

Maoists to join Nepal's government

Tuesday 14 November 2006, by [CHENG Eva](#) (Date first published: 10 November 2006).

Under an historic November 8 agreement between the ruling Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the Maoists will dissolve their parallel government by November 26 and join an interim government that will be set up no later than December 1. The CPN(M) waged a 10-year guerrilla war seeking to end Nepal's feudal monarchy. It has established a parallel administration in some 80% of the country.

The existing House of Representatives, which only reconvened on April 24 after being suspended by King Gyanendra 14 months earlier during a royal coup, will dissolve on November 26. A new constitution is scheduled to be announced by that day, to coincide with the planned dissolution of the CPN(M)-controlled "people's government".

An interim government will be formed and a new House convened with 330 seats. Seventy-five seats will be allocated to the Nepali Congress party, the largest parliamentary party; 73 to the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), the second largest party in parliament; 73 to the CPN(M); and the remaining split between the other five SPA parties.

A poll to elect a constituent assembly will be held in June to determine the fate of the king. The CPN(M)'s second-in-command Baburam Bhattarai hailed the agreement as "the beginning of the end of the monarchy". CPN(M) chairperson Pashpa Kamal Dahal, commonly known as Prachanda, described the November 8 deal as an "historic" event in modern Nepal, though cautioned that "the road ahead is tough".

A crucial component of the deal is the CPN(M) surrendering its arms no later than November 21 under UN supervision. The weapons will be locked up and monitored via closed-circuit TV in various locations across Nepal. Its estimated 35,000 fighters will be confined to camps by November 21. Government troops will surrender an equal number of weapons to be locked up under UN supervision as well.

According to a November 8 Himalayan News Service report, US ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty said Washington didn't intend to end the CPN(M)'s categorisation as a "terrorist" organisation, adding that US policy on Nepal after the Maoists joined government "will depend on the Maoists' behaviour".

A November 8 Himalayan Times report quoted Prachanda as acknowledging New Delhi's "positive role" in helping make possible a critical November 2005 agreement between the SPA and the CPN(M). That agreement played a pivotal role in mobilising popular resistance against the monarchy, which escalated from early this year to climax in April.

P.S.

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