

**Transcript of a BBC interview with Nepal's Maoist rebel leader Chairman Prachanda to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maoist revolt.**

Q. Chairman Prachanda – your war is ten years old now. The economy is in ruins. Tourism is way down. Rural poor have fled their homes and live in terror. And 13,000 people are dead. It's been a disaster hasn't it?

A. We've certainly never said it was good. When we started a people's revolution, we tried to advance the Nepali people's needs and the society's needs in a peaceful way. Everyone knows when we were in parliament, following its processes, we put forward 40 demands so that the problems of Nepalis would be solved in a peaceful way. But, when the ruling classes and the feudalists were not ready to solve the problems of Nepalis peacefully, and instead started victimizing our party workers and people who supported us in a brutal and illegitimate fashion, they compelled us and the Nepali people to take up arms. That doesn't mean we are happy about 13,000 people being killed. For sure, we are saddened by it. But the responsibility doesn't lie with us. It lies with a small clique of privileged class who want to keep Nepal as a medieval feudal state. That is our belief, and that, I think, is the truth.

Q. Let's talk about the "feudals and aristocrats". You say that they are your biggest enemies. Fine, they are sitting safe, mainly in Kathmandu and the other cities. But people who suffered are the poor people in the rural areas. Isn't that true?

A. It is not true. In history, wherever there has been a revolutionary movement, when people's movement moves forward – in the process of revolution, a clique of feudal elements will be staying within the fortification of the army. They will stay in there until their end comes but in the end, revolution will, as seen by history, destroy the feudal elements and in the end, these elements will have to come to the people's court and be tried. We believe that in the near future, these elements will be in the people's court and will be tried by the people. When the revolution begins, they will be staying within the army barracks and army protection and so they will not be the ones caught at the beginning. History has always shown this.

Q. One reason that people including the Americans are scared of you is that they have a nightmare vision – a Maoist takeover, conquering and entering Kathmandu with bloodshed. Is that your aim – to conquer Kathmandu militarily?

A. What America is thinking, I think they are thinking wrong. It is the Americans who have that level of bloodthirstiness. They have been killing and attacking innocent civilians. We are not like that. We certainly want to capture Kathmandu for Nepali people, for democracy and for peace, it is important that the Nepali people have to conquer and we want to go to Kathmandu. It is not like the American vision where there would be a river of blood. We want to conquer Kathmandu with the people's rebellion.

Q. So you think you can conquer Kathmandu militarily?

A. We are not only talking about militarily. I believe we can, and we have to conquer Kathmandu both militarily and politically. That's why we have not thought about it in a purely military way. As you know, we have made an agreement with the parliamentary political parties and we want to get to Kathmandu militarily too. This is certain. We are not thinking of this in a purely military fashion and that is why we are talking about democracy and peace, and for this we have made agreements with the political parties. This proves that we do not want to get to Kathmandu in a purely military way but also in a political and military way.

Q. You say politically. Does that mean in fact you don't really expect to be able to conquer the capital militarily?

A. When we started the people's revolution and when we first attacked the feudal elements' Royal Army, we believed that we could conquer Kathmandu militarily. But later, when countries like the US, the UK and India started supporting the Royal Army militarily - against our people's war and the revolt of Nepali people - that has posed some difficulties. That is why we believe that in today's world it's not possible only to move forward militarily. Today's reality is to move forward both politically and militarily, with a balance of the two. Only with this balance can we gain something for the people and the people's democracy. That's why we are organizing on both fronts, political and military.

Q. So you're saying that in today's world you don't think it would possible to take the capital city militarily?

A. It is possible. But in today's situation it would cause a lot of harm to the Nepali people. That's why we like the political solution better. And we are working towards it.

Q You signed an agreement in India last November with the mainstream political parties, the main opposition parties. That agreement talked about you, the Maoists, "moving along a peaceful political stream". Are you preparing for peace?

A. We are always ready for peace, and when we started the people's war, after a while we said that if the ruling classes would want to peacefully solve the problems of Nepali people, we were ready. Now, in the agreement with the parties, we are still saying that if there is an environment where people can give their own verdict, through an election of a constituent assembly, where people have a voice on the kind of governance that they want, if that right is with the people, then we are ready to have a political competition with the parties. And this is the truth.

Q. This in fact your main political demand – an elected assembly to draw up a new constitution. If that elected assembly drew up a constitution that kept Nepal as a kingdom, with a king, would you be happy?

A. We have said that there should be a democratic republic in Nepal. Our struggle is for a democratic republic. But we have said that people should be harmed to the minimum extent possible. And if the problem is solved in a peaceful and democratic way, we are ready for it, and that's why we have called for a constituent assembly. We believe that with the election of a constituent assembly, a democratic republic will be formed in Nepal. And this will solve the problems of Nepalis and lead the country into a more progressive path. And since we have said that we'd go for a peaceful election of the constituent assembly, we're ready to follow whatever the verdict of the people is. We have stated this over and over again. We'll accept the people's verdict. Whatever decision the people should give, we will be ready to accept this.

Q. Does that mean you would theoretically be able to accept a people's verdict of keeping the monarchy?

A. Yes, theoretically it is like that. But we believe that people would not give that kind of verdict in the current situation. That is our faith and belief and whatever you can say. We are ready to follow the people's verdict. That would mean that ideologically if the people want that, we will follow that. But we believe that the people's version will be for a democratic republic.

Q. Does that mean you could imagine yourself or someone from your party actually serving as prime minister under King Gyanendra?

A. If such a situation arises, if you ask me personally I am not ready. But personal choice is not the main thing. The main thing is following what the people's verdict is. Personally, we might not be ready in situations like this, because we have been fighting for a republic. But since we have already said that we will agree with the verdict of a constituent assembly, we will surely agree to that.

Q Now we are talking all about the future. But violence is still escalating in Nepal. When is this peaceful future going to happen?

A. I believe that the total responsibility for the escalating violence falls on the King and the royal army – on Gyanendra and his royal army. To ensure that the minimum bloodshed is inflicted on Nepali people, we had a four-month-long cease-fire. We have also been saying that we would agree to whatever the verdict is of the constituent assembly. And we have committed to accept multi-party competition. That's why, the way violence is escalating in this country, the total responsibility falls on Gyanendra and his royal army. The Nepali people understand this and the world has seen those who want peace and democracy clearly. In the near future, this situation is not going to remain. Nepali people are going to triumph and democracy is going to triumph. Gyanendra-ism and his feudalistic clique will certainly be destroyed. He is responsible. We also want to appeal to all everyone in the world who

believes in peace and democracy to speak out and stand up against the one who has been shedding blood and killing people every day.

Q. Now you declared a ceasefire for four months. If you were to repeat that but on a permanent basis, laying down your arms tomorrow, this war would stop. Why not do that?

A. We are fighting for the rights of Nepali people. As long as the royal army interferes with Nepali people's rights, as long as they keep killing Nepali people, I mean, the feudal privileged class, and that too an army loyal to a medieval royalty – are an obstacle to the Nepali people. It is important that they be dismantled – not us. Nepali people are rebelling for their rights. In us saying that we are ready, we mean, the royal army, who have been oppressing Nepali people for 237 years, and are loyal to a small clique, who have no loyalty to respect for democratic ideology – that army has to be dismantled. Then only can the problem be solved. We are not the power that gave birth to this problem. It is the King, his clique and his royal army. For a peaceful solution of this problem, what we are saying is that both the armies should be monitored by the UN or a similar organization and go to the people; and that later they can be re-organized into a new Nepali army and that we are ready for. That is why we are not the problem. We are not standing in the way of a peaceful solution. It is the King and his royal army. Even within the royal army, we do not believe that the lower cadres and officials of the army want the war to go on. It is a small clique of generals who belong to the feudalistic privileged class, the Rana and Shah clans of Nepal; they want this war to go on. If they want the war to go on, we do not want to surrender to them. If they say that we should surrender, if US imperialists say that we should surrender, we are not ready for it. We are ready to fight and die but we are not ready to surrender to this feudalistic clique. That is why we are clearing the path for peace.

Q. For Nepal to rebuild itself in the future, it's going to need help. The most powerful nation in the world that might be able to help is the United States of America. Are you ready to work with America?

A. We believe that once the Nepali people's desire for a democracy is fulfilled, once there is peace and democracy in the country, we will be ready to develop diplomatic relations with all nations of the world – for the development of Nepali people, we are ready to receive their support and we will be ready. But what we feel till now, and what experience has shown us, is that America does not work for the improvement of people anywhere. It works only for itself. It works for the benefit of the ruling class, the capitalists within America. We don't believe that it will work to benefit the people from a poor country. Still, once there is democracy and peace in Nepal, we are ready to develop a diplomatic relationship with any country and work with any country around the world.

Q So you could work with America even though it has provided arms for the present government?

A. We are not talking within the context of the present government. If the so-called current government sitting in Kathmandu, the clique of feudal, privileged class – as long as they exist, there is no question of us working with America or any other country. After this clique is dismantled, once there is people's government – a democratic and progressive government – that government will be ready to work with any country around the world. That is what I was trying to say.

Q. I want to ask you about India. It has its own Maoists in rural areas called the Naxalites. Are you working with them, supporting them?

A. We do not have a working relationship with the Maoists [in India]. Since they are communists and we are communists, we have an ideological relationship. But movement and revolution is not about export and import. So what they want to do in India is their own business. And what we are going to do in Nepal is our own business. So we do not have a direct functional or working relationship [with them]. At an ideological level, we meet from time to time and we have our meetings debates and discussions. So what they do in India is their business and what we do in Nepal is our business. And we do not see it as something to be imported or exported.

Q. Some people have felt that you are probably trying to export revolution throughout the subcontinent. Are you saying that you are not?

A. Ideologically we want to move the global revolution forward. We want to take the lessons from the positive and the negative experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; from revolutions and counter-revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Globally the suppressed classes should get their rights, and that's what we want. But in practical terms we do not believe that one country's army should go to the other country and fight for it. Ideologically we do want there to be a revolution in the USA and even in your UK, and that the working classes should rule. That does not mean that once we conquer in Nepal we will go and spread revolution in other countries. But we will give ideological support, for sure. We are a part of a global revolution but we do not believe that revolution is something to be exported.

Q. Fighting a war is very expensive. If your supporters are mainly in poor rural parts of Nepal, where are you getting your money from?

A. We are certainly fighting for the rights of poor people in Nepal. We are the children of Nepali citizens. The main source of our income is the same people we are fighting for. As a secondary source, we used to extract from our enemies; but now, our main source is the support from the people.

Q. What about money from elsewhere in the South Asian region? Whether governments or individuals, maybe in your neighbouring countries?

A. It's been well established that no government anywhere has financially supported our revolution and nor have they supported us in material or military ways. This revolution has been supported purely by Nepali people. So we have not been supported by anyone in terms of military equipment or financially. This is a pure self-reliant revolution of the Nepali people. This has been seen by the world and the world understands this. We are proud that we are not in the hands of any international group. We are free to make decisions for the betterment of the Nepali people, because we have taken neither money nor arms from anyone.

Q. I want to ask you about your vision of a future Nepali society. You have declared war on alcohol and gambling. There have been reports of someone being shot for playing cards. You want to outlaw "vulgar Hindi films". It sounds very puritanical.

A. We have experimented with different things. But the vision that we see of the future Nepal is to be free of class exploitation that exists in Nepal; that all classes should be free from feudal exploitation. Nepal also has caste exploitation. Nepal should be free from the exploitation of the suppressed castes. The suppressed castes have been exploited by feudal castes. And we want them to be free of that. We also have regional exploitation, like Karnali, a remote region – the ruling class of Kathmandu have never looked into the betterment of these people. People from zones like Seti, Mahakali and Karnali [in Far West and Mid-West Nepal] should also get their rights. That's what we want. Similarly the two- or three-fold exploitation of women – they are exploited by the feudal class and by the men. They should also be free of this exploitation. Women should have equal rights and equal participation on the social, political and economic fronts. What we are saying is, our future is going to be free from caste, class, regional and gender exploitation. Nepal should be a common platform for all groups. At the same time, the cultural, political and economic affairs of the country should be decided by the people. The right to make decisions should be exercised by everyone. And it should be progressive. It should move towards a progressive culture. That's what we believe. We certainly have said that dirty and vulgar materials and literature from America or cheap and dirty literature from India should be banned. We believed that and we still believe that. We also definitely want to eliminate bad habits like alcohol and gambling from the villages. What we believe is that in the 10 years of "People's Revolution", the roots of feudalism have been cut off and there is a situation of freedom. Because of the war, people have suffered. But if you go and look into the hearts of people in the villages, they don't feel as exploited as they did yesterday. They feel self-respect. A poor woman in a village with a gun, moving forward to build a new society, feels her life as a woman has been elevated. In a village, there is respect even for the poor. And the suppressed feel that they have a new life as human beings. We are building new lives in these villages. You won't find exploitation and injustice in villages, such as discrimination against dalits [the lowest castes]. And the practice of "untouchability" has ended. There is a great feeling that all people are equal. In this way we have been bringing sweeping changes to the villages. And once the war is over,

we believe that we can move forward and develop economically or otherwise at a very fast pace.

A. If you had such great support, why would you need to use such violence? For example, you declared a strike last week, forcing people to shut their businesses, not drive their vehicles, etc. Your people in Kathmandu shot dead a taxi driver for disobeying that order. What does it mean when people only obey out of fear, pure and simple?

Q The first thing is that we did not start the violence. When we were in the parliament, in the district where we had the maximum support, violence was used on the people by the royal army and the police. They made the people compelled to revolt against it. When do we become violent? Only when the rulers use violence on the people. Certainly, because we have maximum support from people, we have been able to rebel against this. Because we have vision, we have been able to rebel against it. As long as the feudal autocrats do not stop killing the people, there will be a rebellion against it. That rebellion is the right of the people. What we are saying is that in the current situation of Nepal, the right to rebellion by the oppressed is a human right. There are no greater human rights than the people's right to fight for their rights. As far as what you have said about the taxi driver, I do not know if it was done by our people or someone else. Right now, people are against the King and his so-called elections, and the rebellion could come from anyone. I do not know that it was us who killed the taxi driver. We are investigating this – we are looking for who killed him. There is no proof that we killed him.

Q. In this conflict your side, the Maoists, have killed more children than the other side. Your bombs have killed and maimed children. You have recruited children under 12. Isn't this something to be ashamed of – the treatment of children?

A. In our party's central policy, we do not have a policy of recruiting children. We do not even train children below 16 years old as militia. Accidentally children have been killed, and we are saddened by that. But the situation does not match the account that the ruling classes and the feudals have propagated. Children whose parents have been killed in the war – taking care of them is the responsibility of the party. That's why we are compelled to take care of, educate and provide work for hundreds of children, even those who are 12 to 15 years old. This is a compulsion born out of the war. This compulsion has been falsely portrayed by the feudal elements as forced recruitment of children. As for children who have been accidentally killed, we are deeply sad about it. We are trying our very best to ensure that such accidents do not happen. We are doing our best, and this is the truth.

Q. But it's well known – anyone who has seen the Maoist army knows that there are certainly children under 16 there. That's the case, isn't it?

A. In village militias it might be true but in the People's Liberation Army that's not the situation.

Q. You are a married man. You have four children yourself, I imagine grown up by now. They had a schooling. Yet, the Maoists have closed schools – not only private ones but community ones as well. Would you have wanted your children to have been deprived of education in that kind of way?

A. Where have we closed down schools? Schools are running and even with our own efforts, we are trying to open schools and educate children. My children went to school when they were young and are now in the movement.

Q, But I've been and visited people who are no longer being educated because their schools have been closed down.

A Since we are in a state of war, certainly things have not moved the way that they should have been. That is why we need to end the war and for this we need to defeat Gyanendra-ism, feudalism and the royal army. When all people get together and triumph over the autocracy, then only education could be provided in an organized way. As long as the autocratic rule is committing atrocities on the people, till then war is going to escalate and it would be difficult to systematize the education. Yet, even in the situation of war, we are trying to ensure that schools are running and education is possible.

Q. I've met families of people who have been killed by the Maoists for allegedly supporting the army. Yet you know very well that both sides force them to help them, to feed them. Isn't it wrong to kill them on the basis of that so-called "evidence"?

A. The statement that we have forced people to support us is not true. Because before we did not have an army and nor did we have any weapons. We came forth because of people's support and help. It is not possible therefore that we would use force on people. As for our enemies, the feudal elements and the autocrats, after the rebellion started, there are numerous incidents where they have raped women, torched houses and villages; where the army has surrounded them and forced them to carry their luggage. All these have been carried out by the feudalistic autocratic elements, not our army. You might have heard this being propagated but the reality is different. If you look at the villages, when there is a cessation of war, our People's Liberation Army works in the fields of people, they work as labourers to build roads for people – they have been doing all this work. That is why, to say that our army uses force on people is totally untrue. In times of war, in difficult circumstances, things might not work as planned and at times, even though we might have wanted, we might not have managed to organize things the right way. But in general, from our side, there has been and there will be no force on people.

Q. I'm not sure you understood my question. As I say, I've met families of people who have been killed by the Maoists for allegedly supporting the army. That's what I want to ask about – killing people on completely unjustified grounds.

A. We have not killed people or anyone when army surrounds the village and forces people to support and help them. The policy of our party is that informants of the army, the ones who work as spies, and have committed the crime of killing people, then there would be action against them. There is a policy to act against them. But there is no policy that we kill people generally on the basis that they have helped the royal army. Unfortunately, if such an incident does happen, we have been admitting to this and publicly apologized for it. Whenever such a mistake is made and someone loses their life outside of our policy, we have asked for a pardon from the people.

Q. You've said, for instance after an atrocity last June when Maoists bombed a bus, killing nearly 40 civilians and a few soldiers – you said you were “sad and hurt” about that. Yet the UN office in Nepal says it never gets evidence that you have punished the perpetrators of such acts. Why can't you give such evidence?

A. I think you probably don't know this, but after that incident at Madi when there was an explosion on the bus, we were shocked beyond words. Our party workers who were involved in it, they were expelled from the party and the army, and the report on how this expulsion was carried out was been given to the UN. We informed them about who was sentenced, who had committed what crime, the nature of the crime, and the kinds of punishment given to them. All this information was given.

Q. Sometimes you seem to say one thing and do another. For instance, you told the UN that you would not attack candidates from last week's municipal elections, but you did. Two of them got killed. How can people believe you?

A. When we talked about it.... I mean, there is no difference is what we have been saying and what we have been doing. In the circumstance, when we were in ceasefire, we had said that and even later, we did not have a policy of physically harming any candidate. But there has been only one incident – not two – according to the report that was given to our central [committee] – in Janakpur – where a local worker of the party took responsibility for the killing. We are investigating this. If we had wanted, we could have killed many candidates. Because we did not have the policy of killing them, they were not killed. Our party did not have a policy of killing them because they are candidates. We are investigating on the incident of Janakpur and this has been informed to the United Nations Human Rights office. That is why there is no difference between what we say and what we do. As for an informer of the royal army being a candidate, we might have a process of capturing them and trying them in the people's court. As a candidate and an informer of the royal army, if he has been responsible for killing people, the party policy is to take action against him. It is important to understand these two things correctly.

Q. What kind of action?

A. Our policy is that if he is an informer, we'd capture him, stand him in front of the people's court, and take action as per the verdict of the court. Considering the degree of the crime, he could be given a labour punishment for a certain time, or for a while kept under the custody of people, and if the crime is big, he could even be executed. The party policy is to follow this process.

Q. Do you have a timetable to lay down your arms? Or a planned timetable?

A. We do not look at it in terms of a time line. We see it in terms of policy. As soon as the people are given the right to decide of their own fate and of their own future, we will be ready to lay down our arms. But if the people are not given their rights, we are committed to and are ready to fight till the end. That's why we cannot give a timetable on when we can lay down our arms and when we would use them. As soon as people get their rights, as soon as there is a possibility for a democracy, as soon as people can make decisions on their own lives, then there is a possibility of laying down our arms.

Q. More concretely, what needs to happen for you to give up your arms? What's the bottom line, the minimum, that you need to give up your arms struggle?

A. We have already clearly said in our 12-point agreement with the parliamentary political parties, as soon as there is a possibility of preparing a new constitution through a constituent assembly, and form a new army, we are ready to call off the war. For now, the bottom line is the agreement with the seven political parties.

Q. Do you believe in the multi-party system or would you like your party to be the one party ruling Nepal at some point in the future?

A. I am going to address this question very seriously. Three years ago, at a Central Committee meeting of our party, analyzing the experiences from 20<sup>th</sup> century communist states, we put forward a proposal for the development of democracy. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we cannot have a state like those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That's why our Central Committee unanimously passed this paper on the development of democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The spirit of this paper is that there should be peaceful competition between all political parties against feudalism and foreign imperialist forces. And that there should be multi-party competition. Since then we have said that within a certain constitutional provision multi-party competition [should exist] as long as it's against feudalism, against foreign imperialistic interference and all political parties can compete against each other. And this document was unanimously passed three years ago in very clear terms. In the agreement that we recently made with the political parties, we have clearly stated that we agree to multi-party competition. What we have seen from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the lessons that we have learnt from the experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a very important question was – to understand the subject of

democracy and dictatorship we need to develop a new consciousness for this. And we have passed this. Our opponents have understood us in a dogmatic way. We are not dogmatic but our opponents are. They are looking at us with 20<sup>th</sup>-century glasses. But we are already moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. [We are looking at] the kind of state that is possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how to give people the maximum possible rights; how to organize competition; and how to guarantee that this competition does not lead to oppression and suppression. In short, democracy and dictatorship....How to make use of this conflict between them – we are developing on this. And from this process of development, we have termed, development of democracy. People think that our commitment to the multi-party competition is purely a tactic and that we are trying to cheat someone. But in reality we have taken the experience of an entire century, discussed it, analyzed it in our party, and we've come to a conclusion that the development of democracy is necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That's why we take multi-party competition very seriously. We want to move forward. Even in our understanding with the parties, we have said that we don't want autocracy; that we have to crush the feudal autocracy that exists today. It will never propagate multi-party competition. Events have proved this. Not only now – four years ago, when the royal massacre happened, we saw that the feudal autocracy was snatching away the rights that we gained in the 1990 democracy movement. The parliamentary parties were also against the royal massacre. That's why we appealed to the political parties to join us and build a platform, and [we said] we are ready to compete with you, and the feudal autocracy was a common enemy of ours and we should fight against it. And we have been talking about multi-party competition since then. I strongly believe we need to understand this clearly.

Q. Do you want to be leader of this country? Head of state?

A It depends on this political movement and how the events proceed. Our movement is not for me to be the head of state. This movement is to grant democratic rights to Nepali people and secure a better future for them. It's not for me to be a head of state. If this movement goes on and if the situation arises, then if need be, and if necessary for the Nepali people, I am of course ready for it. But I also want to clarify that – from the lessons of the 20<sup>th</sup> century communist states – we want to move to a new plane in terms of leadership - where one person doesn't remain the party leader or the head of state. This discussion is going on within our party, on the subject of leadership, how the leadership should develop; even after the state is captured, how to institutionalize the subject of leadership and how to prepare new leaders, how to prepare lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of successors to them. What were the negative experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which people who should have been more powerful and should have had more rights, could not get them? We are studying this. Why it could not happen during Stalin's time, how much of this happened in Mao's time – we are studying this and we are in the process of developing a new system of thought. The question of being head of state is not a major question. The major question is the development of ideology which would globally uplift and give rights to the working class – our focus is on

developing that ideology. That's why people might have a difficult time understanding us. Those who see us with 20<sup>th</sup> century eyes would not understand us because we are talking about democracy. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, totalitarianism was widely propagated. People might find it surprising. The main difference in us is when we talk about Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and their ideology, we believe that it has to be developed. Just practising it is not enough. To protect it, practice it and develop it is necessary. The responsibility of developing it falls on every scientific thinking person. After the 10 years of our struggle for people, we believe this responsibility falls on us, and we are thinking about it.

Q You've been living an underground existence for 25 years. What's it been like for you and for your family?

A. Underground – one needs to understand it clearly. I have not been underground from the people. I am only underground from the feudalistic elements and its royal army. In villages where people are free, I stay freely too. I meet my family, my children and my wife.

Q. Where do you think Nepal will be in five years' time?

A. I think it will be a republican state... I believe that it will be a republic state in less than five years. I believe that in a short while, Nepal will be a democratic republic. People's resistance exists. With the unity that has developed between the seven political parties, us and the civic society, and the way that the autocratic monarchy and the royal army have been cornered, with this very shortly Nepal will become a republic. And even in the international community, the way that the feudal elements have been cornered and their dramas have been exposed – in such a situation we believe that the Nepali people will go for a republic and in a peaceful way the process of rebuilding Nepal will go forward. In five years' time Nepal will move towards being a beautiful, peaceful and progressive nation. In five years' time the millions of Nepalis will already be moving ahead with a mission to make a beautiful future, and Nepal will truly start becoming a heaven on earth.

Q. Where will the king be?

A He will be crushed..... The King I think will either be executed by the people's court or he might be exiled. For the King, today's Nepal has no future. We don't see a future for him and the Nepali people don't either. The King might be finished or he might flee.

Q. To build a new future for this country you will have to compromise on some areas. What might those areas be?

A If you are talking about compromise, compromise with whom? If you are talking about compromise with the King, we don't see that happening. The only point of compromise, as we have clearly said, is that all political powers in Nepal should be ready to follow the people's wishes, that there should be free and fair elections for the new constitution, and the compromise would happen when everyone is ready to follow the verdict of this election. But

time has moved forward. The King doesn't have that space now. The steps the King has taken, like the drama of the so-called municipal elections – the whole world saw it as the eighth wonder of the world. And now the path the King has taken, there is no space for compromise with him. There was a possibility for compromise before February 1<sup>st</sup> last year. But after the steps he has taken between Feb 1<sup>st</sup> and now, we don't see any space for compromise, and the Nepali people do not see space for compromise either. We can have an understanding with the political parties and the international community for the development of Nepali people, for peace, for progress – that we are ready for.

Q. A few minutes ago you said theoretically it would be possible to keep the monarchy. Now you are saying a likely future for the king is exile or he might even be killed and there is no compromise. If you talk in those absolute terms how are you going to reach any agreement with the powers that be in this country?

A. What I'm trying to say is that the King has taken steps that do not give any room for compromise. It would be correct to say that the path that he has taken is the road to hell. If he has chosen the path of no compromise, there is no way that we are going to see a compromise. Theoretically as I said there was a possibility. But that has now turned into hypothesis. What I mean is: the agenda that the King is moving with, he is negating the possibility of compromise. In the second stage, I was saying that the King himself has finished this possibility and has taken the path to hell. He is not trying to give the rights to people or even the parliamentary parties. And in such a situation there is no question of seeing a point of compromise with him. This is what I was trying to say.