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PROCLAMATION TO THE NATION

FROM HIS MAJESTY KING GYANENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV

February 1, 2005

Beloved Countrymen,

1. The Kingdom of Nepal was built on the foundations of the unification process initiated by King Prithvi Narayan Shah the Great. It is well known that to reign in accordance with the people's aspirations, our forefathers initiated revolutionary measures of historic importance, ensuring a bright future of the nation and her people. History is witness to the fact that both the Nepalese people and the King have, in unison, played decisive roles in each and every period of the Kingdom's process of unification, democratisation and modernisation.

2. Today, we have once again reached a juncture where, in keeping with popular aspirations, a historic decision must be taken to defend multiparty democracy by restoring peace for the nation and people. Even when bloodshed, violence and devastation has pushed the country on the brink of destruction, those engaged in politics in the name of the country and people continue to shut their eyes to their welfare. Tussle for power, abuse of authority on gaining power and unhealthy competition in fulfilling personal and communal interests at the expense of the nation and citizenry contributed to the further deterioration in the situation. There were attempts to flout the universally accepted rule of law in the name of politics. Our desire to ensure social, political and economic justice for our beloved people through the meaningful exercise of multiparty democracy could not be materialised. There was a steady rise in crimes against the nation and people, including destruction of development infrastructures constructed for the people's benefit. Whereas all democratic forces should have adopted a unified approach against terrorism, leaders instead continued their tussle for power, encouraging simple political workers to vandalise public utilities in the name of politics. Faced with this steadily declining situation, it is now time to bring to an end the ongoing acts of terrorist violence and pledge, in earnest, to fulfill the people's aspirations with the restoration of peace and security in the country.

Beloved countrymen,

3. Democracy and progress always complement each other. But, Nepal's bitter experiences over the past few years tend to show that democracy and progress contradict one another. Focusing solely on power politics discredited multiparty democracy. Parliament witnessed many aberrations in the name of retaining and ousting governments. Not a single House of Representatives was allowed to complete its tenure. Continuous confusion and disorder resulted in the obstruction of the democratic process. While the people's aspirations continued to be shattered and their trust

trampled on, they became increasingly disenchanted with democracy itself. After being incapable of holding elections, there were conspiracies to form undemocratic governments, which would be responsible to no one. There was also a written consensus amongst all political parties on vacuuming the people's representatives out but they could not see eye to eye when it came to working together in filling this void. The participation and concurrence of political parties in making way for a form of governance, which negated popular representation, was against the people's wishes and norms and spirit of multiparty democracy. So, we appealed to all those who have faith in democracy with the intention of activating, at the earliest, the system of popular representation. We also met a number of times with members of the general public, senior citizens, representatives of the civil society and leaders of political parties in our effort to gauge the popular mandate and try to convince them of the country's requirements and people's aspirations. We reminded them that the only wish of the Nepalese people and friends of Nepal was to bring to an end the ongoing violence and destructive activities and return peace and tranquility to the country without any further delay. In order to conduct the general elections in an environment of peace and security, opportunities were given to leaders of various political parties to constitute the Council of Ministers, with executive power. But the situation did not improve. National politics was plagued by not uniting in running the government but opposing it on being ousted from it. No serious efforts were made to attenuate the real threat posed against democracy by terrorism in the form of a single-party autocracy. The habit of passing carefree remarks on matters of national security continued. Political parties were unable to display responsible behavior in augmenting the patriotic fervour of our dutiful security personnel, who are active round the clock in ensuring security of the nation and people. Multiparty democrats could not sincerely unite, with national interest as the focal point, to forever end the cycle of devastation being lashed out against the nation and people. Likewise, political parties also could not identify national priorities in keeping with the people's aspirations.

4. Throughout history, the Nepalese people never had to bear the burden of such terrorism, agony and exploitation. No democracy has ever had to go through such a dismal situation, where the innocent are punished by criminals, people whose property is seized and innocent children, women and the elderly who are mercilessly killed by criminals cannot receive any kind of protection from those who govern in their name and parties who claim to represent the

people do not act in their defence. The nefarious designs of an individual or group, negating the wishes of the Nepalese people as well as the national interest and acting through sponsored mobs, cannot form our national agenda. Conscientiousness towards our responsibility to the future of the country and people has nudged us many a time. Circumstances have reached such a critical stage that it has now become imperative for us to take a decision in the greater interest of the nation and people in accordance with their aspirations.

Beloved Countrymen,

5. Nepal's independence, national unity and sovereignty are best safeguarded by the intimate relationship between the King and people. An Institution of Monarchy ever devoted to the country and people and a people with an innate love for their land is the glorious history of the Kingdom of Nepal, its present and also its future. In keeping with this glorious tradition, popular will as always remained the guiding light for Nepal's Monarchy. We are committed to social justice; totalitarianism and authoritarianism are entirely inconsistent with the Monarchical traditions of the Shah Dynasty. We are convinced of the fact that the Nepalese people have deep faith in and are firmly committed to Constitutional Monarchy and multiparty democracy. We believe that centralisation of authority is against democratic norms. We feel that a meaningful exercise in democracy can take place only when elected representatives at all levels are given their share in the governance of the country in accordance with the principles of separation of powers. It is our desire that, while no Nepalese should experience pain or suffering, every citizen should have unfettered access to social, economic and political justice. We strongly believe that the people should always feel that their wishes are being fully honoured and their interests completely protected in the governance of the country. It is our desire to ensure that the Kingdom of Nepal forges ahead towards the creation of a mature democracy and welfare society with the collective judgment, understanding and farsightedness of all patriotic democrats. We are confident that there can never be any differences among democrats on achieving the fundamental objectives of national welfare.

6. We have no interest other than the restoration of sustainable peace and exercise in meaningful democracy for the welfare of Nepal and Nepalese people. Monarchy is guided not by a cheap popularity but by the overall welfare and continued progress of Nepal and her people. Everyone should respect the people's desire for effective reforms. Let no Nepalese feel compelled to take up arms as a means of expressing frustration or disenchantment. At the same time, it must be ensured that every citizen has the opportunity to express discontent effectively without jeopardizing social harmony. It is clear that what the people want are a meaningful exer-

cise in democracy, an effective market economy, good governance, transparency and a corruption-free rule of law. Our only wish is to guarantee our people's happiness through democracy, instil hope among the youth for a brighter future and to ensure dignity for Nepal amongst the comity of nations. Equal opportunities for the development of all our languages, peoples and their cultures alone can preserve and consolidate the Kingdom's distinct characteristics.

7. Contrary to the wishes of the Nepalese people, on whom sovereignty is vested, no serious efforts were made towards initiating elections to the House of Representatives within the year 2061 B.S. by maintaining, to the extent possible, peace and security. Instead of preparing the electorate and political parties for the elections and laying the necessary legal, managerial and technical groundwork, time was wasted on paying only lip service on the urgency of holding elections. As it is our responsibility to preserve our nationalism, national unity and sovereignty, as well as to maintain peace and security in the country and ensure that the state of the nation does not deteriorate any further, we have, by virtue of the State Authority as exercised by us and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, taking into consideration Article 27 (3) of the Constitution, dissolved, effective from today, the current Council of Ministers to fulfill the people's desire for the restoration of peace and security and to activate soon the democratic dispensation. The Council of Ministers to be constituted will be under our Chairmanship. This Council of Ministers will give utmost priority to reactivating multiparty democracy in the country within three years with the implementation of effective reforms by restoring peace and security.

Beloved countrymen,

8. Only a meaningful multiparty democracy can be an effective means of governance by the people. A successful multiparty democracy alone is synonymous with people's democracy. Such a system, which is people-oriented, mature, cultured and refined, has been disrupted. Terrorising the innocent population, extorting money through intimidation, brutally murdering those who dissent, kidnapping students and perpetrating atrocities against teachers, making false promises to simple people and destroying development projects aimed at the people's welfare are crimes against the nation and people, which have to be brought to an immediate end. From now on, such crimes will be dealt with firmly in accordance with the law. Our security forces have been mobilised to carry out their responsibilities more effectively to end terrorism and restore peace and security in the interest of the nation and people. All the organs of the state must remain alert in honouring and upholding human rights. However, it will be unfair to put the state and terrorists on equal footing. We are confident that all peace-loving Nepalese who have faith in democracy will, as always, con-

tinue to cooperate with the security forces in maintaining peace and tranquility.

9. We call upon all those who have gone astray, taking up arms against the nation and people, and those who are engaged in criminal activities against peace and democracy to return to the mainstream of national politics peacefully. Ensuring opportunities to freely express one's views with patriotism as the focal point, fulfilling one's aspirations and contributing to the welfare of the nation and people are the inherent features of multiparty democracy. We assure all those who avail of this opportunity to join the national mainstream that the state will give them opportunities and rights equal to those enjoyed by all our citizens, without any discrimination whatsoever; neither the people nor the law will tolerate any terrorist activities against the state or its citizens.

Beloved countrymen

10. We would like to thank all the friendly nations who have generously supported us, appreciating our commitment to fight terrorism, as well as donors and international financial institutions that have rendered invaluable assistance in our development endeavours. Even the world's democracies are presently faced with the threat of terrorism, which cannot be confined within geographical boundaries. The world community has in fact realised that the more secure, stable and prosperous the smaller nations become, the more secure, stable and prosperous will the region and the world as a whole be. Nepal is, therefore, committed to eliminating terrorism in her own interest as well as in the interest of democracies around the world. Nepal aspires for peace - for herself, her neighbours and South Asia - and to rid the world of the threat to peace.

11. While expressing our unflinching faith in multiparty democracy, we would like to mention that economic and institutional reforms will continue. Efforts at reforms in the utilisation of public expenditure and public service delivery will be made more effective. Banking discipline will be restored. Measures will be adopted towards the effective implementation of the poverty reduction strategy and the anti-corruption drive. Sustainable development is now our national agenda. No one will be allowed to jeopardise the people's security and the future of democracy. Nepal will not allow terrorists to use her territory against herself or against any other friendly nation. In our ties with other countries, emphasis will be laid on fostering constructive relations based on mutual benefit and pragmatism.

12. Corruption, which has been continuously spreading its tentacles has not only cast a shadow over politics and administration, but has also obstructed the nation's march towards progress. Corruption has struck at the very core of our society, the result of which the common man's confidence in the laws of the land has been shaken. Therefore, in

keeping with the popular will and to fulfill the main criterion of good governance, effective measures will be adopted to curb corruption, while ensuring that the principles of justice are not infringed upon.

13. It is our desire that democracy be a way of life, politics be conducted in keeping with democratic norms and values, people from all strata of society honestly adhere to democratic ideals and everyone be guided by the interest of the country and people. All Nepalese wish to see our country as a progressive nation, occupying a pride of place in the international community, where democratic ideals thrive in a peaceful environment. It is our belief that upholding human rights not only preserves and promotes democratic values but also enhances a way of life and civilisational values commensurate with the 21st century.

Beloved countrymen,

14. Our decision should leave no room for confusion amongst the security personnel and civil servants in discharge of their duties and responsibilities. Today, it is we Nepalese who must take an initiative to ensure a bright future for Nepal and the Nepalese. An independent press serves as the medium for raising the level of democratic consciousness. It plays a crucial role in the promotion of national interests. We believe that the press will make effective contributions in ensuring that democratic norms and values inspire our way of life as well as governance. We are confident that, with this in mind, all those who have faith in multiparty democracy will discharge their duties from their respective places and the people's aspirations along with the country's requirements will be realised through the shared efforts of all the countrymen

15. Today, the nation has made a firm commitment and a decision has also been taken accordingly. The nation has taken a step forward towards democracy and progress, leaving behind violence, insecurity and conflict. At a time when the country is in the grip of terrorism, all those who believe in democracy and peace must unite. Let us, therefore, be inspired by our collective wisdom and guided by our national perspective. Any nefarious attempts at disturbing peace and security and hindering efforts at making democracy meaningful will not be tolerated either by the nation or people. Yet, in pursuit of liberalism, we should never overlook an important aspect of our conduct, namely discipline. This is also the thinking of the 21st century. We wish to repeat once again that those who cannot do justice to Nepal, those who cannot believe in the sound judgment of the people and those who cannot stand in favour of peace will stand condemned by the motherland.

May Lord Pashupatinath bless us all! Jaya Nepal!