looking into the strategic defensive phase of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, one would find, informally, the Maoist entered into this phase even one year before the initiation of armed struggle. Through, what was known as ‘Sija Campaign’, the CPN (Maoist) undertook a yearlong campaign to seek the support of the peasants residing in the western districts. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal formally entered into the strategic phase when in its Third Plenum, the CPN (Maoist) adopted the three-phased Maoist path for the armed struggle. In this plenum, the Maoist of Nepal also adopted broad policies to initiate armed struggle the theories into practice.

Strategic defensive of Maoist people’s war in Nepal also involved several tactical stages. They were final preparation of initiation of people’s war, development of guerrilla

34. Thomas Marx, Nihar, P.921.
zones and development of base areas, beginning in 1996 and continuing up to 2001. Started by a small group, equipped with locally made and available weapons, the people’s war in Nepal was initiated in seven target areas from three different regions of the country, according to the report of ‘The Worker’, a CPN (Moist) mouth piece, on 13th February 1996, one police outpost each in Rolpa and Rukum in the western hills, an Agricultural Development Bank and Manakamane distillery in Gorkha distinct in the central hills, a police outpost in Sindhuli and the house of a feudal usurer in Kavre in the eastern hills and the factory of Pepsi cola in Kathmandu valley were attacked by armed squads accompanied by mass supporters at several places. As the Maoist claimed, the selection of the seven targets, to disperse the government forces in one hand and attack on Pepsi-cola Company was to mobilize the people against the imperialist forces.

Once the people’s war was on through the attacks, the next step was the propaganda actions- distribution of leaflets and posters, strikes all over the country, within three weeks of the initiation of the armed struggle, some 5,000 anti-state action took place in about 65 districts (out of 75 districts) across the country. Of that, about 85% of the action was related to propaganda, 12 percent to sabotage and 3% to guerrilla actions. the intensity of these actions were higher in districts like, Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, and Sallyan districts of western hills; the Sindhuli, Kavre and Sindhupulchok districts in the Terai regions of the eastern hills and Gorkha district in the central hills.

Mao, while advocating about the strategic defensive phase gave stress on to lay a solid foundation in the central districts of a country. By closely following this, the Maoist of Nepal, raised guerrilla zones, forces and militia and parallel government unities in the mid-west districts of Nepal, which are far from the reach of Kathmandu. By January 2001, the Maoist had declared temporary base areas in Rakum district. By the year 2000 the Maoist could run parallel government in almost all 75 districts of Nepal barring Kathmandu city and some of the district head quarters. Jan Adalats (people’s court) were established to maintain law and order in the areas of their strong hold. As a part of making people aware of the people’s war, they ordered implementation of an indoctrination programme in schools within the areas under their control.

Five years of strategic defensive phase, the Maoist were busy mobilizing people’s support, building base areas and monitoring information on the political, military and financial position of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA). Moreover, the inhospitable terrain, poor governance, poverty facilitated the Maoists to consolidate their position. The tactics of negotiation by the Maoist, at times, helped them of delay in any action against them.

Tactical lines used by the Maoist in this strategic phase were to create rift between the elected government and the monarch, recruitment of youth, women, and Dalits into the armed struggle, formulation of a number tactics of urban insurrections and more importantly going for the ceasefire in July 2001.
Till the first ceasefire between the government and the Maoist in July 2001, the Maoist problem used to be treated as a law and order problem of the country. On 22nd July 2001, when a police post was attacked and more than 70 police personnel were taken as hostage, the prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba declared a ceasefire on 23rd July 2001. The Maoist leadership, without wasting anytime joined the ceasefire. Three rounds of talks and negotiations between the Maoist and the government, on 30th August, 14th September and 13th November 2001, came to an end without any result or conscious. Once the ceasefire was a failure, a state of emergency was declared on the country on 26th November 2001.

However, to analyze the ceasefire from the Maoist point of view, it was actually a tactical line of the Maoist for a short time. The covert agenda of the party during ceasefire was to get ready to take on the army to enter into a strategic equilibrium from the defensive. The party organized the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) during the ceasefire. The URPCN was also formed. The CPN (M) expanded their organization to a great extend.

One of the changes in this phase in the strategic plan of the Maoist was the acceptance of Prachanda Path on February 2001. According to this ‘path’, the party accepted to follow the policy of ‘urban insurrection’ while continuing the build up in the rural areas and working to surround the towns. This proposal was accepted by the party because, it was felt that more focus on the rural areas would hardly create any pressure on

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Kathmandu. Maoists’ tactics on focusing on the urban areas like Kathmandu, building pressure on government created opportunity for the Maoist to seek the support of the petty bourgeoisie, political parties and civil society groups.

**Strategic Equilibrium Phase**

Strategic equilibrium phase in Maoist theory is a period where there is a balance of power between the people’s army and the state army. In this phase, the development of people’s power and the decomposition of the enemy’s power reach a position where the enemy is not able to defeat the revolutionaries and the revolutionaries are not yet able to overthrow the reactionary state power. The balance of power between the state and the revolutionaries should not be understood on the basis of purely military strength of two sides. Rather it is to be understood on the basis of a qualitative situation between the revolutionary army and the mass in one side and the reactionary state on the other. The emergence and existence of two states, two armies and two ideologies in the process of development of the People’s war has been the most basic condition for the emergence of a state of strategic equilibrium.

The CPN (M) entered into the phase of strategic equilibrium, as it declared, in August 2001. And this became even clearer after the break down of the peace talk and the ceasefire between the Maoist and the government of Nepal in November 2001. For the first time, after the failure of the peace talk and once the Maoist attacked the government officials immediately after that, it was seen two parallel armies and two political systems operating in Nepal.

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39. ibid, P. 148
A number of tactics were followed by the Maoists during this phase. Simultaneous attacks on several targets and to bring other revolutionary forces close to them were tactical move by the Maoists. These were done to put the state forces in confusion. The tactics helped the Maoists in the formation of base areas and the declaration of regional autonomous government. By 2004, the Maoist had declared eight autonomous people’s governments\textsuperscript{40}. Tactics like negotiations, ceasefire, international mediation, restoration of democracy and human rights were applied to regroup the cadres, move armed cadres from the western region to eastern region and consolidate in new regions. More than this, by these tactical moves, the Maoist wanted to divert the attention of the international community, because the Maoists were fully aware of the fact that, qualitative development of the people’s war to higher stages would provoke a stronger offensive from the state with the support of external forces like U.S. and India\textsuperscript{41}. And these were reasons why Nepal, during the period 2001-2004 witnessed a number of ceasefire and peace talk offers both from the government and Maoist side. However, reacting to the criticism on the negotiation offer from the Maoist side, Prachanda argued that the ‘enormous pressure on the state establishment both at the military level (through people’s war) and at the political level (from masses) made the “possibility of negotiation” much stronger, “especially during the stage of strategic equilibrium”\textsuperscript{42}

Mao, while mentioning about the strategic equilibrium phase observed that, this phase should not go for a long period of time. Otherwise the enemy was likely to

\textsuperscript{40} See Nihar Nayak, N-34, P. 926
\textsuperscript{41} ibid.
strengthen itself putting the revolutionary force on defensive. Accordingly, the central committee of the Maoist party hurriedly made an objective study of the situation and on 3rd August 2004 declared the attainment of the strategic equilibrium stage and prepared itself to enter into the strategic offensive phase.

**Strategic Offensive Phase**

One of the major factors of strategic offensive phase is the destruction and near-collapse of the old state and the process of superseding of new-Revolutionary state over the old state. According to Mao, it is the final and the most important phase and strategy of the people’s war. The people’s army is supposed to attack and initiate mass offensive acts against the reactionary state with its overall power and capacity. Use of quality weapons, adoption of urban and tunnel warfare, mobile warfare, instead of guerrilla warfare, necessities of a large army and reserves of ammunitions are some of the most important aspects, prescribed by Mao for the success of this phase.

In August, 2004, the plenum of the central committee of the Maoists decided to advocate the strategic offensive. Declaring on the initiation of the strategic offensive phase, the plenum said, “…. to delay entering the strategic offensive is to commit rightist errors, such as self-preservationism, and would through the over-all people’s power into perplexity and recoil”. Since in this phase both qualitative and quantitative changes are to take place the reactionary state may take help from the imperialist forces to make it a failure. Accordingly, the plenum confirmed that, “backed by imperialism, India was very

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44. F.O., No.41, P.150.
much likely to intervene in Nepal. So Indian expansionism was determined as externally a main barricade for the creation of credible environment to find a forward-going political solution through peaceful negotiations. However, the plenum’s decision on India as the main barricade rather than monarch at the state of the offensive became the cause of inner party struggle as the minority group led by Baburam had serious opposition to it. To him, monarchy continued to be remaining the main enemy in the offensive phase.

However, since strategic offensive phase was the most important phase of the people’s war, the Maoist of Nepal were expected to follow mobile or maneuver warfare, urban uprising, positional warfare and mass mobilization to create a new revolutionary. The western divisional commander of the Nepalese Maoist, Diwakar said, the Maoists even decided that ‘a number of planned battles must be fought, and only at the end will we reach an insurrection’. But, the Maoist in Nepal got stuck for a longtime in this phase because of the lack of logistics and battle technique, weapons, poor presence in urban areas and other resources. This might be the reason, Com. Prachanda said in the Maoist document that, “comrade Mao developed the basic principle of the Strategic offensive as well as its meaning, importance and definition within the protected people’s war. In spite of the same theoretical premises developed by Mao, in the context of today’s twenty first century, it is not possible to use them mechanically”. After the CPN (M) adopted the “Development of Democracy in the Twenty –First century” at the

second national party conference, it drew the conclusion that in every stage of development. Such as from the strategic defensive to strategic equilibrium and to strategic offensive, while there is certainly a qualitative change, still in the present national and international context of the balance of power, the strategic offensive should not be understood as a stage immediately aimed at insurrection. The situation of armed insurrection can be understood as a process of development through sub-stages, such as initiation, continuation and development of the war and the national and international situation⁴⁸.

As it has been mentioned earlier that the Maoists were stuck at the initial stage of the strategic offensive phase for a longtime, commenting of that, the Maoist leadership viewed that the correct understanding of this situation died in objective understanding of the conditions. They even advocated returning even to the strategic defensive phase from the offensive phase if necessary and to reunite and re-organise the struggle against revisionist camp.

Disagreement on adopting the Prachanda path as an universal principle by a group inside the Maoist party led by Baburam, indiscipline inside the party, failure in taking up the strategic offensive phase, deviation from some of the principles advocated by Mao are some of the draw backs that showed the Maoists in Nepal to be ideologically poor and immature in their understanding of the correct path to follow.