

## Report From the Battlefield

# The Breakdown of Ceasefire and Resumption of Military Strike by PLA

The seven-month long ceasefire & negotiations between the reactionary monarchical regime and the revolutionary democratic forces led by the CPN (Maoist) ultimately broke down on August 27, 2003. Chairman Prachand made an announcement to this effect through a public statement. It is worth remembering that this is the second time CPN (Maoist) had sat for negotiation. However this cease-fire and thereafter the military strike differs qualitatively from the earlier one. First of all the present ceasefire had been the result of strategic equilibrium between the old state and the new state. The second feature is the involvement of American imperialists in shoring up the crumbling Royal Nepal Army (RNA) thus transforming it into 'Royal American Army'. The incidents such as the conclusion of five-year agreement against so-called terrorism between American imperialism and the old state right at the threshold of formal negotiation, public declaration of the supply of war logistics worth Rs 3000 million by the Indian military chief in the name of "fighting against terrorism" to the old state, and in the later period, open announcement of the inclusion of the Maoist movement in the list of international terrorism by the State Department of America, open threats given by American ambassador in Nepal, the activities and open statements issued by the royal army and the misleading propaganda made by main parliamentary groups, etc all prove the above facts. Meanwhile a report in *Time-Asia* (September 15, 2003), among others, has confirmed large-scale military involvement of US imperialism in Nepal. According to the report, "Up to 50 US special-forces trainers are now pushing 20 battalions of 700-800 men each-a quarter of entire army-through a 12-week counterinsurgency programme. ....Washington has also supplied the RNA with 5000 M-16s, with 5000 due; Belgium sold Nepal 5500 machine guns, and Britain and India have lent military advisors." According to the study conducted by National Peace Movement, the defense budget has increased by 300% within the last five years period. All these have, however, prepared a favourable ground to raise the PW to the third and higher stage of strategic offensive.

Another specificity has been the highly successful political offensive carried out during ceasefire and negotiations by boldly presenting minimum programme to bring about a progressive democratic change in the country. This prepared ground for moving ahead towards strategic offensive and general insurrection when the old state rejected the political agenda put forward by the Party. In the immediate military plan three stages were chalked out, according to which a plan of carrying out decentralized actions in the first phase, relative centralized ones in the second and big centralized ones in the third. As part of the decentralized actions in the first phase, actions in the form of commando raids, ambush, sabotage and selected annihilations have taken place in almost all the 75 districts of the country. The discernible new trend has been to focus the military actions in the cities and Terai (plain) areas and carry out more of decentralized actions, which has spread panic on the enemy camp.

On August 28, Col. Kiran Basnet, the highest-ranking military officer to have been targeted so far in the PW, was annihilated in Kathmandu in broad daylight. On the same day another Col.. Ramindra Chhetri, the notorious spin-doctor of the RNA who headed the so-called psycho-warfare department and used to conduct a regular TV show maligning the revolutionary fighters, was shot in Kathmandu but narrowly escaped the death. Similarly the next day, Devendra Raj Kandel, an ex-Minister of State for Home Affairs who gained notoriety for his outrageous remark, “Come with bag-full of Maoists’ head and go with bag-full of money”, when he was in power, managed to survive with multiple gun-shot injuries.

In some of the most daring money-actions more than 10 million rupees were captured from government-owned commercial banks in Tulsipur (Dang) and Chitwan, located just a few hundred meters away from the RNA barracks, on August 28 and 29 respectively.

Meanwhile the 3-day Nepal *bandh* (general shut-down) jointly called by the Party, PLA and the People’s Council against the royal military dictatorship on September 18, 19 and 20 had been a complete success.

One of the most daring, and perhaps the biggest and most successful in the whole period of seven and half years of PW, military action in the form of road ambush with mining took place at Sahajpur in Kailali district ( far western Terai region ). The brave PLA fighters ambushed three truckloads of RNA convoy at Faltude of Sahajpur at around 12:30 mid-day and attacked with rocket-launchers and other weapons. Forty-one RNA mercenaries were killed, more than two dozens wounded and two military trucks were blown-up. On the PLA side, platoon commander Com.Sagarmatha was martyred and a few injured. This devastating military blow to the royal genocidal regime was almost totally blacked out from the media.

Similarly, hundreds of small and medium military actions in the form of raids/commando attacks, ambush/mining, high sabotages and selected annihilations were carried out throughout the country. Raids/commando attacks took place in Rautahat ( September 16), Kapilvastu (September 19), Dadelhdhura (September 26), Udaipur (September 27), among others. Successful ambushes and mining were carried out in Kathmandu (September 13), Chitwan (September 15), Dhading (September 18), Mahottarai (September 20), Gorkha (September 27) and others. Selected annihilations of royal butchers, informers and incorrigible criminals were carried out in Banke, Surkhet, Kailali, Baitadi, Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Syangja and elsewhere. And a number of high-profile sabotages including those against the current Prime Minister, four of his Ministers, the chief of the Royal Advisory Council, a former chief of the Election Commission and others sent chills down the spine of the reactionary classes.

Contrary to the claims of the spin-doctors of the royal military dictatorship objective reports from the battle-fields showed that the PLA had inflicted crippling losses on the royal mercenary RNA all over the country. During the period of one and a half month after the breakdown of ceasefire more than 300 royal mercenaries were killed and above one hundred pieces of arms including M-16, LMG, SLR, .303 rifles and tens of thousands of rounds ammunitions were seized.

After a nine-day break during the Dashain (Dushera) festival from October 2 to 10, the new round of the revolutionary military actions was initiated with a raid on the Armed Police Force (APF) base camp at Kusum in Banke district (far western Terai) on the night of October 10. However, the raid was unsuccessful due to a number of subjective and objective factors and the PLA had to stage a retreat with significant losses. Within 48 hours the loss was partially compensated with another raid over a similar base camp at Bhaluwang, Dang district (far western Terai) on October 12. More than twenty-five royal mercenaries were killed and a significant quantity of arms including 14 SRLs, 1 LMG and 5 .303 rifles were captured.

One of the most devastating ambushes with mining was carried out at Gaira of Ghanteshwar in Doti district (far western Hill) on October 15. In the process 20 RNA mercenaries were killed on the spot and another six captured but released after medication. The PLA captured 11 SLRs, 2 M-16, 1 LMG, 3 SMG, a load of M-36 grenades and heavy quantity of ammunitions from the site.

In one of the most daring money-actions 4 million rupees were captured from the Butwal branch of Bank of Kathmandu Limited in Butwal, one of the important trade center of central Terai region.

Also, annihilation of secret service agents in Kathmandu valley and a high sabotage at the residential premises of a serving minister, S.N. Shukla, in Rupandehi have sent chills down the spines of the votaries of royal military dictatorship. It may be noted that Shukla has been a notorious landlord and ringleader of criminals in the western Terai region for long and this attack has given a big boost to the fighting morale of hundreds of thousands of peasants of that area struggling for their liberation.

Similarly, on November 15, a brigadier-general Sagar B. Pande, who was the head of the production department of the RNA, along with three others, was blown up to death in a mining ambush near Bhaise in Makwanpur district (central inner Terai).

On December 1, in one of the longest frontal battles with the royal hirelings the PLA gave a deadly blow to the RNA killing 15 of them and injuring 17 others in Khimdi, Pandaun of Kailali district in far-western Terai. The PLA also managed to seize 4 SLRs with 5000 rounds of ammunitions and 20 magazines, four .303 rifles, one magnum rifle, one communication set and a load of different ammunitions and other logistics. Seven comrades were, however, martyred in the process, including battalion commander Com. Prahar and two company commanders Com. Kushal and Com. Sameer.

In the Western Region, a vicious encounter took place with the royal mercenaries on December 13 at Pachhawang of Rolpa district in which more than ten RNA soldiers were killed. However, four comrades including Com. Vivek, battalion commissar, attained glorious martyrdom in the process. On December 18 a big armoured convoy of RNA mercenaries was ambushed in

Shivagarhi of Kapilbastu district (Western-Central Terai), where ten armed personnel were killed and a huge damage inflicted to the enemy

In the Eastern Region, four RNA mercenaries were killed in an encounter at Mangalbare of Ilam district on November 16. In one of the most devastating road mining at Kanepokhari of Morang district on November 18, 11 APF men were killed and 4 wounded. In an ambush at Aitbare Ramite in Morang district on December 4, four RNA mercenaries met their ignominious death.

In another successful attack on the royal mercenaries, fourteen members of the A.P.F. including an inspector and a number of lower ranking officers were killed when their vehicle was blown-up in a road mining ambush along the Jaleswor-Bardibas road in Mahottari district of eastern Terai on December 14.

Another noteworthy development in recent months has been the steady desertions from the armed forces of the old state to join the revolutionary camp. So far more than 500 RNA, APF and civil police personnel have deserted. In the latest incident Platoon Commander Lal B. Ranjali of Surkhet serving in Bajura RNA camp has deserted and joined the PLA. He has brought one M-16 rifle and 150 rounds of ammunitions with him and has appealed others in the RNA to follow his example.

On January 2, four RNA soldiers were killed in an ambush near Manahari along the Hetauda-Narayangarh highway. On January 3, twenty-five RNA mercenaries were killed in an ambush and subsequent encounter in Jalbire along Mughling-Narayangarh highway (Central Region). However, the PLA also met with an irreparable loss in the martyrdom of Com. Salim, battalion commander, in this action.

On January 5, a big encounter took place with the RNA in Mahure forest of Khotang district (Eastern Region), in which half a dozen royal mercenaries were killed, several automatic weapons seized and a number of top ranking officials of the district captured (who were let off subsequently).

In the latest successful military action in the Eastern Region, more than twenty RNA mercenaries were killed and several others wounded in Ramite of Morang district on January 16-18. The royal mercenaries were first caught in the ambush with mining and later the encounter continued for over two days in the forested area. This humiliating defeat of the RNA was completely blacked out from the old state media.

On January 18, a RNA convoy was attacked along the Dhangarhi-Dadeldhura highway in far-western Region, wherein 13 royal mercenaries were killed on the spot, seven wounded and five captured. In the process PLA was able to capture four pieces of M-16, along with several numbers of magazine, two chains of GPMG and number of bullets, one basket cell of mortar together with M-36 grenade

Whereas decentralized military actions continued throughout particularly in Kavre (January 21), Tanahu (January 22), Lalitpur (February 9) and others, a major encounter took place with the

royal mercenary RNA at Kotwada, Kalikot (far western Mountain) on February 15-17. After a forty-eight hour-long confrontation, the RNA retreated with three confirmed casualties and dozens injured and two helicopters severely damaged. As a result the King's proposed visit to the district headquarter on February 17 was abruptly cancelled. One PLA combatant obtained martyrdom in the process.

On February 21, another major battle broke out with the RNA at Aiselukharka of Khotang district (eastern Hill). After a 14-hour long battle the royal mercenaries were forced to retreat with one dozen dead and two dozens wounded. Six PLA fighters were also martyred in exchange.

In a powerful mine explosion on February 22 along Ghorahi-Lamahi road in Dang district (Western Region) 2 RNA mercenaries were killed and eighteen others injured. On the same day in another mining ambush at Surahikhola of Kapilvastu district (central Terai) 2 APF personnel were killed.

Apart from the military blow by the PLA, a number of revolutionary mass and front organizations have given hard public punch in the form of 'bandhs' to the royal military dictatorship.

On December 9, the All Nepal National Free Students Union (Revolutionary) (ANNFSU-R) organized a successful 'eastern Nepal bandh' in support of its long-standing demands, including release of its leaders captured and held incommunicado by the RNA. All the schools & colleges in the entire eastern Region were completely closed for the day.

Similarly, the 'Madhesh *bandh*' called by the Madhesi National Liberation Front in favour of its demands of rights to national self-determination and autonomous rule, among others, on December 15 was a grand success. Total life in the entire Madhesh (i.e. plains) came to a virtual stand still in response to the strike call. This has given a big boost to the prolonged movement of the Madhesi people for equal rights within Nepal and provided a hard blow to the mono-centred monarchical state.

Moreover, Party regional bureaus and mass and class organizations throughout January and February 2004 have organized a number of district level and regional level bandhs. Among these a countrywide five-day general strike called by the ANNFSU-R for February 25-29 was the most notable (which was later scaled down to a two-day strike).

The All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) has now called for a 'Nepal *bandh*' on March 8, i.e. International Women's Day, in support of its multi-faceted demands, including equal rights to parental property and equal share of the state.

Increasingly defeated in real encounters with the valiant PLA, the royal mercenary RNA has been massacring dozens of unarmed and innocent masses and political activists in fake encounters every day. Also hundreds of people have 'disappeared' from the custody of the royal butchers. International human rights organizations, including the Amnesty International, have

criticized the genocidal royal regime for fake encounter deaths, disappearances and inhuman torture and rape in custody. Even the US government has censured its Nepalese stooges in its annual international human rights reports released in late February 2004 for the massacre in Doramba (August 17), Mudhvara-Doti (October 13), Kavre, Kathmandu, Chitwan, Bardiya and other places and for widespread "unlawful disappearance, detention and torture."

### **Autonomous People's Governments Formed**

As per the Party's known policy of granting autonomous rule along with rights of self-determination to the oppressed nationalities and regions, a campaign was launched to form autonomous people's governments in the liberated areas. After completing the process of forming elected people's committees at village and district levels on the basis of revolutionary united front policies, regional level people's governments were installed in different parts of the country.

On January 9, Magarat Autonomous Region People's Government was declared amidst a huge mass meeting of over 75 thousand people in the historic Thawang village in Rolpa district. As may be recollected, this is the main base area of the revolution and is inhabited by the most oppressed Kham Magar nationality. The Autonomous People's Government was formed under the leadership of Com. Santosh Budha Magar, in which members from various other nationalities and classes and masses are represented. Revolutionary felicitation messages from Com. Prachanda, Chairman of the CPN (Maoist) and Supreme Commander, PLA, and from Com. Baburam Bhattarai, Convener, United Revolutionary People's Council (URPC), were read to the masses on the occasion. Com. Diwakar, In-charge, Western Command, and Com. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Joint-Convener, URPC, among others, addressed the gathering.

Similarly, on January 19, Bheri-Karnali Autonomous Region People's Government was formed under the leadership of Com. Khadga Bahadur B.K. and made public amidst a big mass rally in Jajarkot district. It may be noted that Karnali region is the most remote and backward area of the country. This is also one of the major storm centres of the revolution.

Throughout January and February such Autonomous People's Governments were formed in Seti-Mahakali (under the leadership of Com. Lekhraj Bhatta), Tharuwan (headed by Com. Ram Charan Chaudhary), Tamuwan (headed by Com. Dev Gurung), Tamang Saling (headed by Com. Hit Bahadur Tamang), Kirat (headed by Com. Gopal Khambu) and Madhesh (headed by Com. Matrika Prasad Yadav) and were declared amidst huge public meetings attended by thousands of revolutionary masses.

Meanwhile, the URPC has recently issued a "Directory for Administration of People's Power, 2004," to bring harmony to the administration of local people's power in the base areas throughout the country. In this Directory, separate chapters are included for the administration of Autonomous Regions and Local Bodies, General Administration, Public Security, Revolutionary Land Reform, Forest Management, Industry, Commerce and Finance, People's Cooperatives, Physical Infrastructure Development, Public Health, Public Education, People's Culture and

Social Welfare. Similarly a Public Legal Code has been formulated to administer the New Democratic people's power. "

This campaign has immensely contributed to consolidate the Base Areas and to prepare for impending strategic offensive through the country. •

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