

'Maoist[s] need to renounce violence as a political instrument'

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For their removal from US's terrorist watch list, the Maoist in Nepal would have to "fundamentally renounce violence and terror" as a political instrument, the Obama Administration's nominee as the Ambassador to the country has told US lawmakers.

Scotte H DeLisi, the US Ambassador-nominated to Nepal, at his confirmation hearing told members of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee that though the Maoists have changed itself from the past and have joined the political mainstream, but it needs to address several issues before the US could consider removing it from the terrorist watch list.

Some of these fundamental things that we have asked them to remove them from the list have yet to be addressed.

One of them is to fundamentally renounce the use of violence and terror as a political instrument.

"It seems a simple step, but they have yet to do that," DeLisi said in response to a question from Senator Jim Webb, who chaired the confirmation hearing.

DeLisi said the US is concerned about the acts of violence by the Young Communist League.

"We are also concerned because the Young Communist League, their youth wing, continues to engage in acts of violence and criminal activities in support of their agenda".

And that is something else that has to stop, and they have to renounce that," he said.

"We have asked them to engage in the peace process.

"They're doing so; we hope that will continue".

"But they, like the other actors in Nepal, also need to be involved in the human rights process," he said in response to the question.

"So we've got a mixed bag with the Maoists".

"Yes, we have to engage them; we have to talk to them both as a key political actor and as part of the peace process".

"We hope that they will take some of the steps that will allow us to look at removing them from the terrorist exclusion list," he said.

Last month Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal had requested the visiting US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Patrick Moon, to remove his party from the US list of international terrorist organisations.

"In a recent meeting, our deputy assistant secretary, Pat Moon, was out there. They told us that they wanted to do this, that something would be forthcoming soon. I hope that we'll see that," DeLisi said.

The Ambassador nominee said the decision to place the Maoists on the list of specially designated terrorist organisations stemmed from their activities during the insurgency, many of their actions were quite horrific.

"In particular our concerns were magnified when we saw them bombing the American Centre in Kathmandu, and also there were the deaths of two of our employees, two of our local guards, who were killed by the Maoists".

The political landscape has changed since then in Nepal, and the Maoists' conduct has changed as well.

"Whether their beliefs and attitudes have changed or not remains to be seen," he observed.

"What we have seen that is good is that they have signed the comprehensive peace agreement. They've participated in the electoral process. As the peace process is moving forward, right now they are actively involved in the constitutional drafting process, which is well on its way," he said.

"They've assisted -- they've begun the process of discharging some of the disqualified fighters from the cantonments, and that process should complete by the end of February. And that's also good," the Ambassador nominee said.

"We also welcome that recently they agreed to allow the parliament to resume functioning. Much of that had been forestalled by strikes. They've postponed or they canceled the general strike they have called for. All of these things are good, and we welcome it. And we're talking to them," DeLisi said.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/maoist-need-to-renounce-violence-as-a-political-instrument/575462/0>