



Liberal Democracy Nepal

Nepal Study Center

The University of New Mexico

Workshop on Opportunities and Challenges for Nepali Political Parties

Washington, D.C.

26 October 2005

A workshop on *Opportunities and Challenges for Nepali Political Parties* was conducted in Washington, D.C. by Liberal Democracy Nepal (LDN) on October 22-23, 2005.

The workshop was attended by the representatives of six political parties (Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal UML, Nepali congress – Democratic, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Jana Morcha Nepal, Nepal Sadbhavana Party (A)). In addition to the delegates of the six political parties, prominent Nepali human rights activist Mr. Padma Ratna Tuladhar was also in attendance.

The Workshop consisted of four moderated thematic sessions:

- 1) Dealing with Monarchy and Royal Nepal Army,
- 2) Dealing with the Maoists,
- 3) Managing the Movement for Democracy, and
- 4) Parties Managing Themselves.

The Nepali delegates, LDN moderators and participants, deliberated in depth several aspects of the above themes that included restructuring of the state, social justice, and inclusive party polity, and a negotiated settlement.

On October 29th, Baltimore America Nepali Association (BANA) organized a town hall meeting in Baltimore to allow the local community to have an open forum with the delegates. The town hall meeting was conducted by Mr. Dilli Paudyal, and was attended by several dozen participants from Baltimore and Washington DC area. The political leaders from Nepal gave their perspective on the current political situation in Nepal. The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session between the delegates and town hall meeting attendees.

On October 23, 2005, the workshop participants agreed to recommend the following action items as the Workshop Declaration:

- 1) Concerted efforts to protect human rights and civil liberties in Nepal;
 - 2) Immediate restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal, and full support for ongoing movement for democracy;
 - 3) National sovereignty to rest fully with the people of Nepal;
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- 4) People to decide the role of monarchy;
- 5) The CPN (Maoists) to commit to lay down arms and pledge unconditional commitment to multi-party democracy, and pluralism, and respect for human rights;
- 6) The political parties to commit to full internal democracy, inclusive people-centered politics and healthy democratic practices.
- 7) A negotiated settlement of the current conflict; and
- 8) Explore all possible support for bringing the three protagonists for a peaceful resolution to the current conflict.

The delegates from Nepal included Dr. Ram. S. Mahat, Chakra Bastola, Jhala Nath Khanal, Pari Thapa, Ashok Rai, Dr. Minendra Rijal, Bilmalendra Nidhi, Anil Jha, Dhruba Pradhan, and Padma Ratna Tuladhar.

Speaking about the resources for democracy and conflict resolution, Mr. Murari Raj Sharma, former Nepali Ambassador to the UN spoke about the possible UN support in the Nepali crisis. Dr. Shyam Karki, Vice President of the NRN ICC presented an overview of the Nepali Diaspora resources in North America. Mr. Aditya Jha from Toronto spoke about opportunities for economic development in Nepal, and Dr. Alok Bohara from University of New Mexico (UNM) highlighted the objectives of Nepal Study Center based at UNM.

The participating members of Nepal Diaspora included several members of LDN, friends of LDN, community leaders and many invited participants from the Washington Metropolitan area and elsewhere in the USA.

In addition, a panel on the UN's possible role was also organized with the Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and Deputy Executive Director of the UNICEF Kul C. Gautam as a keynote speaker. UN's conflict expert Samuel Tamrat also made a presentation and joined the panel discussion.

LDN plans to publish proceedings of the meeting in a book format.