CHAPTER-VI

Maoist Movement in Nepal: Implications for India

Since 1996, when the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) launched the ‘People’s War’ (PW) in Nepal, there were concerns in the Indian security establishment about the subversive links between CPN-M and the Indian Naxalites, formally known as the Communist Party of India (Maoist) CPI (M).

Rebel groups or non-state actors normally seek external support, especially from governments in neighbouring countries and from the rebel group active there. Their requirements may be in the form of ideological, human or material resources.

Table 1 : Insurgent Requirements

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<th>Human</th>
<th>Material</th>
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<td>Ability to mobilize local and international support.</td>
<td>Safe heavens and transit.</td>
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<td>Capable leadership including effective command and control.</td>
<td>Financial sources.</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>Direct military support.</td>
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<td>Intelligence concerning the adversary.</td>
<td>Arms and material, including ammunitions, food and fuel.</td>
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<td>Inspiration</td>
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<td>Organisation Aid.</td>
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Support can be in the form of political, moral, military, economic, territorial or cultural assistance.1 Havens, base camps or sanctuaries, support of the diaspora and unrestricted transit, whether inside the country or across international boundaries, are also essential. Without a heaven they are vulnerable to counter insurgency operations.2
India shares close historical and cultural ties with Nepal and these relations between the people of two countries have, to a very large extent, shaped their political relations. Nepal, which has about 90 percent Hindu population, has cultural linkages with India going back to Indian Mythology. It has been a part of ancient India whose northern barrier was the Great Himalayan Range. With the weak political situation in Nepal during late 90's and early part of the new century, not much of attention was paid on the porous 1751 kms. long Indo-Nepal border. 21 districts of India and 26 districts of Nepal are situated on both sides of the border. Though there were 15 check-posts between the two countries to keep check on human traffic, but only 7 were functional. In absence of a formidable apparatus along the border, Nepalese Maoists had established a variety of linkages with their Indian counter parts i.e. Naxalites.

The Naxalite Movement in India

Left wing extremism, which is commonly referred to as ‘Naxalie Problem’ commenced in 1967 from a small village Naxalbari (Siliguri) division of West Bengal. The Naxalite movement started when three sharecroppers lifted 300 mounds of paddy from the granary of a jotedar with the support of 150 CPI (M) workers, armed with lathis, bows and arrows. The movement lasted for 52 days in the area and that too because of the initial hesitation and prevarication of the state government. Naxalbari uprising was superheaded by Shri Charu Mazumdar, who is now accepted as their founder. Around the same time i.e. 1967-68, Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh was engulfed by Srikakulam uprising by the farmers, which became the flashpoint for the start of Naxalite Movement in Andhra Pradesh. Large number of educated youngmen and women who get attracted towards the revolutionary ideology and philosophy of Mao and Marxism joined the movement.
At present, 76 districts in nine states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and West Bengal are affected by the Naxalite violence of varying degrees. Today, the CPML-PW and the MCCI continued to spearhead the Naxal violence in the country, accounting for about 91 percent of the countrywide violence and 89 percent of resultant deaths.5

Nepalese Maoists have been in the forefront of the opponents of India’s ‘big brother chauvinism’ vis-à-vis Nepal, demanding abrogation of the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty, though it suits the Maoists to have a porous India-Nepal border.6 There are indications that insurgency is likely to spill over to Indian territory. The insurgency had spread to the areas in the Nepali Terrain where the Madhise population has close linguistic and ethnicities across the border in Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.7

**CPN (Maoist) – CPI (Maoist) Nexus**

Over the years, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M), Nepalese Maoist in short, and their Indian counterparts, Naxalites of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), Indian Maoists in short which is an amalgam of the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) and the Communist Party of India – Marxist-Leninist (People’s War), PW in short, also popularly known as the PWG – have established a wide variety of linkages.8 Over the years, the CPI-M and CPN-M has evolved into a strategic alliance with a steady exchange of men and material, extension of training facilities and safe havens and facilitations and procurement of arms and explosives.9

Before the historical initiation or formal declaration of armed struggle in Nepal in 1996, some senior leaders of the CPN-Maoists visited Maoist-affected areas of India in 1995. As Prachanda, the leader of CPN-M
acknowledged in 2000, since Indian Maoist groups such as the PWG, the MCCCI and others had already had experience of armed struggle, "We (Nepalese Maoists) made some investigation of areas in Bihar in India. We went to Andhra Pradesh to look at the struggle there and we tried to understand the practical situation and practical problems of armed struggle."

The Nepalese Maoist leaders visited these areas to learn guerrilla tactics, organizational building and strategy and discussed joint training camps for natural benefits. They also had direct and continuous debate with the Indian Maoist groups, mainly the PW and the MCCCI, on issues such as class annihilation and strategies and tactics needs to convert the M-L-M Theory into practice.

The Nepalese Maoists are mostly trained and educated in India. Intelligence sources indicated that the Nepalese Maoists are being trained by the erstwhile Maoist Communist Center (MCCI) of India at the Jhumra hills and Saranda forests of Jharkhand.

On a number of occasions the CPI (M), as also the then PW, and the CPN-M had issued joint statements, as well as statements in support of the other. In February 1996, the MCC Central Committee published a paper welcoming the Maoist movement in Nepal. In October 1996, the MCC condemned the repression of the Maoist movement in its Congress. In due course, the two outfits discussed problem areas and agreed on joint training camps.

On January 25, 2002 the Politbureau of the CPN-M condemned the Indian Government’s prescription of the then PW and the then MCCCI under the now-defunct Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2002, and resolved to work together with the Indian Maoists to oppose the ban, as well as to
build opinion against it.\textsuperscript{14} Earlier, in September 2000, Pramod Mishra, a senior leader of the then MCC, visited Nepal and had extended discussions with Maoist leaders.\textsuperscript{15} Besides the MCC, the PWG cadres were influenced by the CPN-Maoist moving quickly from one phase to another within a short period. For example, Ravi Kumar alias Shridhar alias Mahinder, PWG Andhra Pradesh State Military Commission member translated and published all the documents of CPN-Maoist into Telugu language, to influence the cadres.\textsuperscript{16}

Besides, many Maoist cadres and leaders hiding in India were arrested on a number of occasions and handed over to the Nepalese authorities, or detained in Indian prisons. Nepalese Maoists routinely used India’s northern and eastern border states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand – as a sanctuary, which also served as a base for political, logistical and strategic support for the movement.\textsuperscript{17}

Those who were arrested by Indian authorities include Gajurel, Central Committee Members of the United Revolutionary People’s Council, Kumar Dahl and Hit Bahadur Tamang, Central Committee Members of the CPN (Maoist); Kulaprasad KC, Lokinder Bista and Anil Sharma, General Secretary of All Nepal Peasant Organisation (Revolutionary); Chitra Bahadur Shreshta and some other leaders on June 2, 2004; Maoist ideologue Mohan Vaidya ‘Kiran’ arrested on March 28, 2004 in Siliguri, West Bengal; top leaders Matrika Prasad Yadva and Suresh Ali Magar were arrested in Lucknow on February 8, 2004; Bamdev Chatri, CPN (M) Central Committee Member and General Secretary of the Akhil Bhartiya Nepali Ekta Samaj, a Maoist Front Outfit arrested on September 6, 2002.\textsuperscript{18}
CCOMPOSA

The Nepalese and Indian Maoists are both members of a broad front known as the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) that was founded through a formal announcement on July 21, 2001. The objectives of forming CCOMPOSA is to coordinate their activities within South Asia. The coordinating committee also resolved to combine their efforts and raise their revolutionary struggles with aim of fanning the flames of Protracted People’s War throughout the region and beyond, in conjunction with protracted People’s War in Peru, the Philippines and Turkey. Fighting the so called Indian expansionism was also a major focus of CCOMPOSA. The August 2002, meeting of CCOMPOSA declared, “The Indian Expansionist state, backed by the World Imperialism, particularly US imperialism, constitute the common enemy of the people of South Asia. This provides a concrete political basis for building the unit of the South Asian revolutionary forces.”

Revolutionary Corridor, CRZ

The Maoists of Nepal and Indian Maoists are in the process of forming what is known as a Red Corridor (See Map) stretching from Maoist strongholds in Nepal and extending down into the Danda Karnaya forest ending somewhere in Andhra Pradesh after running across contiguous parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The entire zone that comprises these areas is what is being termed as the Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ). This corridor has dangerous potentials and must never be allowed to be established.

Setting up of such a corridor would certainly full the extremist movement in the country what with the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) already having a broad understanding with the CPI (M). The formation of
the corridor and establishment of CRZ would help the insurgent groups in at least three ways. One, arms could be easily transported across the sub-continent. Two, during times of intense security force operations against the insurgents in any parts of the CRZ they would quickly be relocated to distant and safe areas. Three, with increased presence of Maoist cadres along the length of the corridor, the Naxalite and Maoists might expand their influence to newer areas and, thus, increase the instability in existing as well as fresh areas.\textsuperscript{24}

The establishment of CRZ would, eventually, require greater attention on the part of the security forces to contain and fail rebel activities. Moreover, there is also the apprehension that, “once achieved, this CRZ will virtually drive a wedge through the vital areas of the country, cutting-off the rich north-eastern part of India from the rest of the country. This very large zone will have control over huge deposits of minerals, oils and industrialized territory. This will provide the Maoists a powerful bargaining chip.”

**Change in India’s Policy Against CPN-M**

India’s approach to the Maoists of Nepal only changed after the King assumed direct control of power in February 1, 2005 after dismissing democratically elected government. India suspended its defence supplies to pressurize the king to restore the parliament. India was critical of King’s role and declined to participate in the Dhaka SAARC Summit scheduled for February 2005 to isolate the king. To pressurize the king further India facilitated the 12 point ‘Maoist-SPA’ agreement in New Delhi on November 22, 2005.

The key role in these developments in Nepal was played by Sita Ram Yechury of the CPI (M) which was a major ally of the ruling UPA-I, in India. He was instrumental in the formulation of the 12 point agreement earlier and bringing together the Maoists and the political parties to jointly launch a protest against the king. His four point formula comprising of restoration of Parliament; appointment of an interim government; holding elections to a new constituent assembly and formally inviting the Maoists for talks with the new government, proposed as a road map for democracy has been acceptance in Nepal.
The Nepalese Parliament on reconvening on 28 April 2006 adopted the last two points. Yechury has consistently emphasized on the inclusion of the Maoists into mainstream politics. His contention also signifies the shift in India’s stand. India fully endorses the inclusion of Maoists into the political mainstream subject to their giving up of arms.28

On May 26, 2006, after the first round of government – Maoist talks, a 25 point code of conduct was announced to ensure a peaceful environment during the period of ceasefire. On June 16, SPA and the Maoists signed on eight point agreement which also marked the first public appearance of Maoist Chairman Prachanda in Kathmandu. On August 9, the government and the Maoists sent identical letters to the United Nations seeking assistance in the management of arms and armies of both sides and monitor ceasefire code of conduct among other issues.

On November 8, leaders of SPA and Prachanda signed a landmark deal on arms management and political issues like Constituent Assembly, interim parliament and interim government. On November 21, the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was concluded which declared the end of war taking place since 1996 between the Maoists and the government.29

After the CA elections and the Maoists emerging as the party with the highest number of seats, there have been positive statements from both India and the Maoists towards each other. The Nepalese Maoists have stated that without cooperating with India it was not possible to bring stability in and prosperity to Nepal, and that it was more or less impossible. They clarified that they are not talking of closing the Indo-Nepal border but of regulating it better. Regarding recruitment of Gorkha soldiers for the Indian and the British armies, the Maoists are of the opinion that they have always maintained that recruitment of foreign armies should stop but that
the sensitive and delicate issue will have to be resolved in association with the other parties.\textsuperscript{30} Regarding the 1950 treaty, the Maoists opine that it will be better to have a new treaty in the context of new realities.

India has accepted Maoists as legitimate political actor and both Maoists and Indian government are trying to deal with apprehensions they had about each other. India’s support for Monarchy in the past has always been opposed by the Maoists. But the supportive role played by India in 12 point agreement between Maoists and the SPA was appreciated by the Nepalese Maoists. In New Deli in November 2006, the Nepalease Maoist Supremo Prachanda said, “We want to work with India because from whichever angle we see, whether historical, cultural, linguistic or geopolitcal, without getting involved with India in a serious interaction, the formation of new Nepal is difficult and we realize that.”\textsuperscript{31}

The Maoists after joining the interim government has given enough political signals that they would like to build friendly relations with India to address the apprehensions expressed regarding their linkages with the Indian Maoists.\textsuperscript{32} It needed to be emphasized that Maoists involvement in Nepali politics will have crucial implication for the Indian Maoists and perhaps would give them some lessons regarding the need to be part of the political mainstream.

**“Post November 2005 strains in the Relationship” of CPN-M and CPI(M)**

Differences between the Nepalese Maoists and Indian Maoists surfaced over the November 5, 2006 agreement in Nepal, whereby the Nepalese Maoists agreed to deposit arms in seven designated cantonments. Through a press statement issued by CPI (Maoist) spokesperson Azad, on November 13, 2006, the Indian Maoists were critical of their Nepalese
counterparts decision to give up armed struggle, and said, it was “fraught with dangerous implications. This act could lead to be disarming of the oppressed masses of Nepal and to a reversal of the gains made by the people of Nepal in the decade long people’s war at the cost of immense sacrifices.” In the same statement, the Indian Maoists were equally critical of the CPN-M’s decision to join the (interim) government. Azad declared, “the agreement by the Maoists to become part of the Interim government in Nepal cannot transform the reactionary character of the state machinery that serves the exploiting ruling classes and imperialists. The state can be the instrument in the hands of either the exploiting classes or the proletariat but it cannot serve the interests of both these bitterly contending classes.”

Participation of the Nepalese Maoists in the Interim government on April, 2007 with their commitment to the peace agreement suggests that they are more pragmatic than their Indian counterparts, who have been waging an armed struggle for 45 years without any specific objective. In an interviews with the Indian media, Prachanda stated that ‘The Naxalite movement in India is a problem for India; we feel we are trying to deal with the problems in Nepal in a new way, so if you release our comrades in India and we are successful in establishing multiparty democracy in Nepal, then this will be a very big message for the Naxalite movement in India."
References


17. Ibid.


25. Ibid.


28 Ibid., p. 27.
30 Ibid., p. 338.
31 Pattanaik, *op. cit.*, No. 26, p. 269.
32 Ibid.
33 Raman, *op. cit.*, No. 8, p. 275.
34 Ibid.
35 Prachanda’s interview with S. Vardharajan, “The Hindu” February 8, 9 and 10, 2006.