



Armed Conflicts Report

Nepal (1996 - first combat deaths)

Update: January 2009

Summary

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Background

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Summary:

2008 The election for a constituent assembly in April 2008 was carried out in relative peace despite fears of extensive violence. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) received a vast majority of the votes in a surprise victory followed by Nepali Congress Party and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist). Power sharing negotiations continued for months following the elections until July when Nepal's governing assembly elected Ram Baran Yadav as the first president since abolishing its 239-year-old monarchy. Pushpa Kamal Dahal was named Nepal's first Maoist Prime Minister and took office in August 2008. The government claimed to be tackling the issue of enforced disappearances, which remain a continuous problem within the country. Sporadic violence continues in Nepal although the estimated violence-related deaths in the country have decreased from the previous year. A heavily debated issue in 2008 was the future of the approximately 19,000 former Maoist combatants and their integration into the national army. The Maoist party supports their integration while all other parties reject such a process.

2007 Elections originally scheduled for June 2007 were postponed until April 2008 after the Maoists quit the coalition government over disputes surrounding the method through which King Gyanendra's power should be eliminated. Insecurity is on the rise despite the 2006 peace accords after Madhesi peoples in the Tarai region clashed with Maoists in March, leaving around 130 dead. Although the death toll has declined since 2006, deaths that occurred in 2007 are the result of new hostilities between the government and Madhesi supporters vying for an autonomous state. International analysts and human rights organizations have warned that a failure to diffuse insurgency by Madhesi's may result in renewed destabilization and continued violence.

2006 Co-operation between the Maoist rebels and the House of Representatives led to King Gyanendra's power being stripped, and power being returned to the elected parliament. A cease-fire beginning in April lasted throughout the year, and allowed for peace negotiations to take place between the Maoists and the parliament, leading to an official end to the war in November and a return to democratic practices, which will include the Maoists. Before the implementation of the ceasefire, approximately 480 were killed.

2005 Fighting continued between Maoist rebels and the Royal Nepalese Army killing over 1,500 people. Meanwhile civil disobedience and general strikes repeatedly paralysed the country following King Gyanendra's dismissal of the elected government. In September, opposition parties and Maoist rebels agreed on a common alliance in opposition to the monarchy.

2004 Mass strikes, riots, kidnappings, blockades, terrorist bombings and major clashes between Maoist rebels and government security forces contributed to the conflict this year resulting in thousands of deaths. Thousands more were injured and hundreds of thousands remain displaced. The King of Nepal controlled the government

while opposition parties and donor agencies pushed for the restoration of democracy.

2003 A ceasefire between the government and Maoist rebels held for the first eight months of the year, leading to a decline in conflict-related deaths in 2003. However, due in part to the continued suspension of the democratically-elected government, the rebels withdrew from the ceasefire in August and both sides resumed fighting, resulting in the death of approximately 1,000 soldiers, rebels and civilians in less than five months.

2002 Fighting escalated dramatically as government and rebel forces launched frequent attacks which killed over 4,600 people, many of them civilians.

2001 Following the June massacre of the royal family Maoist rebels increased attacks, killing over 50 people, mostly police, in July. The new round of violence prompted the use of the army against the rebels for the first time. In late July, the newly-elected Prime Minister ordered an army ceasefire and called for dialogue with the rebels. The rebels agreed to peace talks in August but, by November, had broken the ceasefire and walked out on the talks.

2000 Insurgency spread to at least 35 of Nepal's 75 districts in 2000 and grave human rights violations continued, committed both by the Nepalese police force and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN). Over 1,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the conflict, 300 of them in 1999

Type of Conflict:

State control

Parties to the Conflict:

1) The government.

President: Ram Baran Yadav Mr Yadav became the first president of republican Nepal in July 2008, nearly two months after the country's new constituent assembly had voted to abolish the 239-year-old monarchy. He is an ethnic Madheshi from Nepal's southern lowlands and was backed by the centrist Nepali Congress - the second largest party in parliament - as well as two smaller parties.

"Nepal's governing assembly has elected the country's first president since abolishing its monarchy. The assembly selected Ram Baran Yadav, an ethnic Madheshi from the centrist Nepali Congress party, on Monday, rejecting Ramraja Prasad Singh, backed by the Maoists. Yadav received 308 votes, giving him the majority of votes in the 594-seat assembly required to win. Singh won 282 votes. Yadav is the first head of state since the dissolution of the 240-year old Hindu monarchy in May." [*Al Jazeera*, 11 July, 2008]

Prime minister: Prachanda Prachanda is the alias of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Nepal's first Maoist prime minister. The former rebel leader took office in August 2008 after protracted political negotiations following Nepal's transformation from a monarchy into a republic.

[Source: BBC Country Profile: Nepal]

"The Maoists had won in 112 of 202 constituencies where counting of the direct vote had concluded. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's Nepali Congress, which has dominated politics for six decades, had won just 32 seats, while the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML) had won 28 seats." [*Christian Science Monitor*, 15 April, 2008]

2) The Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) (also known as Madhesi Peoples' Rights Forum or MPRF) under Chairman Upendra Yadav – active primarily in the Terai region of Nepal, in the lowland area near the Indian border.

Composed of the Madhesi peoples of the Terai region, this umbrella group is vying for fair representation in the Constituent Assembly and redress for heavy-handed suppression of protests by government forces. The group also wants the creation of a federalist state system, under which it would be able to gain state autonomy. Analysts warn that if problems in the Terai region are not resolved, violence could once again engulf the country and undermine the 2006 peace agreement.

"Violence involving the Madhesi people of southern Nepal is spreading with dozens of people injured. Madhesi activists are demanding greater autonomy, better representation in parliament and the removal of hill dwellers from important local jobs. They have called an indefinite strike. The latest violence centered on the towns of Biratnagar and Janakpur." [*BBC News*, 25 January 2007]

"This is not a simple law and order problem," says Ameet Dhakal, news editor of the Kathmandu Post, the leading English daily. "The protests are fueled by long-accumulated resentment, frustration, and desperation among the Madhesis, and the real or perceived bias against them." [*The Christian Science Monitor*, 06 February 2007]

"Until the government passed a liberal citizenship bill late last year, Madhesis often had a difficult time securing citizenship certificates, which Nepalis need to vote, get driver's licenses, own property, and carry passports. The lack of opportunity has disenfranchised a vast segment of the Madhesi population. Several groups, including the Madhesi People's Rights Forum and two splinter groups of Maoists, claim to lead the protests. The Forum was the first to articulate the Madhesis' political demands, which include a federal structure with some degree of self-determination for Madhesis, a proportional election system for the special assembly elections to draft a new constitution, and fair representation of Madhesis in state organs." [*The Christian Science Monitor*, 06 February 2007]

"Part of the extensive flatlands or Terai, it was ablaze with the anger of Madhesis, or southern Nepalese, complaining that the state discriminates against them. Violence, leaving over 25 dead, has cast a shadow over a country at a time when the United Nations has been rolling out its new peace mission to consolidate the end of the Maoist insurgency. And the agitation is not over yet, it is merely suspended for 10 days, insists the chairman of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Upendra Yadav. He refuses even to talk to the government unless Home Minister Krishna Sitaula is sacked and the deaths are investigated at the highest level." [*BBC News*, 12 February 2007]

"Considering more than one in three Nepalese is a Madhesi, they are under-represented in power." [*BBC News*, 12 February 2007]

3) Other insurgent groups operating in the Terai region of Nepal.

Status of Fighting:

2008 Sporadic violence occurred, particularly in the Terai region of Nepal, which resulted some 81 deaths and an increased number of Internally Displaced Persons. During the April election, however, the anticipated violence was largely absent. Approximately 800 international observers participated in the elections which fostered a peaceful electoral process.

"Numerous armed groups, largely in the Terai region in the lowland area near the Indian border, engaged in attacks against various entities, including civilians, government officials, members of particular ethnic groups, each other, or Maoists." [*2008 Human Rights Report: Nepal*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, 2009.]

"Thousands of people displaced by Nepal's decade-long Maoist conflict still await help almost 21 months since a comprehensive peace accord was signed. Based on the number of registered IDPs, the government estimates there are 44,831 IDPs in the country, while NGOs and international agencies put their actual numbers at between 50,000 and 70,000." [*IRIN*, 6 August, 2008]

"Despite worries caused by a pre-electoral period marred by incidents of violence, Carter Center observers found that on election day the majority of Nepali voters participated in a remarkable and relatively peaceful constituent assembly election with the overall election administration being well-executed." [*The Carter Center*, May 2008]

"Some 800 international observers are in the country, including ex-US president Jimmy Carter and a 120-strong European Union team." [*AFP*, 8 April, 2008]

2007 Despite the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in November 2006 and the arrival of United Nations disarmament observers, violence within Nepal has continued throughout the year. New outbreaks of fighting between the Madhesi peoples of the Tarai plains and Maoist supporters in March near the town of Guar left over 100 dead. The international community continues to condemn Maoist rebels who have reportedly reinstated their recruitment of child soldiers. A United Nations demobilization program entered its second phase, with the collection of over 3500 weapons from the Maoist rebels. However, for the third time in less than a year the Maoists blocked UN inspections of their camps, fuelling reports of their involvement in increased abduction and enrolment of child soldiers. Further, villagers in rural areas continue to report intimidation and coercion from Maoist supporters that has in some cases escalated into cases of arbitrary beatings and forced abduction. In early 2008, Madhesi insurgents constructed a road block in the capital of Kathmandu, effectively eliminating the import of necessary commodities to the country's capital.

"The United Nations will launch its first arms monitoring operation in Nepal beginning on the 7th of January to implement its support to the peace process as requested by the Maoists and the interim government of seven national parties, which signed a historic peace agreement in November ending the decade-long armed conflict." [*IRIN*, 29 December 2006]

"Local human rights activists are still concerned that the Maoists have not stopped recruiting civilians, especially children. The international children's watchdog, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, claimed in its 2005 report, 'Caught in the Middle: Mounting Violations Against Children in Nepal's Armed Conflict', that up to 30 percent of the Maoist forces may be children." [*IRIN*, 11 January 2007]

"The protests gathered momentum after police arrested 28 Madhesi activists in Kathmandu on Jan 16 for burning copies of the interim constitution, and later turned violent after a Maoist cadre killed a Madhesi protestor in clashes in eastern Nepal on Jan 19 for blocking the highway. The protests have left 19 people dead so far, including one policeman, according to Informal Sector Service Center, a human rights NGO in Kathmandu. With curfews in place for weeks in violence-torn industrial cities and towns bordering India, Kathmandu is running short of essentials, including fuel and cooking gas." [*The Christian Science Monitor*, 06 February, 2007]

"Leaders of southern Nepal's Mahadhesi community, who are demanding federal powers, vowed to continue blocking the road between Kathmandu and the Indian border, the main corridor for most of the landlocked country's imports." [*Agence France Presse*, 19 February 2008]

2006 January saw the end of a three month cease-fire, with the Maoists aggressively attacking government targets. Intense fighting occurred between the rebels and the security forces from January to April. In March, the rebels imposed road blocks, inhibiting any traffic into the capital, Kathmandu. In April, the Maoists suspended the road block, and called a three month ceasefire, which the government agreed to. The cease-fire was extended for another three months in July, and yet again in October, resulting in a relatively peaceful year compared with those in the recent past. During the cease-fire, peace talks took place between the rebels and the government, resulting in a formal end to the decade-long war on November 21, 2006. The UN is to launch an arms monitoring operation in Nepal beginning on January 7, 2007.

"Hundreds of Maoist rebels raided a town in eastern Nepal, bombing government buildings and freeing dozens of prisoners from a local jail, officials said on Monday....the rebels, who are fighting to overthrow Nepal's constitutional monarchy, bombed or set fire to the district administration office building, the revenue office and the local municipal council office....The rebels also set ablaze the home of the mayor who was elected in last month's municipal elections opposed by the Maoist." ['Maoist rebels attack Nepal town, free prisoners', *Reuters AlertNet*, March 6, 2006]

"Maoist rebels in Nepal have extended an olive branch by announcing a unilateral three-month ceasefire and suspending a crippling road blockade that had cut off the transport of essential goods in the capital for the past three weeks."['(Nepal tension eases as Maoists call ceasefire', Tilak Pokharel and Somini Sengupta, *Reuters*, April 28, 2006]

"Nepal's government and Maoist rebels declared a formal end Tuesday to a decade-old civil war that killed about 13,000 people in one of the worlds' poorest countries. 'The government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) have agreed to convert the ongoing cease-fire into a

permanent truce and declare that the war which began in Feb. 1996 is over,' said the accord, written in Nepali." ['Nepal's Premier, Rebel Leader Declare End to Civil War', Sharma Gopal, *Reuters*, Wednesday November 22, 2006]

"The United Nations will launch its first arms monitoring operation in Nepal beginning on 7 January to implement its support to the peace process as requested by the Maoists and the interim government of seven national parties, which signed a historic peace agreement in November ending the decade-long armed conflict that had killed over 14,000 Nepalese people." ['NEPAL: UN monitoring of arms and armies to begin', *IRINnews.org*, Wednesday January, 3 2007]

2005 Intense fighting between Maoist rebels and government troops throughout the year resulted in hundreds of deaths on both sides. Human rights violations and the use of child soldiers by the rebels and the government continued. Thousands of people were arrested in a year-long crackdown by the government. Large pro-democracy demonstrations, general strikes and rebel blockades shut down the capital Kathmandu on multiple occasions. Violent vigilante groups armed by the government were also more active. Fighting decreased following a four month unilateral ceasefire declaration by the rebels in September.

"Nepali police fired tear gas to break up protests by rock-throwing students during a general strike in Kathmandu on Friday to protest the killing of 12 civilians by a soldier near the capital, witnesses said. Shops and schools were shut and public transport off the roads in the city, which mainly heeded the strike call by political parties as anger remained high following the incident around midnight on Wednesday when the soldier fired on a crowd of villagers who had gathered at a temple to mark the full moon." [*Reuters*, December 16, 2005]

"Maoists killed 40 Nepalese soldiers in an all-night battle in the country's northwest, the army said, brining the death toll to 66 after the rebels said 26 of their fighters were killed." [*Agence France Press*, August 9, 2005]

"Both the Maoists and the Army have involved children in their bloody nine-year war...CWIN [Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre] estimates that 405 children under 18, including 115 girls, have been killed in the conflict so far." [Bikash Sangraula, *Christian Science Monitor*, June 28, 2005]

2004 Intense fighting continued with major clashes between government security forces and Maoist rebels, as well as Maoist attacks on civilian targets. A government ambush of Maoists in March involved thousands of soldiers and resulted in hundreds of deaths. Rebels blockaded the capital of Kathmandu several times including a major blockade that almost entirely halted the flow of goods and people in and out of the city for several days. Maoist attacks on development and infrastructure projects resulted in millions of dollars in damages. The frequency of clashes increased during December.

"More than 1,000 Maoists launched a violent assault on a district headquarters in Nepal's northwestern mountains, officials said Sunday, as angry traders rallied in Kathmandu to protest a crippling rebel blockade of the capital, now also hit by a general strike." [*Agence France-Presse*, August 22, 2004]

"Maoist rebels attacked development and infrastructure projects Sunday in rural Nepal, causing more than one million dollars of damage ahead of a general strike, police said." [*Agence France-Presse*, May 2, 2004]

"Nepalese security forces have claimed major success in 36-hour clashes with armed Maoist rebels in western Nepal, state-run Radio Nepal reported Tuesday." [*Agence France-Presse*, February 17, 2004]

"The killing of 29 security force members by Maoists in Nepal's eastern district of Bhojpur is a major blow to the Nepalese army, which had claimed it was eroding the rebels' power." [*BBC News*, March 3, 2004]

2003 The intensity of fighting between Maoist rebels and government forces was low early in the year following a January ceasefire but a breakdown in negotiations in August led to a return of violence. The rebels continued the use of guerrilla tactics such as ambushes and bombing and antipersonnel mines were used by both sides. Both the rebels and security forces targeted civilians; the rebels attacking those deemed "enemies of the people", including politicians and teachers, and government forces targeting those perceived to be supportive of the Maoist cause. A government initiative to create civil defence groups to fight the Maoists threatened to further draw the civilian population into the conflict. Aside from civilian casualties, the conflict also produced a significant number of both internally and externally displaced persons.

"Plans to set up 'Rural Volunteer Security Groups and Peace Committees' can place the civilian population in grave danger by seriously compromising their neutrality ..."[*Amnesty International*, November 11, 2003]

"During the second half of 2003, media reported some 200,000 displaced in urban areas across the country with 100,000 IDPs in Kathmandu alone. If one includes those who have fled to India, the total number of people displaced, directly or indirectly, by the conflict could be much higher." [*ReliefWeb*, October 10, 2003]

"Both the army and the Maoists have been using landmines, which have victimised civilians more than the combatants,' the [Ban Landmine Campaign Nepal] statement said. [*Agence France-Presse*, August 15, 2003]

"Once welcomed by many Nepalis, the rebels have grown increasingly brutal in their 'people's war' ... According to human rights monitors and victims, they have murdered teachers and other perceived enemies ...

Government security forces have fought back with harsh measures of their own, targeting not only the Maoists but in many instances unarmed civilians accused of supporting them, according to a report released last month by Amnesty International." [*Washington Post Foreign Service*, January 2, 2003]

2002 Rebels and government forces clashed in frequent skirmishes with the most intense fighting related to proposed elections. Both sides were accused of destroying property, and killing and torturing civilians.

"Human rights groups have accused both the rebels and the government of killing and torturing civilians." [*Boston.com*, August 9, 2002]

2001 Maoist rebels increased attacks after the June 1 massacre of the Nepalese royal family, most against remote police stations. The government response was to deploy the Nepalese army against the rebels for the first time since the uprising began in 1996.

"Nepal was braced for further violence after Maoist rebels shot dead 41 policemen and vowed to continue their war against the government. The rebel leader, 'Comrade Prachanda', chairman of the underground Maoist communist party, claimed responsibility for the attacks on three police posts in remote areas of western Nepal. In the latest attacks, a large group of rebels surrounded a remote police post in Lamjung district, 120 miles west of the capital Kathmandu. At least 21 officers were shot dead in a two-hour battle. The rebels killed 10 policemen at Taruka, 50 miles north-west of the capital, and shot 10 more in an ambush at Bamiaksar, 188 miles to the west." [*The Guardian*, July 9, 2001]

2000 Armed insurgents continued to commit kidnappings, torture and killings. The police force took retaliatory measures (extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention). In response to the rise in insurgent attacks, the government of Nepal has increased the powers of the police to arrest and detain suspects and to deal with the insurgents.

"Unrest has spread from the Maoist heartland in the mid-western region to affect more than 35 of the county's districts and recently attacks have escalated sharply...." [*Asia Pacific*, 8 March 2000, p. 16]

"...police operations in the context of the 'people's war' are not subject to proper control. There appears to be no independent investigation of alleged 'encounter' killings. There has not been a single case of any police officer being charged, let alone prosecuted, in relation to excesses committed in the context of the insurgency...Chief District Officers, prosecutors and district courts turn a blind eye as case after case of killings in disputed circumstances get reported." [*Amnesty International*, 24 February 2000]

"The Maoists guerrillas have been responsible for a series of outrages. Two months ago the rebels beheaded a suspected informer, leaving the victim's head in a tree. Last month they killed 21 people...they have ruthlessly eliminated supporters of the ruling Nepali Congress and other rival parties...MP's are now too scared to live in the districts they represent." [*Asia Pacific*, 8 March 2000, p. 16]

Number of Deaths:

Total: An estimated 13,000 to 14,000 people have died since the conflict erupted in 1996.

"Nepal has a long history of violence. A decade-long Maoist insurgency claimed more than 13,000 lives, with the police, the army, and the Maoists all responsible for numerous human rights abuses during the conflict." [*Human Rights Watch*, 22 May, 2008]

"Nepal's 10-year conflict has taken the lives of about 13,000 people."
['UN begins Nepal arms monitoring', *BBC News*, January 8, 2007]

"...nearly 11 years of armed conflict [that] led to the deaths of over 14,000 people."
['NEPAL: Rights activists want child soldiers released', *IRIN news*, Reuters AlertNet, 20 Nov 2006]

2008 The number of conflict-related deaths decreased in 2008 with at least 81 violence-related deaths reported. Despite the comprehensive peace agreement signed in 2006, violence continues to be a reality as civilian and militant deaths result from bombings and shootings within the country. Enforced disappearances remain a problem and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist confirmed it was responsible for deaths related to a number of the enforced disappearances in 2008.

"The year saw at least 81 fatalities in extremist-related violence, comprising 55 civilians and 25 militants. Militants killed included Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) cadres as well as insurgents of different groups operating in the Terai region." [*Nepal Assessment 2009*, South Asia Terrorism Portal]

"In recent years, there have been a significant number of bombings, shootings and armed clashes across Nepal, including in areas frequented by foreigners, resulting in the death and injury of many Nepalese civilians. Violent incidents, including bombings, have continued in 2008 despite the cease-fire announced under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the formation of a new government." [*UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, 17 March, 2009]

"In July 2008, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) acknowledged to Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) that it had killed 12 of the 14 persons OHCHR had documented as victims of actions tantamount to enforced disappearance by the CPN-M." [*Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, December, 2008]

2007 Over 130 deaths were reported in 2007. The majority of these deaths involved civilians and Maoist rebels and occurred as the result of clashes with Madhesi protestors in the Tarai plains. Although this represents a decline from 2006, it also demonstrates a new source of unrest in the country.

"Violent protests and fighting among rival minority groups seeking greater rights has killed more than 130 people and at least 200 others have been kidnapped in southern Nepal this year, the UN said. The United Nations human rights office in the capital, Katmandu, said all violence must cease and demands for greater rights should be pressed for peacefully." [*The Associated Press*, 13 December 2007]

"More than 60 people have been killed in violent clashes between police and Madhesi protestors, largely led by the popular Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), known as a platform for all pro-Madhesi activists and supporters but yet to be recognized as a political party." [IRIN, 09 April 2007]

"Nepalese police failed to stop the massacre of at least 27 Maoist supporters by ethnic activists last month, the United Nations human rights body said. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) also called for a government investigation into the violence in the south of the country, which has cast a shadow over the country's peace process." [Agence France Presse, 20 April 2007]

"Since the 16th of September violence between the Pahade and Madhesi ethnic communities has led to at least 18 deaths, and over 5 000 displaced people requiring humanitarian assistance, according to local human rights activists." [IRIN, 26 September 2007]

2006 South Asia Terrorism Portal estimates there were approximately 480 deaths this year, the bulk of them occurring between January and April, before the cease-fire was declared. The majority of deaths were Maoist rebels (238), followed by a significant number of security forces (181), and a much smaller number of civilians (61).

"More people have in fact been killed by the government side, but the Maoists have ruthlessly pinpointed and executed people." ['Meeting Nepal's Maoist Leader', Charles Haviland, *BBC News*, June 16, 2006]

"According to Human Rights Watch, although some of the army's worst excesses have been curbed, it still commonly commits torture and sponsors armed vigilante groups which abuse local people. The organization says the Maoists in turn forcibly recruit children and murder those they accuse of being vigilantes...violence in Nepal appears to be more random and anarchical than ever."

['Civilian deaths 'rising' in Nepal', Charles Haviland, *BBC News Kathmandu*, March 28, 2006]

2005 According to the Nepal-based Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) which carries out extensive investigations throughout Nepal, over 1,500 people have been killed this year with roughly two-thirds of those killed by government troops and the rest by rebels.

"...a New Dehli-based rights group said violence had intensified under emergency rule in Nepal with more than 600 people killed in the 100 days after the king seized power, taking the total number of deaths to 12,000 since the Maoist revolt erupted in 1996." [Gopal Sharma, *Reuters*, May 10, 2005]

2004 Over 2,700 people were killed in 2004. Conflicting reports about casualty numbers and the absence of reports on casualties from government assaults make an estimate of casualties difficult. The majority of the reported casualties were rebels, but a significant number of civilians and members of security forces were also killed.

"Army spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung said 500 Maoists were killed as well as 18 soldiers and policemen as troops pushed the rebels from Bedi, headquarters of Myagdi district 300 kilometres (180 miles) west of Kathmandu." [Agence France-Presse, March 21, 2004]

2003 According to independent media reports, over 1,800 rebels, government fighters and civilians were killed in 2003, with the vast majority of these deaths occurring following the August 27 collapse of the ceasefire agreement. Approximately 80 percent of all reported casualties occurred among rebel forces; however, due to the style of warfare being conducted and to the conflicting casualty reports, it is impossible to confirm the exact number of casualties.

"In the two months since the collapse of a cease-fire agreement, more than 1,100 people, many of them noncombatants, have died in renewed fighting between Maoist rebels and U.S.-backed government forces ..." [Washington Post, November 7, 2003]

"After breaking off a seven-month peace process with the Kathmandu government, Nepal's Maoist rebels have launched a campaign of assassinations in the capital ... Government forces have been fighting back, including an attack on a rebel bunker that killed at least three dozen Maoists yesterday." [*Globe and Mail*, September 18, 2003]

2002 Over 4,500 people were killed in the conflict throughout 2002.

2001 According to media reports more than 600 people were killed in rebel offensives in July. The majority of the dead were police officers stationed in remote outposts.

2000 According to a number of sources approximately 400 people were killed in fighting during 2000.

"According to official figures, between November 1999 and October 2000, 221 people were killed by police in the context of the 'people's war'. The government claimed there were no civilians among them and that all members of the CPN (Maoist) were killed during exchanges of fire. However, there was clear evidence that dozens of civilians and many members of the CPN (Maoist) were unlawfully killed. There were also reports that riot police killed several civilians, including two children, when they opened fire during demonstrations in December." [*Amnesty International 2001 Annual Report*, January-December 2000]

1999 There were at least 400 people killed during 1999, many of them reportedly civilians.

Political Developments:

2008 In the April 10th elections, which domestic and international observers accepted as being legitimate, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M or Maoists) won a majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly (CA). Soon after being sworn in on May 27th, the CA abolished monarchy and proclaimed the country a federal democratic republic; on June 11th, King Gyanendra moved out of the Narayanhiti Palace. On July 23rd, Ram Baran Yadav became president and Pramananda Jha vice president. Earlier in the year, the government had moved towards allowing an autonomous Terai region and in October it proposed peace talks with rebel groups in the region but few groups responded and at year's end, the armed struggle for control in Terai continued.

"The situation is much worse in the Tarai region, where at least 14 armed groups continue with their armed struggle in the name of Madhesi aspirations, even after the Eight-Point Agreement signed on February 28, which conceded the demand for an autonomous Terai region subject to the approval of the Constituent Assembly." [*Nepal Assessment 2009*, South Asia Terrorism Portal]

"In October, the Nepalese government called on rebel groups for peace talks to end violence in the region. However, less than half a dozen groups have accepted the government offer and only a few of them have actually held talks with the government. The armed groups have been blamed for over 150 deaths since the beginning of 2007." [*South Asia News*, 25 January, 2009]

"Though the run-up to the elections was marred by sporadic violence, the polling was, by and large, peaceful. Every party accepted the verdict, even if some of them were shocked at their performances. In its very first meeting, on May 28, the CA declared the country a Federal Democratic Republic and formally announced the abolition of the monarchy. King Gyanendra quietly vacated the Narayanhiti Palace on June 11." [*Nepal Assessment 2009*, South Asia Terrorism Portal]

"The Maoists won a surprise victory in last year's election and now head a coalition government but their rebel army has never disbanded. A former Maoist commander is now the defence minister." [*Reuters*, 3 March, 2009]

"Amnesty International has called on Government of Nepal to end impunity by establishing an independent and effective commission to resolve enforced disappearances, avoiding amnesties for key human rights violations and acceding to the Rome statute of international Criminal court." [*Amnesty international*, 17 March 2009]

"Over recent weeks and months, leaders of various political parties have been giving divergent

views on how the army integration process should take place and how the 19,602 Maoist combatants should be managed. Leaders of almost all parties, but not the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), suggest that the Maoist combatants should not be integrated into the Nepal Army (NA), while the Maoists want all their former fighters inducted into the national army." [Myrepublica.com, 2 February, 2009]

"Despite the achievements thus far, Nepal still faces various challenges in consolidating peace. The government needs to address the integration and rehabilitation of some 19,000 former combatants, in addition to drafting a new constitution and fulfilling peoples' high expectations for peace dividends. During his visit to Nepal, the Secretary-General encouraged the political parties to continue cooperation to meet these challenges, and he pledged continued international support for Nepal in carrying the peace process forward." [UN Peace Operations Year in Review 2008]

2007 Following the November 2006 peace agreement, on January 15, 2007 an interim constitution came into force, paving the way for Maoists to join the country's Interim Parliament and to officially become part of the Government. However, elections that were originally scheduled for June 2007 were postponed to April 2008 after the ruling coalition government failed to break political deadlock with Maoist rebels. Maoists quit the coalition government in September after the other parties did not agree to abolish the monarchy without a vote. On a separate political front, the Madhesi people continued their struggle for a federalist Nepal and asserted their demand for an autonomous Madhesi state. A 22-point peace agreement was signed in August between the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and the government that promised a federalist system with autonomous states. However, the agreement has failed to stop unrest as Madhesi protests continued along with violent clashes with other activist groups, Maoists and government forces. The government has embarked on establishing a truth and reconciliation commission modeled after that of South Africa, while the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, has asserted that a truth and reconciliation commission should not serve as a substation for prosecution of those involved in atrocities. International analysts warn that a disregard for Madhesi demands could jeopardize the 2008 elections and may further inhibit the peace process, ultimately forcing the country into renewed violence and destabilization.

"Unrest in the Tarai plains has exposed the weaknesses of Nepal's peace process, could derail elections for a constituent assembly in November and, if not properly addressed, could start a new form of conflict." [International Crisis Group, 09 July 2007]

"The Madhesi Janadhikar Forum signed a 22-point agreement with the government, primarily agreeing to restructure Nepal as a federal country with autonomous states, and to give proportional representation to Madhesi, people from the Terai plains, in all state agencies." [New Kerala Online, 31 August 2007]

2006 King Gyanendra called municipal elections for February 8 which were boycotted by the Maoist rebels. Voter turn-out was only twenty percent and the results were eventually revoked by the House of Representatives. In April, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the rebels reached an agreement to work together to oust the King. Following a three week road block into the capital city and a four day general strike that shut down the entire country, Gyanendra announced he would hand political power back to the SPA and the House of Representatives. The House passed a proposal depriving the King of his power to veto laws in the legislature, removing his legal immunity from paying taxes, and stripping him of his position of Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepalese Army. Peace talks between the SPA and the Maoists resulted in a formal end to the war in November. The agreement included plans to convert the existing House of Representatives to an larger interim parliament that would include seventy-three Maoist members, with plans to hold official elections that would include the Maoists in June 2007. An interim constitution was drawn up and will come into affect January 15, 2007.

"Representatives of the seven political parties and Maoists announced an agreement to launch a fresh agitation on April 6 against King Gyanendra. Both the sides made public the Memorandum of Understanding through separate statements. The agitation programme starting on April 6 includes a four-day general strike and civil disobedience movement, besides a large public rally in the capital Kathmandu on April 8." [South Asia Terrorism Portal, March 19, 2006]

"Nepal's parliament has stripped the king of his power over the legislature – effectively leaving the

monarchy with little more than a ceremonial role. The move comes weeks after King Gyanendra was forced to give up absolute power in the face of massive anti-government protests." ['Nepal's Parliament Strips King of Last Powers', Patricia Nunan, *newsvoa.com*, June 11, 2006]

"Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist rebel leader Prachanda signed the accord at Katmandu convention hall packed with cheering officials, dignitaries and foreign diplomats. Under the agreement, the rebels are to join the interim parliament by Nov. 26. An interim government including the rebels is to be in place by Dec. 1. A yet-to-be elected constituent assembly is expected to decide the monarchy's fate. Centrist parties favor a constitutional monarchy with a ceremonial role for the king." ['Nepal government, rebels sign peace deal', *Associated Press, CTV.ca*, Tuesday November 21, 2006]

"The government and the Maoists have agreed that an interim constitution should come into effect on 15 January. A meeting between the two sides agreed that the new constitution would give the prime minister unprecedented powers and pave the way for an administration that includes the Maoists." ['UN begins Nepal arms monitoring', *BBC News*, January 8, 2007]

2005 In February Nepal's King Gyanendra led a coup d'état to create an absolute monarchy backed by his 78,000 strong Royal Nepalese Army and launched a violent crackdown on opponents. In response, opposition parties organized several massive pro-democracy demonstrations and nation-wide general strikes. Towards the end of the year, the seven party alliance representing Nepal's ousted political parties and the Maoist rebels agreed to a common front against the monarchy. The Maoist rebels agreed to support multi-party democracy putting aside their demand for a communist republic and in September announced a three-month unilateral ceasefire. All parties agreed to boycott local and parliamentary elections announced by King Gyanendra for February 2006 and April 2007 respectively.

"Nepal's seven main political parties say they are preparing for talks with the leaders of the nation's Maoist rebels, who have been waging a violent campaign against the state for the last nine years...On Monday, party leaders reached a consensus on forming a monitoring committee to ensure the rebels adhere to promises made not to attack civilians, NGO staff or political party workers in areas of the country they effectively control...In early July, Maoist supreme leader Prachanda proposed talks with Nepal's seven leading political parties aimed at uniting against the government led by King Gyanendra, who suspended parliament and assumed direct rule on 1 February, 2005." [*Reuters*, August 23, 2005]

"The Royal Nepalese Army, which assisted King Gyanendra's February 1 seizure of power, is responsible for a widespread pattern of enforced disappearances, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. Human Rights Watch called on the king and the army to immediately end the practice of 'disappearances' and to take concrete steps to hold perpetrators accountable." [*Human Rights Watch, Nepal: Security Forces 'Disappear' Hundreds of Civilians*, March 1, 2005]

"Nepal's King Gyanendra has sacked the country's government and declared a state of emergency...Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and members of his government have been placed under house arrest and have had their homes surrounded by soldiers...In his announcement, King Gyanendra said he was dismissing the government 'because it has failed to make necessary arrangements to hold elections by April and protect democracy, the sovereignty of the people and life and property.'" [*BBC News*, February 1, 2005]

2004 The rebels offered to hold talks with the king under international oversight but the government indicated that only the Prime Minister would negotiate based on guarantees of success. In addition to the violence, thousands of Nepali citizens were kidnapped by the Maoists. Most were released after attending "re-education" programs or Maoist celebrations but some as young as 15 were forced to work or serve with the Maoists. The Nepalese Prime Minister's talks in India led to an Indian pledge to train and support the Nepali security forces in their fight against the Maoist rebels. Meanwhile, donors failed to agree on an aid package for Nepal, citing the violence and the King's reluctance to hold elections as reasons, and several hundred thousand Nepali citizens remained displaced.

"Maoist rebels kept vehicles off roads leading to Nepal's capital for a second day on Thursday and

residents said fuel was being rationed and food prices had begun to rise. The guerrillas call for an indefinite blockade -- and an implied threat to attack vehicles that violate it -- has disrupted the supply of food and goods to Kathmandu, a city of 1.5 million people situated in a valley ringed by hills." [*Reuters*, August 19, 2004]

"Maoist rebels fighting to topple Nepal's monarchy would be ready for a new ceasefire if the government meets their key demand of an assembly to rewrite the constitution, a senior guerrilla said Wednesday." [*Agence France-Presse*, July 7, 2004]

"The Nepali Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, has ruled out an immediate resumption of peace talks with Maoist rebels...He told reporters in the capital, Kathmandu, that no negotiations were better than failed ones, and that there was no point in initiating talks unless success was guaranteed." [*BBC News*, June 22, 2004]

"Nepal's King Gyanendra has said there needs to be peace for democracy to work properly in the country...Nepal is also suffering a prolonged power struggle between the king and the main parties after he sacked the elected government in October, 2002." [*BBC News*, February 19, 2004]

2003 A ceasefire agreement signed by the government and the Maoist rebels in January endured until August, in spite of occasional outbreaks of violence. The commencement of the ceasefire coincided with the government's decision to remove the terrorist label from the rebel group, which was reapplied following its collapse. The rebels cited the government forces' continued activity and a lack of political reform as justification for their formal resumption of hostilities. In June, King Gyanendra appointed Surya Bahadur Thapa as Prime Minister following the resignation of Lokendra Bahadur Chand. The main political opposition to the government came from five parties that formed a common front. The five parties – Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), People's Front (PF) and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandi Devi) – opposed the monarchy's interference with parliament and refused to participate in talks between the rebels and the government, due to their allegation that the appointed government was unconstitutional. In May the US State Department added the Nepalese Maoist Party to its terrorist watch list.

"... the king - revered by traditionalists as a divine incarnation - has faced four months of street protests in Kathmandu by Nepal's five leading mainstream parties, furious at being sidelined from power. Unless the king first reaches an agreement with the five agitating parties, there is no question of solving the Maoist problem in the country,' Thapali [a political science professor in Kathmandu] said." [*Agence France-Presse*, October 3, 2003]

"In a dramatic statement on Wednesday, chairman of the Maoists Comrade Prachanda announced that the utility of holding talks, maintaining ceasefire and sticking to peace code of conduct has ended ... He blamed the government's inability to agree on their demand for constituent assembly and the 'activities of army' as being responsible for their taking the decision to walk out of the peace process." [*Daily News Advisory*, August 28, 2003]

2002 In October, due to escalating fighting, King Gyanendra dismissed the prime minister, assumed full executive powers and indefinitely postponed elections. In November, the King appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand as leader of the interim government. The state of emergency called in August was allowed to lapse although the government continued to employ the army to counteract rebel attacks. A rebel call for peace in October was ineffectual, failing to put an end to the violence or the food grain shortages caused by rebel and army blockades.

"Nepal sank into political crisis last night when King Gyanendra sacked the prime minister, assumed full executive powers and postponed a general election indefinitely... An escalating guerilla war waged by Maoist insurgents has led to the crisis..." [*Electronic Telegraph*, October 5, 2002]

"... there was a severe food grains shortage in Karnali region due to [a] Maoists blockade, violence, terror and stoppage of government supplies by the army." [*Daily News Advisory*, October 3, 2002]

2001 In July the Nepalese Prime Minister deployed army units against the rebels for the first time although soon after the newly-elected Nepalese Prime Minister ordered a government ceasefire and called for dialogue. The rebels responded in kind and in August they agreed to meet with government officials for peace talks. However, by November, the rebels had decided to walk out on peace talks and to break the ceasefire.

"A Nepalese government team is due to meet Maoist rebels in Kathmandu for the first formal direct contact between the two sides since 1996. The landmark peace talks aimed at ending the Himalayan kingdom's bloody insurgency. The talks came five weeks after Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected as the troubled kingdom's prime minister and issued an invitation to the rebels for negotiations. The rebels have agreed to a truce and exchanged dozens of prisoners as a goodwill gesture ahead of the talks." [CNM, August 30, 2001]

2000 In March, prime minister Girja Koirala regained power, replacing Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Since his return, Koirala has advocated a hardline approach and an armed solution to the conflict.

"There were worrying signs that the government was pursuing a hardline approach, particularly after it put before parliament a bill increasing the powers of the police to arrest and detain suspects and to shoot on sight anyone who 'engages in any violent or subversive act', and granting further judicial powers to district administrators rather than the courts." [Amnesty International Annual Report, 2000]

Background:

Following two-centuries of hereditary rule by a small elite at the top of Nepal's complex ethnic and caste-based social hierarchy, the establishment of a multi-party democracy in Nepal in 1990 as well as a new constitution, brought expectations of increased human rights protections, stability and development. Despite some improvements, however, there was little progress in bringing existing legal and administrative provisions fully in line with international standards and principles enshrined in the constitution which set up a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. On February 13, 1996 the "People's war" was declared by the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) against the Nepalese government with the main goal of establishing a republican state. Human rights violations by both the government security forces and CPN members have been reported on a daily basis. Following the mid-2001 massacre of the royal family, violence escalated and the government brought in the army in addition to national police forces to fight the rebels.

In late 2002 King Gyanendra dissolved Nepal's elected government, allegedly in order to bring about stability, postponed elections indefinitely and assumed de facto control of the state. These actions and the lack of political reform further alienated the Maoist rebels and the political opposition from the Nepalese Government. Power was returned to the House of Representatives in 2003, but once again removed in 2005, when Gyanendra claimed the elected parliament had been proven unable to deal with the Maoist insurgency.

During 2006 Gyanendra announced he would hand political power back to the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the House of Representatives. The House passed a proposal depriving the King of his power to veto laws in the legislature, removing his legal immunity from paying taxes, and stripping him of his position of Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepalese Army. Peace talks between the SPA and the Maoists resulted in a formal end to the war in November 2006. Elections were scheduled for June 2007 but then delayed until 2008 after political parties and Maoist rebels failed to reach an agreement over a new electoral system and the fate of the monarchy. In addition, throughout 2007 Madhesi protestors in the Tarai region repeatedly clashed with government and Maoist forces and are asserting their right to an autonomous state. Analysts have warned that a failure to acknowledge and diffuse this issue could effectively undermine the 2006 peace accords.

"The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006 paved the way for the United Nations to establish the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), a special political mission mandated to provide support and assistance during the transitional period." [UN Peace Operations Year in Review 2008]

"Since its establishment by the Security Council in January 2007, UNMIN has provided assistance in several key areas, including technical advice to Nepal's electoral authorities in the planning and organization of the election, civilian monitoring of the management of arms and armed personnel

from the Nepal and Maoist armies in 28 cantonment and satellite sites around the country." [UN *Peace Operations Year in Review 2008*]

Arms Sources:

India, the US and the UK have supplied military equipment to the Royal Nepalese Army and the Armed Police Force, as well as training to Nepalese soldiers in counter-insurgency measures. China, Belgium, South Africa, Poland, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and France also supply military support to the government. In 2005, following King Gyanendra's coup both India and the UK suspended military aid to Nepal for a brief period of time but later both countries resumed arms shipments. The US also postponed the shipment of "lethal arms" to Nepal. By the end of the year US shipments had not resumed.

The rebel groups use homemade weapons and explosives or steal weapons from the police and the army. Kashmiri rebels and other Indian rebel groups and illegal arms dealers have also been accused of supplying the Maoists with arms. Although both the Nepalese government forces and the rebels have been using antipersonnel landmines for several years, the government has confirmed that it is now a producer of such mines.

[Sources: *Landmine Monitor Report 2003*; *Daily News Advisory*, January 9, 2003; *SIPRI Yearbook 2002*; *Jane's Defense Weekly* August 7, 2002; *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1999-2000*]

"The government recently paid cash worth about \$15 million to the Israeli government for ammunition for M16 rifles. Now it has paid another \$10 million for Chinese-made rifles....there are fears the government could be diverting development funds to buy weapons. Security spending has already shot up in the last four years. The new expenses would also substantially line the pockets of agents and the officials they liaise with." ['Nepal dips into dwindling dollars for more arms', *newKerala.com*, Monday February 6, 2006]

"While Nepal's major arms donors India and the US suspended lethal arms supply after King Gyanendra seized power through a bloodless coup last year, China and Israel have been supplying arms and ammunition to the Royal Nepalese Army with negotiations on to get supplies from Pakistan as well." ['Amnesty asks for arms embargo on Nepal', *newKerala.com*, February 12, 2006]

"We have 10,000 weapons including mortars and rifles...most of them were seized from security forces during battles,' said Ananta [a military leader]." ['Nepal rebels reveal strength for first time, say they have 36,000 troops', *Agence France Presse*, Tuesday July 11, 2006]

"Local NGO, Friends for Peace, reported the bulk of small arms smuggled into Nepal come from India's bordering illegal arms bazaar. It said light weapons like katuwa (homemade guns), bharuwa (muzzle loader), 12-bore guns, 22-bore guns, air guns, rifles and shotguns were easily brought into Nepal, mostly by criminals and sold to Maoist militants." [*IRIN News*, October 17, 2005]

"Governments of countries named in this report, in particular India, the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK), have provided substantial levels of arms, training and other military assistance to Nepal throughout this period. The assistance increased after November 2001, when the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) became directly involved in the conflict. In Amnesty International's view, such assistance has enabled an increase in grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law." [Amnesty International, *Nepal: Military assistance contributing to grave human rights violations*, June 15, 2005]

UK's military supplies: "According to the UK government's reply to questions raised in the UK Parliament concerning arms supplies to Nepal, the UK government has provided as a 'gift' the following 'non-lethal' equipment to the government of Nepal between 2000 and 2004: 2x2 Tonne ultra light dumper trucks (2000); 35 Land Rovers (2002); 2 Mi17 helicopters (2003); Load carrying equipment for MISG (2003) Radios and night vision goggles for MISG (2003-04); 10 Mk7 bomb disposal wheelbarrows (2003); Improvised Explosives Devices (IED) search equipment

(2003–04); Revolution IED wheelbarrow (2004); Infrastructure support and office equipment for RNA Intelligence School (2003–04); Infrastructure support for RNA Peacekeeping School (2003–04); English language training facility for RNA Peacekeeping School (2004–05); 2 Islander Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) aircraft and associated surveillance equipment (2004); Engine spare parts for Ferret Scout Cars (2004). Although this equipment is described as 'non-lethal', it can be used to help launch military attacks and placed in the wrong hands it could facilitate violations of humanitarian law and human rights violations." [Amnesty International, *Nepal: Military assistance contributing to grave human rights violations*, June 15, 2005]

"Since 2001, the USA has provided over US\$29m in FMF [Foreign Military Financing] to Nepal, which has included grants for military equipment and training.(10) According to a US Department of State official, this military assistance included 20,000 M16 assault rifles provided to the RNA.(11) The APF and Rangers Battalion of the RNA have also been armed and trained by USA." [Amnesty International, *Nepal: Military assistance contributing to grave human rights violations*, June 15, 2005]

"Although the Maoists have no known state patron to provide arms and supplies, they have captured more than 1,000 weapons - including antiquated Enfield rifles, light machine guns and Belgian-made automatic rifles - from security forces ... government officials say." [*Washington Post*, January 2, 2003]

Economic and Social Factors:

Economic and social factors have played a significant role in fuelling the conflict. Nepal is a country marked by extreme poverty and socioeconomic inequality. Power and wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a ruling minority at the top of a social hierarchy determined by ethnicity and caste. The population has become frustrated with the harsh realities of poverty and limited economic reform by the government. Overall, the lack of political and socioeconomic progress since democracy replaced the absolute monarchy in 1990 has fed popular discontent. Most observers see the emergence of the Maoist rebels as a consequence of extreme poverty combined with government oppression.

Lack of social and socioeconomic progress has also promoted discontent amongst the Madhesi people, leading to ongoing outbreaks of violence in the Terai region.

"Economically, the Terai is the most fertile and productive region of Nepal where agriculture dominates. The main agricultural products are rice, jute, sugar, mustard, tobacco, herbs and spices. Most of the agro-based industries are here. In addition, the region is rich in forestry. [But] despite the economic significance of the Madhesi people, they have felt neglected by successive Nepalese governments over education, health access, economic activities and development programmes. Many of the poorest communities survive on less than US\$1 a day." [*IRIN News*, February 8, 2007]

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