

Chapter 2 Resistant Movements in Conflict transformation and Social Change

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2.1 Resistance Movement in State Transformation and Social Change

The people's resistant movement of April 2006 in Nepal (hereinafter referred to as April movement) was a non-violent struggle by the people to end the autocratic rule of the King and restore peace by transforming the armed conflict into a viable democratic political system. A Non-violent peace initiative requires a fundamentally different approach to have than that requires the use of force and coercive measures (Ackermann and Duvall, 2005) in a dominant approach. Non-violent action theory (BRCCCM, 2003) provides a strong analytical framework to understand the civic movement of Nepal. In the area of conflict transformation and peace building, the conceptual framework of non-violent action put forth by Sharp (1973), Ghandi (1938 and 1950), King (1963) and other peace theorists and leaders provides a new dimension. Proponents of non-violent theories of conflict transformation highlight the importance played by the people's convictions and ideologies, and their commitments to achieve their goals through a peaceful means. In the understanding of this theory, conflict is a non-violent struggle for bringing about social justice and change. The notion of non-violent actions for social change brings out tensions and contradictions that already exist in society, but which remain denied and covered up (McCarthy and Sharp, 1997).

The non-violent action theory adopted by Mahatma Gandhi (1938 and 1950) and Martin Luther King (1963) stresses the need for peaceful protests against the adversary and to a

search for moral defeat of the resisting force (Mitchell, 1981). A conflict transformation strategy embedded in non-violent action theory begins with a three-fold understanding of the mass movement to transform the conflict, i.e., (a) conflict as an element of society, (b) conflict as a catalyst for social change, and (c) conflict as a form of reflection of people's power to establish social justice. Hence, a non-violent mass movement provides a basis to understand conflict as a means of social change, political reform and internalization of the fundamentals of democracy. The experiences made by nonviolent people's movement on the different parts of the world have demonstrated that non-violent civil movement makes more powerful impact than that made by the violent approaches (Aditya *et al.*; 2006). The instances of 1905's Russian popular uprising, the popular non-violent struggle led by Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi for the independence of India, Civil rights movement of USA led by Martin Luther King, the non-violent struggle of Chilean people against Augusto Pinochet in 1983; the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos, the president of Philippines, by people's power in 1986; The Rose Revolution of Georgia (2003), the Orange Revolution of Ukraine (2004); Kyrgyzstan's popular 'Tulip' Revolution¹ (2005), People's movement of Lebanon (2005), and the People's movement of Nepal (April 2006) have all proved the importance of non-violent movements can have against the unpopular and despotic governments (Stephan and Mundy, 2006)². However, the success of non-violent movement very much depends upon the strategy used to forge the unity of the people, follow non-violent methods, press for issues of importance, and display ability to organize people's agency (Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994; Stephan and Mundy, 2006).

The aims of Nepal's April movement of 2006 were to topple-down the king's rule, to resolve the ongoing armed conflict and achieve lasting peace in Nepal. It was realized

¹ The Tulip Revolution refers to the overthrow of President Askar Akayev and his government in the Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan in March 2005. The revolution sought the end of rule by Akayev and by his family and associates, who in popular opinion had become increasingly corrupt and authoritarian. In the early stages, this revolution was referred as "Pink," "Lemon", "Silk", "Daffodil", or "Sandpaper" Revolution by the media. But the term "Tulip Revolution," was nomenclated by Akayev himself before ousting from the president in a speech warning that no such Color Revolution should happen in Kyrgyzstan. ² See The Economist.Com, Bloodless Regime Change (2006) for detail.

that these aims would be possible only by changing the competitive and adversarial relationships between the seven party alliances (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists)³ [herein after referred to as Maoists] into one of partnership approach. To achieve lasting peace requires restoring the fractured social relations amongst the conflicting sides through, reconciliation; apology from the perpetrator and forgiveness by the past victim, by building new relationship between adversaries, and a change in the adversarial or competitive relationship through dialogue and cooperation. Galtung (1996; 2000a and 2000b) argues that once they emerge, conflicts pass through a series of transformational processes, i.e., articulation or dis-articulation, conscientisation or deconscientisation, complexification or simplification, polarization or depolarization, escalation or de-escalation. Incompatibilities between conflicting parties can be overcome by transcending the contradiction, or through compromise, or by deepening or widening the conflict structure, and by associating or dissociating the actors (ibid). All these transformational processes were clearly observed in the 10 years of the armed insurgency in Nepal as explicitly reflected in the 12-point understanding they reached. Galtung (1996), Krippendorf (1973), Shell (2003) and Curle (1971) emphasize the ever-growing global asymmetric relationships as the structural source of conflict around the world. Asymmetric relationships can be transformed through a shift from unbalanced to balanced relationships, and a process of conscientisation, confrontation, negotiation and development (BRCCCM, 2003).

The post-1st February 2005 relationship between the SPA and the Maoists was transformed from asymmetric to one of cooperative relationship, which was reflected in the 12-point understanding. The improved relation between the SPA and the Maoists has been ultimately successful to end the rule of monarchy and to suspend the King's power in a move to overthrowing the monarchical system ultimately and replacing it with the Federal Republican system for Nepal.

³ The details of the Maoists insurgency is covered in books of the author entitled a) 'The Price of Neglect: From Resource Conflict to Maoists Insurgency in the Himalayan Kingdom. Kathmandu: Bhrikuti Academic Publications (Upreti, 2004) and b) Armed Conflict and Peace Process in Nepal: The Maoists Insurgency, Past Negotiation and Opportunities for Conflict Transformation. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers (Upreti, 2006).

2.2 Features of the 2006 April Movement of Nepal

The April movement of 2006 met several of the criteria necessary for a resistance movement some of which were as follows:

- ☐ It often remained non-violent in nature;
- ☐ The April movement first started as people were suppressed with violence by the repressive regime ;
- ☐ The April movement was relatively of a shorter duration lasting just 19 days , But, the results were radical and the output obvious;
- ☐ There was a unique combination of frustration, alienation and a hope for the future;
- ☐ The April movement put faith in mass action and mass movement motivating maximum people for participation in the resistance
- ☐ Often such movements result in a regime change and the same happened in this instance as well ;
- ☐ Convictions and ideologies, values and commitments of people were the basis of resistance;
- ☐ It focused on the peaceful protest against adversary resulting in a moral defeat of the resisting force;
- ☐ Often outcomes result into three forms. They are
 - ☐ Cosmetic change,
 - ☐ Minor reform and
 - ☐ Radical transformation
- ☐ And this April movement has the symptoms of leading it toward a radical socio-political transformation;

- External support was secured commensurate with the strength of the resistance movement in the lack of an alliance among the progressive forces;
- There was support from the neutral mass as the April movement gained in momentum; and
- The repressive action and behavior of the rulers was, to a great extent, met the necessary conditions for fuelling the resistance movement.

2.3 Nepalese Experiences in the April Movement

Nepal is now at the crossroads of transformation from the centuries old feudal, top-down, autocratic and exclusionary monarchical regime triggered by the non-violent April movement of 2006. An ‘understanding was reached between the SPA and the Maoists in the conditions that developed across the nation following the start of the Maoists ‘People’s War’. Intense power struggle between the political parties and the palace reached its peak when the King resumed all the executive power on 1st February 2005 by a coup; the parliament was dissolved, and the elected prime minister overthrown. This action of the king motivated the major political parties to come together and form an alliance (popularly known as the Seven Party Alliance⁴) to protest against the King’s action. They also decided to collaborate with the Maoists to revolt against the King, which the CPN (Maoists) had been proposing to do since last two years. That strategy brought together the two major forces of the country fighting against the king. As a consequence, a 12- point understanding was reached between them, which ultimately paved the path to launch the mass agitation of April. The nonviolent people’s resistance movement (popularly known in Nepal as *Janaandolan*) of 6- 24 April 2006 proved that people’s power can defeat autocratic, feudal regime the 10- year armed conflict was unable to do. This paper highlights the reasons for success of the non-violent movement. Women, marginalized groups, ethnic communities, disabled, youth, children,

⁴ The Alliance is composed of Nepal The Communist Party United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), The Nepali Congress Party (NCP), The Nepali Congress Party (Democratic) (NCP-D), The Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Anandidevi), The Nepal Peasants and Workers Party, United leftist Front and Samyukta Janamorcha.

students, housewives, laborers, peasants, workers, street-vendors, business people, retailers, peace and human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, scholars and researchers, poets, writers, school teachers, university professors, doctors, nurses, shoe makers, tailors, government employees, technicians, artists, film actors and actresses, in short , people from every walk of life participated in the non-violent movement. This paper also sheds light on similar nature of wider and inclusive participation by the people in this movement. During the King's period (15 months) of the direct rule, the state was very coercive. The high-handedness of the government during the April 2006 was excessive and autocratic. This paper also analyzes the reasons for the regime's coercive approach and its failure. This paper also sheds lights on the role of important stakeholders such as the SPA, the Maoists, media, civil society and NGOs, and international community in making the April movement successful.

Effective transformation of conflict needs empowerment of people. This paper uses the conceptual frameworks of non-violent action and people's power to examine the April movement of Nepal as a means of conflict transformation and peace- building. However, the paper does not cover the political dynamics following the successful completion of April movement of 2006. Once people organize for resistance movements, it is very hard for autocratic rulers to politically survive through suppression. In Nepal, despite the rigorous efforts and attempts by the king to justify his takeover, domestic protest mounted, but the international community, remained unconvinced by it. In his attempt to convince the Nepalese people and the international community, the monarch reiterated the 'grand failure of the political parties' to contain violence, to restore peace, control corruption and to improve the deteriorating economic situation of the country. In all his speeches, public comments, and media interviews, the king vehemently expressed his dismay with political parties as, *"Nepal's bitter experiences over the past few years tend to show that democracy and progress contradict one another. Multiparty democracy was discredited by focusing solely on power politics. Parliament witnessed many aberrations in the name of retaining and ousting governments. Not a single House of Representative was allowed to complete its tenure. Continuous confusion and disorder resulted in the*

obstruction of the democratic process.⁵ He further said addressing the Nation at the time of the royal takeover on February one, ‘...today we have once again reached a juncture, where in keeping with popular aspirations, a historic decision must be taken to defend multiparty democracy by restoring peace for the nation and people. Even when bloodshed, violence and devastation have pushed the country on the brink of destruction, those engaged in politics in the name of country and people continue to shut their eyes to their welfare. Tussle for power, abuse of authority on gaining power and unhealthy competition in fulfilling personal and communal interests at the expense of the nation and citizenry contributed further to deterioration in the situation. ...It is now time to bring to an end the ongoing act of terrorist violence and pledge, in earnest, to fulfill the people’s aspirations with the restoration of peace and security in the country.... As it is our responsibility to preserve our nationalism, national unity and sovereignty, as well as to maintain peace and security in the country and ensure that the state of the nation does not deteriorate any further, we have, by virtue of the State Authority as exercised by us and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, taking into consideration Article 27 (3) of the constitution, dissolved effective from today, the current Council of Ministers to fulfill the people’s desire for the restoration of peace and security and to activate soon the democratic dispensation⁶’.

Time and again, the king highlighted the role of the Shah Dynasty in the nation building of Nepal, referring to the unification process initiated by the King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

⁵ The King’s address to the nation at the time of the Royal takeover on 1st February 2005. It was the morning of 1st February (10:50 am), security officials under the command of army were deployed in all strategic places such as the media houses and party offices. Security forces were sent to arrest or detain political leaders and human rights activists. Telephone lines were cut and the king’s address to the nation lasted more than 34 minutes. Prime minister and ministers were detained in their own offices and residences (Upreti, 2006). There was a meeting of the king held with the security forces (The military, police and the armed police force in the evening of the 31 January. The king met the Prime Minister in the same day but the prime minister was not aware of the plan. Later, Mr Deuba acknowledged that when he met the king he felt that something could happen but he did not suspect the king to take such a big step.

⁶ See The Kathmandu Post of 2 February 2005 for the full text of the speech by the King.

Like his forefathers, he wanted to be at the centre stage of Nepal's politics, which was opposed by the SPA and the CPN (Maoists). The King had miscalculated the people's desire for peace and his own ability to deliver it. Ordinary people were tired of continuing violence, but monarchy itself was the root cause of the structural conflict because of its feudalistic, exclusionary and regressive nature. The ordinary people's expressed desire for peace was misunderstood by the king who was only keen to strengthen his direct rule in the name of 'fighting against terrorism'. Hence, without declaring a ceasefire, he, invited the CPN (Maoists) for peace talks, ignoring the other political parties. He was over reliant on the security forces and in using coercive strategy than political negotiation. But his strategy and tactics to get support for his regime from the international community in the name of 'war against terrorism' and military-reliant coercive approach failed. The April movement of 2006 was basically the result of the king's action and behaviour. Repression, gross violence of human rights, blatant abuses of state power and resources, abuse of authority, and tense relation with international community marked the king's direct rule. If the king had not repressed the political parties, perhaps they would not have needed to align with Maoists to jointly fight against his regressive regime. The 12-point understanding between the SPA and Maoists was the outcome of the suppression by the king. The three of the 12-point understanding actually paved the path of the April movement:

1. Today, democracy, peace, prosperity, social advancement and a free and sovereign Nepal is the main desire of all Nepalese. We completely agree that autocratic monarchy is the main hurdle in (realizing) this. It is our clear view that without establishing full democracy by ending autocratic monarchy, there is no possibility of peace, progress and prosperity in the country. Therefore, an understanding has been reached to establish full democracy by ending autocratic monarchy by exerting all forces against it, thereby creating a nationwide storm of democratic protests.
2. The seven agitating parties are fully committed to the fact that only by establishing full democracy through the restoration of the Parliament with the force of agitation, forming

an all-party government with complete authority, holding elections to a constituent assembly through dialogue and understanding with the Maoists, can the existing conflict in the country be resolved and sovereignty and state power completely transferred to the people. It is the view and commitment of the CPN (Maoists) that the above mentioned goal can be achieved by holding a national political conference of the agitating democratic forces, and through its decision, forming an interim government to hold constituent assembly election. An understanding has been reached between the agitating seven parties and the CPN (Maoists) to continue dialogue on this procedural work-list and find a common understanding. It has been agreed that the power of people's movement is the only alternative to achieve this.

3. Today, the country demands the establishment of permanent peace along with a positive solution to the armed conflict. Therefore, we are committed to ending autocratic monarchy and the existing armed conflict, and establishing permanent peace in the country through constituent assembly elections and forward-looking political outlet. The CPN (Maoists) expresses its commitment to move along the new peaceful political stream through this process. In this very context, an understanding has been reached to keep the armed CPN (Maoists) force and the royal army under the supervision of the United Nations or any other reliable international supervision during the holding of the constituent assembly elections. It is also agreed that the result of the free and fair elections would be accepted by both the parties (SPA and the CPN-Maoists). We expect reliable international mediation even during the dialogue process.

The SPA had protested the king's rule right from the beginning, but the Nepalese people had lost faith in these parties because of their poor performance in the past and therefore had not meaningfully participated in the earlier protest programs (Upreti, 2006). Once the SPA reached the 12-point understanding with the Maoists and publicly acknowledged their past mistakes and promised not to commit the same mistakes again (points 6 and 7),

The Maoists similarly promised to work together to resolve 10 of years armed conflict, establish peace and to work toward restoring full democracy in the country. Once this was done people in massive strength came on to the streets and challenged the royal régime Non-violent April movement of 2006 was precisely the outcome it.

2.4 People's Power Observed in Nineteen Days (6-24 April 2006)

The SPA called a nationwide general strike (*Nepal bandh*) for 4 days (6-9 April). In response, hundreds of thousands of people came onto the streets across the country. On 5th April, CPN (Maoists) declared a ceasefire in support of the general strike. In spite of the SPA's promise of a peaceful the general strike, the royal government was claiming that the CPN (Maoists) will infiltrate the general strike to make it violent and the government would take necessary measures to protect the people's life and property. The government asked the SPA to call-off the general strike and threatened to suppress it with the use of force. Despite the threat from the government and Nepal army (which led to the formation of a unified command of police, armed police, military and intelligence), the SPA decided to go ahead with their plans of agitation and protest. On the first day of the general strike on the 6th April, protesters organized mass rallies all over the country. In some areas protestors dismantled the statues of the Shah Kings. This protest was expanded in the following days. Even before the start of April movement, the royal government mobilized unified command to prevent people from coming on to the streets. Political leaders and activists were arrested from their residence or at the first encounter in the demonstration. People organized demonstrations in different parts of the town and district headquarters all over the country. The King's government took all sorts of repressive measures and indulged in excessive baton charges and gun fires. On the 1st day of the general strike, CPN (Maoists) fiercely attacked the unified command in Sarlahi district and the defeat severely demoralized the security forces. Consequently, the security forces vented their anger against peaceful demonstrators in different parts of the

country. Mass demonstrations in the streets of Kathmandu and other parts of the country were expanding rapidly, irrespective of gunfire and other repressive measures employed by the autocratic government. On the evening of the 7th April, the government imposed a night time curfew extending it to day-and – night curfew on 8th and 9th April with a ‘shoot on sight’ order. However, people defied the curfew and came on to the streets in mass. By April 9, almost 90 percent of the political leaders who had actively led in the protest, and more than 70 percent of local civil society members, human rights activists and journalists supporting the protest were arrested and jailed.

The nationwide general strike (6-9 April) called by the protesters get expanded for an indefinite period and people from all walks of life came on to the streets to protest the brutal regime of the King in greater numbers. Civil disobedience across the country paralyzed the nation. The King’s government and its home minister with a proven track record of anti-democratic convictions totally failed to keep law and order in the country even after full mobilization of the unified command and mobilization of all state resources and power. Government employees from law courts, ministries and departments, from corporations and companies all joined the civil disobedience and in the protest. Civil servants, banking sector and state-owned public sector employees joined in the protests. Even, tourists and foreign citizens joined in the protests held in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Solidarity for the democratic movement was evident on a massive scale. Even in remote rural districts more people gathered every day ⁷ and the number of people coming onto the streets of Kathmandu reached 2 million in strength. The then ‘Royal Nepal Armys’ used helicopters for surveillance over peaceful demonstrations in different parts of the country and directed the ground troops to suppress them. Ground forces opened fire at the demonstrators in different parts of the Kathmandu with the orders of the army officers in the surveillance helicopters. The then Home Minister himself was working at the Army headquarters for coordinating with the Army Chief and the Valley Command Forces to suppress the movement.

⁷ The Kathmandu Post April 24, 2006.

⁸ After the successful April revolution, the name of the Royal Nepal Army was changed to Nepal Army by the revived Parliament.

The government justified its suppression by saying that it found infiltration by CPN (Maoists) cadres in the demonstrations. So, during the 19 days of peaceful protests, 25 people got killed, with more than 5500 people wounded that created a horror all over the country. The government massively mobilized ‘vigilantes’, criminals, and royalist youths to suppress the pro-democracy movement. Home Minister is alleged to have spent millions of rupees weekly for this purpose⁹. But this measure did not work. When the April movement rapidly spread, the king invited SPA to talk with him. On his message to the nation on the occasion of the New Year’s Day on the 14th April, he said, ‘...*Democracy demands restraint and consensus as all forms of extremisms are incompatible with democracy. While facing the challenges confronting the nation democracy also emphasizes acceptance of the pre-eminence of the collective wisdom in charting a future course*’ ¹⁰. However, the SPA ‘Movement Coordination Committee’ said that the king’s message was ‘meaningless’ and ‘contains nothing’. It stated, ‘*The king has used the trump card of dialogue at a time when he is completely isolated at the national and international level. The idea of the dialogue is a ploy by the royal regime to create confusion among the people and the international community*’. The King failed to weaken the resolve of the people’s movement in the name of dialogue. Interesting contradiction is that during the 14 months of his direct rule, the king consistently denied requests from political parties, the civil society and the international community to open dialogues with the political parties and to reach a negotiated settlement with them.

When the king failed to convince SPA to come up to talks, he attempted to use the international community, particularly India and the USA, countries who were in favour of the constitutional monarchy, to help him out. International community in general

⁹ The government appointed after the April movement formed a high level commission under the chairpersonship of ex-judge of the supreme court Mr. Krishna Jung Rayamajhi (Popularly known as the Rayamajhi Commission) to investigate the atrocities caused by the King’s government to suppress the 19 days of *Janandolon*. This commission came to the conclusion that the whole team of the king’s government was responsible for killing 25 people and wounding more than 45,500 people with the misuse of millions of rupees from the treasury.

¹⁰ The Himalayan Times 14 April 2006.

and these two countries in particular pressurized the SPA to accept the king's offer. Dr. Karan Singh,¹¹ who is a relative of the Nepalese Royal family, came as a special envoy of the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manamohan Singh, to mediate with the SPA.

On 19 April, Dr. Karan Singh met the SPA leaders and discussed the package he brought from the Indian government. His formula prescribed negotiation between the king and the SPA ensuring constitutional monarchy, and handing over of the executive power by the king to the SPA. The King accepted this package of negotiation. Accordingly, on the night of 21 April, he addressed the nation and said, "*we, through this proclamation, affirm the executive power of the Kingdom of Nepal, which was in our safekeeping, from this day, shall, be returned to the people and be exercised in accordance with Article 35 of the 1990's constitution*¹²". However, people in the streets were in no mood to compromise unless the king accepted all the demands of the protesters (full acceptance of the 12-point understanding, and election to a constituent assembly). After this offer from the king, India expressed its hope that the king and political parties would reconcile and move ahead. At the same time, Envoys of USA, France, Sweden, UK, Germany and Finland went to the residence of SPA senior leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, on the 22 April to pressurize SPA leaders to accept the offer of the king. People opposed their action vehemently¹³.

¹¹ Foreign Secretary Mr Shyam Sharan (who was Indian Ambassador to Nepal earlier) and Mr Pankaj Sharan (Joint Secretary of Indian External Affairs) also accompanied him and Mr Shyam Sharan had also talked with the Royal Nepal Army at that time.

¹² Article 35 of the 1990's constitution states that the executive power shall, pursuant to this Constitution and other laws, be vested in His Majesty under this constitution shall be exercise upon the recommendation and advice, and with the consent of the council of ministers, except as otherwise expressly stated that it may be exercised exclusively by Him Majesty or at his discretion or on the recommendation of any institution or official. Such recommendation, advice and consent shall be submitted through the Prime Minister.

¹³ See "Open questions to European Diplomats" from Bishnu Raj Upreti on 23 April 2006 at web page <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article1975> for detail about the public opposition to their pressure to SPA leaders. The main questions asked were (1. How many times the king has used its commitment on multiparty-democracy and respect of human rights during his direct autocratic rule and did he ever translate

However, once the protesters knew that the foreign diplomats are exerting pressure on SPA leaders to compromise with the king, a huge mass of demonstrators reached the residence of Girija Prasad Koirala where foreign envoys and SPA leaders were having a meeting. They chanted slogans against the king's offer and warned the SPA leaders not to surrender to the pressures by the foreigners and to keep the movement to go on. In the end, the SPA leaders rejected the King's offer as well as the suggestions made by a group of foreign diplomats. The movement continued with strength and received wider support. By the 23rd of April more than half the of country's population came out on to the streets protesting against the king's rule and demanding the election for a constituent assembly. The street demand now shifted suddenly in favour of a republican state and punishment to the king.

Mass demonstrations turned into violent confrontations in different parts of the country. The royal regime brutally tried to suppress by mobilizing the army. It was not acceptable to the people and people opposed the repression by coming out onto the streets in millions. The Army failed to control the mass uprising and the SPA leaders got encouraged with the people's support. They threatened to form a parallel government (which CPN (Maoists) leaders had been suggesting them from the time of signing up of the 12-point agreement), if the royal regime was not willing to surrender. Public pressure was mounting against the King tremendously.

Finally, the army succumbed in front of people's power, since they could not control millions of demonstrators rallying on the streets. The army feared the possibility that the teeming millions of protesters could storm the royal palace if the mass demonstrations

these rhetoric into practice? Why Nepalese people should believe another rhetoric this time?; 2. Do you truly believe that the attitude, intention and behavior of the king are committed to democracy and establishing people's sovereignty?; 3. Political history and culture of your country reveals that there is respect of people supremacy and will. You should not respect this principle in the case of Nepal?; 4. Do you want political leaders not to respect the aspiration of people protesting in street?; 5. How you see possibility of resolving the deepening crisis by just accepting the prime minister offered by the king? This arrangement in the past but did not produce any result? And 6. Are you in support of the king's manipulation or with Nepalese people struggling to establish people's true sovereignty?]

continued further in the coming days. As the army was the sole base of king's 1st February coup and since the royal force was already demoralized, the king had no options but to submit to the wishes of the people. Then a tactical package of negotiations was offered from the Royal palace and from the international power centers to the SPA leaders. This package had two conditions to be fulfilled by the SPA leaders which they accepted just before the king's address of 24 April. The first condition was to keep the constitutional monarchy and the second, not to interfere the army.

A negotiation between the SPA and the Royal palace was reached on the mid night of 24 April 2006. In a televised speech the King said, ' *Realizing the people's movement and seven party alliance's roadmap we have revived the House of Representatives which would help resolve the national problems, including violence...* ' ¹⁴.

The CPN (Maoists) and some critical analysts were not happy with the negotiated settlement accepted by the SPA. They argued that the people's movement would have definitely overthrown the monarchy with the peaceful street protest continuing for 2 more days, if the SPA had not accepted the negotiation. It was also suspected that SPA leaders had assured the king about the continuity of the monarchy in the country upon which the king accepted the roadmap of the SPA. At the same time, the CPN (Maoists) too were unable to continue the movement alone without further support from the SPA.

2.5 April Movement 2006 and Political Alliance of Compulsion

The major political parties such as the Nepali Congress (splinters were reunited in November of 2007), the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) and to some extent other members of the SPA and the CPN (Maoists) had had deep adversarial relationship, attempting to politically finish each other. The SPA parties were in the government previously and using the state power to suppress the CPN (Maoists) rebels fighting against the state and also the ruling parties. Despite the vehement request by peace activists, civil society leaders and intellectuals to opt for a non-violent approach

¹⁴ The Kathmandu Post 25 April 2006.

to conflict transformation, for 8 years political parties were continuously ignoring this request and were using force to defeat the CPN (Maoists). Political parties never realized the need for state restructuring and transformation of a stratified vertical social structure and a skewed economic and political relation (Upreti, 2006). All major political parties showed a power-hungry attitude and behaviour of the status quoists. They were not only intensely engaged in their own internal power struggle, but also continuously bargaining with the King for power. Hence, they never made serious efforts to end the violent conflict with a negotiated settlement. Instead, they used the Maoists armed conflict as a pretext to retain their own power. Political parties realized their mistakes and erosion of public trust in them when the king arrested and jailed them, and imposed his autocratic rule on the 1st of February, 2005.

On the other side, CPN (Maoists) leaders were concentrating to strengthen their army power and to weaken the political parties, instead of meaningfully engaging them to change the feudalistic political order. They let the palace and other regressive forces to erode the popularity of the political parties and vice-versa. However, their magic expansion and success in managing 'people's war' was able to bring 80 percent of the country under their control, though they were not able to capture the state.

Therefore, the armed conflict reached a situation of strategic stalemate. The CPN (Maoists) defeated the Nepal Army in many individual armed fights, but it was not able to defeat the state on their own. Hence, they were now seeking to defeat the king and his army in a concerted arrangement. For that, they not only changed their strategy but they also ideologically shifted their aims of a totalitarian government and a centrally controlled political system and opted for a more competitive multi-party political system. Therefore, the decision on both sides (CPN (Maoists) and the SPA) was based on the 'necessity and compulsion' of circumstances created by the king. It was the king and his autocratic government which were primarily responsible for bringing these two opposing forces together and for reaching the 12-point understanding which laid the foundations for the April movement. In the modern history of Nepal, significant political changes have taken place in the last two years: the April 2006 popular uprising being the most

important one. The April movement also brought the ten years of armed conflict to the final stage of negotiated settlement.

2.6 CPN (Maoists) in the April Movement

After serious discussions, CPN (Maoists) and the SPA leaders reached an agreement in New Delhi on 19 of March, 2006 and agreed to coordinate their plan for a nationwide general strike during 6-9 April¹⁵. CPN (Maoists) not only declared unilateral ceasefire on 3rd April 2006 and called halt to all offensive operations by it in the district headquarters and in the Kathmandu valley, but also lifted the indefinite transportation blockade they had imposed on Kathmandu in the previous weeks¹⁶. These steps were necessary for making the people's movement successful. Once, the SPA and the CPN (Maoists) agreed to hold the constituent assembly elections, restructure the state, and to decide the fate of the monarchy by the constituent assembly meeting, public support suddenly for the movement increased and the mass came on to the streets. CPN (Maoists) leader Prachanda issued several statements against the royal takeover and expressed his commitment to support the political parties to restore democracy. Senior CPN (Maoists) leaders and SPA leaders visited New Delhi to discuss the modalities of collaboration to fight against the royal takeover. They discussed the issue with various Indian politicians.

In October, SPA gave mandate to Madhav Nepal and Girija Prasad Koirala to hold talk with the CPN (Maoists). After a series of discussions and meetings¹⁷, they agreed to a 12-points understanding. The CPN (Maoists) declared a unilateral ceasefire for three months on September 3 2006, and promised that it was a step forward with the political parties in political collaboration.

This ceasefire was a very strategic choice of the CPN (Maoists) because:

¹⁵ Kantipur Daily, 20 March 2006.

¹⁶ Kantipur Daily 4 April 2006.

¹⁷ see *Nepal Weekly*, Vol. 6, No. 15, 20 November, 2005 for detail on the talks between the Maoists and the political parties.

- They gave the message across the world that they want peace and end to political conflict,
- They made the King's position difficult in winning international support on the mere ground of controlling terrorism. The king had planned to attend the UN General Assembly where he could strongly put his case to justify the royal takeover as a step to combat terrorism. When the Maoists declared a ceasefire, the king faced an awkward situation. He had to justify his takeover in the UN as a move for peace in Nepal but if his government would not reciprocate the ceasefire how could his steps (royal takeover) be justified? This raised serious questions on the intention of the king. Obviously, his intention was not to restore peace and he therefore did not reciprocate the ceasefire. All this led him to cancel his plan to address the UN General Assembly in September of 2005.
- CPN (Maoists) also gathered more sympathy from the Nepalese people and the international community because of their unilateral ceasefire,
- Pressure mounted on the king's government both domestically and internationally for reciprocating the ceasefire,
- In between, they could organize political programs, train their cadres and fighters, and accomplish organizational activities, such as meetings and conventions, training and orientations, expansion of public relations, etc.

During the king's direct rule, CPN (Maoists) made strategic moves demonstrating to the Nepalese people and the international community that their side was genuinely committed to peace, willing to collaborate with political parties, and accepted multiparty democracy, and respect for the rule of law and human rights. But they kept on pressurizing the army and the King. In collaboration with the SPA, they foiled all bids for local election, which the King intended to launch to show his commitment to democracy. The CPN (Maoists) had earlier declared a national strike in the 1st week of April, but later withdrew it to make the 5- day protest organized by the SPA successful. Further, the CPN

(Maoists) sent large number of people from rural areas to the cities and town center to hold mass rallies and protests; they publicly supported the general strike and mobilized their forces to make the protest successful. Thus the CPN (Maoists) contributed substantially and procedurally to make the April movement successful. Ten years of CPN (Maoists) armed conflict and the 12-point understanding laid the foundation for the success of the April Revolution.

2.7 Seven Party Alliance in the April Movement

The SPA was the leading force of the April movement. As mentioned earlier, the credibility of the political parties had been eroded, and people were frustrated with them for their failure to bring about peace, and give them good governance. Soon after the royal takeover however, people realized the importance of the role of political parties. The king's rule failed to address the expectations of the people in establishing peace, controlling corruption, and in stopping abuses of state power and resources by the government personnel. Instead, corruption increased manifold, insecurity reached a peak in the history of Nepal, resources and power of the state were blatantly abused by government official and ministers. The King's poor performance helped political parties gradually regain the confidence of the people.

The role of SPA during the nineteen days of April movement was

quite noteworthy in which primarily, the youth leaders of political

parties played an important role in making a success of the movement. The SPA initiated the movement and later a spontaneous participation of the mass followed. SPA leaders publicly acknowledged this fact by saying that '*The Movement from now on was in people's hands*'. Local coordinator of the Mass Movement Coordination Committee in Kathmandu said, '*even if the seven parties accept the king's offer, we are in no way going to compromise...the people will choose their leader*'. Most SPA leaders were not that active in the people's movement, but they showed their political maturity by not surrendering to the wishes of the King.

¹⁸ The Himalayan Times, 22 April 2006.

The Royal takeover was a serious blow to the political parties. The main leaders of the political parties were either detained arrested or jailed. The SPA leaders viewed these moves by the king as a strategy to weaken the resolve of the political parties. This motivated the political parties even more to unite to fight against the King's takeover and reinstate democracy in the country. They signed a six-point program that called for the restoration of the House of Representatives as an entry point and the elections to the constituent assembly as an exit point for resolving the ongoing conflict. Some political parties even changed their position on the constitutional monarchy, opting for a republican political set up. The SPA had boycotted the municipal election arranged held by the royal government in the February of 2006. They tried to get more international support to their cause. Leaders of the main political parties¹⁹ visited India and discussed Nepal's political crisis with the Indian government, the Indian political leaders as well as CPN (Maoists) leaders. On 16 November 2005, CPNUML leaders Madhav Kumar Nepal and Khadga Prasad Oli suddenly flew to New Delhi, only 5 days after their return from India. The Indian Ambassador met Madhav K. Nepal the same day before departing for New Delhi. Girija Prasad Koirala too was in New Delhi for a week. The Indian Ambassador also flew to New Delhi on the same day. CPN (Maoists) leaders were there in New Delhi already. The CPN (Maoists) and the SPA leaders held several rounds of talks and Indian politicians helped in coordinating these meetings. As a result the historic 12-points agreement comes to be born.

The Delhi meeting and consultation of SPA prepared a roadmap²⁰ called 'the declaration for a united effort to resolve the national crisis', making the following provisions:

1. Take up the democratic road and not the one leading to extremism,

¹⁹ For example, Girija Prasad Koirala (NCP), Bam Dev Gautam (CPN-UML), Gopal Man Shrestha (NCP-D) visited India to finalise 12 point understanding.

²⁰ A Joint Declaration for a United Effort to Resolve the national Crisis, signed by the leaders of 7 parties and issued on 8 May 2005 (25 Baishak, 2062).

2. Today's need is to do away with the King's autocratic rule,
3. Reinstatement of the parliament for a people's representative government,
4. Some important points mentioned to resolve the national crisis were:
 - a. The government shall be responsible to the parliament,
 - b. Conflict management and reinstatement of peace,
 - c. Commitment toward the future progressive programmes,,
 - d. Constitution shall adhere to the norms and values of liberal multiparty democracy ,
 - e. Progressive political movements to be based on the constitution of 1990,
 - f. Plans to hold national elections.

This roadmap of the SPA laid the basis for reaching the 12-point understanding between the CPN (Maoists) and the SPA later. The SPA formed a Joint People's Movement Central Coordination Committee to organize and coordinate the people's movement and passed a resolution on the 13th of March to organize a 'Let's Go to Kathmandu' campaign to effect the 6-9 April national strike successful ²¹. Youths, students and trade union wings of SPA played a crucial role in making the non-violent people's movement successful.

2.8 Civil Society in the April Movement

Immediately after the royal takeover, the civil society became active in organizing rallies, debates, discussions that provided a strong support to the SPA cause to fight against the cessation of democracy. Initiatives taken by the civil society to promote the people's movement for democracy encouraged the political parties gain confidence and win back the lost trust with the people. The civil society for the first time defied the curfew with a

²¹ Kantipur Daily, 14 March 2006.

march from the Teaching Hospital, one of the coordination centers for the mass protest, and came out onto the street despite the 'shoot-on-sight' order.

Human rights groups and professional organizations such as the associations of journalists, lawyers, medical practitioners, actors, engineers; students unions, university teachers and laborers; writers and poets, guild, artists, and private sector media houses all got active in protest of the royal takeover . Specialized associations such as the Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal, Nepal Poultry Entrepreneurs Forum, Nepal Hotel Workers Association, Nepal Chartered Accountant Association, Airline Operators Association, Forest Technicians Association, National Dalit Rights Forum, Indigenous Peoples Peace Commission, the Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal, Maithili Federation, Loktantrik Newa Struggle Committee, and National Disabled Federation also backed the people's movement. Civil society initiative was also supported by international organizations and networks, such as The UN High Commission on Human Rights, The Amnesty International, The International Commission of Jurists, The Human Rights Watch, The International Federation of Journalists, Reporters without Borders, The World Association of Newspapers, The World Editors Forum²², etc. The Civil society mobilized hundreds of thousands of people not only in The Kathmandu Valley, but also in small cities, towns, urban areas and villages across the country. In terms of keeping anti-regression movement going in the face of a heavy handed suppression, human rights groups, lawyers and journalists all played a crucial role²³. The contribution of the civil society to successfully accomplishing the people's movement was acknowledged and appreciated by political leaders. This was reflected in the formation of a 5-member Peace Talks Observation Team (to which 5 prominent leaders of the civil society were selected) and a 31-member National Code of Conduct Monitoring Committee by the negotiation team composed of CPN

²² All of them issued strong statements, wrote to the king to stop attack on people, and condemned gross violation of human rights and even some of them threatened.

²³ Human rights activists were the first to break the no go zone declared by the royal government, journalists and lawyers were in the street continuously to protest the king's regime at the time when political parties were not able to come to the street.

(Maoists) and the government on the 15th June 2006. On top of it, CPN (Maoists) proposed to allot 33 percent seats to the civil society in their nomination to the interim parliament²⁴. Sadly, however the prestige accorded to many of the civil society leaders by nominating them to position of responsibility has been eroded making them a baseless and opportunistic group of people having no roots among the grassroots.

2.9 Nepalese Citizens in the April Movement

The expectation of the Nepalese people had got quite high because of the regime change from an autocratic system to one of a multiparty parliamentary democratic system in 1990, with commitments of political leaders to address the people's sufferings.

But these assurances were systematically denied them not only by the previous regime, but also by the political parties who came riding the waves of political change. They completely ignored their commitment made to the Nepalese people during the time of the 1990's movement. Hence, people were frustrated by them and alienated by them. To some extent, attracted by CPN (Maoists) insurgency. The King used this frustration of the people to play against political parties, and staged his coup. He made a promise to fulfill major expectations of the Nepalese people, restore peace and security, control corruption, maintain law and order, achieve national unity and prevent the nation from further deterioration.

However, his actions and behavior in the 15 months of the royal rule proved to be just the opposite of his public reiterations. The king did not make any attempt to resolve the Maoists armed conflict. Rather, he used the opportunity as a means to hold on to power. Nepalese people soon came to realize that the king's direct rule was even more harmful to people and the country. Therefore, they lent their full weight to the April movement. One uppermost concern of the April mass movement was restoration of peace in the country. Women, disabled persons, children, elderly, farmers, street vendors, and even rickshaw pullers actively took part in the peaceful mass protest. It was estimated that more than 16 million people came out on the streets across the country.

²⁴ This was reflected in the suggestions given by the CPN (Maoists) to the Interim Constitution Drafting Committee.

2.10 King's Government and the April Movement

The king was in no mood to compromise with the SPA during the early days of the movement. He was neither interested to listen to the SPA and CPN (Maoists) nor ready to listen to the international community and the civil society. Rather, he made unsuccessful attempts repeatedly to convince the international community to help him fight terrorism in Nepal. This becomes clear from his address to the SAARC Summit at Dhaka on 12 of November, 2005. He said, *“It is ironical to note that the global war on terrorism is not matched by global action against it. The global war on terrorism has failed to reach every nook and corner of the world, especially in weak and vulnerable countries, as if they do not deserve justice and protection from terrorism. It is this double standard and selective approach that is assuming a dangerous character rather than terrorism itself. We cannot make a distinction between good and bad terrorism; terrorism is terrorism. In our region, the Declaration of the 11th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu categorically stated that “terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is a challenge to all states and to all of humanity, and cannot be justified on ideological, political, religious or any other ground”. We agreed that “terrorism violates the fundamental values of the United Nations and the SAARC Charter and constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security in the Twenty-first century”. Nepal has ratified the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol with the belief that these instruments provide an effective tool to counter terrorism in the region. We call upon the SAARC member states to forge a strong partnership to eliminate terrorism from the region as well as spearhead a coordinated and earnest action against it”*. His heavily worded statement was a clear message to the international community that he is fighting terrorists and the SAARC countries should not criticize for his war on ‘terrorism’. His statement in the SAARC Summit was in essence a response to the demand made by the international community to hand over power to political parties.

Interestingly, the King had nominated to his cabinet members who were notorious figures in the autocratic panchayat regime (this time also, all political parties remained banned) with a track record of crime, human rights violation, rape, corruption, hooliganism and default on bank loan behind them²⁵. None of them had democratic credentials and a commitment to multi-party democracy.

Therefore, all their efforts were concentrated on reviving all but the old autocratic panchayat regime. Hence, under the direct guidance of the king, the cabinet members made systematic efforts to dismantle all the democratic institutions one by one, evolved during the 12-13 years of multi-party political rule earlier. The king's government had issued more than 6 dozens of ordinances to strengthen the King's autocratic rule.

The ministers in the autocratic government of the king made every effort to get the political parties surrender themselves before with the king. They treated progressive democratic forces as supporters of the CPN (Maoists). The actions and behavior of the ministers and of the king's coterie thus widened the gap between the progressive political forces and the palace that contributed to materialize the April movement.

As the king took very regressive path, he was unable to find enough capable people to accomplish the important state tasks such as those of ambassadors, ministers, planners, analysts and strategists, security and political advisors. He did not trust capable and honest people who had earlier served in the autocratic panchayat regime. He had to fully rely on the incapable persons with regressive attitudes. Their main role during the 15 months of autocratic rule was to widen the gap further between the palace and the political activists, suppress human rights activists, journalists and political parties, and to wipe out the CPN (Maoists) cadres. These acted as some contributing factors to unite people for April Revolution.

²⁵ His vice-chairperson and other two of the powerful members of the cabinet were defaulters of the banks' loan, one senior minister was charged as attempt rapist of hospital nurse, many of his cabinet ministers were declared as guilty of suppressing 1990's peoples movement by the Mallik Commission, two of the cabinet members were charged by the court as guilty of corruption.

The King similarly made unsuccessful attempts to use religion in strengthening his power. He had mobilized radical extremists and the orthodox Hindu clerics, and had hired people working under the banners of Hindu religion to oppose progressive political forces, which only back fired.

The hard-line royalists moves helped to widen the gap between the king and the political parties and that contributed to the birth of the idea of republicanism. A former Chief of the army staff, who was said to be one of the close advisors to the King, had publicly asked the government to declare political parties as anti-nationalists force. The then Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet, Dr Tulsi Giri clearly said that monarchy and democracy in Nepal cannot go together and therefore Nepalese people should either monarchy or democracy (Upreti, 2006). In a television interview he further said that sovereignty cannot originate from two sources, it should only be with the king, not with the people judging from past experiences, it is unlikely that he could speak on such a fundamental issue without the consent of the king²⁶. This meant that the King was not ready to give up power yet and was not interested to hold talks with the political parties. It is because of these factors that, Nepal's politics is headed toward a republican system.

The CPN (Maoists) demand for a republican system is gradually progressing. The CPN-UML has decided to go in for a republican political system. Similarly, the Nepali Congress, another big party and a past supporter of the idea of the constitutional monarchy has changed its stance by removing the provision of a constitutional monarchy from its party constitution. Other leftist political parties had been already in favor of a republican system. Youths, intellectuals, and the civil society members are increasingly aligned to the republican idea. In this way, influential forces in Nepal, which had defended the constitutional monarchy earlier, are now asking for a republican political set-up. Thus, the 1st February move by the king proved counterproductive for the life of the monarchy in Nepal.

²⁶ For example, Dr Mohamad Mohasin, Communication Minister in the *Deuba* government said to be representative of the king, repeatedly indicated in late 2004 and early 2005 about the forthcoming of 1st February event. Keshar Jung Rayamajhi had publicly asked the King to takeover. It happened after few weeks of these statements.

2.11 Security Forces in the April Movement

The security forces were also abused grossly in suppressing the April movement of 2006. The movement was suppressed by the Unified Command under the leadership of the then Chief of the then Royal Nepal Army, who was leading the fight against CPN (Maoists) insurgency. The army had created a special valley command to suppress the people's movement in the Kathmandu Valley. Similarly, a core team composed of the Army Chief, the Home Minister and the palace representative was made responsible for the mobilization of this security forces and in foiling of the people's movement. The army and the armed police used force excessively. The army used air patrolling by flying helicopters over rallies and demonstrations to create fear. Tanks and army vehicles were moving on the streets of Kathmandu Valley and in areas of mass rallies. When security forces unleashed brutal suppression against the people, national and international media vehemently criticized the security forces for its repression. Nepalese people came out even in greater number than ever to protest the use of force. 25 demonstrators got killed. Many of them were deliberately shot to death. Security forces shot at the demonstrators on the orders of their higher authorities (core team and valley command) .So they did not bother to take any precautionary measures. The use of excessive force thus became counterproductive in effect and millions of people came to the street to oppose the brutalization even more in number.

Security forces on the ground were also facing other serious dilemma. On one side, their own family members ('wives of security personnel', 'family members of the security forces') not only came out in protest on the streets and participated in mass demonstrations, but they also issued statements asking their husbands and sons to stop shooting at the rally. On the other side, their seniors in command were ordering them to shoot.

2.12 International Communities in the April Movement

The role of the international community during the royal regime had been largely favorable and supportive to the people's resistance movement since most of the international members were not happy with the takeover of 1st February 2005. However, their role in the eyes of Nepalese people looked suddenly suspicious as envoys of USA, France, Sweden, UK, Germany and Finland rushed to the residence of SPA senior leader Girija Prasad Koirala (where SPA leaders were having a special meeting) and wanted to exert pressure on the SPA to accept the king's offer of the 21 April. However, this offer amounted to nothing less than legitimizing the king's rule and accepting him as the custodian of the constitution and the protector of the national interests and institutionalizing monarchy in the future also. Hence, hundreds of thousands of protestors reached venue of the meeting and warned the SPA leaders not to make any compromises and keep the people's movement going.

On the other side, Finish Charge de Affairs Mr. Pauli Mustonen²⁷ (who was also the local chair of EU at that time), said, '*Many EU countries have welcomed the king's proclamation of 21 April and the EU is monitoring the situation*'. Similarly, the then British Ambassador Keith Bloomfield said '*it could be a basis to move ahead but parties do not accept it*'.²⁸ The EU issued a statement saying that the royal proclamation is an opportunity for parties to move ahead. Similar supports to the king were coming from China, Canada, and the UN welcoming the Royal proclamation. But, the SPA leaders in the end took the side of the Nepalese people and did not listen to what the foreign diplomats has to say. India changed its position at once and its foreign secretary Shyam Sharan said the next day (22 April) that the king's address of 21 April was not sufficient to solve the ongoing political problem.

²⁷ Mr. Mustonen died in a helicopter crash in Taplejung on 23 September 2006 with other 23 persons including State Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation, Director Generals of Forest and Wildlife Departments, Ex -Minister Dr Harka Gurung, Head of WWF Nepal Dr Chandra Gurung, and others. ²⁸ The Himalayan Times, 23 April 2006.

Some of the international non-governmental organizations had also expressed their solidarity with the demonstrators. The Alliance of INGO even came on to the streets to express their solidarity and to protest the human rights violation during the April movement. Many senior Nepalese staff working in the INGOs and donor organizations got actively involved in the April movement in their individual capacity.

There was thus a good synergy from concerted efforts of the local and global civil society organizations in making the people's movement a success. The critical position of influential global organizations against the king and support for people's struggle almost paralyzed the royal government. Few days before the surrender by the king, The Amnesty International, The Human Rights Watch and The International Commission of Jurists called for a travel ban on the king, the army officers and his senior advisors and aides for traveling in foreign countries which placed the king in an extremely difficult situation. In a meeting organized by the Swiss government in Geneva, these three international organizations also suggested freezing the assets kept in foreign countries of any person(s) associated with the royal regime²⁹. The same meeting also discussed 'targeted' and 'smart sanction' against the king and his aides. When the king's brutality against peaceful demonstrators was escalated from the 6th of April, bilateral countries and inter-governmental organizations became even more vocal to oppose the suppression.

Since the morning of the 24 April, a series of meetings was held by the key international players (Ambassadors of USA, India, Norway and few other diplomats), representatives of the Palace and the leaders of CPN (UML) with the NC. The main agenda of these meetings were how to peacefully end the movement. The Palace through the diplomats offered to negotiate with the leaders and expressed its willingness to accept the roadmap laid down by the SPA. Diplomats conveyed this missive of the King to the leaders of the political parties, and in response, a positive message was conveyed back by the political parties to the Principal Secretary of the King, Mr Pashupati Bhakta Maharjan. Next the Principal Secretary of the Palace visited Girija Prasad Koirala and Madhav

²⁹ Kantipur Daily, 19 April 2006.

Nepal individually and informed the willingness of the king to accept the SPA roadmap. Restoration of the Parliament was the main demand of the Nepali Congress and therefore it at once agreed to the King's offer. Likewise, UML leaders were also convinced by the King's willingness to accept the SPA roadmap. Finally, a few selected leaders of NC, UML, and the Principal Secretary of the King (and some diplomats working behind the scene) drafted the text to be read by the king in the evening. The king's speech was broadcasted on the Nepal Television. In this way, the 19 - day peaceful ³⁰ movement was ended. If this movement had been extended for another one or two days, the king would have been overthrown. However, the priority of SPA seemed to be to force the king to accept SPA roadmap, instead of ending the monarchy. Therefore, the negotiation that followed between the SPA leaders and Palace was a logical sequel despite the vehement opposition to it from the CPN (Maoists) who wanted to use the movement to end the monarchy immediately from this country. It is also widely speculated that an understanding between the political leaders of the NC and the representative of the king was reached to keep the constitutional monarchy in some form once the king agree to the SPA roadmap. This became obvious from the fact that the restored Parliament reduced the role of the king but continued to recognize its existence .The government allocated a huge amount of the country's budget to pay the allowance of the King and his immediate family member. Many analysts and people close to the Prime Minister indicate that the frequent expression of Prime Minister G.P Koirala about the need for a 'ceremonial king' or 'baby king' is a reflection of this hidden understanding between the SPA and the King. However, the King got suspicious of NC leader's promise when the Interim Constitution was promulgated in which the role of the king was completely suspended.

³⁰ Though the repressive government killed 25 people and wounded more than 5500 people, in 19 days the protesters were peaceful in this resistance.

2.13 People's Resistance and Start of Downfall of the Royal Dynasty

With the 10 years of republican campaign led by the CPN (Maoists) on the one side, and the behavior of the reigning king, his son and his close allies on the other had, has put the existence of royal dynasty on the verge of extinction. After the royal takeover of 1st February, major parties supporting constitutional monarchy such as the CPN (UML) have decided to opt for a republican political system, and the Nepali Congress the other big party of the SPA, too has deleted the clause of the constitutional monarchy from its party constitution. The Youth, ethnic communities, *Dalit* communities, intellectuals, scholars, journalists, and young politicians have all been overwhelmingly demanding for a republican political set up in the country. Even those who used to support the king and the active monarchy in the past have gradually been changing their positions at present. Many of them are agreed to a republican state in Nepal now. In the rural areas, the CPN (Maoists) have educated and oriented the people against the monarchy and oriented and in favour of a republican system. Hence, at present those who want to retain monarchy in this country are insignificant in number and not in a position to change the wave of republicanism in Nepal. USA, because of its strategic interests, by keeping the monarchy, hopes to stall radical communists from coming into power which might encourage other national and international radical communists to take up arms and come to power is indirectly supporting the palace but USA is also in a very difficult position, since by supporting the monarchy it is denying popular aspirations of the people. In its official statements, however, the USA has always maintained that it would respect the verdict of Nepalese people on the issue of monarchy. One can assume that the ever-awaited free and fair elections for the constituent assembly is most certainly going to end the 400 year old of monarchy of Nepal³¹.

³¹ The Interim Constitution has made provision of deciding the fate of monarchy by simple majority decision of the first meeting of the constituent assembly.

2.14 Conclusions

The April movement of 2006 has fundamentally questioned the feudalistic, centralized and exclusionary political system presided over by the monarchy in Nepal. It has also paved the way for a broader socio-political transformation and the ushering of a federal republic structure of the state.

The April movement of 2006 has further strengthened the theoretical and methodological basis for adopting a non-violent approach for political change in 20th century .It has justified itself as an alternative method of conflict transformation in the 21st century. Nepal's recent model of mobilizing people's power against armed conflict challenges the American approach of use of force to resolve conflict. A Non-violent form of people's resistance is probably a better way always for strengthening democracy for state-building and transforming a feudal, hierarchical, exclusionary state apparatus into an inclusive, modern democratic state. Based on the experiences of 19-day-long people's peaceful resistance movement, I argue that conventional concept of civil society needs to be redefined based on the potential of civil movement in changing the political system and shaping the future of the nation-state. I conclude that non-violent resistance movement has great prospect of settling conflict and building peace.

As explained in the theory of conflict transformation through nonviolence (Wehr *et al*, 1994; Clark 2000), the people's resistance movement of Nepal has succeeded in transforming an autocratic and feudal regime of the king through a short run of transition to a promised democratic and peaceful country. Non-violent resistance movements can transform conflict by detaching it from the use of force and coercion through exercise of tolerance by harnessing conciliation, through promotion of co-operation and through use of other peaceful alternatives. The major actors of the April resistance movement demonstrated to possess these characteristics while fighting the army, state power and resources in a peaceful manner. Nepal's experience highlights that people's resistance movement takes origin from below. It not only is able to contribute to the

downfall of dictators and autocrats, it also paves the path for social change in a society.

Nepalese experience of the people's resistance movement has confirmed that the success of resistance depends upon certain complementary elements. These are a unity of purpose; a broadbased, non-violent and disciplined home-grown movement participated in by all concerned stakeholders, organizations, the media, support from national and international organization, and through use of a host of other tactics, such as strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, street speeches and street drama. Therefore, 'people's power is a form of consciousness', and is 'about restoring the invisible institution of morality' (Ackerman and Duvall, 2005:42) in the transformation of a state.

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