CHAPTER-IV

Ideology, Strategy and Tactics of CPN (M)

Ideology

The general meaning of the term ‘ideology’ is that it is a system of ideas concerning a phenomenon, especially the social life. Ideology not only provides the motivating force but also defines the aims and objectives of the movement. The CPN (M) is a party guided by Marxist and Leninist theory and Maoist thought operating in Nepal as accusing all other communist parties as revisionists and liquidationists, they claim themselves to be only real followers of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Marxism is a philosophy of struggle. The law of development according to Marxist dialectics is that each process of development in nature, society and human thought takes place through the struggle of opposites and its obvious result will take the form of a leap. Any thought that sees any kind of development process as an ordinary addition – subtraction scheme and as gradual evolution should be exposed as bourgeois evolutionism by the Marxists. It is clear that transformation from one process to another process does not take place gradually, but through leaps, through qualitative change, through revolution.

In this regard Lenin says development is the struggle of opposites; there are basically two outlooks regarding development, the development in the form of increase and decrease and the development as a unity of opposites. Mao has given the name of vulgar evolutionism to the thought that looks at development as increase and decrease or as repetition, and said instead that the inevitable result of the unity and struggle of opposites is a qualitative change – or leap. This he formulated as unity-struggle-transformation.
In regards to the theory of knowledge, Mao developed the theory of two leaps, i.e. from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge, and from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. Among these Mao has termed the phenomenon of leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice “extremely important”. On this Mao says, “Only this leap – the first leap of acquiring knowledge, or the thoughts, theories, policies, plans and means crystallized as a reflection of the objective external world, verifies the right from the wrong. Not only this – the only intention of the proletariat to know the world is to change it.” Thus Mao has emphasized on the need and importance of the leap in the process of transformation of thoughts into practices. Leap, qualitative change and revolution is not gradual evolution but a state of rupture, or a state of transformation of the opposites into each other as Mao, while talking of evolution as not being polite, restrained, etc. had mentioned about qualitative change, its process, etc.

The Maoists of Nepal quote Mao and say, “Mao enriched qualitatively the theoretical treasure of Marxism-Leninism by successfully fulfilling the necessity of class struggle in the imperialist era.” For CPN (M), contribution of Mao in relation to People’s War should be understood in the context of the necessity of developing class struggle in the history.

The Maoists take the position of Marx and Engels that the violent revolution has a universal character in the class society. They believe in Lenin’s clarity on systematically developed theoretical concepts regarding necessity of armed struggle in the course of implementing it in the Russian revolution. Based on the theoretical assertions of Marxism-Leninism on violent revolution and the experience acquired from their practical applications, Mao developed the comprehensive theory of ‘people’s war’ in the course of accomplishing new democratic revolution in China. They claim that the theory of ‘people’s war’ developed by Mao represents the
apex of Marxism-Leninism military science and will be applied universally in all kinds of countries according to the situation.\textsuperscript{4}

Ideologically, CPN (M) believe that the revolt is the only path for changing the society. They advocate that the 'people's war' will end all kind of other war.\textsuperscript{5} Therefore, they tried to revolt against the Panchayat regime in 1990 when strong alliance of Nepali Congress and ULF were trying to defeat the Panchayat through peaceful movement. Those, who believe in peaceful means to change the society, are according to the Maoists, foolish and irrationals.

The CPN-M claims that they have been ideologically following Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and their ultimate aim is to apply Mao’s thought in Nepal. The CPN (M) in the application of Maoist understanding which emphasized on the “masses as a creators of history”, started to mobilize the people for a protracted people’s war against the state. It took to arms following this Maoist thought. To Mao, ‘people with no army have nothing to its own’. Following this saying of Mao, Prachanda, describes the relationship of civil-military-weapon. Prachanda says, ‘in whatever way they are equipped with weapons, trained and powerful in the beginning their fall is inevitable when they stand against the interest of the masses. Final victory is their’s that fight for defending the interest of broad masses however weak they seem militarily in the beginning.\textsuperscript{6}

Apart from this belief in people’s army and war, Mao had also shown his belief in people’s power rather than the weapons. He used to say, “weapons are an important factor in war, but not decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive’.\textsuperscript{7}

Maoists in Nepal followed the double criterion laid down by Mao on people and army, and tried to attract general people by raising ‘situational
local issues related slogans'. They tried to bring these issues to the forefront. These issues not only touched native and suppressed people but also the migrants, labourers, peasants, women, dalits etc. They even tried to win support of the people by creating hostility among the different groups in the society, the cadres of the Maoists used to claim that after their rule prevails in the society, the absentee migrant landlords will have to give up the lands they occupied. The Maoists sells such agenda to the native people most of whom belong to the marginalized section of the society. According to CPN-M, harmony is needed for achieving its ultimate goal of 'communism through socialism'.

Strategy

CPN-M believes that in the present era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the enemy class is practicing various forms of conspirational strategies to stop revolution in countries like Nepal. Because of it, they cannot arrive at a correct strategy without understanding the strategy of the enemy. In this light it is necessary to determine the strategy and tactics of the Nepalese armed struggle by focusing on the overall state of the enemies together with the basic specificities of Nepal and Nepalese society.

Nature of State

Nepal is a landlocked country which is surrounded on three sides by India and in the North by China. Although it is small in area, however except for 17% of the Terai plan lands, the rest of the country is geographically replete with remote hills and Himalayan mountains with different climates, ethnic groups, cultures and languages. In Nepal for a long period, a centralized reactionary state equipped with a modern and powerful permanent army and bureaucracy has been in existence. This is
especially centralized in the cities. CPN-M believes that the enemies of the Nepalese people are not only within the country but also present outside of it in the form of imperialists, especially the Indian expansionists.9

The economic and political development of Nepal has been uneven. Nepal is predominantly rural and the exploited peasants who represent 90% of the total people are spread throughout the villages. The process of urbanization is on the rise; however, it is still small. The Nepalese peasants and other sections of the masses have passed through a process of different forms of struggle both local and countrywide for a longtime. There is a widespread attraction towards communism among the people. However, here the influence of reformism and right revisionism is also strong. In Nepal there has been virtually no direct experience of armed struggle under the leadership of the communist party. The reactionary ruling class of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial Nepal, where the Medieval Monarchy system exists, is undergoing intense crises and this crisis has started manifesting politically as well as in a serious manner.10

A big section of the Nepalese people is spread in different countries for employment, mainly in India for the army and other kind of work. From the above mentioned nature of Nepalese state the strategy and tactics of the Nepalese armed struggle can be discerned.

CPN-M, believes that the party ‘people’s army’ and United Front are the three weapons for a people’s revolution. Their single objective is to capture power through ‘people’s war’. To attain that the party mobilized the people in big way by raising situational and local struggles to prepare them for the protracted people’s struggles. In the process, it laid to rest the myth that Nepal is a peaceful country whose citizens are naturally averse to violence. The Maoists have consistently maintained that violence has been at the heart of the state power throughout Nepal’s history.11 Prachanda
argued against the popular notion of Nepalese being peace-loving and non-violent people. Such idea according to him is against the historical fact. To Prachanda, such 'historical fact' is a conspiracy to mentally disarm the people, and to protect their rule for their reactionary violence.\textsuperscript{12}

The strategy on armed struggle adopted by the CPN (M) in its third plenum in March 1995 made it even more explained. "The reactionary propaganda that the Nepalese people are peace-loving and that they do not like violence is absolutely false. It is an incontrovertible fact that the Nepalese people have been waging violent struggle for their rights since historical times. Till today whatever general reforms have been achieved by the Nepalese people, behind them there was the force of violent and illegal struggle of the people."\textsuperscript{13}

This point was reinforced by Prachanda in a separate essay wrote, "People have not obtained even the least of gains without waging violent struggles. Today, the Nepalese society has arrived at such a point of under the existing political system that there is no alternative on the part of the people other than to smash it."\textsuperscript{14} According to CPN-M, to become a genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary, one has to support the theory of 'people's war'. Elaborating the three stages of strategy he says, "For the success of revolution in the country like ours that lies in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition it is essential to pass through the three stages of the strategic defense, equilibrium and strategic offensive with the strategy of seizing towns from the rural areas.\textsuperscript{15}

Initially CPN-M adopted Guerrilla war because \textit{ithad} a key role in the first stage. The Maoist itself compared the Guerrilla war to Shah Dynasty’s state expansion campaign.\textsuperscript{16} It was even compared to the world history and said, "the guerrilla warfare has been effective when pro-people
forces carry on war against anti-people army with relatively more equipped with training and arms.”

CPN-M has mentioned five key conditions for the success of Guerrilla War in Nepal. These are:

(i) A correct ideological and political line (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) of the leadership.

(ii) To be conducted for the masses and by the masses.

(iii) Need for a continuous process of awakening and organizing more people through faster and better methods.

(iv) Basic tactics must be followed. Under the tactic of ‘hit’ and ‘run’, Prachanda referred some sub-tactics. These are: when enemy advances, we retreat, centralizing our forces to fight the enemy, decentralizing it to arouse the masses, finding out the weakest points of the enemy with adequate preparation and to attack by ensuring victory, carrying out dependable geographical and other surveys, always trying to keep enemy in surprise, maintaining regular alertness, mobility and secrecy etc.

(v) Building base area for mobilizing and regularizing the war.

Stage of Revolution, Programme and Motivating Force of Armed Struggle

According to the theoretical directives of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and general specificities of the Nepalese society CPN-M has formulated a political strategy of completing “New Democratic Revolution” with a people’s democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat based on the unity of the workers and peasants against feudalism and imperialism. The long term aim of the party is to move
towards socialist revolution after the successful completion of the new
democratic revolution as an integral part of the world proletarian socialist
revolution and to achieve communism by waging cultural revolutions
based upon the theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of
the proletariat. It is clear that the nature and orientation of the Nepalese
armed struggle will be directed by and committed to the aim of this
political strategy. Accordingly the nature and orientation of the Nepalese
armed struggle has been clearly specified by the National Congress of the
Party as, “The Line of protracted people’s war based upon the strategy of
surrounding the city from the countryside.”

**Revolutionary Front**

According CPN-M, “The Proletariat” is the fundamental motivating
force of “New Democratic Revolution”. Although the numeric strength of
proletarian workers in the modern industries and factories of Nepal is
small, it is, however, increasing. Even though the number is small, this
class, which is completely alienated from the modern production processes
and productive forces, is the most revolutionary class of the society. For
the success of new democratic revolution, this class has the historical
responsibility of identifying and giving leadership to other allied classes.

The farm workers, bonded labourers, landless peasants, porters and
poor peasants, and in the cities the cart pullers, rickshaw pullers, drivers of
tempos, taxis, and the transport and hotel workers etc., are the most
reliable, consisting of a big section of the population and the main
motivating force for the Nepalese revolution. (Hereby “poor peasant” is
generally meant those peasants who cannot make their livelihood from
their land alone). Middle peasants, those who live with difficult even after
working hard on their land throughout the year and who also take some
land on a contract or on a sharecropping basis. In the hilly regions of Nepal
these peasants outnumber other classes. For the New Democratic Revolution this class of middle peasants is an important motivating force.

Rich peasants; those who can have a good livelihood from their land; they are able to employ one or two labourers in their work despite their own participation in their farm work and are able to accumulate part of their income through exploitation. This class is a vacillating ally for the revolution, Petit-bourgeois class. In this class are included the teachers of schools and colleges, students, doctors, engineers, lawyers, junior office workers, petty traders of towns, retail traders, craftsmen, etc. Because of the nature and conditions of its production process this class remains vacillating. Despite this, the class can play an important auxiliary role for the revolution. Today the imperialists and the reactionary forces are focusing their attention to keep the intellectual of this class away from the revolution argues CPN-M.

In Nepal although the national bourgeoisie doesn’t have an independent role it is slowly taking form. These kind of capitalists who are involved in small handicrafts and modern industries and trade are at one end dreaming of amassing the wealth by exploiting the workers, and at the other end they are being run over by the monopolist comprador and bureaucratic capitalists. Hence, they naturally show a contradictory character towards the revolution. Use to changing its character according to the situation, this class will remain vacillating ally of the revolution.20

It is obvious that the Nepalese armed struggle should formulate its strategy and factors by taking into consideration the above general condition and character of the enemy and the motivating forces of the New Democratic Revolution.
Party Programme

As have been discussed earlier, the Maoist announced a ‘People’s War’ on February 13, 1996, under the slogan: “Let us march ahead on the path of struggle towards establishing the people’s rule by wreaking the reactionary ruling system of state.” Maoists strongly believe in the philosophy of Mao-Zedong who proclaimed, “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”. Maoists also draw inspiration from the ‘Revolutionary International Movement’, Peru’s left wing guerrilla movement – the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), and from radical communist parties in different parts of the world.21

The CPN-M’s ultimate objective is the elimination of the monarchy and the establishment of a single party communist state. Party firmly believes that it can achieve their cause through force and intimidation. They strive to emulate the shining path’s stated objective of destroying government institutions and replacing them with a peasant regime. As with the Shining Path, Nepal’s Maoists ruthlessly deal with political dissent.22

The Maoists aims in the ‘People’s War’ are to establish a ‘People’s Democracy’ in Nepal. The Maoists view it as an, “historical revolt against feudalism, imperialism and reformists.” The catalyst for declaring the ‘People’s War’ was the failure of the Nepalese Government to respond to a memorandum presented by its representatives to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on February 4, 1996. The memorandum listed 40 demands related to “nationalism, democracy and livelihood.” These included the abolition of royal privileges, the promulgation of a new constitution, and the abrogation to the Mahakali treaty with India which regulated the distribution of water and electricity as well as the delineation of the border between the two countries.23
The Maoists argue that what makes them different from other communist parties in the country is that they want a complete revamp of the multi-party democratic system as part of a program aimed at turning the country into a Marxist republic. CPN-M states that the aim of the armed struggle is to solve the basic contradictions between feudalism and the Nepalese people, imperialism (mainly Indian expansionism) and the Nepalese people, comprador and bureaucrat capitalism and the Nepalese people, and in the immediate term the contradiction between domestic reaction which is made up of a combination of feudal and comprador and bureaucratic capitalist classes backed by Indian expansionism and the Nepalese people. This way it is clear that the target of the armed struggle will be confiscating the lands of feudal and landlords and distributing them amongst the landless and poor peasants on the basis of the “land to the tiller” theory and to attack them for this purpose; and in order to cut the roots of imperialist exploitation through projects such as industries, banks, etc. in the hands of comprador and bureaucratic capitalist and projects run by government and non-government organizations and to attack them for the same purpose.

This way it is clear that the target of armed struggle will be against feudal, landlords, comprador and bureaucratic capitalists.

**Perspective Tactical Line and Tactics of CPN-M**

CPN-M is of view that Nepalese people are the great warriors of the world who are known for their ability to bear the severe material and bodily hardships while fighting Nepalese peasants, and other sections of the people have been joining in countless numbers of violent and armed conflicts against the reactionary state, and the anti-establishment feeling among the Nepalese people is very strong. But CPN-M believes that the domestic and foreign reactionary forces including the revisionist element
have been time and again ditching and conspiring against the fighting
tendency of the Nepalese people. Today, the greatest responsibility has
been upon the revolutionaries to initiate armed struggle methodically and
consciously against feudalism and imperialism and to complete the New
Democratic Revolution by representing that great historical legacy. 26

The fundamental principles of this path are: To grasp firmly the fact
that the people’s war is the war of the masses, that it can be developed only
by relying on the masses and principally on the peasants and the masses are
the creators of history; to acknowledge the need and importance of the
stages of strategic defence, stalemate and offence of the people’s war and
to make plans accordingly by accepting the strategic role of guerrilla war
as it is the principal form of war in the initial stage of strategic defence; to
grasp the importance of developing guerrilla warfare into positional
warfare and of establishing base areas to capture central power; and above
all, in the ideological directives of MLM to establish the leadership of the
party over the army and not to permit at any cost to arise a situation where
the gun would control the party. It is by practicing the main strategic
principles of protracted people’s war and by refraining from making
mistakes that one can unfold the laws of the Nepalese people’s war. It is
important to note the truth that the laws of war can only be learnt by
participating in war. The overall strategic and tactical aim in war is to
preserve one’s force and to destroy the enemy’s force. 27 That is why it is
important to be clear right in the beginning about the policies needed to
develop the Nepalese people’s war by understanding the overall national
and international situation. It is only by applying these policies carefully
that the armed struggle can be initiated, preserved and developed. Neither
by being one-side, nor by giving equal emphasis to all work, can in the
present context the people’s war be initiated, preserved and developed. From this point of view the people’s war will go ahead as a total war.

The successful development of the Nepalese people’s war will be determined by decentralizing actions based on central policy, by launching actions at different isolated spots of the enemy and by applying large force against small forces in order to get quick victory, by adopting hit and run tactics, by going ahead with guerrilla actions under the centralized plan from different parts of the country but also by giving special attention to specific strategic areas, and as Mao has said, by organizing and mobilizing as many people as possible and as fast as possible and as good as possible by placing the question of capturing political power at the centre.

There are two broad aspects of the strategy adopted by the Maoists: (1) To increase their organizational, strength and resource capabilities through various means; (2) To expand the area of their control and influence in a gradual but offensive way.

In order to increase their resource capabilities and organizational strength, the Maoist have raised their forces and trained them in Guerrilla Warfare. They have targeted police stations, the treasury, local feudal elements, Agricultural Development Banks, small farmers’ development projects, foreign investment projects and individual businessmen and industrialists. In order to exert their influence in different areas, the Maoists have adopted the following steps: (i) Control of areas that they have captured; (ii) Introduction of their own rules and regulations ignoring and ultimately overthrowing the government administration under their area of influence; (iii) Providing military training to the local youth in the areas of their influence and preparing them for guerrilla warfare; (iv) Adopting Mao’s strategy of mobilizing peasants by encircling the cities from the countryside through a protracted war.
As stated earlier the Maoist Movement was initially launched in four districts of western and mid-western Nepal. Initially, Maoists concentrated on looting Agriculture Development Banks, police stations and government treasuries. They also started killing and abducting local Nepali Congress leaders and workers. They also organized bandhs and strikes quite frequently. They had three basic objectives in mind:

(i) Developing people’s war in an organized form.

(ii) Eliminating selected enemies.

(iii) Procuring arms and finances and developing guerrilla zones.

Initially, the Maoists followed the strategy of expanding their area of influence. They destroyed loan documents and bank records in the rural areas. The local administration was compelled to withdraw from the areas of their influence. In the rural areas, they also took up anti liquor campaigns and tried to mobilize people against many socio-religious bondages and ill-practices. As a result, they gained sympathy and widespread support in the countryside. After 1997, the Maoists began to attack businessmen, farmers, student leaders of the other parties, army men, local miscreants and other whom they considered to be suspicious.

In February 1998, the Maoists formed their Central Military Commission and in February 1999, the Regular People’s Army was established. With this, the Maoists also increased the scale, scope and frequency of their attacks. They engaged in brutal killings and followed the military strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside through guerrilla warfare. The second National Conference of the Maoist Party stated, “There should be no illusion that the path of revolution in the oppressed nations of the third world is still the path of Protracted People’s war.”
As has been discussed earlier, the protracted war that they launched had to go through the following stages – strategic defence, strategic stalemate and strategic offence. After 1999, they also began to take action against deviations within their party. By 2000, the Maoists had formed the People’s government in Jajarkot, Rukum, Rolpa and Salyan. By this time, a large number of districts had came under their influence.

In February 2001, Pushap Kamal Dahl (Prachanda) became Chairman of the CPN (Maoist). The Royal Massacre of 2001 affected Maoists plan. On 23 July, 2001, Maoists entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Sher Bahadur Deuba government. The failure of three rounds of talks between Maoists and the government. The declaration of emergency in the country and the deployment of army helped in constraining the Maoist movement. On 25th November, 2001 the Maoists returned to guerrilla warfare. The Maoists also declared the formation of the United Revolutionary People’s Council (URPC) of Nepal. A Central People’s Government was also constituted under the leadership of Babu Ram Bhattarai.

In December 2002, the Maoists constituted a Central Dialogue Team and indicated that a peaceful solution to the problem was possible through political negotiations. On 29 January, 2003, the Maoists announced a second ceasefire. However, negotiations again failed with the government. The Maoists resorted to violence once again towards mid-2003 and started targeting urban areas and public places. In 2004, the Maoists included forcing elected members by local bodies to resign, abduction of school children and teachers, abduction of villagers, and so on, in their list of activities.

At a plenum of the Central Committee of their party in May/June 2003, CPN (Maoists) adopted a resolution on “the development of
democracy in the 21st century”. This advanced the concept of working in a multi-party competitive democratic system within the stipulated constitutional framework.

At another plenum in August 2004, the Nepal Maoists proceeded further under the slogan “revolution within revolution” to arrive at what they call “a new milestone in the development of revolutionary ideas”. In the central committee plenum in September/October 2005, they concluded that keeping in mind the prevailing political balance of power in the country and the international situation, it was decided to take a special initiative to implement the immediate tactics of multi-party democratic republic, which prepared the ground for concluding a 12-point understanding with other parliamentary political parties to spearhead the anti-monarchy mass-movement. The central committee plenum of September/October 2005 is characterized by them as a set of ideas synthesized as “Prachanda Path”.

According to Prachanda, “in today’s context, people’s war can only be carried forward in the form of total war.” Prachanda’s notion of total war can, therefore, be understood as the incorporation of the specificities of armed (urban) insurrection within the overall strategy of protracted people’s war from the very beginning. The adoption of the tactics of armed insurrection right from the outset of the people’s war calls for political mobilization at the national as well as international level and not just area wise seizure of power at the local level, all over the country. It presupposes the engagement of the party and various frontal organization in all kinds of issue specific, group specific struggles, at different levels, that are directly or indirectly linked to the central strategy of the overthrow of the present state and the capture of power. This calls for a lot of flexibility in the party’s approach. It is such extreme flexibility in strategy and tactics, while
steadfastly upholding the political line of capturing political power, which characterize total war. This therefore seems to be the Nepal Maoists answer to the problem of translating and consolidating the seizure of power in vast expanses of the countryside into capturing state power at the national level.

The following are some of the tactical principles of total war: prioritize work in rural areas, but don’t give up work in cities either; prioritize illegal work, but don’t give up legal possibilities either; prioritize work of people’s war, but don’t give up people’s movement either; prioritize underground work, but don’t give up open political work either; prioritize class struggle in the countryside; but don’t give up country wide struggles either; prioritize guerrilla actions, but don’t give up country wide struggles either; prioritize guerrilla actions, but don’t give up exposing enemies and political propaganda either; prioritize development of armed organization, but don’t give up work of forming front, organization either; prioritize relying on your own strength and organization, but don’t give up tactical alliance, international opinion-building and support either, etc.43

It is these tactical principles of total war whose formulation and adoption is supposed to provide the Nepalese people’s war its uniqueness and revolutionary energy. This is supposed to be part of the creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the specific conditions of Nepal giving rise to Prachanda thought in the process. One concrete instance of the protracted people’s war incorporating key elements of the strategy of armed insurrection was, according to Bhattarai, the launching of the February 1, 1996 people’s war in a countrywide insurrectionary manner.44 Along with continuing the task of legal, open struggles, there is also focus on central political intervention and armed action which would involve propaganda work in cities and constant attempts to intervene in the centres of reactionary state power.45 Such a kind of concerted, multifaceted
political struggle, is an important part and feeds into the core political line of building base areas as the backbone of people’s war, guerrilla warfare around these areas, and routine political work outside guerrilla areas, including propaganda work in cities.46

The CPN-M itself came close to a split in 2004-05, with differences over strategic issues exacerbated by an emerging personality cult around Prachanda. The rift focused around the balance between political and military action, which in turn related to a long standing divergence within the party as to whether the struggle against the Nepali monarchy should take priority, or whether it should be subordinated to the needs of a national popular defence against “Indian expansionist” a strong current within the CPN-M had long seen King Birendra as a Sihanouk like ‘royal nationalist and potential ally against the great power to the South. The debate was finally settled in favour of the anti-monarchist position, itself powerfully vindicated when Gyanendra turned against the mainstream parties in February 2005. The latter’s struggle for survival effectively pushed them towards the Maoists, who were quick to grasp the exceptionally favourable shift in the domestic and international relationship of forces that had taken place, as the king continued to isolate himself both domestically and intentionally.

The tactics of the party must be understood with reference to the historical meeting of its central committee, held in Chunbang village in Rukum district in September-October 2005. That meeting put an indelible mark on the evolution of the party itself. Before that meeting, internecine strife had peaked between two lines of thinking within the organization. The division had become public, and while there was fear among the revolutionary masses about the very existence of the party, the reactionary forces were ecstatic. However, the central committee, led by Comrade
Prachanda, devised a way to turn this intra-party struggle into a motive force to propel the organization forward. The Chunbang meeting, in fact, achieved a new level of unity through the process of dialectical debate.

One important decision taken at Chunbang was that the CPN-M should force an alliance with the agitating parliamentary parties, inspite of their unstable and vacillating character. This was considered necessary in order to isolate and abolish the monarchy. The matter of the monarchy’s abolition carries a particular meaning in the context of Nepal, for it is a reactionary institution with deep roots, and backed by an army more than 1,00,000 strong. Even while the CPN-M was thus engaged against the monarchy, the external and internal reactionary forces joined hands to prop up the crumbling Monarchy, seeking to convince the indecisive parliamentary forces that once the royal institution was gone there would be no force able to halt the Maoist march.

Fortunately, the awareness among the people and the tactical move by the Maoists forced the Nepali Congress and the CPN (Unified Marxist-Leninist) to maintain conditional, even if temporary, ties with CPN (Maoist). CPN (M) has been engaged in this arrangement with the parliamentary parties since 22 November 2005, after signing the 12-point understanding with the parliamentary parties. From the study of the concrete condition and character of this compromise with the parliamentary parties, it becomes evident that the CPN (M)’s policy is neither ‘all alliance and no struggle’, nor is it ‘all struggle and no alliance’.

Prachanda gave two reasons for not seeking to seize state power militarily in 2005, when it seemed within their grasp, but instead turning to negotiate a permanent peace settlement, involving a long-term strategic alliance with the mainstream parties to fight for a ‘democratic republic’. First, given the international balance of forces, the Maoist leadership
believed that while they might capture state-power, they would not be able to retain it. Second, by abandoning the path of armed struggle for peaceful mass mobilization they hoped to achieve a new legitimacy, domestically and internationally, that would afford them greater protection in the long run. This turn was one that many of the CPN-M’s own cadres, educated in the belief that they were fighting for a through going people’s democracy, found hard to swallow. The new line that was finally accepted was that the democratic republic, though seemingly bourgeois in form, was actually a transitional phase towards a future people’s democracy, and that progress along this ‘peaceful’ path would be gauged by the extent to which the key tasks of overcoming class oppression (above all, the question of land reform), eliminating caste and gender oppression, and resolving the ‘nationalities’ question (Federal restructuring of the state) were actually carried out.

At this present juncture, in the shaping of Nepal’s future history, the Maoists, with their current positions are playing an important role along with major political parties. The shift from the underground to the over ground, the decision to give up arms and participate in the democratic mainstream and competitive politics appears, as of now, to be irrevocable. Whether the entire Maoist cadre would embrace this radical shift in positions and practice is a question that would only be answered in the near future. However, Prachanda sums up the Maoist positions at the moment by the following:

Our party has taken the 12-point understanding with the parliamentary political parties very seriously. We consider it not as a game plan or an agreement of convenience but as a historically essential and practical understanding required to fulfill people’s aspiration for peace and democracy against feudal and tyrannical monarchy. The ensuing protests
against tyranny have not only justified its significance but have also approved of it. As a first milestone of the process of achieving complete democracy (i.e. democratic republic in our understanding) through a constituent assembly election, the 12-point understanding has a long-term importance.\footnote{53}

As a result of 'correct actions by the CPN-M, today the people's revolutionary aspirations remain centred on the party. The mass line of the party, its political line, and the discipline of its PLA – all of these are preparing the ground for final victory. The party's influence among the masses is increasing by the day. Nepal is presently in a transitional phase, which the CPN-M is using to spread and consolidate its mass base to get rid of its own shortcomings, and to introduce disarray in the enemy camp. All this, so that we can deliver the final blow and usher in the era of democracy in Nepal, claims a senior Maoist leader.\footnote{54}

Protracted People's War

The Unity Centre adopted at its unification convention in 1995 the strategy of Protracted War based on encircling the towns from the countryside. This concept was proposed by Prachanda and endorsed by the convention but it only took concrete form three years later. The third extended meeting of the Party, in March 1995, adopted the following plans for putting the theory of people's war into practice:

... give priority to the rural work, but do not leave urban work; give priority to legal struggle, but do not leave legal struggle too; give priority to specific strategic areas, but do not leave work related to mass movement too; give priority to class struggle in villages, but do not leave countryside struggle too; give priority to guerilla actions, but do not leave political exposure and propaganda too; give priority to propaganda work within the
country, but do not leave worldwide propaganda too; give priority to build army organization, but do not leave to build front organization too; give priority to rely on one’s own organization and force, but do not miss to forge unity in action, to take support and help from international arena.55

People’s war was the essence of the Chinese Communist’s military doctrine, advocated mainly by mao Zedong and codified by him in numerous writings.56 The basic elements of the original Chinese version of “Peoples War” are: (1) the key objective and the highest form of revolution is to mobilize and arm the people to seize political power; (2) the key factor in winning a battle is to rely totally on the people, for they are the solid foundation for launching war; (3) establish the people’s army mainly with peasants; (4) unite the major and local forces with the guerrilla forces and militia; (5) establish solid revolutionary bases at places where the enemy is weak and where there are geographic advantages; and (6) utilize the strategies of people’s war because they are suitable to revolutionary war and provide accurate guidance for fighting a war.57

In China Mao divided the process of people’s revolution into three stages – strategic defence, strategic balance and strategic offence – a structure followed by the Nepali Maoists, at least in theory, throughout their armed campaign. Following the August 2004 CPN-M Central Committee plenary, it was announced that the Maoists had entered the final of three stages, adopting the slogan “Let us raise the process of revolutionary transformation to new heights and enter into the stage of strategic offence.”58

At the start of their campaign, they warned that the war would be “quite uphill, full of twists and turns and of a protracted nature.59 But while “making use of all forms of struggle,” they would stick principally to “the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside, with agrarian
revolution as the axis and from the midst of and in conjunction with the rural class struggle.\textsuperscript{60}

\textbf{Strategic Defence}

The attacks carried out by the Maoists to launch the “People’s War” clearly indicated their political and revolutionary priorities. The armed struggle was launched on 13 February, 1996 with surprise attacks on police posts in Western districts of Rolpa and Rukum and the Eastern district of Sindhuli. In Rolpa the fighting lasted for a few hours, while in Rukum and Sindhuli the police handed over their weapons without a struggle. In Gorkha district the Maoists underlined their political intent by attacking Chyangling Villages Agricultural Development Bank and Small Farmer’s Development Project and burning papers related to loans.

They also signaled their moralistic agenda with an attack on Gorkha Manakamana Distillery. On the same night their petrol bomb attack on the Pepsi Cola factory on the outskirts of Kathmandu showed that they had multinational corporations in their sights and were willing to strike in the capital as well as the more remote rural areas. It was only after five days that the Maoists formally claimed responsibility for these attacks in a statement from Prachanda.\textsuperscript{61}

At first glance these attacks were not terribly violent – no lives were lost – but they were intended as a sign of the determination of the Maoists to pursue a sustained armed uprising. In the words of one leftist analyst, “those events gave birth to a completely new possibility in terms of the construction of military force. In fact this was a new undertaking in the Nepali class war that had never before occurred in the country’s history.”\textsuperscript{62} However, these apparently minor and scattered events in a handful of districts did little to shake the political established in Kathamdnu.
The first defensive stage took some five years and involved a progression through six district working plans which were adopted to developing circumstances.63

**The New Line: Prachandapath**

After five years of armed struggle, the Maoists carried out a full assessment of their progress. They had established at least temporary base areas in a number of districts, and the party’s influence had grown at an unprecedented rate. But these successes brought their own problems. The base area policy was clearly not emulating the revolutionary Chinese model, and the rapid expansion of cadres and activities led to organizational challenges. It was time to re-examine strategy.

The Maoists second national convention, held at a secret location in February 2000, was the first mass meeting of the party since the start of the armed insurgency. The outcome was adoption of a new line that was given the name “Prachandapath”64 Proposed by Prachanda himself in his political report, it was ratified along with a change to the party constitution which resulted in his appointment as Chairman. The new strategy basically called for more focus on urban insurrection while continuing the build-up in rural areas and working to surround the towns.

The need for a change was justified by the argument that no single established model of proletarian revolution could still be appropriate given changing global conditions.65 The initial faith that “Protracted People’s War” was suited to Nepal’s situation was undermined by a growing realization that a decade long struggle along Chinese lines was unlikely to be successful. Doubts that a slow build-up in rural areas would lead in itself to a decisive revolution led to a marring of Maoist and Leninist
tactics: the "People’s War" in the villages would be complemented by a push for "people’s rebellion" in towns and cities.

In some respects this was not so new. The policy of the CPN (Unity Centre) in 1991 had acknowledged that, "in the specificities of our country and the current world situation, the significance of urban mass movements had definitely increased." Given the experience of the 1990 People’s movement, whose success had hinged on the final mobilization in the capital itself, it is not surprising that the Maoists also acknowledge the value of targeting the centre of power more directly.

Baburam Bhattari described Prachandapath as a school of thought that was more than a set of tactics but less than an ideology. But the personalization of the new strategy by its direct linkage to Prachanda himself raised hackles within the party and among another communists. Mohan Vaidya (Kiran) has made grand claim for the new line: "Prachandapath is now standing in a new turning point of history to make a qualitative leap in the process of becoming universal, not particular." But Krishna Bahadur Mahara has said, “It is learned from the experience of Russia, China and others... we haven’t given up Marx, Lenin and Mao but we do not want to take it as dogma. We want a 21st century democracy in which the people supervise the state so that people with money cannot control the election. We want transparency and equal opportunities for all parties.”

The new policy incorporating urban insurrection recognized that in a highly centralized country such as Nepal it would be hard for rural actions alone to put serious pressure on the state. If the Maoist revolution were to progress, there would have to be new ways of bringing the struggle directly to Kathmandu, where state power was concentrated. A range of tactics for urban insurrection was proposed to make continuous interventions in
national politics, to use fraternal organizations to carry out strikes and street demonstrations, to foment revolt within the RNA and to seek to placate sympathetic and opposed political forces. As their tactics were primarily non-violent, they were used during the first ceasefire of 2001. On 21 September, 2001 the Maoists had planned to organize a large anti-monarchist demonstration in Kathmandu but this was blocked by the government.

The combination of “People’s War” and urban uprising strategies for revolution has not been tested elsewhere and offers no guarantee of success. Maoist leaders and workers acknowledge that Prachandapath will prove its validity only by success.71

**Strategic Balance**

The central goal in achieving strategic balance is to reduce the capacity and influence of the state while building up an alternative government in waiting. It requires the development of military capacity sufficient to hold one’s own against opposing forces, though not necessarily equality. As always in Maoist doctrine, it is not the number of troops or range of their equipment that counts but the ways in which tactics can be employed to make the most of existing capabilities and put the enemy on the wrong foot. The Maoists claim they reached the stage of strategic balance from the start of their direct confrontation with the RNA in November 2001,72 following the breakdown of the first ceasefire and the abandonment of abortive talks. By then the Maoists felt that they had weakened the “old regime” to the extent that their a new regime” would start to be seen as an equivalent force. They marked entry to this stage with a “general offensive” involving audacious simultaneous attacks on multiple targets, including army bases.
At that point, the RNA’s assessment of Maoist strategy was, “Establishment of bases in rural areas in order to encircle the towns and cities and finally encircle Kathmandu Valley. For this they are carrying out ambushes and other terrorist activities... and strengthening their organization.”^73 The Maoists attempted to reduce the state’s reach through attacks on police posts to force withdrawal; attacks on mainstream party activists to eliminate political competition; attacks on local government bodies and forced resignation of officers; attacks on infrastructure to reduce the state’s delivery capacity; and the intimidation and cooption of remaining institutions and civil servants, such as teachers.

These tactics, helped by the state’s ineffective response, were first notably successful earlier in the mid-western Maoist “heart land” districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Salyam, Jajarkot, Kalikot and Pyuthan. As state presence was reduced there – a clearly visible trend of 1999 – the abandoned countryside fell largely under Maoists way. The escalation of the military conflict following the mobilization of the RNA during the state of emergency declared in November 2001 only hastened this process.

By early 2004 the Maoists asserted that the declaration of regional autonomous people’s government had “immensely contributed to consolidate the Base Areas to prepare for impending strategic offensive through the country.”^74 However, whether the Maoists have ever been successful in creating base areas in open to differing interpretations. The classical Maoists definition of a base area is a region where the presence of the “reactionary state” is entirely eliminated, and there is a genuine attempt to exercise “new people’s power.”^75

According to the principles developed by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party during their struggle for power, five conditions are essential to the creation of functional base areas: an extensive and reliable
popular support base, a communist party guided by correct principles and solid organization, a powerful people’s army, suitable terrain for military action and sufficient economic resources to support the population.\textsuperscript{76}

According to Baburam Bhattarai, base areas are bordered by “Guerrilla areas” where Maoist and the state military control are in flux. Base areas are a more stable and developed form of such guerrilla areas. Beyond both of these is the area of state control, which should be subjected to repeated guerrilla incursions and attacks; this he defines as the “guerrilla action region.”\textsuperscript{77} When asked in an interview, “Where is your Yenan?”\textsuperscript{78}

**Period of Ceasefire and Offensive Strategy**

In 2003, the Maoists decided to go for ceasefire and talk to the government. The ceasefire was announced on 29 January 2003 and came into force when both sides signed a 22 point code of conduct on March 13 in the same year. However, talks never reached substantive issues, and both sides accused each other for violating ceasefire conditions. The Maoists were prepared for failure of the talks, and they used the ceasefire period for intensive engagement. The Maoists negotiating tactics was designed to appeal to a mainstream audience: the proposed model of a round table conference, interim government and constituent assembly carefully avoiding any reference to dictatorship of the proletariat or rolling cultural revolutions. Meanwhile, the declaration of successive new regional autonomous people’s government underlined their long term plans, while military recruitment and training quietly continued on a large scale.\textsuperscript{79}

After the breakdown of peace talks and ceasefire, there was escalation of the conflict. The international flow of military aid to RNA, designed to defeat Maoists and force them back to negotiating table, as viewed positively by the Maoists. It helped them in preparing a favourable
ground to begin the People’s war to third and higher stage of strategic offensive. In the immediate military plan, three stages were chalked out by the Maoists. A plan of carrying out decentralized actions in the first phase, relatively centralized ones in the second and big centralized one in the third.

**Strategic Offensive**

The Maoists announced launch of their strategic offensive on August 31, 2004 and the first sub-stage was defined as a strategic counter offensive. The Maoists even used the claim of impending Indian Military intervention to call for basic military training, both offensive and defensive, for all villagers and preparations for Vietnam-style tunnel warfare. The Maoists had moved into final stages of their armed campaign to capture state power. For the Maoists, the critical characteristic of the final offensive stage is that it takes place when there is a final polarization and reduction of the conflict to a clash between two opposition armies. However, the Maoists never specified any time frame, in which to complete the strategic offensive and were cautious when it came to promoting rapid victory.

The Maoists certainly demonstrated their trademark lack of modesty by claiming to be on the winning side by successfully carrying all out offensive. In the Maoist conception, the revolutionaries launch a ‘strategic offensive’ when they are able to go for the decisive destruction of the enemy’s army and establish the rule of the people throughout the country. The weakness of the Nepali state’s political response to the insurgency was clear but the Maoists hardly seemed capable of the decisive destruction of the state. Though, the army could not re-establish control over the entire country but it was equally emphatic that the state could hold its minimum defensive positions at the district headquarters and Kathmandu valley.
The success of the first plan of the strategic offensive on the eastern front confirmed the party’s analysis of their first strategic offensive victory and they focused on highways, cities and headquarters. There were conflicting assessments of the war and it reflects the propaganda aims of the two sides. However, in terms of Maoist policy, the crucial question was: What is victory? The Maoist leadership was very well aware that an all out military victory was not only infeasible but also impossible. Rather, the Maoists always saw political and military actions as two sides of the same coin, and this basic assumption lies at the core of all their policy statements and war strategies as it would be strange, to expect their conception of victory to be any different.\textsuperscript{84}

**Ruling Classes and the Class Character in Nepalese Society**

CPN-M believes that because of its monopolistic hold over the communication over the whole world at this time, the enemy is launching a disinformation campaign with the deliberate propaganda of “terrorism”, “fall of socialism” and the “superiority and success” of capitalism and attempting to lower the morale of people through the strategy of psychological warfare.\textsuperscript{85} It is unleashing a vicious cultural war through the flooding of vulgar culture and literature in order to distort the minds and souls of the people. They believes that all the imperialist forces and the reactionary ruling classes of each country are campaigning strategically by spreading the network of well trained and technically equipped spies and attempting to infiltrate into the revolutionary party in order to collect information, to create illusions inside the party, to do destructive activities and to arrest or kill the genuine revolutionary leaders or activists of the party. They are inventing new forms of reforms and democracy in order to confuse the people politically.\textsuperscript{86}
Under the strategy of preventing revolution in a country like Nepal the network of Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) have been spread in order to engage some educated middle class people, to prevent them from falling below the middle class and to entrap the people in a petty reformist mirage. The enemies are encouraging unemployed youth to get scattered all over the world and to wander into India in the name of employment. The youth are being used as mercenary soldiers in foreign armies.

The imperialists are polluting the minds of the people through the propagation of religion and other means after entering into rural areas with attractive slogans. If despite all these and other innumerable traps the revolutionary movement rises up then they start a campaign of heinous genocide through their powerful permanent army. In short, in the present era, the strategy of the enemy of the people is that of total war.\textsuperscript{87}

In such a situation the strategy of a revolutionary party that wants to go ahead with armed struggle to make a revolution should also be clearly based on total war. It is necessary for revolutionary party to adopt the strategy and tactics of ‘tit for tat’ against the imperialist and reactionary forces by uniting with the people in all spheres of national and international life. CPN-M believes that it is impossible for the armed struggle in Nepal to make a quick leap into an insurrection and defeat the enemy. However, it is fully possible to finally crush the enemy through systematic development of the Nepalese armed struggle. It can be derived clearly from this that the Nepalese armed struggle must necessarily adopt a protracted people’s war strategy of surrounding the city from the countryside.\textsuperscript{88} The successful development of the Nepalese People’s war will be determined by decentralizing actions based on central policy, by launching actions at different isolated spots of the enemy and by applying a large force against
small forces in order to get quick victory, by adopting hit and run tactics, by going ahead with guerrilla actions under the centralized plan from different parts of the country but also by giving special attention to specific strategic areas, and as Mao has said, by organizing and mobilizing as many people as possible and as fast as possible and as good as possible by placing the question of capturing political power at the centre.

Prachanda has mentioned six strategies and tactics of people’s war waged by CPN-M. They are: (i) tactics of surprise attacks, (ii) to attack weak enemy at first and strong the later, (iii) to take advantage of contradictions among the enemies, (iv) to adopt a policy if intrigue, conspiracy and deception, (v) to apply the method of embargo against enemy, and (vi) to adopt the technique of protracted war. According to the Maoists, these are developed from the experiences of the past wars like Gorkhalese War.\textsuperscript{89}
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In First Peace Talks Maoists and government held three round of talks which will be discussed in the next chapter in detail.

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