

## **Cost of violence and the peaceful way out: A comparison of the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists)**

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One of the ways to end protracted, violent, intrastate conflict is negotiated settlement where the rebel parties negotiate with the government and give up armed struggle. However, the most intriguing puzzle is: what influences the rebels to come to the negotiating table and opt for peace? The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) are recent examples of rebel groups that have renounced violence and transformed into mainstream political parties after waging insurgency for many years. These two cases present an opportunity to analyze factors that lead rebel parties to renounce violence. In this article, I argue that violent rebel groups settle for peaceful means owing to their perception of the high cost of violence that arises from pressures exerted by the military means of a state, by domestic groups, and by the international community. In both cases, when the state opened up political space to accommodate the rebel group, accumulated pressures influenced them to renounce violence. The study indicates how civil society, with solidarity from the global community, is able to defy the mobilization narrative of a rebel group and pressure them to renounce violence.

**Keywords:** asymmetric conflict; ethno-political conflict; social movement

After the demise of the Cold War, several cases of armed rebellion have ended in peaceful negotiated settlements and there have been many studies on the topic. For instance, Zahar's thesis (1999) on Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina focused on the transition from armed rebellion to peace agreement, and Soderberg's work (2007) similarly focused on rebel to party transformation with the cases of El Salvador and Mozambique. These studies were based on the rational choice perspective, arguing that incentives drive the rebel groups to peace. Yet, in order to provide a full picture of the transition to peace, this perspective requires further exploration of the factors that push rebels and governments to negotiate.

The cases of Northern Ireland and Nepal are recent cases where armed rebel groups, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), referred to as 'the Maoists' hereafter, have renounced violence to settle for peaceful politics. What led them to do so? To be more precise, the question this article seeks to address is: what are the cost factors that led the armed rebels to renounce violence and come to peace? The main argument of this article is that in

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protracted conflicts caused by armed rebellion, raising the cost of violence for the rebels through military, domestic and international pressure, while opening a political space in the government, influences them to make a strategic shift from violence to peaceful politics.

The findings of this study can have significant relevance in the current context, when there is so much effort going on worldwide to put an end to violence. With the rise of terrorism and asymmetric warfare as in Iraq and Afghanistan, what some call ‘fourth generation warfare’ (Hammes, 2004), subduing an armed rebellion against a state has become a more difficult task. One of the common methods used by governments in inflicting cost upon the rebels is the military strategy of counterinsurgency.

Personally, having served in the Nepalese Army since the beginning of the insurgency in Nepal, I have had a first-hand experience of such counterinsurgency efforts. I have found that such an approach is limited in its applicability when the conflict is *protracted*, for the following two reasons. First, counterinsurgency aims to isolate the rebels and repress the rebellion (Kilcullen, 2006, p. 112). Yet it is precisely because of the inability to repress the insurgency that the conflicts become protracted in the first place. Second, counterinsurgency strategy today is derived largely from the teachings of David Galula (1964) and lessons of earlier insurgencies such as the British Malaya Campaign of the 1950s (FM 3–24, 2006). However, the political environment of the world has changed significantly due to globalization and the media. In this modern context, recent examples of rebellion transformed to peaceful politics, such as PIRA and the Maoists, have shown a new way forward. Study of these two cases can help in understanding and addressing such contemporary protracted conflicts. It is to be noted that the cost of violence in a protracted conflict applies not only to the rebels, but to the state as well. One of the effects of increasing costs to the state can be the state’s opening up of political space to the armed group and accommodating them politically, as seen in both Nepal and Northern Ireland.

This article is organized as follows. The first section reviews literature with the aim of streamlining existing thoughts on the topic of armed rebellion and its settlement. The second section will describe the methodological tools used for the research and the reasons for choosing the case studies. The case studies of PIRA and the Maoists will be analyzed in the third and fourth sections. The fifth section will compare the two cases, before the conclusion.

### **Theorizing the transition from violence to politics**

The aim of the article is to contribute to the theory of how rebel insurgency can be transformed to political party (Soderberg, 2007, p. 5). In order to narrow the scope, the broad topic of rebel to party transformation can be divided into three areas: conflict termination by negotiated settlement (Mason, Weingarten, & Fett, 1999; Walter, 2002; Zartman, 1995), peace agreement process and spoiler problems (Newman & Richmond, 2006; Stedman, 1997), and demilitarization in which former rebels transform into non-violent politics (Lyons, 2005). The main focus of this article is renunciation of violence by the rebels that falls under the first of the above three, conflict termination by negotiated settlement.

This study concentrates on intrastate violence from a governance perspective rather than from a peace-building perspective that entails external intervention. Much literature on conflict termination has been in the area of peace-building in “collapsed states” and dwells on the topic of external intervention (Walter, 2002).

Zahar and Saideman argue that “the security dilemma best applies in the absence of government, as it was originally intended – in the relations of sovereign states in a world without a central government. In relations between sub state units (ethnic group for example), the context is one of hierarchy – where the government exists in some form” (2008, p. 2).

The very existence of armed rebellion indicates the rise of forces that aim to destroy the existing hierarchy. Reinstating the state from protracted conflict implies reconstructing state hierarchy. It is equally important, however, that reconstruction keep in check the state’s capacity for excessive violence. Therefore, in order to address intrastate violence, this study presupposes the balancing act that requires a state to “be sufficiently threatening to deter political opponents while accommodating enough dissent so that frustration does not build into challenge” (Zahar and Saideman, 2008). This balance suggests that bringing peace to sub-state violence involves the state reverting back to hierarchical order, with its monopoly of violence, yet accommodating genuine political demands.

As mentioned earlier, counterinsurgency alone might not be the best approach to address armed rebellion when it is protracted. While counterinsurgency may be desirable at the incipient stage, it tends to get locked into a mutually hurting stalemate when the insurgency becomes protracted. At such times, Zartman suggests that it is negotiated settlement that provides a “way out” (2008, p. 22). He sees negotiation as distinguished from counterinsurgency in offering “basic acknowledgement of the legitimacy of internal dissidence, seen as the result of the breakdown of normal politics” (Zartman, 1995, p. 335).

However, a problem arises when the actors do not agree to come to negotiating table in the first place. Stedman (1996) offers four reasons why negotiated settlements are more difficult in intrastate than in interstate wars: parties need to disarm and form a single army; the totality of the civil war means that only elimination of the opponent is thought to be the solution of the conflict; leaders want a complete victory and control over the country; and finally, fear that the other party will want complete victory and will not be satisfied with a compromise. Amidst such concerns, “rational calculations of cost and benefit become distorted as perceptions of risk become magnified: parties overestimate the risks of settlement and underestimate the risks of continuing the war. The parties come to fear settlements more than they fear continued fighting” (Stedman, 1996, p. 351). Stedman further argues that only two factors will facilitate a peace agreement: First, “the prospect of greater pain and the impending loss of the resources needed to fight create pressures for negotiation. Second . . . if they believe that it [peace agreement] will provide security” (1996, p. 351). While the latter refers to the incentive or pull factor for the negotiated settlement, the pain refers to the cost or the push factor that propels the parties towards an agreement.

Why do rebels choose violent means? This is an important question that needs to be analysed first in order to understand why they choose to settle. The incentive of armed conflict is that it provides “marginal organization with potential to gain power and influence” (Zahar, 2008, p. 162). This argument seems to apply equally, whether the state is repressive or democratic. Groups choose to continue with the conflict when they perceive it to be beneficial compared to the dividend that peace brings or when the end objective seems worth paying the price and can be sustained by the resources they have (Collier & Hoefler, 1998). It is in accordance with such calculations that rebels choose asymmetric warfare and terrorism. Conversely, when

the parties in conflict feel that the cost of conflict is mounting and there is requirement for a break, be it a short-term tactical break or a long-term peace, they choose to stop by proclaiming a ceasefire.

Soderberg's approach to the theory of rebel to party transformation is based on incentive. She argues that the three factors that influence the transformations of rebels into political parties are group cohesion, popular support at the domestic level, and legitimacy at international level (2007, p. 8). However, an analytical problem arises in this argument when considering the fact that increase in legitimacy or popular support due to use of violence is likely to result in continued violence to gain total power rather than compromise and rebel transformation.

This might be explained better by "cost" rather than "incentive". Kalyvas (2008) argues that in the absence of deterrence, such as in weak states, even interpersonal revenge can flare up to take the form of rebellion and violent conflict. In other words, when the cost of violence is low, actors tend to seek the benefits of violence (Zahar & Saideman, 2008, 8–10). It can be deduced from these arguments that the incentive value of legitimacy might be more helpful in turning rebel groups into political parties at a later stage, perhaps during elections; however, without the raised cost of violence, rebels might not be willing to begin negotiation. This is where it becomes necessary to explore the importance of the cost factor that pushes insurgents toward negotiation.

Zartman's theory of ripeness is relevant here. He argues that while incentives increase the pull factor for the rebels to negotiate, the model of "raising the cost" aims to develop the ingredients of a mutually hurting stalemate that makes the push or the 'pain' factor (Zartman, 2008, p. 30). But what is pain in objective terms? Kleiboer (1994) argues against the subjective nature of Zartman's concept of mutually hurting stalemate and his idea of the right moment for negotiation. She suggests that rather than "ripeness", it is the "willingness" of the actors which influences them come to peace negotiations. However, both ripeness and willingness are highly subjective terms not easily turned into objective indicators. In this article, I seek to pursue this debate by identifying the cost variable in objective terms.

## **Methods**

This is a qualitative study of two cases. In particular, it has used Mill's method of agreement to seek commonalities in the cases of the PIRA in Northern Ireland and the Maoists in Nepal. Lieberson points out the downside of this method, arguing that drawing conclusions from a mere correlation of dependent and independent variables of a few cases leaves "strong grounds for questioning the assumptions essential to causal analyses generated by such procedures" (1991). In order to compensate for this danger, I began with focused research and content analysis of each case concentrating on possible causal variables. In both the case studies, renunciation of violence by the rebels was the common outcome. An intervening variable in both cases, "opening up of political space" by governments, was taken as an assumption and therefore its causality was not analyzed.

The study was based on an extensive literature, using secondary sources, along with primary sources such as newspapers, field reports, interviews and online database resources. A good deal of field research has been conducted both in Nepal and Northern Ireland covering the period of violent rebellion. Despite the abundant literature that is available on Northern Ireland, it is still limited in the case of the

PIRA since it had been a secretive organization. Yet, with the literature available, significant observation could be made on the effects of the pressure upon the rebel organization. The research also reflects my own personal observations, having been through the insurgency period in Nepal as a military officer.

### ***Disaggregating the variable “cost” into explanatory factors***

Cost in conflict can be interpreted in terms of pressure that arises due to resource constraint. “Civil war can be conceived of as an organization that mobilizes human and material resources for the purpose of waging battle” (Mason et al., 1999, p. 246). Here I consider three kinds of pressures that constrain rebel ability to continue violence: military pressure, domestic pressure, and international pressure.

#### *Military pressure*

In protracted or intractable conflict, military pressure is mutual, for both rebels and the government. Rather than normal law-and-order police duties, government pressure depends on the mobilization of armed forces in counterinsurgency roles during the times of threat to internal security of the country. Such military pressure creates restrictions for the rebels in their freedom of movement that limit their logistical and mobilization capacity.

#### *Domestic pressure*

This pressure implies lobbying for peace by civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and moderate political parties. Civil society here refers to the wide range of voluntary associations, non-profit organizations and their communication networks that are amorphous, mobile and flexible. But what is at stake for the rebels in the activities of domestic groups and civil society? The answer comes from a mobilization perspective. In order for violent collective action to take place, mobilization through political framing or “collective cognition” is important (Tarrow, 1998). When the rebel leaders face the problem of framing their narration due to societal rejection or for other similar reasons, they are constrained to an extent since civil society is the source of their resources, human or material. Broad acceptance of the rebel frame for conflict is particularly important in areas that do not offer natural resource endowments that rebels can control.

Similarly, moderate political parties are another factor that contributes to domestic pressure on the rebels. Referring to violent conflicts after the 1990, Kaldor et al. argue that “Because new wars represent a form of political mobilization, extremists are generally strengthened in war and civil society greatly weakened” (2003, p. 135). To use Putnam’s term, militant mobilization along extreme ideological or ethnic lines deprives society of the creation of “social capital” necessary for peace. Conversely, it implies that a functioning civil society constrains the extremists and helps the political mobilization of the moderate centre by moderate parties.

#### *International pressure*

International actors here refer not only to individual countries that have specific interests but also the range of international NGOs that form networks globally. It is

very unlikely in a globalizing world that any state and its sub-state actors will remain isolated from the influence of the international environment. According to Kaldor, globalization today has “increased economic, political, social and cultural interconnectedness as well as growing awareness of what happens in different parts of the world and the sense of belonging to the single human community” (2009, p. 180). How does such international interest translate into pressure upon the rebels? Rebels require international support to acquire military resources necessary for violence and also to obtain recognition once in power, their envisioned end state of the violent struggle. Shah (2008, p. 10) uses the Foucauldian term “Polymorphous power” to connote the synergy produced by the fusion of civil society and modern networks of “communication technology and other articulatory assets”, which the civil society uses to generate moral authority. In other words, global values (Kaldor et al., 2003, p. 17) can give civil societies at the international level a global clout. In this context, signals from a global community can render the violent act of the rebels illegitimate, undermine the rebel conflict frame and also restrict their flow of resources. These signals can put the rebels under pressure.

### ***Case selection***

The cases of Nepal and Northern Ireland present an ideal opportunity for studying the transition from rebellion to politics. While the conflict in Northern Ireland represents mobilization along ethnic lines, Nepal’s is a case of ideological conflict in a classic communist pattern. However, after waging armed rebellion for many years, the rebels eventually came to peace through negotiated settlement in both cases. Another commonality between the cases is the timing of the peace initiative, which was in the era of globalization after the Cold War. This research will analyze, for each case, the effects of the three kinds of cost already described.

### **The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA)**

#### ***A brief sketch of the PIRA background***

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), also referred to as the Provos or the Provisionals, was established in 1969 after splitting from the Official IRA (Tonge, 1998, p. 41). Similar to the position of the Official IRA before, the PIRA claimed to be fighting for *Dail*, the last Republican parliament of the undivided Ireland of 1919. The PIRA waged armed rebellion against the British Government from 1969 until the ceasefire in 1994 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The PIRA-led armed rebellion started in Northern Ireland after the civil rights movement. This movement, organized mainly by the Catholic minority, evolved as a result of the Labour government’s adoption of the welfare state policy and in particular Brookborough’s Cabinet decision to extend its social benefits to Northern Ireland in the late 1960s (McGarry & O’Leary, 1996, pp. 155–159). The argument is that such an opening, after decades of harsh measures against the Catholics by the British Stormont regime, provided a room to mobilize the protest movements. It was during this timeframe that intercommunal violence had broken out between the Republicans and the Unionist community (with a majority Protestants). After the Republican–Unionist violence of August 1969, Mac Stiofain, the Provisional Chief of staff, stated that the Republicans “were determined that they would not be caught defenceless again” (English, 2003, p. 120). This became the justification narrative of

the PIRA that was used on several subsequent occasions, for the use of violence against the establishment that was regarded as pro-protestant.

There were many attempts to foster a dialogue between the British government and the PIRA, before the Belfast agreement of 1998. One of the prominent attempts was the Sunningdale Agreement, initiated by the British government in March 1973. Signed by the Republicans at Sunningdale on December of that year, it did not include the PIRA or its political wing Sinn Fein, and lasted no more than six months. The British carried on with their military operations and the Republicans continued to be imprisoned under the 1971 Internment Act. By 1981 the protests and hunger strikes of prisoners at H-Block Maze prison were starting to get attention across UK and beyond, especially after one of the prisoners, Bobby Sands, won election to Westminster before he died of hunger strike in the prison. In 1985, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed between the British and Irish Republic governments acknowledging that the problem of Northern Ireland was a joint one. In 1994, the PIRA with its political wing Sinn Fein declared the ceasefire and finally signed the Belfast Agreement in 1998.

### ***The changing objectives of the PIRA***

From its start until 1998, PIRA underwent tremendous internal change, which is evident in its organizational objectives of that period. In 1971, during the meeting of the members of Sinn Fein and PIRA with the Northern Ireland Secretary Whitelaw, one of their demands was to “hold free elections to establish a regional parliament for the Province of Ulster as a first step towards a new government for the Thirty-two Counties” of the whole island (McGuire, 1973, p. 30). Mac Stiofain, the Provisional Chief of Staff since 1969, did not even approve the meeting, as he “seemed to think that the movement’s aims would be achieved by military aims alone” (McGuire, 1973, p. 33). The British government’s refusal to address any of their demands only strengthened Mac Stiofain’s view within the PIRA. Clearly, their aim at this stage was not compromise, but a complete victory. However, nearly two decades later, this position of the PIRA had changed. In a policy document of the party, *Towards a Lasting Peace* written in 1992, two distinct changes were observed. First, rather than the oft-used phrase “Brits out”, the document used “Irish self-determination” that became the trend thereafter (Tonge, 2005, p. 115). Second, it reflected an expectation for the British government to persuade the Unionists to accept a united Ireland (Tonge, 2005). This evident change suggests a shift in PIRA policy from the earlier resolve of violent confrontation to a more peaceful approach of political contest. What made such a change possible? I argue in this section that the change was due to the relentless pressure from the military, and from domestic and international pressures.

### ***Military pressure on the PIRA***

The British Armed Forces were mobilized for counterinsurgency roles in Northern Ireland in the aftermath of 1969. The intensity of military operations soared following the incident of “Bloody Friday” on 21 July 1972, after Whitelaw’s meeting with the PIRA had failed. On that day, 22 bombs planted by the PIRA killed 10 and wounded 130 civilians in the Belfast city centre within one hour (Operation Banner Report, 2006). In response, the British government carried out a major military

action named “Operation Motorman”, from 31 July to 1 December 1972. This period saw the largest British military deployment in Northern Ireland: 28,000 military personnel including 5300 from the Ulster Defence Regiment. After the end of this operation, there remained approximately 11 Battalions with 15,000 to 20,000 uniformed personnel stationed in Northern Ireland (Operation Banner Report, 2006).

The main tasks of these military units, along with the newly established 14th Intelligence Company (Taylor, 2001), focused on intelligence-gathering and counterinsurgency operations. Besides the routine tasks of checkpoints and patrols, the elite Special Air Service in the later half of the 1970s and 1980s were conducting mostly surgical operations based on sound intelligence (Taylor, 2001). The violence of the PIRA never again reached the level of 1972 (Operation Banner Report, 2006, pp. 2–10).

Indeed, the cost of violence was severe for the PIRA. Constant operations by the British military had become a major obstacle for the PIRA to carry out violent activities, mainly owing to problems of logistics and human resources. First, the logistics problem was something that the PIRA had been facing since the early days. McGuire (1973) points to the problem of ammunition due to the wide variety of weapons they had. The seizure of their weapons shipment from Libya by the Irish Navy on 28 March 1973 was a major blow (Taylor, 2001, p. 154). There were no other large recorded arms shipments from Libya until mid 1980s (O’Duffy & O’Leary, 1990, p. 322). Moreover, massive search operations by Royal Ulster Constabulary in the Northern Ireland and the *Gardai* police force in the South were revealing a large number of arms caches (O’Brien, 1993, pp.143–151). This created a significant logistic challenge, in maintaining the arms to continue violence.

Second, on the human resource front, many of PIRA cadres were arrested or killed. Between May and December 1973 alone, 1798 members of PIRA were arrested and a company of PIRA had to be disbanded (Operation Banner Report, 2006, pp. 2–11). Similarly, O’Duffy and O’Leary (1990) state that due to the increase in the effectiveness of the surveillance by the security forces, the PIRA’s freedom of movement to conduct militant activities during the latter part of the 1970s was heavily challenged. British military pressure remained unabated and by the late 1980s, “70 percent of all planned PIRA operations in the province were aborted for fear of detection, whilst of the remaining 30 percent, another 80 per cent were prevented or interdicted by the security forces” (Neumann, 2003, p. 162). As a result, the PIRA organization restructured in 1976–77 in anticipation of “the Long War” based on the cellular concept of Active Service Units that would be harder to detect (Fay, Morrissey, & Smythe, 1999, p. 12). The military, on the other hand, was focusing on intelligence and surgical operations. The killings of the PIRA operators in Loughall in 1987 and in Gibraltar in 1988 (Taylor, 2001, pp. 270–285) sent a strong signal that they were not safe to operate at home or abroad.

Analysing the deterrence and backlash effects of military strategies in Northern Ireland, Dugan, LaFree, and Korte (2009) argue that while Operation Motorman had a deterrence effect as Republican violence took a “downward trajectory” thereafter, the internment policy, criminalization/Ulsterization policies, and assassinations of PIRA men by the security forces in Gibraltar and Loughall had backlash effects. The internment policy (1971 to 1975) refers to the detainment of suspected terrorists that amounted to a total of 1981, almost all of whom were republicans; and the criminalization policy of the government after 1976 refers to the

treatment of the detained suspects as criminals rather than political prisoners. In general, “backlash” in their argument connotes a rising trend in terrorist attacks following a new response to terrorism. For my argument here, it is not necessary to deny that some counterterrorism policies in Northern Ireland were counter-productive. It is only important that military pressure on the PIRA was strong and persistent across the period of interest.

### ***Domestic pressure on the PIRA***

Domestic pressure for the PIRA to renounce violence came from the community and from the Socialist Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), a moderate Republican party. At community level, the minority Catholic society had started to make demands for political rights after the initial reforms of the 1960s. In 1967, the newly established Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) pursued issues such as opposition to discrimination at local employment, universal suffrage at local and governmental level and repulsion of the Special Powers Act (McEvoy, 2008, p. 33). Additionally, there were peace groups and NGOs working to facilitate people to meet across communities. Such groups that numbered approximately 47 in 1985 had increased to more than 130 by 2001 (Fitzduff, 2002, pp. 33, 35). Together, these associations and NGOs were not only helping the Catholic and the Protestant communities to work together, but also “campaigning against plastic bullets or *punishment beatings*” (Fitzduff, 2002, p. 15). By doing so, the popular cause of the Republican movement for political mobilization of the community was being addressed by these organizations. Their efforts helped to create indirect, grassroots pressures on both government and the rebel organizations. To the former, pressures mounted to reform and accommodate the minorities. On the other hand, for the PIRA such efforts rendered their extremist mobilization narratives weak as the practice of political protests was promoting a non-violent means to push for reform.

The Catholic community was another important element of domestic pressure. The PIRA had adopted the “Armalite and ballot box” strategy after the successful hunger strike prison protests of 1981. Sinn Fein, the political wing of the PIRA, came to the fore after its leader Gerry Adams won election in 1982 to the Northern Ireland Assembly. However, the built-in contradiction of the “Armalite and ballot box” strategy had posed a serious problem and was largely counterproductive for its political ambition (McGarry & O’Leary, 1996; Shirlow, 1998, p. 174). The Catholic community, still shocked by the prison deaths of the hunger strikers, did not favour the “provocative” armed campaigns of the PIRA (Murray & Tonge, 2005, p. 113).

In the meantime, following the Eastern European example of the late 1980s, the role of civil society was becoming significant as an agent of change. By the mid 1980s, members of the civil society were beginning to question the elite version of the narrative that had been fuelling the conflict (Farrington, 2008, p. 124). It is here that a link can be drawn between the refusal of the Catholic community to abide by the violent narrative of the militant PIRA and the rise of its political wing, Sinn Fein. Shirlow (1998, p. 176) states that besides the low 6% of the national votes that Sinn Fein received in the 1980s, even the supporters were beginning to get uncomfortable with its use of violence. It was amidst such rejection among the Catholic nationalists that Adams, in his publication *The Politics of Irish Freedom* in 1986, proposed a new strategy for their movement by showing a peaceful way out (Arthur, 2002, pp. 90–91).

SDLP, the moderate party of Republicans, was putting pressure on PIRA by attracting its supporters. Under its leader Hume, the SDLP in the 1980s was getting much attention from the Catholic community that was beginning to look away from violence. Like the PIRA and Sinn Fein, the agenda of SDLP was also Republican, but the difference was its adoption of non-violent means. Derived from their 1972 document that proposed Anglo-Irish activity, the SDLP initiative in 1983–84 was a *New Ireland Forum* for all the nationalist parties. This forum aimed to affirm the aspirations of the Republicans at a politico-structural level and also acknowledge comprehension of the Unionist position (Murray & Tonge, 2005, p. 126). Sinn Fein rejected the Forum, as they were concerned about the eminence of SDLP as a challenger in their Republican cause (Murray & Tonge, 2005, pp. 124, 127). The British Government seemed to marginalize Sinn Fein and promote SDLP by agreeing to facilitate the Anglo-Irish Agreement that was in line with the proposal made earlier by the SDLP (Shirlow, 1998, p. 175). At the international level this “was a coup for the SDLP largely because of the diplomatic efforts of John Hume” (Murray & Tonge, 2005, p. 143). However, Sinn Fein leader Adams had a nuanced view and was of the opinion that Anglo Irish Agreement gave a political opening for all the nationalists including their party (Murray & Tonge, 2005, p. 149). As a result of these pressures and perceptions, Adams towards the late 1980s, had successfully endorsed the policy of anti-absenteeism in the Republican movement that sought to seek fresh allies and form a “Pan-nationalist front” to engage with the government in securing political gains through dialogue (Shirlow, 1998, p. 177). By this time, Sinn Fein had become much more prominent than the militant PIRA.

### ***International pressure on the PIRA***

Literatures of international pressure on the armed Republican movement tend to bifurcate into two main strands: pressures due to change in international environment, and other deliberate measures. First, the PIRA movement was ongoing during the time when international politics was witnessing an end of the Cold War. Cox (1997) points out that such change was not a sufficient condition but a necessary one, which added to the PIRA perception of futility in continuing armed movement. He cites a Sinn Fein document where their argument was that the British were against the undivided Ireland because a neutral state outside NATO would pose it a grave threat, an exaggerated version of which would be the formation of “European Cuba” out of Ireland (Cox, 1997, p. 683). In this sense, the PIRA’s fight was against the quest of the British “Imperialists” to dominate and control the island. However, the fall of the Soviet Union and the Downing Street Declaration later in 1993, which stated that the British Government had “no selfish strategic and economic interests in Northern Ireland” (cited in Cox, 1997, p. 686), left them bereft of such justification, thus implying the futility of their armed struggle.

Another similar change in the international environment was the rise of human rights imperatives. Farrington (2008, p. 48) argues that “the shift in the international agenda away from territorial notions of self determination and an increase in interest in human rights norms have been mirrored by a shift in Sinn Fein’s discourse”. Such shift had caused the movement to shed its solidarity with the earlier version of armed national liberation movement to a more politically astute agenda of human rights and equality.

There were four other deliberate measures at the international level influencing the PIRA. First, the seizure of an arms shipment from Libya by the French and Irish authorities posed not only immediate constraint on resources, but also signalled a hostile international attitude towards their armed struggle. Second, as discussed above, seizures of weapon caches in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland were a major blow. Third, Clinton's policy of easing up relations with the movement and the aspirations of Republic of Ireland to join the European Union also signified the contextual change in the international setting (Cox, 1997). This setting influenced the PIRA to shed violence and come on board in common pursuit towards regional and Western prosperity after the Cold War. To use Stedman's term (1997), they would otherwise miss the "departing train".

Finally, global activism was becoming more vibrant. Hughes (2009, p. 302) argues that the immense injection of EU funding in Northern Ireland after 1995 for peace and reconciliation projects lacked "deep and strategic thinking" (2009, p. 302) and that its objective was based on generic concept of "partnership" and civil empowerment rather than strategic and substantive policy agendas (2009, p. 294). He points to more than 5000 voluntary and community organizations that had emerged haphazardly and grown as a business, with more people employed in this sector than in the manufacturing industrial sector (2009, p. 296). However, it can also be argued, as Hughes states at one point, that the mushrooming of the NGOs did provide international dimension for "recognition of the political nature of the conflict" (2009, p. 293). Moreover, the fact that the power-sharing model of the Sunningdale Agreement was rejected by the PIRA in 1970 but accepted in 1998 can also be related to the changed environment caused by, among many others, the rise of these NGOs in the later period. When combined with the pressures from military and civil, they contributed to the making of the aforementioned "Polymorphous power" that pressured the PIRA from the social and global sphere.

To recapitulate, the mounting pressures on the PIRA over the years influenced it to renounce violence. The initial pressure by the military and the detentions in prison shifted the focus of the republican movement to protests for political rights. The winning of elections by Bobby Sands and the prominence of Adams in politics helped to bring the political wing, Sinn Fein, to the fore. The swing of the Catholic community away from the violence and the competitive pressure to win votes against the SDLP rendered their ballot and bullet strategy a paradox. The international scenario after the Cold War shook their ideological foundation, while the confiscation of arms shipments and caches by Irish and French authorities indicated an uphill battle that PIRA faced if they were to continue violence. Moreover, along with these push factors, there was also a pull factor that requires mentioning. The changing proportion of demography due to lower birth rates, higher death and migration rates of the Protestants in Northern Ireland was an incentive or pull factor for the Catholics, as it signified increasingly powerful republican votes (McGarry, 2001, p. 119). The Republican decision to renounce arms was based on these rationalist premises.

## **Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)**

### ***A brief background of the Maoist insurgency***

The Maoist insurgency in Nepal started in 1996 and lasted until 2006, claiming the lives of 13,256 people (NHRC Report, 2007). In 1990, following a mass uprising

against the one-party monarchical system (*Jana Andolan I*), Nepal had adopted a multiparty democracy with a constitutional monarch. The Maoists declared “People’s War” in February 1996 after the government refused to concede to the group’s 40-point demands. This section will seek to show why the Maoists shifted their position from a violent party to one that agreed to renounce violence and come to peace. For simplicity, the decade of insurgency in Nepal can be divided into three phases interspersed with peace talks during the ceasefires: from 1996 to the end of the first ceasefire in November 2001, from then until the end of the second ceasefire in 2003, and finally, the phase of political turmoil until the formation of interim government that included the Maoists in 2007.

#### *1996–2001*

From 1996 to the beginning of the first ceasefire in 25 July 2001 was the inception period of the insurgency to which the state responded by mobilizing the police force. Police operations conducted in the Maoist stronghold area in Western Nepal in 1995 and 1998 had a significant negative effect on the locals and it became one of the key mobilization narratives for the Maoist leaders (ICGR, 2003, p. 4). The first ceasefire that had become effective on 30 July came to an end on 23 November 2001, with the Maoists attacking military barracks in the Dang and Salleri districts of Western Nepal. The government responded to such unprecedented attacks by declaring a state of emergency three days later. It was after this emergency declaration that the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) was mobilized in a counterinsurgency role.

#### *2001–2003*

This second phase started with the state of emergency and lasted until the end of second ceasefire in August 2003. The king had acquired more power since the start of the ceasefire in January 2003. The new king Gyanendra had ascended the throne after the royal massacre on 1 June 2001, when the crown prince killed the former king and other members of the royal family before committing suicide. At the time, the political situation was at an impasse, as government power was not able to maintain internal security to conduct elections. The new king intervened on October 2002 by sacking the government that he labeled as “incompetent” and appointed a hand-picked Prime Minister, Lokendra Bahadur Chand (Thapa & Sijapati, 2004, p. 129). The King’s role became more active and the Maoists initiated a second ceasefire with the government.

#### *2003–2006*

After the resumption of hostility in August 2003, the next phase of turmoil lasted until the final peace agreement in June 2006. A key turning point was on 1 February 2005, when the king took an extreme step by dismissing the Prime Minister, imprisoning and placing political party leaders under house arrest, and putting a ban on media. In response to the royal coup, major mainstream parties formed a Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and together with the Maoists, they started mass protest movements for 19 days (from 6 to 24 April 2006) referred to as *Jana Andolan II*. When the king finally resigned, the political parties reinstated the House of Representatives. They then signed an eight-point agreement on 16 June that gave

political space to the Maoists. The Maoists agreed to renounce arms, locking them in containers under UN supervision. A consensual interim government was formed and the legislature declared Nepal a republic. The Maoists had a share of 83 seats out of 330 in the legislature of the interim government (Lawoti, 2008, p. 340).

### ***Change in Maoists' objectives and the puzzle***

The Maoist policy objective changed significantly over the years. Prior to their decision to start an armed rebellion, they had taken part in the parliamentary election under the party name United People's Front Nepal. They were then able to win 9 out of 205 parliamentary seats. It can be argued that the leadership of the Maoist movement at the time calculated the use of violence as the best means to garner more power. "The plan of initiation of the people's war would be based on the principle that everything is an illusion except state power" (Thapa & Sijapati, 2004, p. 46; from the Worker No. 2 1996). In an interview in 2001 conducted by Revolutionary International Movement (RIM) publication *A World to Win*, the Maoist Supremo Prachanda makes the aim clear: "Now we are marching forward, focused on the main slogan of consolidating and expanding the base areas and marching ahead in the direction of establishing the central people's government. The latest towering military actions are the result of the same slogan and plan" (Maoist Statements & Documents, 2003, p. 267).

However, a few years later in 2006, the Maoists seemed to agree on renouncing arms with a few seats in the legislature and the interim government. What was the reason for such compromise before attaining their earlier mentioned aim of state capture? If abolishing monarchy was their ultimate aim after which they would renounce violence, why then did they initiate a dialogue with the King during the second peace talks in 2003? Overall, the question posed by Lawoti is apt: "Why did the Maoists abandon the electoral path (only eventually to return to it)?" (2008, p. 18). The remainder of this section, in confirmation with the main argument of this article, will explain how the cost of the violence for the Maoists, through pressures at military, domestic and international levels, was the reason behind such rational choice.

### ***Military pressure on the Maoists***

Authors such as Nepali and Subba (2005, p. 92) and Gersony (2003, p. 28) argue that the Maoists experienced unfettered growth prior to the mobilization of the RNA. This changed after the declaration of emergency rule on 26 November 2001. The government also issued the Terrorist and Destructive Activities (Prevention and control) Act (TADA), which gave extraordinary powers to the security forces to arrest and detain suspects without trial for up to 90 days, and to seek another 90-day extension in the court (Karki & Seddon, 2003, p. 37; Geiser, 2005, p. 9). The military numbered 46,000 when the insurgency began, and doubled after the peak of insurgency in 2003 (Nepali & Subba, 2005, p. 98; Dhungana, 2007). During this surge in capacity, highly efficient units such as the Ranger Battalion were formed (Kaplan, 2005). The government adopted the Unified Command strategy in 2003, which brought police and armed police under the RNA, thus granting unity of purpose and coordinated action (Marks, 2003, p. 19). As a result, it was in the first emergency period in which the effect of the RNA operations, combined with

the emergency measures, had a large impact on the Maoists. The Maoists lost 4132 of their members in the 14-month emergency period, which was four times more than before the emergency (Thapa & Sijapati, 2004, pp. 141, 150). A report by Amnesty International states that within a period of 9 months after the imposition of the emergency, 9900 “Maoists” were arrested, 1722 of whom continued to remain in custody (cited in Pettigrew, 2003, p. 265). While human rights organizations were criticizing the state for such a heavy-handed approach, the toll on the Maoist organization was causing fast depletion of its human resources. This could be seen in their forceful recruitment drive in the villages at the time. It was this pressure that influenced the Maoists to initiate peace negotiations with the monarchy in 2003, which was termed the “unholy grand design” by analysts (Upreti & Dhungana, 2004, p. 7), connoting a conspiracy theory that the Maoists were the King’s stooges.

The raised cost of violence inflicted upon the Maoists since the deployment of the military proved to be detrimental in their aim to seize power through violence. While the seven-month long respite during the ceasefire from January to August 2003 might have provided the Maoists with consolidation time, military pressure resumed as soon as they turned back to violence after the ceasefire was broken. In the days that followed, such pressure against the Maoists would be taken to a new height when combined with international and domestic pressure.

### ***International pressure on the Maoists***

The interests and involvement of the international actors in Nepal during the insurgency period were varied. Some countries had security interests, mainly India and USA; others had developmental or humanitarian concerns such as the EU countries, UN or other International NGOs. While the former contributed to boost the security mechanism of the state with their military aid, the latter helped to create the “deterrence assurance balance” (Zahar & Saideman, 2008, p. 15), by influencing the state to open political space and also protesting against the violence.

Instability in Nepal was a security concern for both India and the US during the insurgency years. For India, this was due to the open border, especially after the hijacking of Indian Airlines from Kathmandu in 1999 by terrorists who were linked with Kashmir (ICGR, 2003, p. 5; Mishra, 2004, p. 643). Similarly, the US concern grew after the September 11 terrorist attacks and the declaration of the Global War on Terror by the Bush Administration. The Maoists were declared terrorists, by both India and the US, along with a “red corner notice” put upon them by the Interpol. Both countries provided the Nepalese government with military aid, which was operational when the third phase began after the end of the ceasefire in August 2003. At the time, the RNA acquired 5000 M16 rifles from the US and bought 5500 Belgian machine guns. It bought from India 13,000 INSAS rifles, 6 helicopters, 2 light helicopters and military trucks at discounted rates (Seddon, 2005, p. 14). The British provided two MI-17 helicopters and 2 Islander reconnaissance aircraft on the condition that they would not to be used for lethal purpose (Seddon, 2005; Shrestha, 2006, p. 183). Moreover, the Indian authorities arrested a central level Maoist leader, C.P. Gajurel, in August 2003, followed by Matrika Yadav, Suresh Ale and Mohan Baidya in early 2004 (Mishra, 2004, p. 641). This posed a huge problem for the Maoists’ freedom of movement and also raised their concern for international legitimacy.

The other aspect of international influence in Nepal during the period grew out of humanitarian concerns. A number of international organizations including the EU, UN and many NGOs, were voicing their concerns for human right abuses. Whitfield (2008, p.8) succinctly points to the dilemma faced by the development donor community during 2002 about whether to continue providing aid to the King's regime after the political parties were dismissed. There were mounting demands on the government to guarantee human rights (AHRC, 2005), and this worked well to entice the Maoists towards peace as it was influencing the government to accommodate the Maoists if they renounced arms. Suhrke mentions that in August 2002, the UN Secretariat had made an offer to the Maoist chairman, Prachanda, for UN mediation, which he finally agreed in March 2004 (2009, p. 19). In Zartman's term (2008, p. 30), this international humanitarian approach was helping to provide the "way out".

### ***Domestic pressure on the Maoists***

Domestic pressure to the Maoists came from two camps: civil society and the moderate political parties. The term civil society in Nepal encompasses a wide range of organizations, from traditional community organizations to trade unions, human rights organizations, gender-, media-, and ethnicity-based organizations (Hachhethu, 2006b, p. 116). Moderate political parties here refers mainly to the seven-party alliance (Nepali Congress Party, Nepali Congress (Democratic), Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist–Leninist, Nepal Sadbhavana Party, Nepal Workers and Peasants' Party, United People's Front, and the United Left Front) or the "SPA" that was instrumental not only in bringing multiparty democracy in 1990, but also bringing an end to the monarchy in 2006.

The civil society influenced the Maoists by both indirect and direct means. A study conducted by Hachhethu et al. suggests that as a result of the democratic change of the 1990s and the freedom of speech thus acquired, there was a sharp rise in general political participation in subsequent years (Hachhethu, Kumar & Subedi, 2008, pp. 27–29). Civil society demanded reforms in the government for the rights of *dalits* (lower castes), women and indigenous groups, and worked towards empowering all strata of population including workers and journalists (Dahal, 2006, p. 28). These measures robbed the Maoists of their revolutionary agendas to a certain extent, as the people could demand rights without having to fight with the state military. This pressured the Maoists, albeit indirectly, since mobilizing people to engage in violent activity was becoming more difficult with increasing public awareness of the democratic process.

People were also beginning to protest against Maoist atrocities. Due to the scarcity of resources caused by military pressure, the Maoists were resorting to extortion and abduction for the purpose of recruitment. The atrocities perpetrated by the Maoists were beginning to get national media coverage at an unprecedented level. In the month of January 2005, for example, there were reports of Maoists abducting 600 students from Doti in Western Nepal on the 13 January; 177 students and 38 teachers from Raamechap on 21 January; 500 youths in Acham on 22 January; and 1100 students and teachers from Sankhuwasabha and Dhading on 28 January (TKP, 2005). This culminated in the Chitwan bus-bombing incident, where a Maoist landmine killed 40 civilians in June 2005 (BBC, 7 June 2005). This led to the protests by civil society, human rights organizations, and the general public against

Maoist violence. The result of such protests by the empowered civil society in Nepal had a contagious effect in pressuring the Maoists.

Moderate political parties had a major role in convincing the Maoists to choose peaceful means. Prior to 2005, a tripartite power-relation existed between the Maoists, democratic political parties and the constitutional monarch, which had been advantageous for the Maoists (Hachhethu, 2006a, p. 125). After the King's takeover in February 2005, both the Maoists and the political parties found a common agenda for alliance against the king. Hachhethu argues that it was around this time that the Maoists realized "the limitation of the 'people's war' in terms of gaining complete victory" (2009, p. 62). However, it can be argued that such realization had been floating amongst the Maoists since the king's takeover and that the alliance with the political parties had merely opened up the political opportunity to manifest it by forming political alliance. As argued in the paragraphs above, their difficulty in fighting militarily during the first emergency period had been exacerbated by international pressures. In this context, the alliance with political parties had provided a good opportunity to shift the strategic focus from politics by violence to politics of peace. In the 12-point agreement signed between the SPA and the Maoists on November 2005, they agreed "to end the autocratic monarchy and establish complete democracy" (Nepalnews, 2005).

To summarize, it is apparent that the pressure exerted on the Maoists compelled them to leave the path of violence. The late deployment of the military gave time for the insurgency to grow, but nonetheless the Maoists felt significant pressure after the first emergency and the deployment of military. Although at an incipient phase, the democracy in Nepal allowed the government to open political space even during this tumultuous period. The Maoists, due to the accumulated pressure from domestic and international actors, changed their stance and renounced violence in 2007, thus transforming into a political party with a quarter of the 330 interim legislature seats.

### **Comparative analysis**

The two case studies show that pressure from the government forces, domestic groups and the international community raises the cost of violence for armed rebel groups. Military pressure was an important dimension for both the PIRA and Maoist cases. Kumar, a political science scholar from Nepal, writing in the chaotic time just before the broad-based people's movement of 2006, *Jana Andolan II*, argues that the emergency measures "brought about a paradox to the fore: emergency was declared to secure the state against the threats to its integrity but it also exposed the existing circumstances of insecurity" (2006, p. 162). In retrospect, however, the emergency and the military pressure, in spite of the momentary insecurity and the harsh measures, did uphold the supremacy of the state in both Nepal and Northern Ireland. As mentioned earlier, counterinsurgency did eventually prove to be "the reassertion of state hegemony against the counter-hegemonic forces subsisting in the social sphere" (Kumar, 2006, p. 161). In Northern Ireland, the relentless pressure of the military against violent actions and the confinement of cadre led the PIRA to shift their focus to protest movements after Bobby Sands won the election.

Similar to the bullet and ballot strategy of the PIRA, a shift in the Maoists' strategy due to the military pressure can be identified in an interview with Maoist Chairman Prachanda:

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. (Prachanda’s interview, BBC, 2006)

The progression of events in both the cases brought a similar change in the equilibrium between the governments and the rebel groups. With military pressure on the insurgents, the focus of contest for both groups became politics rather than violence, due to the moderate political parties and the rising constituencies of the moderate middle ground. For the IRA, the precise shift was marked by their demand for political status in the prison cells. As for the Maoists, it was the demand for the revival of the parliament. After such a shift, it was the moderate political parties, SDLP in the Northern Ireland and the SPA in Nepal, which began competing with rebel parties for popular support. This made their strategy of “bullet and ballot” or the “balanced” mix of politics and military, that had evolved as a result of the government military pressure, a paradox in both cases. When continued pressures on the rebels met with the intervening factor of political openness in the governments, there was the shift of equilibrium from violence towards the peaceful politics by negotiated settlement.

The role of international pressure in the two cases varied in degree. Compared to Nepal, the bilateral commitment and pressure was much greater in the case of Northern Ireland because of its proximity to Western international values and organizations. Yet, the role of international community in empowering the civil society and raising awareness was common in both cases. It is in this sphere that the global and domestic pressures seemed to have fused together in producing the net effect, which compelled the parties to come to peace. While the pressure on the state was to open political space, the pressure on rebel parties was to renounce violence in order to gain legitimacy.

## **Conclusion**

The argument of this article is that the raised cost of violence influences rebels to renounce violence and adopt peaceful means as political space is opened to them. The PIRA and Maoist cases show that, in the current context of globalization and broad media coverage, domestic and international communities together with security forces can influence rebel groups to turn to peaceful politics. When conflict is protracted and the rebels cannot be suppressed by counterinsurgency means alone, negotiated settlement is the way out. However, convincing the rebels to renounce violence and being able to institutionalise their demands through peaceful politics is difficult because of the unyielding positions of the actors. When the governments were willing to accommodate the rebels, an intervening variable that was assumed rather than examined in this paper, cost factors influenced rebels to renounce violent means and come to agreement. This essay has also taken a step forward in disaggregating the cost or the pain factor, as proposed by Zartman (2008), into three different mechanisms: counterinsurgency pressure, domestic civil pressure, and international pressure. Soderberg’s (2007) study of rebel to party transformation makes a negotiated settlement the first step for the rebels to turn into a political party and the two cases analyzed indicate that these three kinds of cost came together in determining this crucial first step.

Finally, the findings of this study mark the acknowledgement of the effect of global dimension in internal politics. Ironically, results highlighted the importance of sovereignty in addressing insecurities of the citizens, yet pointed to the inevitability of the rise of global values and the permeation of such values into internal politics. This raises questions that have implications for further study. In the current context, to what extent do values of human rights influence domestic and international voices against violence? Also, to what degree is military pressure important in relation to the pressure from the domestic and international voices? These questions will likely be raised in future approaches to understanding how armed rebellions end.

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