

Maoist Boss, Baidya meet Halfway to Mend Fences

- **Hardline camp decides to support peace efforts**
- **Dahal to consult Baidya faction in all major decisions**



Baidya and Dahal

By Kamal Dev Bhattarai

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The party establishment and hardliners in the UCPN (Maoist) formally patched up their differences on Sunday—with the hardliners agreeing to support efforts to conclude the peace and constitution writing processes and party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal acquiescing to lead efforts for a revolt should the processes fail.

The party’s Central Committee meeting decided to make “maximum efforts” for peace and constitution, but it also decided to lead efforts to stage a revolt if “conspiracies are hatched to thwart a people’s constitution.”

Leaders say the party’s ‘Plan A’ is peace and constitution, while ‘Plan B’ will be “people’s revolt” and that both processes will go simultaneously.

“Baidyaji has agreed to support the peace and constitution writing processes, which is a positive development,” said Maoist Politburo member and prime minister’s political advisor Devendra Poudel. He was referring to Mohan Baidya, the hardline leader of the party. For now, Dahal has managed to defer a split in the party conceding grounds to the rival camp—agreeing not to take major decisions without first taking the hardline faction into confidence. It is not immediately clear how much leeway Dahal will have in taking the peace and constitution processes forward. In the past, Dahal has taken unilateral decisions on a number of issues, which has made progress on peace and statute writing possible.

“The Congress and other parties are responsible for the party’s fresh decision,” said Politburo member Harlibol Gajurel, a Dahal confidant. He said NC’s rigidity tied the hands of the party establishment—forcing it to strike compromise with hardliners to avoid taking a double risk—splitting the party and not guaranteeing peace and statute.

Gajurel, however, said his party will expedite the process to conclude the peace and constitution writing processes. Dahal and Baidya have agreed to put their political documents on hold for now.

Dahal’s document emphasises on peace and constitution, while Baidya’s advocates a people’s revolt. Sunday’s decision follows a long drawn-out political battle in the party, where the hardliners accused party leaders of taking a revisionist approach to remain in government and of appeasing the “expansionist forces.”

The compromise was made possible after Dahal felt that he had given ‘maximum concessions’ to other parties on the constitution drafting process and the hardline faction found no immediate alternative to peaceful path, according to party leaders. Dahal and Baidya held several informal meetings, seeking common ground to patch up the differences. After the CC meeting, Baidya said they have agreed on the new constitution being “anti-expansionist and anti-imperialist” and which would guarantee rights of the marginalised, Dalits and oppressed communities—one of the major issues raised during the insurgency. The rival factions have also agreed to work to draft a people’s constitution.

Both the factions are silent on government change, a prominent agenda raised by the hardliners. The issue will be settled after discussions with other parties in line with the seven-point agreement, Baidya said. As per the CC meeting’s decision, a meeting of the party’s Standing Committee will publicise a detailed report on the party’s immediate programmes and policies, such as mobilisation of cadres, training, etc.

Both the political documents will be forwarded to the local level for discussions, while there will be uniformity in action and the party establishment will not muzzle dissenting opinions, the meet decided.

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