

Nepal Council of World Affairs



Annual Journal 2022

Advisor

Mr. Hemanta Kharel
President, NCWA

Editorial Board

Mr. Ramesh Singh
Dr. Bishnu Dev Pant
Mr. Bimal Khadka
Mr. Gaurab Shumsher Thapa

Consulting Editor

Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka

Publisher

The Nepal Council of World Affairs

NCWA Building, Harihar Bhawan

Pulchowk, Lalitpur

G.P.O. Box: 2588, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-5426222, 5010047

Email: nepalcouncil@gmail.com

info@ncwa.org.np

Website: www.ncwa.org.np

March 18, 2022

Price : Rs. 300.00 NC in Nepal

: Rs 250.00 IC in India

: US\$ 10.00 in SAARC Region

: US\$ 20.00 in Others Countries

Layout

Rajesh Kc

Cover Design

Yuba Raj Adhikari

Printed at

Heidel Press Pvt. Ltd, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4250086, 4250087

ISSN No.: 2467-947x

Executive Committee



Hemanta Kharel
President



Buddhi Narayan Shrestha
Vice President



Ramesh Singh
Secretary General



Prof. Dr. Ram Dayal Rakesh
Secretary



Bimal Khadka
Treasurer



Dr. Suresh Malla
Member



Dr. Bishnu Dev Pant
Member



Ganesh Rai
Member



Khum Sharma Dhital
Member



Sarita Shrestha
Member



Gaurab Shumsher Thapa
Member



The Prime Minister

KATHMANDU
NEPAL

Message

I am pleased to note that Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) is celebrating its 74th Anniversary with various programs including publication of its Annual Journal. On this happy occasion, I wish to extend my best wishes to all its members and pay tribute to those that played pioneering role in the creation and nurturing of NCWA as a distinguished public platform for deliberation on foreign policy related issues.

Established in 1947, this Council is one of the oldest and reputed organizations in Nepal that has played important role in promoting healthy and useful policy dialogues on key international issues with concerned stakeholders. Besides, it has hosted prominent world leaders visiting Nepal and conducted high-level policy discourse and interactions. By organizing dialogue, interaction programs and seminars from time to time on relevant issues of national and international importance and through conducting in-depth research and publications on foreign policy issues, this organization has been supporting policy makers, intellectuals and general academicians in different ways.

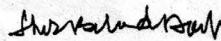
Over the years, NCWA has also played significant role in promoting mutual cooperation between Nepal and other nations of the world. I believe that NCWA will continue its constructive role in the future and demonstrate its relevance as ever. As a Think-Tank organization of the professionals and intellectuals, it must work as an independent and apolitical forum on foreign policy related matters.

It is well known that the NCWA has been publishing journal on different themes for a long time. In this regard, I am happy to know that this year's issue is being published on the theme of "Strategic Importance: Foreign Policy of Nepal". This seems to be highly relevant in our present context. I would like to congratulate the NCWA Executive Body and, in particular, the editorial team for selecting this important topic. I hope articles compiled in this Journal will be interesting and thoughtful reading materials to all who have keen interest in foreign policy and international affairs.

Finally, I wish every success for the 74th anniversary of the Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA).

Jay Nepal !

15 March, 2022


Sher Bahadur Deuba



Minister for Foreign Affairs

Government of Nepal

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Singha Durbar
Kathmandu, Nepal

Message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Nepal Council of World Affairs is celebrating its 74th Anniversary of its establishment and has published its "Annual Journal" for the year 2022.

Over the years, Nepal Council of World Affairs has become an epitome of knowledge creation and comprehensive thinking for policy making in international relations arena. Discussions, research, analysis and interaction among media practitioners and politicians conducted by Nepal Council of World Affairs have proven beneficial to those interested in international relations and foreign policy.

Programmes like seminars, workshops, talk programmes organized by Nepal Council of World Affairs have created better public opinion and views on international relations and we know today that public opinion has become an important component in conduct of foreign policy.

As a nation, Nepal stands tall in the international community with a foreign policy that adheres to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, non-alignment, panchasheel, international law and norms of world peace.

I believe that the Annual Journal published today will enhance awareness among the wider population about the issues of public concern and global affairs.

I extend my heartiest congratulations and good wishes to the Council for its continued success and publication of this Annual Journal 2022.

Dr. Narayan Khadka

Message from the President of NCWA

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) is pleased to announce the release its annual publication to mark its 74th Anniversary. NCWA has been bringing out the annual publication based on specific theme on a regular basis since last couple of years. This year's publication focuses on "Geo-strategic Location and Foreign Policy of Nepal"

Think tanks generate space for producing ideas and offer advice on various pertinent policy issues based on their research and informed judgment. They also engage in policy advocacy and play important role on the strateging these policies. NCWA with its unique history has been involved in facilitating interaction programs and discussions among diplomats, academicians, professionals, politicians and experts on emerging topics. It has also occasionally organized various forums for policy dialogue on national and international issues.

The NCWA requested its members to contribute scholarly papers focusing on geo-strategic location and foreign policy of Nepal. I would like to thank all the contributors for providing excellent papers within such a short span of time. I hope that the readers will find the publication useful. We will welcome any suggestions and feedbacks that you have for improving the quality of this publication.

Hemanta Kharel

President

Nepal Council of World Affairs

From The Editorial Desk

Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA), the oldest think-tank of Nepal, has been publishing its journal regularly highlighting different dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy since its establishment.

This year NCWA is celebrating its 74th Anniversary with great enthusiasm. To mark the 74th Anniversary, NCWA Executive Committee decided on the theme "Geo-Strategic Location and Foreign Policy of Nepal" for its annual journal. The editorial board circulated suggested outlines for the article to NCWA members requesting them to contribute quality articles on the above-mentioned theme within a certain time frame. The board has decided to include the articles in this publication based on the theme, content and usefulness of topics. We hope that these articles would help our readers to understand the various dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy in relation to its geostrategic location and geopolitical significance.

Furthermore, the messages received from the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, and Hon'ble Finance Minister Mr. Janardan Sharma, would also help readers understand the guiding principles of Nepal's foreign policy in the days ahead.

The editorial board extends sincere thanks to all the contributors of articles.

Editorial Board

Table of Content

Part I

Geo-Political Strategic Location and Foreign Policy

Nepal: Geo-Strategic Location and Foreign Policy	1
Hemanta Kharel	
Geostrategic Location and Its Implications for the Foreign Policy of Nepal	8
Mohan P. Lohani	
Withering Asian Century?	13
Dinesh Bhattarai	
Nepal's Geo-Strategic Importance for an Effective Foreign Policy	23
Rajendra B. Shrestha	
National Security in the Context of Nepal's Geostrategic Location	30
Suresh Malla	
Geostrategic Foreign policy of Nepal: A Historical Perspective	36
Shobhakhar Kandel	

Part II

National Security

Need of Climate Diplomacy for geo-strategically located Nepal	46
Sunil Babu Shrestha and Rijan Bhakta Kayastha	
Modern Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Nepal	56
Niranjan Man Singh Basnyat	
Some Nuclear Related UN Treaties and Nepal	64
Kamal K. Shrestha	
Nepal - Coping up with the National Crises	69
Rabi Raj Thapa	

Foreign policy of Nepal: The changing Security Spectrum of South Asia and beyond	76
Gopal Pokharel	
Strategic Importance of Nepal	81
Yuba Raj Adhikari	

Part III

Geo-Political Strategic Location and Foreign Policy

Out -of -the -Box Approaches to Mitigating Forever Problems in Asia	88
Chiran Shumsher Thapa	
Global Geopolitics in its Present Manifestation	
Does Nepal Need any Strategy to Deal with it?	93
Madhavji Shrestha	
Non-Alignment Movement and Nepal	100
Shreedhar Gautam	
Nepal in the Face of Geopolitical Rivalry of Great Powers	105
Yuba Nath Lamsal	
Dag Hammarskjold- A Diplomat of Multidimensional Personality and Relevance in Present Context	112
Nir Bahadur Karki	
Nepal-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Close friend in the Middle East	121
Bharat Khanal	

Part I

Geo-Political Strategic Location and Foreign Policy

Nepal: Geo-Strategic Location and Foreign Policy

Hemanta Kharel*

Abstract

Nepal's unique geo-Strategic location can be considered as its soft power asset. Existing international relations of Nepal call for skillful diplomacy to take maximum economic and technological benefits from major powerful countries of the world and emerging regional powers. . Nepal needs to adopt 'balanced' foreign policy strategy to benefit from economic growth and development of immediate neighbors, super power of the world and other rising powers in the Asia region. Nepal also needs to actively participate in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Continued cooperative partnership among friendly nations based on our national interest needs to be enhanced to minimize risk and enjoy opportunities of geo-strategic location.

Concept of Geo-Strategic Location

The term geo-strategy was first used by Fredrick W. Schuman in his 1942 article "Let us Learn Our Geo politics". Later, it was widely used as challenge and opportunity of geo-strategic location.

Now a day's, Geo-politics and geostrategic words are commonly used to describe geo-strategic location of the country. Geo-politics is ostensibly natural examining the geographic and political features of different regions, especially the impact of geography on politics. Where geo-strategy after involves comprehensive planning, assigning means for achieving national goals or security assets of military or political significance.

Some of conceptual views of geo strategic location are given below:

Strategic geography is concerned with control of or access to, spatial areas that affects security and prosperity of nations. Spatial areas that concern strategic geography change with human needs and development. It is also related to geo-strategy. (Kemp, 1997)

...If you know a country's geography, you can understand and predict its foreign policy (Bonaparte).

* Mr. Kharel is the President of Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA)

Geo strategy describes where a state concentrates its efforts by projecting military power and directing diplomatic activity. The underlying assumption is that states have limited resources and are unable, even if that are willing, to conduct a tous auzimuts limits foreign policy. Instead they must focus politically and militarily on specific areas of the world, geo-strategy describes this foreign policy thrust of a state and does not deal with motivation or decision-making process. The geo strategy of a state, therefore, is not necessarily motivated by geographic or geopolitical factors. A state may project power to a location because of ideological reasons, interest groups or simply to whim of its leader (Grygiel, 2006)

Geo strategy is about the exercise of power over particularly critical spaces on the earth surface; about crafting a political presence over the international system. It is aimed at enhancing one's security and prosperity, about making international system more prosperous; about shaping rather than being shaped. A geo strategy is about securing access to certain trade routes, strategic bottlenecks, rivers, islands and seas. It requires an extensive military presences, normally coterminous with opening of overseas military stations and building of warship capable of deep oceanic power projection. It also requires a network of alliances with other great powers who share one's aim or with smaller "lynchpin states" that are located in the regions one deems important. (Rogers, 2010)

From above different views it is understandable, how the geo strategic position of a country plays a very important role in determining the domestic and foreign affairs of that country. It has great impact on the economy of a country. It determines whether the foreign investment is desirable or not. It also plays an important role in promoting trade and business.

Nepal's geo-strategic location has made it possible to establish the headquarters of regional and international agencies such as International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific (UNRCPD), South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), and UNICEF Regional office for south Asia (ROSA-UNICEF).

Cohen (2010) viewed that the geopolitical structure, its role and capabilities as the geopolitical forces it shapes the international relations system and diplomacy of a nation. If Nepal carefully moves its diplomacy, its geographical location has the ability to influence world politics.

Nepal's Geo-Strategic Location and its Importance

Nepal's central location on the Southern side of imposing mountain system that separates the Tibetan plateau from the plains of India has always strongly conditioned the country's history and foreign policy (Rose, 2005, p.3). Nepal is bordered to the

South East and West by India and its share of 1700 km border and China to the North having 1400 Km border. The politico-economic and cultural relationship of Nepal has been closely connected with these two countries since centuries. Bilateral relations with India and China, despite some fluctuations, have flourished well, but Nepal is unable to share the economic benefit with India and China as per expectations. Nepal always wants to see both India and China serve Nepal's interests as a land of opportunity rather than a platform for rivalry.

Geographical location is one of the very important factors conducive to activating geo-politics. Countries having critical geographical location like Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bhutan have both opportunities and challenges. Such strategic location has encouraged the involvement of big powers like USA, China and India. Because of weak institutions, fragile civil society and elite control, big powers have been able to increase their influence. Countries like Nepal have distinctive vulnerabilities. In some, state institutions are brittle. In others, civil society provides an inadequate check on the actions and power of state elsewhere elites, including external actors are prone to capture. Therefore, it depends on how the country's leadership conducts well-crafted foreign policy supported by adept diplomacy. The ground realities of Nepal indicate that the leaders are not able to calibrate its foreign policy using geographical location as an opportunity.

As Nepal is located between two emerging nations of the world, India and China, it constitutes an integral part of their strategic interest in South Asian region. Nepal is also immensely important for strategic interests of the United States of America which wants to keep this country on its radar by supporting socio-economic development and other matters of Nepal's concern. In this context, it is notable that US has offered a dominant role to India in Indo Pacific Strategy (IPS). Nepal's strategic significance has been further enhanced by US led West efforts to include Nepal in IPS, so that it can be used as a lever in targeting and countering Chinese influence, including its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The major concern and interest of India and China in Nepal is that any security problems arising from the latter's territory would have spillover effects on their security. China is much more worried about the possibility of escalating anti-China elements in Tibet, whereas India's anxiety is that any overwhelming foreign interest has the possibility of Nepalese territory being used for anti-India activities including its security and strategic interests. India perceives increasing Chinese interest and influence in South Asian region (SAR), particularly in Nepal, as part of Chinese larger strategy to encircle India. India's interest is to maintain its influence in Nepal while China also wants to increase its influence and space to make its foothold much stronger.

The announcement of investment from India and China in the development of infrastructure, basically North South connectivity would bring both surprise and astonishment to all countries involved. Under Chinese partnership cooperation through BRI, the proposed Sigatse-Kerung-Kathmandu railway, if constructed, may be a game changer in Nepal's aspiration for economic prosperity. In the same way, India's announcement to construct Raxual-Kathmandu and East-West railway (Kakarvitta, Jhapa-Gaddachauki-Kanchanpur 924.80km) which runs parallel to east-west highway would also contribute a lot for economic development of Nepal.

Nepal's hydropower potential is estimated to be as high as 83,000 MW, out of which 42000 MW is considered technically feasible. Such a huge hydroelectricity potential could support the Sino-Indian industrialization and economic growth. Recent bilateral discussion with Bangladesh and India reveals that they plan to buy 15600 MW by 2034 and additional 9000 MW by 2040 respectively from Nepal. Sri Lanka has also shown its interest to buy electricity via India. If Nepal's diplomacy works effectively, there is possibility of integrating the region not only within SAARC and BBIN, but also in BIMSTEC and ASEAN countries with land connectivity.

Nepal can be used as a suitable experiment for global climate change. There is a common view among a large number of countries that climate change is impacting Nepal disproportionately to its size despite its almost negligible contribution to the greenhouse gases. Nepal's mountains are becoming more vulnerable due to increased carbon emission on the one hand and on the other hand, the life of Nepalese people living in mountain areas is becoming much harder and harder.

Nepal can be a very popular tourist destination because of its tremendous potentialities. Out of ten highest mountains of the world, there are nine in Nepal including Mount Everest. Exciting trekking routes, abundant flora and fauna, cultural and religious diversity, and snow-related sports and protected national parks and conservation of forest areas are attracting tourists from all over the world for entertainment and enjoyment. Nepal's unique geo-strategic location between the two most populous countries, China and India, with the population of 1.42 and 1.35 billion respectively which together comprise 36 percent of world population is a great opportunity for Nepal's economic development through tourism promotion.

The geopolitical risks for Nepal due to its geo-strategic position are high. In the changing international world order, it is extremely difficult for a small state like Nepal to remain neutral to the gravitational pull of powerful states. Therefore, Nepal should be careful and avoid possibilities of being the victim of great power politics. To minimize risk, Nepal needs to conduct smart diplomacy and cooperative partnership, at bilateral and

multilateral level, for achieving its interest. Heads of Nepal missions in foreign countries should be well informed about global political and economic situation as well as capable of analyzing and consulting with friends to convince them of Nepal's national interests.

Foreign Policy of Nepal

The soul of Nepal's foreign policy is 'Amity with all and enmity with none.' Nepal's adherence to the principles of the UN Charter, Panchasheel, and norms of world peace confirms this. Nepal's constructive engagement and policy to work closely with immediate neighbors, major world powers, development partners, United Nations and labour receiving countries should get top priority. These engagements must be based on mutual trust, friendship and cooperation.

"The foreign policy of every country deals first with the preservation of its independence and security and second, with pursuit and protection of its economic interests. Deeply involved with these interests are a concern with resisting any penetration and manipulation by foreign countries and ideologies and an unblushing effort to accomplish some active penetration and manipulation of their own". (Deutch, 1992)

In the contemporary world, foreign policy is considered to be an extension of the domestic policy of state. So Nepal's foreign policy should also truly represent its core national interest and promote national security, economic prosperity and international image of the country. Foreign policy, it may be noted, is pursued not by any political party or by any existing government but by a state in course of dealing with the international community. It seems we are losing this basic spirit of foreign policy.

Nepal's foreign policy is mostly focused on maintaining balance between its two immediate neighbors. Nepal's strategic location makes it natural for external powers to take interest in its domestic as well as foreign policy. Sometimes, Nepalese political leaders are deeply engaged in over-politicization of its foreign policy which can be not only risky but there are also great chances of the country losing international image. Therefore, a national consensus on foreign policy is essential. Despite political parties' ideological differences and competing interests, they should not compromise on national interest by using foreign policy for achieving domestic political ends.

Existing international relations demand that Nepal should pursue a very careful and skillful diplomacy to obtain maximum economic and technological benefits from major powerful countries of the world and emerging regional powers. Nepal needs to adopt national interest based foreign relations strategy to benefit from progress made by immediate neighbors, India and China. For achieving it, there is an urgent need for further developing and strengthening trust, good will and expanding the scope of cooperation and economic partnership with our immediate neighbors.

Nepal and India enjoy civilizational, socio-economic, geographical and cultural relations since centuries. People to people relations are based on harmony, brotherly affection and mutual trust as well as respect. Nepal and China are also age old friends. Relations between the two countries are based on the principle of peaceful co-existence and have remained friendly and cordial. Although Nepal is continuing its efforts to promote vital economic interests through activities aimed at attracting more foreign investment in priority sector, expanding export trade, widen the avenues of cooperation in conformity with our national interest is not moving ahead as per our expectation. Nepal is trying its best to address its geo-political challenges with greater tact and diplomacy by implementing the nonaligned foreign policy and has assured both neighbors that their interest will not be affected from Nepali land. Nepal knows very well that China's strategic interest is largely related to security and peace in Tibet and India's interest and security concern are related to enhanced connectivity and security on open border between the two countries. Nepal is always committed to not allowing Nepali soil to be used against neighboring or other counties while anticipating similar commitment from them. But the question is always there about the trust of these countries in some of our Nepali political leaders.

Conclusion

Nepal knows the geo-strategic importance of its location but is unable to take full benefit out of it. The ongoing and continuing efforts of China and India with their global power ambitions and desire to keep their influence intact may create uneasy situation in Nepal. In such environment, Nepal needs to conduct its foreign policy on the basis of Panchasheel and should maintain equi-proximity with immediate neighbor in our national interest and also keeping in mind cooperative partnership in regional as well as global affairs.

References

- Acharya, J. (2008). Nepal's Foreign Policy: A Geopolitical reflection. <http://www.iids.org.np>.
- Bista, B.P. (2012). Nepal's Foreign Policy Challenge. Report on emerging Challenges of Nepal's Foreign Policy Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA): Kathmandu.
- Bonaparte, N. Quote master <https://www.quotemaster.org/images/q/12965/1296585/i1.png>
- Cohen, S.B. (2010). Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations 2nd Ed. New York: Rowman and Little field Publishers INC.
- Deutch, K. W. (1912-1992). A Social and Political Scientist, the Stanfield Professor for

International peace: Harvard University.

Garfano, J. (2004). *Alternate Security Strategies: The Strategic Feasibility of Various nations of Security*. International Peace Research Foundation.

Grygiel J.J. (2006). *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.

Gray. C.S. & Span, G. (1999). *Geo politics geography and Strategy*. London, Portland Oregon: Frank Cass.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2022). [http://moga.gov.np/foreign policy](http://moga.gov.np/foreign-policy).

Kemp G., Harkavy R. (1997). *Strategic Geography and the changing Middle East*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in cooperation: Brookings Institution Press. Washington.

Kumar, R. (2017). *Geo-Strategic Status of Nepal between India and China, A Security perspective*. Gandhinagar, Gujrat: Centre for International Studies, Central University of Gujrat.

Rose, L.E. (1971). *Nepal: Strategy for Survival*. California: University of California press.

Rogers, J. and Simón, L. (2010). "Think Again: European Geostrategy". <https://web.archive.org/web/20100424042233/http://europeangeostrategy.ideasoneurope.eu/2010/03/14/think-again-european-geostrategy/>

Geostrategic Location and its Implications for the Foreign Policy of Nepal

Mohan P. Lohani*

Abstract

There is a consensus that Nepal's foreign policy formulation and implementation has been significantly shaped, among others, by the country's geostrategic location. Such location of the country was perceived, more than 2 centuries ago, by late King Prithvi Narayan Shah who unified different principalities into a single country and was recognized as the Founder, of modern Nepal. He used the 'yam between 2 boulders' imagery to concretely illustrate the geostrategic location of Nepal situated between 2 neighbors China to the north and India to the south with diametrically opposite political and social systems. This imagery is valid even today.

The pursuit of a nonaligned foreign policy has enabled Nepal to maintain 'balanced' relations' not only with two immediate neighbors but also with big powers and other countries of the world. The paper argues that it is in the national interest of Nepal to maintain friendly, cooperative and 'balanced' relations with its neighbors to benefit from their tremendous economic success and prosperity. It is equally important for Nepal to become sensitive to its neighbors' interests and aspirations and accommodate their legitimate concerns by tilting to neither side.

The paper, in conclusion, argues that in view of Nepal's geostrategic location, Nepal's interdependence between China and India is an irrefutable reality and the country's foreign policy is dynamic as it is based on continuity and change. Nepal would do well to adopt a pragmatic approach and play a proactive role in promoting its national interest in all forums-bilateral, regional and multilateral, for the well-being of the people."

Key Words: Geostrategic location, Foreign Policy Formulation, Nonaligned foreign policy, 'yam between 2 boulders' imagery, balanced relations, immediate neighbors-China and India, pragmatic policy and proactive role.

* Prof. Dr. Lohani is a Former President of NCWA and also Former Ambassador to Bangladesh

Introduction

Nepal's unique geostrategic location, among others, has shaped and guided the country's foreign policy formulation and implementation ever since the 'yam between two boulders' imagery was imaginatively conceived and pronounced by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal. He unified, more than two centuries ago, tiny principalities into a single geographical entity which proved to be a bulwark against foreign invasion. Had late King Shah not succeeded in his unification campaign, several experts wonder whether Nepal, then confined within the boundaries of a small Gorkha Kingdom, could have survived the existential threat looming large on the horizon.

The basic parameters of Nepal's foreign policy, namely, commitment to the UN Charter; principles of nonalignment; *Panchsheel* (Five principles of peaceful co-existence); world peace; and respect for international law have been consistently enunciated, irrespective of systemic change, in all constitutions, including the latest constitution of September 20, 2015, ever since the country liberated itself from century-old family rule of the Ranas in 1951. It may be noted that the 2015 constitution was promulgated, for the first time, by the Constituent Assembly composed of over 600 people's representatives.

From Isolationist to Non-Isolationist Policy

Commenting on how Nepal moved from isolationist to non-isolationist foreign policy late Prof. YN Khanal, an eminent scholar and ambassador to India and China and the US, makes an insightful observation in his book *Nepal's Non-Isolationist Foreign Policy*, an anthology of more than 100 articles and essays on various topics ranging from foreign policy to literature and arts: 'During the Rana days Nepal was isolated from the current of world opinion. Parochial conservatism, distrust and doubt all these elements cast their weight on the foreign policy in the past. The Revolution of 1951 marked a healthy reversal of this kind of foreign policy. Nepal started getting into the international world with open eyes and Nepal, which is situated between the People's Republic of China and India, and which is determined to maintain as far as possible friendly relations with them has found that the policy of dynamic neutralism is the most appropriate one for her.'

In Prof. Khanal's opinion, 'instead of looking at everything from the point of view of the Cold War, the inclination to examine every question on its merit became more and more pronounced. In the United Nations, too, resolutions originated by neutral countries started winning acceptance more and more frequently.'

Nepal's Nonaligned Foreign Policy

While Nepal was admitted to the UN in December 1955, she became a founding member of the Movement for Nonalignment (NAM) in 1961. The UN Charter became, for most part, a guiding principle for NAM to propound and uphold its principles safeguarding the right of each country to self-determination and independence, including economic and social rights. Nepal has continued to play an active role not only in UN forums but also in all NAM summits at the highest political level. Each summit that lasted for 5 days covered the entire agenda discussed by the UN General Assembly at its 3-month regular annual session. Nepal forcefully championed the cause of the least developed among developing countries (LDCs) and land-locked developing countries (LLDCs) at these summits.

It is argued that NAM has lost its relevance with the end of the Cold War in the eighties of the last century when the Warsaw Pact led by the then Soviet Union was dismantled followed by formal dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Russian Federation that replaced the former Soviet Union was recognized instantly by all countries of the world, including Nepal and retained its seat in the UN Security Council as one of its permanent members.

Despite the non-existence of one of the two military blocs, NAM with more than 100 members has continued to justify its existence as an independent political force in international relations with a great deal of moral weight and influence on issues of global concern. The pursuit of nonaligned foreign policy has enabled Nepal not only to balance its relations with its powerful neighbors but also to seek friendship with all and receive their generous assistance in development endeavors of the country. It is true that the bipolar world has been replaced by a multipolar world diversifying power centers and confirming a paradigm shift in international relations.

Nepal as a nonaligned country has pursued an independent policy backed by a firm resolve to judge each international issue on its merit. Nepal persistently raised its voice in the UN for China's rightful place in the world body. China which was finally admitted to the UN, including the Security Council as a permanent member has continued to appreciate Nepal's support for its legitimate place in the United Nations. During the 1962 war between India and China, Nepal remained neutral, a position dictated by its geostrategic location.

Geostrategic Location and Nepal's Foreign Policy

Two thought provoking articles, one by Gopal Khanal, an expert on geopolitics, and the other by Surendra Singh Rawal, a foreign policy expert with military background, published in the Kantipur, a vernacular daily on January 11 this year provide us ample food for analysis and review of Nepal's foreign policy from different perspectives but

focused on Nepal's unique geostrategic location. Gopal Khanal, in his article 'How long should Nepal get embroiled in unification debate?' argues with reason that the unification campaign launched by Prithvinarayan Shah was aimed at preventing the British empire which had already colonized the Indian sub-continent in our neighborhood from invading Nepal as a colonizer. *Dibyopadesh*, according to Khanal, is significant in the sense that Prithvinarayan Shah prescribes two different approaches to the rulers of British India and China rulers and emphasizes the need for careful balance between the two neighbors enough to substantiate Nepal's geo-strategic location. Khanal further argues that the main issue is not so much how we understand PN Shah as how to facilitate Nepal's emergence as a developed country by maintaining 'balanced' relations with both neighbors. In the emerging geo-political context, Nepal is required to formulate a policy designed to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its independence.

While Nepal's geostrategic location between India and China remains unchanged, a major development in Nepal's neighborhood in recent years and decades is the emergence of two powerful countries with their own strategic thinking in the region. Khanal rightly states that Nepal's relations with both China and India are governed by our permanent interests as a LDC and a LLDC. No foreign power can be allowed to minimize and underestimate our cherished national goals and interest. While cautioning our neighbors against any interference in our internal affairs, Nepal should encourage its two neighbors to invest, without any threat of insecurity, in our development projects.

The first priority before Nepal's ruling coalition partners today is to evolve a national consensus and a common position on the agenda of national concern and interest. While building a national consensus, it is essential to win the confidence of the opposition. Khanal concludes by saying that while PN Shah gave us geography and our national identity, the rest lies with our leaders to lead and develop the country in a coherent and coordinated manner.

An equally enlightening article in the same daily is Surendra Singh Rawal's 'Foreign Policy enmeshed in a yam between two boulders.' Rawal begins his article by referring to *Dibyopadesh* in which PN Shah calls for good relations with both emperors of China and India, but he cautions the people against the shrewd ruler of the South. India became independent after the British left in 1947. While India continues to cooperate with Nepal in its development endeavors and this is gratefully acknowledged by the people and government of this country, the old imperial mindset of the Indian bureaucracy, however, remains unchanged. This is evidenced by recent instances of Indian blockade, and its encroachment on Nepali territory. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing an election rally on December 30 last year stated that an all weather road from Tanakpur to Pithoragadh had been built and that there was a road extension up to Lipulekh which is Nepal's territory. Several opposition parties, including the ruling party Nepali Congress have reacted furiously against Indian encroachment without Nepal's consent. The political parties have called for withdrawal of the Indian army deployed at Kalapani for

many years and also urgent action on a new map released by the government of Nepal on Jestha 7, BS 2077 showing Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura in Nepali territory.

Rawal opines that foreign relations are dynamic, not static. Like Khanal, he, too, emphasizes the need for Nepal's balancing role or strategy between the two neighbors and moving ahead with cautious optimism. Rawal thinks that while Indian threat looms large, Chinese interference is not explicit. Because of rivalry between India and China, Nepal finds itself in an uncertain strategic situation. It may be recalled that India and China enjoyed excellent relations in the fifties and both subscribed to the principles of peaceful co-existence or *Panchsheel* endorsed at the historic Bandung Conference in 1955. China is, no doubt, a powerful rising nation in Asia. Precisely speaking, balance of power between India and China should be Nepal's strategic goal.

Conclusions

Judging from various opinions and comments on Nepal's geostrategic location, most commentators would not prefer to see Nepal tilt to either side of its immediate neighbors. Nepal's interdependence between India and China is a geographical imperative and a fact of life. In this context, continuity and change in the conduct of foreign policy is a pragmatic approach for Nepal. She is also advised to play a proactive role in promoting her national interest in regional and international forums like the UN, SAARC and BIMSTEC. While geography remains unchanged, attitudes, mindsets and perceptions change. There is no denying the fact that late King PN Shah's strategic thinking is relevant even today so far as his judgment on Nepal's geostrategic location is concerned.

References

- Dahal, M. K. et. al (2008). *Nepal: A Generic Guideline for Development through Economic Diplomacy*. Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA): Kathmandu.
- Khanal, YN. (2000): *Nepal's Non-Isolationist Foreign Policy*. Satyal Publication: Kathmandu
- Khanal, G. (2022). "How long should we get embroiled in unification debate?". Kantipur Daily: Kathmandu.
- Rawal, S. S. (2022). "Foreign Policy enmeshed in a yam between two builders". Kantipur Daily: Kathmandu
- Lohani, M. (2009). "China's Foreign Policy: An Overview", *Friendship, Special Issue to Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of People's Republic of China*. China Study Center: Kathmandu.

Withering Asian Century?

Dinesh Bhattarai*

Abstract

Once the poorest and exploited at the hands of colonial powers, Asia's breathtaking success has made it an economic weight and a formidable force in the world economy. The economic progress based on the unprecedented success of China followed by India initiated the shifting of the global power from Europe and North America to Asia. The growth in Asian economies shook the assumption of superiority of the West and created a sense that "Asia is the key to the future." Asia's emergence as the driving force of global economy and politics led political pundits to proclaim the 21st century as Asian century. Countries in the region displayed their capacities and potentials to firm up the proclamation. The shift eclipsed the American unipolar moment and led to the emergence of multipolarity. Asian states began to create and recreate relations among themselves. Big countries China and India moved from confrontation to cooperative relations that accelerated shifting the fulcrum of political and economic activity towards Asia.

With the resurfacing of old wounds, suspicions, and threats, including the border clashes between China and India in 2020, Asian dynamism appears to be burdened with political unrests, ethnic tensions, populist nationalism and growing military tensions. It is against this backdrop that this write-up attempts to discuss the prospects of Asian century in the context of emerging socio-economic challenges including the outbreak of covid19 pandemic.

Key words: Asian century, Europe, America, China, India, Power shift, Covid-19 Pandemic.

Background

A century ago, the United States President Theodore Roosevelt, said, 'Our future history will be more determined by our position on the Pacific facing China than by our position on the Atlantic facing Europe.' Earlier U.S. Senator William H. Seward who later became the US Secretary of State from 1861-69, in 1852 had said, "... the Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands, and the vast regions beyond, will become the chief theatre of events in the world." This is what brings America to the Pacific.

Former US Secretary of Treasury Lawrence Summers wrote, "What is happening in

* Dr. Bhattarai is a former Ambassador to the United Nations, and former Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Ministers of Nepal and also member of NCWA

Asia today is much more spectacular... living standards rise 100-fold within a single human life span. They rise more than living standards have increased in the US since the country gained independence in 1776. This is not an isolated event affecting a few people in some niche of the world. This is an event affecting a third or more of humanity.” He added, “No other event is as important today as the rise of Asia-centered on China and followed by India. Growth has numerous ramifications for the global system. Developments in the Middle East- the region’s conflicts, troubles, and achievements – will probably be considered the second story in its importance. And the end of the Cold War- the 50-year struggle between the two economic and political systems- will be assigned only third place in contemporary history.”

The region has seen the rise of new powers, prosperity, and peace. “The development of Asia is so significant, and the impact of a growing Asia on the global economy is so substantial, that many other questions need to be raised. (Dinello and Wang, 2009). “For the first time in 500 years” said former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, “the center of global economic gravity is set to return to East Asia.” (Evans, 1993). In 2011, the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proclaimed the 21st century as the Pacific Century. She wrote that the Asia-Pacific remains a key factor driving global politics. (Clinton, 2011). She called the 21st century “America’s Pacific Century.”

US Intelligence assessment forecasts that Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power by 2030 with China, India, and Brazil becoming especially important to the global economy. The report also says: “Technology will continue to be the great leveler. The future Internet ‘moguls’ - as with today’s Google or Facebook -sit on mountains of data and have more real-time information at their fingertips than most governments.” (Zakaria, 2012) Several writings warn that Asia faces a series of internal and external shocks during the next 15-20 years in which low growth, rising food prices, and energy shortages will pose stiff challenges to governance. At a time when there are remarkable successes and strengths, and Asia awakes to reshape the world, many fear there could be surprises in the region.

After the normalization of US-China relations, the US facilitated China’s integration into the world economy. China began opening up and reforms process in 1979. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping’s counsel to his colleagues was “coolly observe, calmly deal with things, hold your position, hide your capacities, bide your time, accomplish things where possible.” China was weak then and not in a position to assert itself at the world stage so came the counsel “hide and bide your time,” maintaining a low profile. This prepared the ground for unprecedented progress. Today China stands tall as the second-largest economy in the world and does not feel the need to “hide and bide” and has moved to “show and tell.” In 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the arrival of China to the global power center.

The unprecedented growth of China and its transformation from agrarian backwater, as Graham Allison writes, has made it the “biggest player in the history of the world.” Within the space of a few decades, writes Ashley Tellis, China has transformed itself from a predominantly agricultural economy into a manufacturing powerhouse, whose southern provinces were once described by *The Economist* as “the contemporary equivalent of 19th century Manchester—a workshop of the world.” (*The Economist*, 2002). There was an outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. The crisis created turbulence around the world. Chinese views of “American power shifted profoundly, and that shift is reflected in China’s discourse on multipolarity and the international balance of forces” (Doshi, p. 161, 2022).

There was a massive social and political awakening. As “geostrategic shift has been marked by the Asianization of world politics” (Dahal, 2022) and the center of economic gravity moving from Europe and North America to Asia, countries in the region have been displaying all their capacities and potentials to shape the 21st century— as the Asian Century. Asia-Pacific concept of the late 20th century became the Indo-Pacific which Japan calls to be free, open, and transparent. Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) of the US is not a new concept. It can be considered as a new name to the Asia Pacific, a regional strategy the US had developed to counter the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War. US President Trump in his 2017 November speech elevated the Indo-Pacific as the centerpiece of US regional strategy, turning confrontational towards China. The renaming ‘Indo-Pacific Region’, in place of Asia-Pacific, is interpreted as the recognition of the importance of India as the fulcrum of the regional strategic order. Beijing takes it as a ‘renewed strategy’ of the US to ‘counter China’s growing economic and political influence.’ The Indo-Pacific is the busiest and most strategically significant trade and energy corridor.

On November 17, 2011, US President Barack Obama, addressing the Australian Parliament said, “Let there be no doubt: in the Asia-Pacific in the 21st century, the United States of America is all in.” It was, he said, a “deliberate and strategic decision.” America was “here to stay.” We seek “the future in the Asia Pacific - security, prosperity, and dignity for all. That’s what we stand for. That’s who we are. That’s the future we will pursue, in partnership with allies and friends, and with every element of American power.” (Obama, 2011) This shows how much the region holds the key to the future of US power. This is what has led Washington to declare the ‘pivot to Asia’ concept and try to show by actions to reassure its friends and allies in Asia about its continued presence. (*The Economist*, 2011)

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, after taking office, chose to make his first foreign visit to India in 2013. Writing in the *Hindu* of May 20, 2013, he said, “we live in an age of change but there are always certain things that are enduring forever refreshing and

attractive. India is such a nation, at once old and young.” (The Hindu, 2013) Premier Li wrote, “the world looks to Asia to be the engine driving the global economy. This would be impossible without the two powerhouses of China and India. Our two countries need to work hand in hand if Asia is to become the anchor of world peace. An Asian century that people expect would not come if China and India, the two most populous countries in the world, failed to live in harmony and achieve common development. Asia's future hinges on China and India. If China and India live in harmony and prosper together, and if our two markets converge, it will be a true blessing for Asia and the world at large. China's development promises opportunities for India, and India's development promises opportunities for China. Our common development will benefit people of the two countries and offer the world more and better opportunities” (The Hindu, 2013).

The resurgence of Asia in world affairs and the global economy which was happening before the emergence of Covid-19 will be cemented in a new world order after the crisis (Mahbubani, 2020). He argues further that Asia will have growing respect and admiration stating that through the quality of governance, Asia will show a culture of pragmatism, a willingness to learn, and follow the best practices from around the world. Amartya Sen, a noted economist and Nobel laureate opined that for societies to succeed, they need the invisible hands of free markets and the visible hand of good governance. Analysts have long talked about the end of an American-led system and the arrival of an Asian century which is now happening in front of our eyes (Berrel, 2020).

Promise or Peril?

Many predicted “the rise of the Asia-Pacific and an era of unparalleled Asian power, prosperity, and peace,” and many believed that “East is replacing the West, in a great shift of global power that will permanently reshape our world. All those predictions now are themselves at risk” (Auslin, 2017).

The true beginning of the 21st century was September 11, 2001- the day Islamic terrorists attacked America. It was a transformative moment of the post-Cold War order. Far-reaching consequences arose from the 9/11 attacks. The US retaliated by launching the global war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. Fears of nuclear weapons technology used for illicit gains and falling into the hands of terrorists grew. The crisis undermined economic growth.

Globalization stitched the world together, brought unprecedented opportunities, and also helped better the lives of the people around the world. China's entry into the global economy created the most remarkable story of national progress. China was able to lift millions of people out of poverty. While globalization created profound interdependence, prosperity, and security in one place came to be connected to actions or inactions with those outside the national frontiers. The euphoria created for the Asian century appears

to be diluting. “While dynamic and peaceful on the surface, the continent is riddled with unseen threats from economic stagnation to political unrest and growing military tensions” (Auslin, 2017). Further, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, “Asia first misses the point” as the attention of the world is riveted on ...Ukraine (Mead, 2022).

Despite eighteen meetings between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi including the visits to each other countries and meetings on the sidelines of international meetings since 2014, Sino-Indian relations could not be cemented. The 73-day Doklam stand-off along the Bhutan-China-India tri-border region in 2017, Sino-Indian border clashes of June 2020 and growing distance between these two formidable nations, and risks associated with them brought their differences and disputes on the border into sharp focus. Since then, India-China relations are not only slowing, but they also remain in a conflictual mode. India considers China as the greatest challenge to its security. China’s growing diplomatic, military, economic, and political footprints are viewed with grave concerns in India. India fears that its congenital foe, Pakistan- nuclear power state, is in a deep relationship with China, whose friendship has been characterized as “all-weather, higher than the Himalayas, deeper than oceans and sweeter than honey.” Relations are being widened and deepened with a flagship project known as China-Pakistan Economic Partnership (CPEC).

China launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as “the project of the century” in 2013. This is considered a signature foreign policy and investment strategy of President Xi that would connect 64 Eurasian and African countries. Some even go to the extent of suggesting it as a “Chinese version of the world order.” China has now become assertive and is ascending. The US and some European countries consider BRI as an instrument of putting countries in “debt traps” and increasing Beijing’s political influence in Africa and Asia. China is also reported to be planning to re-engineer transboundary river flows that form the artery of the Brahmaputra River system, of which India is a downstream country and critically depends on the flows of water. Beijing has begun to call the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh as “South Tibet” (Chellaney, 2019).

When Donald Trump was elected as the US President on the slogan of “America First” and “Make America Great Again”, the US retreat began from several international forums, yielding space to emerging power China. The increasing conflicting and competing territorial disputes in the South China Sea, chaotic withdrawal of America from Afghanistan after 20 years of military engagement, the current political mess in Syria and Yemen have opened space for rising China. China now heads four of the UN’s fifteen Specialized Agencies including the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and International Civil Aviation Organization. As the US suspended funding to the World Health Organization in 2020, China promised US\$ 2 billion to fight

the pandemic. The Economist writes “any retreat by America from global leadership is an opportunity for China.”

The US considers China as a strategic competitor. European Union considers China a “systemic rival”. China aspires to be a continental power and also wants to become a maritime power. Beijing wants to protect and advance its interests abroad and secure what it sees as its rightful place in international affairs. China-US hostility is higher than it has been in decades. A veteran Chinese military specialist and scholar, Col. Liu Mingfu, writes China’s great goal is to restore China to its historical glory and take the place of the US as a world leader. He sees the relationship between China and the US will be a “marathon contest” and the “duel of the century” (Liu, 2015). The US-China talks in Anchorage, Alaska in March last year revealed the fiery exchange of words between the two delegations, telling each other not to preach. The US considers China as its “foremost foreign policy challenge.” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has described China as “the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century.”

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong writes the US remains an important participant, underpinning regional security and stability and enhancing its economic engagement through initiatives (Lee, 2021). For reasons of history, economics, and security, “America is the most important external actor in Asia’s destiny” (Auslin, 2017).

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a “game-changer.” This has exposed the vulnerabilities of health systems and administrative capacities of several countries. Democracy is in decline. Populist nationalism is rising. Strongman’s theory is undermining national institutions. This has impacted global security, stability, development, achievements, conflicts, and troubles. Militaries have claimed the major portion of national budgets. China, India, North Korea, and Pakistan are nuclear powers. Iran reportedly appears to be close to enrich its uranium production. A yawning gap between the promises of rulers and their performance and delivery has fueled resentment. As the awakening could not match the aspirations and needs of the youth, the socially massive awakening got accumulated and radicalized politically. Trust between the rulers and ruled is eroding rapidly, and popular uprisings have created new regional dynamics. Youth bulge has created a pile of political tinder, producing insurmountable challenges, accumulated resentments, and uprisings turning the 21st century as an era of paradox.

Nepal – An anchor of stability and security

Nepal’s geostrategic location between India and China forms the geopolitical heartland of Asia (Dahal, 2022) The location of Nepal explains its contemporary challenges. Nepal borders four of India’s politically sensitive states and China’s Tibet Autonomous

Region which constitutes its “core concern”. It is equally important to study mutually reinforcing ethnic linkages for peace, stability, and development in the entire region as ethnic linkages travel across the borders on both sides-north and south.

Geography is a nation’s destiny. Nepal should develop a strategic culture and have a geostrategy for the skillful management of geostrategic sensitivity for the preservation of its sovereignty and protection of territorial integrity. It must not ignore the dynamic transformation that is generating a new set of strategic uncertainties and ambiguities in the neighborhood and beyond.

Nepal’s long-standing policy has been “friendship with all and enmity with none.” Kathmandu seeks goodwill, friendship, understanding, support and cooperation from its neighbours, friends and well-wishers in the international community. Of late, Nepal seems to be turning into a confluence of triangular interplay - American, Indian, and Chinese competition, and cooperation. Development grant assistance of US\$ 500 million provided to Nepal by the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)-Nepal Compact that invited sharp exchange of words between the US and China is a recent example of the growing interests and attention of global powers in Nepal. As the fulfillment of commitments to MCC got delayed due to political wranglings in Nepal, the US saw China’s hand in “fomenting propaganda” (Lu, 2022), and China called it American “coercive diplomacy.” Beijing questioned “does a gift come with the package of an ultimatum? How can anyone accept such a “gift”? Is it a “gift” or Pandora’s box?” (Chunying, 2022). This demonstrates the intersection of big powers’ geopolitical manoeuverings and counter manoeuverings.

In the ongoing geopolitical play of big powers, emerging global power China would try to push established global power America as far away from its borders as it could and reduce America’s weight in international diplomacy. As China vigorously pursues peripheral diplomacy with ‘security, diplomacy and economics’ as its components, the US would try to influence China’s neighbours to contain and provide a counterweight to Chinese dominance. They would adopt whatever means they find it convenient. As Greek historian, Thucydides wrote, “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”

Nepal pursues democratic pluralism at home and multipolarity in international relations and judges every issue on its merits without fear or favor. Nepal has to do tight rope walking and maintain the balancing behavior with all nations. There can be no question of Nepal taking the side of any country. Nepal needs neighbors India and China as well as the US. It also needs the United Nations and friends in the international community. Nepal needs their goodwill, support, and cooperation for its socio-economic transformation. Nepal does not want any geostrategic maneuverings and counter-maneuverings against

its neighbors and friends from its territory. Nepal remains constructively engaged with neighbours, development partners and friends in international community, on the basis of mutual benefits and respect to advance its interests, expects them not to cross any red lines that destabilize the country or hurt its interests and deprive it of its legitimate aspirations. They all should understand that only an independent, stable, democratic, and prosperous Nepal will be the anchor of regional stability and security and in the interests of all.

Conclusion

The world has become more interdependent and interconnected. Nations' destinies have come to be intertwined. No nation, no matter how powerful, will be able to shape all the rules in its own image. It will need to be cooperative and confident. A more responsible, pragmatic, and principled approach is needed to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty. Important issues such as climate change, pandemic, nuclear proliferation, and other transnational issues that threaten the existence of the entire humanity need close cooperation and coordination of all-big or small nations alike. This is time to come together, work together "to preserve Asia's incredible success and influence its subsequent development" (Auslin, 2017).

Today's realities of the world include the US preeminence and China's rapid rise to the status of global power. The established power US and emerging power China have shared interests and therefore shared responsibilities. They shall have to learn to live with each other, work together and cooperate on areas such as economics, transnational issues like climate change, nonproliferation, terrorism and counterterrorism, education, and tourism. India's cooperation to address these issues is vital. Without India on board, there would be no peace, stability, and development at the regional level in particular and the world in general. There is no Asian century unless India and China come together. No Asian century can come until China, India and other neighboring countries are developed.

The then Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali visited the US at the invitation of his counterpart Mike Pompeo in December 2018. Coinciding with Minister Gyawali's visit, the US Department of State issued a statement mentioning that Nepal too had a "central role to play in the Indo-Pacific region." Upon return to Nepal, Minister Gyawali "outrightly rejected reports about Nepal supporting the Indo-Pacific strategy of the US" (Gyawali, 2018).

Addressing the 76th UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka underlined "the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, non-alignment, international law, and norms of world peace constituting the important ingredients of Nepal's foreign policy." (Khadka, 2021) He expressed abiding faith in *Panchsheel*- the five principles of

peaceful co-existence as a framework for interstate relations in the twenty first century. These principles remain of paramount importance in the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy. Explaining the recent Nepal vote on the Ukraine issue in the UN, the Minister clarified that "Russia's invasion of Ukraine was against the sovereignty of a nation. Nepal's vote was against the invasion. It is as per the UN Charter, non-alignment, and international treaties, and not about taking sides." (Khadka:2022) This firmly establishes the point that Nepal remains a truly non-aligned country, and there is no question of Nepal taking any sides.

References

- Auslin, M. (2017). *The end of the Asian century: War, stagnation and the risks to the world's most dynamic region*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Borrel, J. (2020). Quoted. *The South China Morning Post*.
- Chellaney, B. (2019). *India's China policy seems adrift*. Retrieved March 1, 2022, from The Hindustan Times: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/columns/india-s-china-policy-seems-adrift/story-mO6zXHcRTRV5oow4nlwfSK.html>.
- Clinton, H. (2011). America's Pacific century. *Foreign Policy*, 189, 56-63.
- Dahal, D.R. (2022). *Small States in a Globalized World*. Kathmandu: Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University.
- Doshi, R. (2022). *The long game: China's grand strategy to displace American order*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dinello, N. & Wang, S. (2009): *China, India and Beyond: Development drivers and limitations*. Global Development Network.
- Evans, G. (1993). *The Time*.
- Gyawali, P.K. (2018). *Gyawali refutes reports about joining US-Indo-Pacific Strategy*. cited in Anil Giri Retrieved March 3, 2022, from The Kathmandu Post: <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2018/12/24/gyawali-refutes-reports-about-nepal-joining-us-indo-pacific-strategy>
- Hua, C. (2022). *Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson at a regular press briefing*. Retrieved March 2, 2022, from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202202/t20220223_10644886.html
- Khadka, N. (2021). Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of Nepali Delegation Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka at the General Debate of the 76th Session

of UN General Assembly, *Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, New York*.

- Khadka, N. (2022). Vote for Ukraine is not about taking sides, cited in Modnath Dhakal: *The Rising Nepal*.
- Lee, H. L. (2021). The endangered Asian century: America, China and the perils of confrontation. *Foreign Affairs*.
- Li, K. (2013). *A Handshake across the Himalayas*. Retrieved March 4, 2022, from The Hindu: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead//article62114797.ece>
- Liu, M. (2015). *The China Dream: Great power thinking and strategic posture in the Post-American era*. CN Times Beijing Medi Time. United Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Lu, D. (2022). *US believes China behind delay of \$500 m grant project in Nepal*. Cited in Prashant Jha, Retrieved March 5, 2022, from The Hindustan Times: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-believes-china-behind-delay-of-500m-grant-project-in-nepal-101644830409010.html>
- Mead, W. R. (2022). “Asia first” misses the point, the US needs a coherent strategy for both security and economic policy. *The Wall Street Journal*, February 14, 2022.
- Obama, B. (2011). *Remarks by President Barrack Obama at the Australian Parliament*. Retrieved March 5, 2022, from The White House: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>
- The Economist. (2002, October 10).
- The Economist. (2011, November 19).
- Zakaria, T. (2012). *US intelligence sees Asia’s global power rising by 2030*. Retrieved March 5, 2022, from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-intelligence-idUSBRE8B90HY20121210w>

Nepal's Geo-Strategic Importance for an Effective Foreign Policy

Rajendra B. Shrestha*

Abstract

Nepal's unique geo-strategic position has contributed to expand its roles and enhance its strategic significance in the regional as well as the global affairs. South Asia is becoming a new heartland in the 21st century due to the rise of China, India and the encirclement policy of the US. Nepal's foreign policy is incomplete in the changing geopolitical situation.

India has political, and security, interests as well as in Nepal's natural resources, trade, and cultural influence. China's interests are basically security interests, economic interests, and promotion of Chinese influence.

Since China and India are the two rising trade partners, Nepal's connectivity corridor could provide cost effective transit link in the region and beyond. Nepal must be economically sound and politically stable to take advantages of our unique geo-strategic position. It should become a vibrant bridge between the two globally emerging economies by taking advantages of our geo-strategic position and building a national consensus for political stability, economic development, good governance and smart diplomacy.

Changing Global Scenario

Nepal's unique geo-strategic position has contributed to expand its role and enhance its strategic significance in the regional as well as the global affairs. Our neighbors are taking interest in Nepal mainly because of its connectivity potential, natural resources and their security concerns. By realizing our geo-strategic importance, immediate neighbors and some established powers are trying to expand their influences in various forms in Nepal.

South Asia is becoming a new heartland in the 21st century due to the rise of China, India and the encirclement policy of the US. Nepal is in the central part of this due to the intense rivalry between China's BRI and US'MCC projects. The US, China, and India are the key players in this new heartland.

* Dr. Shrestha is a former President of NCWA

Introduction

The constitution of Nepal has recognized five major pillars of Nepal's foreign policy—the United Nations Charter of 1945, non-alignment adopted in 1955, *Panchsheel* (five principles of peaceful coexistence developed in 1954), international law and norms of world peace that emerged in 1943.

Nepal drafted a new foreign policy in 2020. This is the first official comprehensive document of Nepal's foreign policy comprising nine different priority areas of bilateral relations, multilateral supports, rules-based world order, regional support, economic diplomacy, protection of the rights of natural and legal persons, public diplomacy, track-two diplomacy, and institutional setup.

Although it is a progressive document, it is insufficient because it has failed to examine geopolitics and its implications on foreign policy. Also, it is silent on current global, regional, and national geopolitical complexities raised due to global projects like MCC, BRI and IPS. The document has no vision to deal with superpowers. Besides, it has not specifically predicted any possible threats to Nepal due to bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral geopolitical rivalries.

Challenges

Nepal's foreign policy is incomplete, and even irrelevant at times, in the changing geopolitical situation. China, the US, European Union and India are major geopolitical actors in Nepal. The interests of the US and EU in Nepal are almost similar. From this perspective, the major geopolitical actors in Nepal are India, China, Western powers, other major nations and developing nations including the LDCs.

India is the most dominant geopolitical actor in Nepal. Nepal has been facing political crises and challenges due to India's unnecessary intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. India has political interests, security interests, and interests in natural resources, trade, and cultural influence. To balance those interests, Nepal should develop its India policy accordingly.

The main issue at the moment is related with border regulation, diplomatic negotiations to bring back encroached Nepali territories of Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, Lipulekh and Susta, revisiting the unequal 1950 treaty of peace and friendship, public security and security of natural resources.

Trade imbalance, protectionism and issues of asymmetrical dependence are other areas of concern in addition to cooperation in different cultural, religious aspects for maintaining peace and security.

Likewise foreign policy based on national interest can be shaped through Nepal's China policy. China's interests are basically security interests, economic interests, and promotion of Chinese influence. The security interest of China in Nepal include Tibet factor, border regulation, and neutralizing Western engagement in Nepal. Similarly, China's interest in the larger markets of northern states of India, implementation of BRI, infrastructure development including establishment of industries in Nepal for exporting goods to north Indian states.

Nepal needs more transit facilities from Chinese sea/dry ports, support for connectivity and infrastructural development. Establishment of joint agro-research and production centers, exports of Nepali products to China, tourism promotion and trade balance are some of the economic interests of Nepal with China.

Similarly, Nepal needs to have a separate policy to deal with the West. Western powers have mainly three interests in South Asia—strategic/political, market, and cultural/democratization interests. Encircling and containing China seems their core strategic interest in Nepal though they never express it openly.

Nepal, on its part, has the obligation to address the security interests of its immediate neighbors—China and India. Nepal has to safeguard its economic interests from Western attempts to disrupt the Sino-Indian market while preserving its religions and culture from Western influence and dominance .

Finally, Nepal also needs to have a policy for the rest of the world. This policy should include 152 developing countries, 46 least developed countries (LDCs), and other emerging powers.

These countries simply do not have much political and security interests in Nepal. They have interests in economic development and prosperity. Nepal should gear up economic as well as South-South Cooperation with those countries. This policy should cover South Asian countries (except India), the destination countries of Nepali workers, international organizations especially from South Asia, Asia, including Nepali diaspora.

Opportunities

Nepal, with its critical geo-strategic position between the two Asian giants constitutes an integral part in their strategic interests in South Asian Region (SAR). Cordial Sino-Nepal relations have provided an opportunity for China to expand its multi-faceted engagements in Nepal which were earlier enjoyed by the southern neighbor. It can provide shortest China – SAR gateway, particularly to a large Indian market of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar.

President Xi Jinping's commitment during his visit to fully support Nepal becoming a

“land-linked” state demonstrates that China is willing to play a dynamic role in Nepal. Indian hegemonic behavior along with the number of problems in Indo-Nepal relations such as unequal treaties, border encroachments, political instability in Terai /Madesh, trade and commerce, water resources have created an opportunity for the rise of Chinese influence in Nepal.

Competition and rivalry between India and China has made Nepal an indispensable component of their strategic interests, enhancing our values not only within SAR but also in the Indo-Pacific region. Nepal is also important for the strategic interests of US and wants to keep on its radar by helping in its socio-economic development, democracy and security.

China perceives that cordial and friendly Sino-Nepal relations could support them resolve genuine problems in the future in TAR, including the Indo-US’s potential threat in the region. Nepal’s geo-strategic position comes in the front in these equations where China respects Nepal as a reliable neighbor.

China’s main concern in Nepal is primarily the US not India. China suspects that the US and its allies are trying to use Nepal in their larger strategy of encircling and containing it. This has led China to be more active in Nepal in recent years. Nepal’s participation in BRI includes connectivity through Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional network, trade, energy, people to people, finance and the whole spectrum of connectivity. The strategic agreement will give Nepal access to Chinese sea/dry ports. It can potentially project Nepal to be a strategic force in the region.

Nepal corridor will open up new opportunities for inter-regional economic cooperation. Since China and India are the two rising global trade partners, Nepal’s connectivity corridor could provide cost effective and time saving transit link in the region.

Nepal provides an immense strategic relevance to the Indian security as well. India’s anxiety is that any overwhelming foreign interests have the possibility of Nepali territory being used in anti-India activities, including their security and strategic interests.

Nepal has tremendous potential to become a top destination for tourists as it is famous for its snowcapped mountains with eight of 10 highest mountains of the world including Mt. Everest, abundant flora and fauna, exciting trekking routes and rich cultural and religious heritage. Nepal is located between the two most populous countries China (1.4 b) and India (1.35 b). Even if only 0.50 percent (14 million) of them visit Nepal every year, it will boost Nepali economy tremendously.

Climate change is adversely impacting Nepal disproportionately compared to its size and negligible contribution to greenhouse effects. Our mountains are becoming more

vulnerable due to increased carbon emission and extreme altitude variation. Nepal's central location in the Himalayas between the two industrial giants could be an ideal location for global climate change experiments.

Most of the large rivers in the SAARC/BBIN/BIMSTEC region originate from the Himalayas and mountains. Mountains, with their tremendous potential for hydroelectricity and vital ecosystem, play significant roles in economic development, environmental protection, ecological sustainability and human wellbeing. Like “blue economy” for maritime nations, mountains of Nepal possess remarkable potential for “mountain economy” and benefit lowland nations in the region as well.

Conclusion

No nation can be regarded as truly independent if it is not economically independent. No nation can be really sovereign if it is not able to solve its problems on its own. Nepal's independence and sovereignty have been challenged by the economic realities and political conditions.

Economic independence is not possible without development, which is impossible without mobilizing internal human and natural resources. Therefore, Nepal must be economically sound and politically stable to take maximum advantages from our unique geo-strategic position.

Our geo-strategic position demands that Nepal cannot be a part of any strategic alliance which may destabilize relations with immediate neighbors and cordial relations with other nations. Our foreign policy starts with China, India and the neighborhood and goes beyond. Active involvement in the United Nations and its instruments, multilateralism, nonalignment and equi-proximity relations with immediate neighbors” is the fundamental aspects of Nepal's foreign policy. We must develop this nation with the goodwill, support and cooperation of neighbors and established powers.

Nepal must put an end to playing diplomatic card, one neighbor against the other. We must have balanced diplomacy with both neighbors, a strategy severely constrained by a weak Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is further aggravated with the appointment of party indoctrinated diplomatic cadres with no or limited diplomatic skills and international exposure.

The future of the China-Nepal-India relation will depend on Nepal's foreign policy skills to safely navigate and stand by its national interests.

Nepal is an important partner in the BRI. Although there is some concern of falling into debt-trap which can be avoided by aligning infrastructure development along BRI plans and a proactive diplomacy. We must understand the consequences of over-dependency

on one neighbor over the other.

Similarly, since US is one of our oldest and reliable development partners and also the largest contributor to the United Nations, it can help Nepal in various platforms of the United Nations. The MCC compact being solely a development package (not like the quad arrangement under IPS), it will not be wise to reject it which may adversely affect our diplomatic credibility in international cooperation. However we should carefully assess its implications on our sovereignty, independence and non-aligned foreign policy before making a final decision.

Nepal's dream of becoming a transit/linked state cannot be significantly affected by the Sino-Indian political differences. It will open South Asia door to China and support India to expand its reach to Tibetan Autonomous region (TAR) and Central Asian region (CAR) by significantly reducing transportation costs. To achieve this goal, we should skillfully coordinate and negotiate in bringing the two neighbors together to forge trilateral cooperation in a mutually beneficial win-win situation.

Spearheaded by China and India, Asia is emerging as the dominant global economy in the twenty-first Century. Land connectivity between these countries is central to the development of intra-Asian trade networks. There is also a possibility of inter-regional trade and commerce between SAR, ASEAN and CAR. The India-Nepal-China corridor can become an integral part of this.

The geopolitical risks for Nepal due to its geo-strategic position are high. In the new world order, it is extremely difficult for small states to remain indifferent, non-committal, or neutral to the gravitational pull of powerful states. Therefore, we must soon transform our dynamic geo-strategic significance into a soft power asset and avoid possibilities of being the victim of great power politics by introducing smart diplomacy and cooperative partnership in the region.

Our geo-strategic position offers greater possibilities of closer China-Nepal-India cooperation by means of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity. This will not only benefit these nations but also enhance inter-/intra-regional trade and commerce. We cannot afford to be land-locked country anymore. We need to become a vibrant bridge between the two emerging global economies by taking advantages of our geo-strategic position and building a national consensus for political stability, economic development, good governance and smart diplomacy.

Nepal will begin a path to prosperity and earn respect and dignity from our friendly partners especially our southern and northern neighbors if the leaders realize and adhere to these values. Nepal needs to capitalize on this new opportunity and be prepared to

benefit from cooperation in development programs of mutual interests that will lead to economic development and prosperity.

References

- Acharya, G.P. (2018). The bigness of smallness published in Nepal Niti. Available at <https://www.nepalniti.com/2019/04/17843/>.
- Acharya, J. (2008). Nepal's new foreign policy agenda. Kathmandu: IFA.
- Bhardwaj, N. (2020). BRI and Indo Pacific Strategy . The Rising Nepal: Kathmandu.
- Dahal, G. (2018). Foreign relation of Nepal with China and India. Journal of Political Science, Volume XVIII, 2018.
- Shrestha R.B. (2019). Nepal's Foreign Policy Challenges and Opportunities in the Changed Context. Nepal Council of World Affairs. Annual Journal, 2019: Kathmandu.



नेपाल राष्ट्र बैंक

Virtual Currency/ Cryptocurrency तथा Network Marketing

अन्तर्गतको कारोबार/व्यवसाय गैरकानूनी हुने सम्बन्धी जानकारी

हालका दिनमा छोटो अवधिमा उच्च प्रतिफल दिने प्रलोभन देखाइ Virtual Currency/ Cryptocurrency हरूको कारोबार/प्रयोग गर्न तथा त्यस्ता Virtual Currency/ Cryptocurrency हरूसँग सम्बन्धित Hyper Fund जस्ता कोषमा लगानी गर्न / Jocial, Crowd I, Solemax Global जस्ता पिरामिडमा आधारित Network Marketing मा आवद्ध हुन प्रोत्साहन गर्ने गराउने गरेको जानकारी प्राप्त हुन आएकोले सो सम्बन्धमा यस बैंकको गम्भीर ध्यानाकर्षण भएको छ । नेपालमा विदेशी विनिमय वा मुद्राको रूपमा Virtual Currency/ Cryptocurrency ले कानूनी मान्यता नपाएको सन्दर्भमा उपर्युक्त बमोजिमका गैर कानूनी वित्तीय औजारमा आवद्ध भई कारोबार गर्दा सर्वसाधारण ठगिने, अवैधानिक तरिकाले रकम बाहिरिई स्वदेशी पूँजी पलायन हुने भएकाले त्यस्ता कारोबार तथा व्यवसायमा संलग्न भई नेपालभित्र बसोबास गर्ने नेपाली तथा विदेशी नागरिक र विदेशमा बस्ने नेपाली नागरिकहरू समेतले त्यस्तो कार्य गरे/गराएको पाइएमा प्रचलित कानूनबमोजिम कारबाही हुने व्यहोरा सर्वसाधारण सबैको जानकारीका लागि अनुरोध छ ।

National Security in the Context of Nepal's Geostrategic Location

Suresh Malla*

Abstract

Each country has primacy as an object of security because its existence is a necessary condition for the realization of any individual or collective value in an international system. Adopting the qualitative research design, this study aims to explore the national security threats due to the geostrategic locations of Nepal. Document analysis was made for the primary sources of data. The study reveals that the country having a complex geostrategic location faces multiple challenges, such as financial threat, political instability, high vulnerability, and unforeseen internal and external threats. To overcome the threats, the study recommends adopting a balanced foreign policy, harmonizing the relations with the neighboring countries, and using soft power to meet the national interest.

Keywords: National security, geostrategic locations, globalization, power relations, harmonizing

Introduction

Security is a predominant theme today (Tripathi, 2008, p. 28) in the globalized world which is primarily concerned with the security of human beings, security of the nation, and the security of the region and the world, in general. More specifically, security is concerned with the protection of the nation in which one is able to counteract perceptible threats against the existence of someone or something with a reasonable expectation of success. The strategic geography of the state has a direct impact on national security and it also has an impact on foreign policy.

The concept of security is as old as the origin of civilization (Baral, n.d., p. 15). So, it is a developmental concept. In this sense, security is concerned with development. It is not only concerned with military hardware but also involves the overall development of nations' wellbeing –social, economic, geographic, and human security. According to Capie and Paul (2002) “security” is a multidimensional concept- that security must be conceived in broad terms to include economic issues as well as military threats. It stressed the linkage between common security and common prosperity (as cited in

* Dr. Malla is an Executive Member of NCWA and Former Minister, GoN.

Bhandari, 2021, p. 92).

The geostrategic locations play a vital role in national security. Countries with access to the seas make it an important part of national power (Mishra and Singh, 2008). Landlocked countries, however, have no access to open seas have inferior geographical positions. Such countries need to adopt a balanced foreign policy for national security.

Being a state in a landlocked geostrategic location, it may face multiple challenges despite globalization. Hence, with the technological improvements in transport, landlocked developing countries continue to face structural challenges to accessing world markets. As a result, landlocked countries often lag behind their maritime neighbors in the overall development and external trade. While the relatively poor performance of many landlocked countries can be attributed to distance from the coast. (Michael, McArthur, Sachs and Snow, 2004)

The foreign policy of the landlocked countries should keep balanced relations between the neighboring and other counties. In fact, the landlocked counties have no other choice but to adopt yielding strategies towards their transit or coastal neighbors. This power relation is visible comparing the foreign policy options of landlocked counties and their neighbors (Idan & Shafer, 2001). Landlocked countries are considered militarily weak even in comparison to 'middle-rank powers. Furthermore, such countries suffer from feeble bargaining power against their neighbors.

National security planning has a significant role to minimize security threats of the state. There are some key reasons for the countries to have an integrated and detailed national security plan to ensure that the government addresses all threats in a comprehensive manner; to increase the effectiveness of the security sector by optimizing contributions from all security actors; to guide the implementation of policy; to build domestic consensus and to enhance regional and international confidence and cooperation.

On the verge of "How does geostrategic location impact national security?", this study is made aiming to explore the impact of geostrategic locations in national security. It is also objected to discovering the components of national security of landlocked countries like Nepal. The national security policy, in a similar vein, is a framework for describing how a country provides security for the state and its citizens.

Data and Method of Analysis

This study is purely a qualitative study. According to Best and Kahn (1993) "qualitative research focuses on in-depth (investigative) interviews, observations and document analysis" (p. 204). Here, the researcher has employed documents to review and conduct analysis for the primary data of the study. For Frey (2018), document analysis is a

form of qualitative research that uses a systematic procedure to analyze documentary evidence and answer specific research questions. Moreover, document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). The primary sources of the data were collected from the foreign policies and procedures of Nepal, the Constitution of Nepal, and other relevant studies and reports of international relations.

Results and Discussion

Nepal's geostrategic location requires a balanced relation with neighboring and extended countries. The public policies with the foreign policy of the state must employ harmonious relations with the diplomat nations for the sake of national security. In this condition, national security is a relatively desirable condition to be obtained through public policies. It provides the main justification for the exercise of sovereignty.

Internal and External Threats

The state with landlocked geostrategic locations suffers from both internal and external threats. The internal threat would be the problematic notion of subversion (systematic use of violence to force social, political, and legal changes). For the last three decades, Nepal is suffering from multiple kinds of threats such as organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism including some organized violations in the name of different groups.

On the other hand, being the state in between the two mass lands suffers from the security threats like military aggression, spying, covert operations, territorial invasion, and economic blockade as vital external threats. Including Nepal, countries like Rwanda, Mali, Afghanistan, and Armenia have faced lasting conflicts and insecurity which have played a role in severe security conditions of their respective regions (Mahdi, 2016).

Political Stability

Political stability is a key to national security. That is, in democratic states, political stability is a must to demystify security threats. The national attempt requires to adopt the agenda in bringing security, defense, intelligence, policing on public and foreign policy.

Internal political changes in a country change the intentions and diplomatic and military capacity of the country in the international environment, changing the distribution of power in the international system. In turn, a structural feature of the international system produces consequences for the behavior of the system units. That is, self-help mechanism or self-defense mechanism, which in turn affects groups and individuals in the countries.

An important step in advancing the security discussion can be evaluating two recent attempts to overcome the impasse of security. First, the proactive actions to resolve the tension between secure statehood and individual security through the strictly juridical and normative way. There should be a typical liberal position in the international debate. It contributes to limiting inevitable risks to democracy caused by complex geostrategic locations of the state to strengthen intelligence for national security.

Second, the attempt to resolve the moral ambiguity of the concept of national security through the use of the concept of human security. The critique of this attempt will allow a more accurate assessment of the risks of loss of efficiency in the operation of the armed forces and intelligence services, especially due to the excessive expansion of the array of defensive and informational requirements that have emerged from the adoption of the concept of security as a parameter for planning security policies (Mahdi, 2016). In addition to a loss of efficiency, a possible anchoring of the missions of the armed forces and intelligence services in the concept of human security poses additional risks for democratic politics by "securitizing" issues and problems unrelated to the potential use of force (i.e., education, environment, health, etc.).

Harmonizing Foreign Policy

The geostrategic location of a country matters in the power relations between a state and its neighbors, in most cases, putting landlocked countries in an inferior position. The economy is impacted due to landlocked locations. Landlocked countries' foreign policies have three main characteristics: special policies towards the transit states (including concession towards the maritime neighbors), multi-directional foreign policies, "which entails refraining from joining exclusive alliance systems and maintaining cooperation with competing alliance systems" (Idan and Shaffer, 2001) and promoting the transportation issue to the level of a priority in foreign policy (Mishra and Singh, 2008). So, for financial sustainability, the state needs to adopt a peacekeeping foreign policy.

Harmonizing and peacekeeping foreign policy of a landlocked country may benefit from the developed neighboring countries too because the countries are dependent on neighbors to access the international markets, use their infrastructure, and go through their costume and tariff processes (Chowdhury and Erdenebileg, 2006). Thus, landlocked countries need their neighbors' cooperation, follow a special foreign policy, and show concessions towards neighbors (Idan and Shaffer, 2001). Furthermore, landlocked countries are not just affected by being dependent on their neighbors' transit routes, but also upon their security and infrastructure.

Dependency Creates Threat

Security relations are inextricable between the different levels of analysis of international relations. Landlocked states in an inferior power relationship vis-à-vis their maritime neighbors (de Blij and Glassner, 1989) for a number of reasons. First, it can make them dependent economically if trade in a country rests on the whim or capacity of its neighbors. Second, potential attacks, invasions, or military turmoil in a maritime country disproportionately affect its landlocked neighbors because security alternatives are further reduced and their economic impacts are more pronounced (Mahdi, 2016).

Landlocked countries like Nepal can manage a cordial relationship with their neighbors to protect sovereignty over their territory. For Nepal, the corrosive force does not work while dealing with other countries. Due to weak state power and permanent inferiority (de Blij and Glassner, 1989), a country is not in a position to use corrosive force. Ultimately, dependency on business, education, and trade remain unwinded and create a threat. Landlocked countries inherit inferior geographical position in relation to their neighbors (Mishra and Singh, 2008).

High Vulnerability

In relation to national security for the landlocked country, they are vulnerable to their own landlocked status as well as to the well-being of the neighboring countries (Mishra and Singh, 2008). Landlocked countries are heavily dependent on their neighbors' infrastructure, cross-border political relations; neighbor's peace and stability; and administrative procedures (Faye, McArthur, Sachs, and Snow, 2004). The complex geostrategic locations create security threats within the country and its people. The country has to face multiple challenges which have a direct impact on national security.

Conclusion

The security measures must retain proportionality in relation to perceived threats to the existence, effectiveness, and autonomy of the state. The proportionality requirement serves mainly to find the notion of safety as an absolute condition. For national security, it is crucial that there is a need for collective and individual protection of the members of the state against threats to their survival and autonomy. The government, as a state, must take the right actions for the security of the people.

Geostrategic location plays an important role in determining a state's national interest. The foreign policy needs to be adopted as per the geographic locations of the country since it plays a significant role to run the government. The complexities in modern contexts depend on the geographic territories of the state. So, the states having geostrategic locations like Nepal need to be reasonably capable of neutralizing vital threats through negotiation, obtaining information on capabilities and intentions, through the use of

extraordinary measures and the range of options adopting balanced relations.

References

- Best, J. W. and Kahn, J. V. (1993). *Research in education*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bhandari, P. (2021). Factors Affecting National Interests in the Aftermath of Post 1990 Armed Conflict in Nepal. *Journal of APF Command and Staff College*, 4(1), 91-105.
- Bowen, G.A. (2009), "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method", *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Chowdhury, A., & Erdenebileg, S. (2006). *Geography against development a case for landlocked developing countries*. New York: United Nations.
- De Blij, H. & Glassner, M. (1989). *Systematic political geography* (4th ed.). New York, NY.
- Frey, B. B. (2018). Documents analysis. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation. **Doi:** <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781506326139.n209>
- Faye, M. L., McArthur, J. W., Sachs, J. D., & Snow, T. (2004). The Challenges Facing Landlocked Developing Countries. *Journal of Human Development*, 5(1), 31-68. Doi:10.1080/14649880310001660201
- Idan, A., & Shaffer, B. (2011). The Foreign Policies of Post-Soviet Landlocked States. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 27(3), 241-268. doi:10.2747/1060-586x.27.3.241
- Mahdi, S. (2016). *Security and foreign policy of landlocked countries*. An M. A. Thesis Submitted to University of Massachusetts Boston.
- Michael, L.F., et.al. (2004). *The Challenges Facing Landlocked Developing Countries*, *Journal of Human Development*, 5:1, 31-68, DOI: 10.1080/14649880310001660201
- Mishra, R.N., & et.al. (2008). Defense and security problems of Land-locked Countries (LLCs). *India Quarterly*, 64(3), 55-74. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45073177>
- Tripathi, S. (2008). Asian Security: Challenges and Prospects. *India Quarterly*, 64(3), 28-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45073176>

Geostrategic Foreign Policy of Nepal: A Historical Perspective

Shobhakhar Kandel*

Abstract

This article intends to explore the international relations of Nepal with regard to historical perspectives and to find out the important strategic measures to safeguard the glorious dignity of the country. Within the geostrategy, geo-political and geo-economic strategies play a pivotal role to adopt politically and militarily sound international relations. Unity, national consensus, and sustainable economic development are the key components to safeguard the national sovereignty and integrity of Nepal.

Keywords: International relations, geostrategy, geopolitics, foreign policy, economic development

Introduction

The foreign policy stands for the activities and relationships between and among the countries particularly guided with the domestic affairs or its types of geographical site. According to Napoleon Bonaparte, "if you know a country's geography, you can understand and predict its foreign policy" (Baniya, 2021). Likewise, geopolitics is a key component of foreign policy. Within geopolitics, geostrategy is a crucial topic in the discussion of foreign policy affected by the nation's geography. Geo-strategic significance had always played a crucial role in shaping the foreign policy, security, and development of Nepal (Baniya, 2021).

In recent times, two terms regional and global understanding are also in a voyage to draw the boundary with ally behavior or opponent actions with other nations to secure nation's frontier and to establish peace and prosperity or socio-cultural, financial wellbeing of the nations. Wide-ranging foreign policy also contributes to remaining political statuesque within the country. In other term, strategies are formulated to boost the transnational objectives of the nation. Adaptation of sound foreign policy and its effective implementation guarantees a nation's sovereignty is preserved, international dignity enhanced and the national interest promoted (Hamal, 2014).

* Dr. Kandel is a Professor, Central Department of Education, TU and Member of NCWA.

Methodology

This article is based on secondary data collected from published books, online documents, and subsequently analyzed through the descriptive method. The data were obtained from secondary sources both in hard copies and online portals, and further analyzed in a descriptive method. The major findings of this study are associated with geopolitics and geo-economics that governs fundamental strategies suitable for the geography of Nepal.

A Short History of Nepal's Foreign Relations

Nepal is a landlocked country between two giant neighbors India and China. Thus, she has been implementing a foreign policy in line with her geostrategic location since inception keeping these realities in mind. From a historical viewpoint, Nepal had initiated foreign policy during the Kirat period through the trade of wool and copper commodities that were exported to India, Tibet, and Sri Lanka (Upadhyaya, 2007). Special Nepali handicrafts of that period were; namely the *Bhingisi* and the *Apasaraka*, high-quality rainproof blankets (Adhikari, 2020). There was cordial relation between these countries and there were no threats. During the Lichchhavi period, to enhance foreign relations, Nepal approached Tibet. There was matrimonial relation with both Tibet and India. The marriage of Nepali princesses to the Tibetan and Indian princesses tied up the good relations between them (Upadhyaya, 2007, p. 94). Nepal further entered into the regional scenario with the fame of the national art and sculpture. King Anshu Verma was well recognized by both the kings of Tibet and India. Indian and Tibetan diplomatic missions, individual visitors, pilgrims, and groups of merchants passed through Nepal as it was a transit point for both countries.

In the medieval period of Nepal, China also established a relationship with Nepal during the Malla dynasty rule. During the tenure of Chinese King Kublai Khan, Nepali artists and sculptors were invited from Nepal. They designed and constructed the famous White Pagoda, stupas, and other several arts and sculptures in the capital city Peking. The work made by Nepali art veterans attracted the monarch and people of China. Nepali artists along with sculptor Araniko were honored by the medal of *Guanglun Dainfu, Da Situ*, a high-level award of that time (Upadhyaya, 2007). This fact validates that Nepal became well known in the world scenario. Following good faith relations since then, a regular exchange of Nepali and Chinese-Tibetan artists, as well as students, was initiated.

During the tenure of King Ratna Malla, there was a confrontation with Tibet which led to the battle that was ultimately in the favor of Nepal getting a huge quantity of gold and silver. In medieval Nepal (Malla period), Nepal used to handle mint coins for Tibet (Upadhyaya, 2007). Later there was a diplomatic understanding between Nepal and Tibet whereby Nepali merchants got permission to start trading there in Tibet. In the

early phase of the Malla reign, the relationship between Nepal and India was warm and welcoming. The holy priests and students were used to visiting both countries to gain knowledge and skills. India's Universities Nalanda and Bikram Sheela were centers for education. But a confrontation between India and Nepal occurred while the King Harihar Singh of Simraungadh, a state in the south of Nepal, attacked the expedition of King of Bengal which led to the loss of his state Simraungadh and was compelled to escape to Nepal. Immediately, Sultan Shamsuddin of Bengal attacked Nepal and ransacked property (Upadhyaya, 2007).

After the unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, a king of tiny Gorkha state, he applied a non-aligned policy towards the neighbors, because China and India had been expanding their territory and there was a threat to newly united country Nepal. Prithvi Narayan Shah, at the end of his reign, told his officials about the future of the country as well as foreign relation of Nepal, "this kingdom is a yam between two stones, maintain relationships with the emperor of China and also with the emperor of the south but he is very cunning" (Vaidya, 2018). This was the symbol of his non-aligned policy but he was conscious of the British empire spreading in the south. Due to the geostrategic location of Nepal, her foreign policy of non-alignment was originated in 1768 along with the creation of an independent nation after the unification of different tiny principalities (Hamal, 2014).

Prithvi Narayan Shah wanted to keep Nepal safe from the two giant powers. Nevertheless, he had to clash against Muslim Nawab's expedition led by Gurgin Khan on behalf of Mir Kasim of Murshidabad and the British expedition led by Captain Kinlock and defeated them and captured a huge number of arms and ammunitions like guns, gun powder, and cannons. Even though he was not willing to attack them and wanted to keep good relations but he was compelled to be offensive. The origin of nationalism can be traced to the territorial and political unification of the country with the establishment of *Jaisi Kotha* as an office of foreign affairs by Prithvi Narayan Shah. He had adopted it as the foundation of national security policy. This policy was based on the geopolitical and geo-strategic sensitivity of the nation to protect and preserve the territorial integrity of Nepal, which has been the guiding principle of national security policy ever since (Baral, n.d).

Prithvi Narayan Shah's successor and their officials, especially his son Bahadur Shah and General Bhimsen Thapa continued the expansion campaign and reached the Tista River to the east and Sutlej River to the west. Then confrontation was started with British India. During this time, due to economic causes, especially currency supplies, Nepal's attention was diverted towards Tibet. Since it closed the trade routes with Nepal, a war occurred between the two states in 1788. After the war, there was a bilateral treaty- the Kerung Treaty to settle down the dispute trading routes of Kuti and Kerung

(Hamal, 2014).

Due to the non-implementation of the provisions of the Kerung Treaty, Nepal had to face another battle with Tibet. The involvement of China supporting Tibet in the war was unfortunate for Nepal, and it was compelled to sign the Treaty of Betravati in 1792. Later Nepal lost her traditional commercial space in Tibet and China occupied the same. Ultimately, China annexed Tibet within her sovereignty (Hamal, 2014).

Concerning the relationship with then India, British India was trying to approach Nepal for trade relations especially in commercial natural resources and transit points to Tibet-China. Ignoring Prithvi Narayan Shah's principle of being careful with the south, the Nepal government signed the commercial treaty with British- India. Nevertheless, it was not implemented, consequently, the British East India Company was able to conclude another commercial treaty in 1801. This treaty opened the avenue to the British in Nepal with the provision of stationing its envoy in Kathmandu. But this treaty was not imputable after the British invalidated it because the provisions of the treaty were neglected and the role of the envoy was limited by the government of Nepal.

Later, General Bhimsen Thapa came into power and consolidated the total administration of Nepal. Confrontation with British India started due to his plan of forming an alliance against British domination and forged the anti-British front in Asia. He wanted the form an alliance with France but it was also defeated by the British. Ultimately, a war between Nepal and Britain took place between 1814-16. Nepal was compelled to sign the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816. Due to the disunity in the royal court, Nepal could not take revenge on the British and lost the entire territory of the west of Mahakali River and east of Mechi River as well as the south part of current Terai.

Thus, it is also notable that, to secure any nation from foreigners, the nation's national unity is inevitable. There was a misunderstanding between the king and his officials on whether to the continue war or postpone it immediately and sign the treaty. The treaty was against the brave heroes of the nation. The royal court was the place of intrigue which led to the encroachment of territory by foreign invaders. Nepal's aim was nation-building and standing in the world with a powerful territory and economy. It totally applied geo-strategic policy and made huge military forts the higher places and strategic points to thwart the possible foreign invasion. These forts and fortresses are still important and must be renovated with modern technology.

During the Rana regime, power was vested in the prime minister. Understanding the expansion of British East India Company and shrewdness regarding diplomacy in the south, they did not take the policy of confrontation and pleased the rulers of the Company government to save the sovereignty and retain power (Hamal, 2014). Hence, they supported the British government by continuing the recruitment of Nepali youths in the

British Army. Moreover, while there was a mutiny against British rule in India in 1857, Nepali Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana took an opportunity to successfully suppress the mutiny around the Lucknow area. To appreciate Jung Bahadur Rana's efforts, British India returned back the territory of Banke, Bardia, Kailai and Kanchanpur, southwest of Nepal, which was lost via the Sugauli Treaty. Thus, this territory is known as *Naya Muluk*.

In the meantime, there was another dispute over the boundary area of Khasa in Tibet and Jung Bahadur tried to settle the boundary dispute. It went in vain so he decided to attack Tibet and war took place in 1855. The battle was in the favor of Nepal and the Treaty of Thapathali was concluded in 1856. He also visited Europe to extend Nepal's foreign relations with Britain. Jung Bahadur consolidated power by unnatural means, but the whole nation had a national consensus over the relations towards the British. The economy of Nepal also was sound to arrange arms and armaments and logistics supply for the Nepali Army.

Later, Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana also visited Britain. He continued to maintain cordial relations with the British, supported the Younghusband mission against Tibet, reopened the recruitment in British Army, and provided military support in World War I. It is well known that Nepal has remained independent from the beginning but there was no official announcement of her independence. During the tenure of Chandra Shumsher, there was a treaty of friendship on December 21, 1923, with Britain wherein Nepal was recognized as an independent country for the first time. According to this treaty, Nepal was free from the trade of armament from a third country. This treaty was also recorded in the League of Nations in 1925 (Yadav, 1999).

Likewise, during the tenure of Prime Minister Juddha Shumsher, World War II was in full swing, Nepal continued the traditional foreign policy and extended the economic and military support with war logistics as in World War I. Likewise, Nepal granted permission on military recruitment of Nepalese youths in the British army and Burma rifles, Assam Rifles, and Kashmiri infantry in British India. Nepalese soldiers showed great valor, unwavering loyalty, and unmatched courage during the war that made the whole world take notice of Gurkhas and their fighting techniques. (Yadav, 1999).

Until that time Nepal's external relation was limited in China-Tibet and British India. Breaking this tradition, Nepal participated in the first conference on Asian-African relations held in 1947 in India to approach the external world. As a result, diplomatic relations with the United States of America and India were established in 1947 during the tenure of Prime Minister Padma Shumsher Rana. During the tenure of Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Rana, cordial relations with India continued. Diplomatic relations

with France were concluded in 1949 (Hamal, 2014).

Throughout the nineteenth century, besides agricultural products, Nepal produced a surplus of copper, iron, lead, as well as gold, cinnabar, and sulfur enough for export. Sulfur and saltpeter were in demand by gunpowder factories that were state established in various parts of the country. Likewise, timber, woodwork, rice and paddy, grains, cotton, wax, iron, rhinoceros' horn and hides, and falcons were prominently traded products both in China-Tibet and India. During that time, the economic conditions remained consistent (Adhikari, 2020). World Wars I and II brought changes in Nepali trade and industry. Nepal became dependent on India gradually, especially, for jute sacks and textile. Meantime, the government faced difficulty controlling the exchange of commodities from the southern borders. Thus, Juddha Shamsheer had to ban imports from India, but it was impossible to control them (Adhikari, 2020).

The participation of Nepali youths in two world wars brought a twofold impact on Nepali politics and the economy. Youths, who fought on behalf of the British and became famous in the external world, witnessed political, economic, educational development, and democratic thought spread in western nations. On one hand, being conscious of the country, some of them led the political and social organizations against the suppressive policy of Ranas. On the other hand, they brought the western culture of manner as well as increased economic status. Imports surged and export of Nepalese goods slow down. Gradually, dependency, especially on India, on external commodities increased. After the treaty of 1950 with India, Nepal could not compete with the Indian market. Modern medicines were increasingly available in the towns and administrative centers of the country (Adhikari, 2020).

After the dawn of democracy in 1951, Nepal, leaving alignment policy regenerated the non-alignment policy. In August 1951 Nepal and the United States established diplomatic relations. Nepal was successful in getting membership of the United Nations in December 1955. Diplomatic relations with Japan and the Soviet Union were established in July 1956. Nepal played important role in the non-alignment movement of the third world. During his coronation in February 1975, King Birendra announced the proposal for Nepal to be a Zone of Peace. More than 116 nations supported the proposal till 1989. Since 1985, Nepal has been a member state of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), an economic and political organization of eight nations in south Asia (Shiwakoti and Dahal, 2003). When Nepal purchased some armaments from China, there was a situation of unrest between Nepal and India over the provisions of the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950. India imposed an economic blockade after the terms and conditions of the trade and transport treaty expired on March 23, 1989, which created a scarcity of essential commodities in Nepal. (Shiwakoti and Dahal, 2003).

Nepal has got landlocked geography had unique biodiversity. Thus, the fundamental objectives of the foreign policy of Nepal are to enhance the dignity of the nation by preserving sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and encouraging the economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nepal (MOFA, 2022). Likewise, the basic principles of Nepal's foreign policy are-mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, respect for mutual equality, non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes, cooperation for mutual benefit, abiding faith in the Charter of the United Nations, and values of world peace(MOFA, 2022).

Discussion

Globally accepted determinants of foreign policies are- population, geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military power, language, religion, races, and cultural elements, thought, policymaking, world recognition, world union, and the response of concerning country (Shiwakoti and Dahal, 2003). Modern diplomacy is a combination of political, economic, cultural diplomacy, and priority is given to economic diplomacy (Kharel, 2020). Economically big and powerful nations always try to keep small nations at their mercy which increases dependency. Moreover, landlocked small nations like Nepal are more economically dependent on big nations (Shiwakoti and Dahal, 2003). A notable aspect of Nepal's foreign policy is national unity. There should be a common understanding among all political parties, if it is not possible, for major political parties to forge a consensus before formulating a long-term foreign policy of the country (Kharel, 2020).

Going back to the history of the strategy adopted by Nepal to secure any nation from foreigners, the nation's national unity is inevitable. During the ancient and medieval periods, our geo-strategy was suited to secure national integrity by making good relations with our neighbors politically and economically. The Malla kingdom was divided due to unrest in the royal court. Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors united Nepal. It was possible with the participation of all walks of castes including but not limited to Pandey, Arjyal, Pantha, Rana, Khanal, and Bohora (Baral, n.d.). Later, there was a misunderstanding in the royal court which led to the massacre of King Rana Bahadur and his brother Sher Bahadur Shah. Immediately Bhimsen Thapa consolidated the power and made socio-economic and military reforms and was able to expand the territory to Tista River in the east and to the Alaknanda River in the west. He tried to forge foreign support to make Asian Union against British Empire. Meantime, there was confusion between the royal court and his officials regarding the continuity of war with British India or postpone it immediately and sign the treaty.

Ultimately the treaty of Sugauli in 1816 was signed. The treaty was against the brave

heroes of the nation due to the royal court being the place of intrigue which led to the encroachment of territory by foreign invaders. Likewise, during the Rana period, Nepal got great achievements regarding foreign relations. Jung Bahadur was successful in returning back the territory around Khasa captured by Tibet and compelled to sign the Thapathali treaty and Naya Muluk lost in the Sugauli treaty with British India. Nevertheless, prime minister Jung Bahadur Rana consolidated power by means of unnatural way, the whole nation had national consensus over the foreign relation toward British so far.

After the dawn of democracy in Nepal, Nepal could approach the foreigners adopting a non-aligned strategy. Nepal was successful to become a member of UNO. But unfortunately, king Mahendra not only dissolved the elected government and parliament, dismissed the multiparty democracy as well, and established the party-less Panchayati system which led to unrest in Nepal. All the political parties were banned and leaders were arrested and kept in jail. King Mahendra, to take support over his step of dismissing the democracy permitted the Indian army to stay in the Lipulek area. Later, India permanently settled her army capturing the territory which is the major matter of dispute with India till now.

Conclusion

Analyzing the above history of foreign relations and discussion over the success and failure of Nepali strategies adopted by the nation, geopolitics envisaged playing a key component of foreign policy. Within geopolitics, geostrategy is crucial. Within the geostrategy, geo-political and geo-economic strategies play a pivotal role to adopt politically and militarily sound international relations. From the very beginning united and economically sound Nepal had always achieved national goals. Being a geographically landlocked country between the two giant and economically emerging nations India and China, Nepal should take this as an opportunity for development and has to be satisfied in the fixed boundary and disputes over the frontiers are to be solved by bilateral negotiations. Moreover, Nepal should be politically stable and economically sound. For this, Nepal should make short and long-term strategies with national consensus, and diplomatic organs must be automatically workable and not affected by the dynamic political situation.

Likewise, Nepal has to establish massive industrial development based on agricultural resources, hydropower, and tourism to balance the ratio of export and import of essential goods. For the development of the tourism industry, building infrastructure, preserving natural resources, and renovating the headquarters of earlier principalities and their *Kot, Killa, Gadhi, Gauda, Chautari, Deurali*, and royal palaces as tourism destinations would be the essential income-generating resources as well as strategical point of

view. Moreover, education especially vocational education based on small industries is necessary to prevent the brain drain, a contentious issue, of youths that human resources are vital to the development of the nation. Any country could not be dominated which has at least a politically national consensus in contentious issues and is economically self-dependent to safeguard national dignity.

References

- Adhikari, B. (2020). <https://www.spotlightnepal.com/2020/04/20/state-of-nepals-economy-and-development-prior-to-the-introduction-of-padma-shamshers-constitution/>, retrived on 01/20/2022.
- Baniya, D. B. (2021). Geo-strategic importance of Nepal. *Unity Journal* (39-47). [://www.nepal.info › unity](http://www.nepal.info/unity), retrieved on 01/17/2022.
- Baral, B. (n.d.). Journal of Political Science. *Volume XX (1- 22)*. <https://www.readcube.com/articles/10.3126/jps.v20i0.31792>
- Hamal, Y. B. (2014). Ecology of Nepal's foreign policy. Kathmandu: Nepal Centre for Development and Policy Studies Pvt. Ltd. (CEDEP Nepal).
- Kharel, H. (2020). National Interest and Diplomacy, Annual Journal (1-8). Kathmandu: Nepal Council of World Affairs.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2022). <https://mofa.gov.np/foreign-policy/>, retrieved on 01-14-2022.
- Shiwakoti, G. & Dahal R. K. (2003). *Antaraashtriy rajniti* (International politics). Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Upadhyaya, S. R. (2007). *Nepal ko prachin tatha madhykalin itihās* (History of ancient and medieval Nepal). Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Vaidya T. R (2018). Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal. Kathmandu: Educational Publishing House.
- Yadav, P. L. (1999). *Nepal ko rajnaitik itihās* (Political history of Nepal). Rajbiraj: Vijaya Kumar.

Part II

National Security

Need of Climate Diplomacy for Geo-strategically located Nepal

Sunil Babu Shrestha* and Rijan Bhakta Kayastha**

Abstract

Nepal has a unique geo-strategic location in between two big countries China on the north and India on the remaining three sides. The two neighbors are not only bigger in size, they also hold a major share in the global economy. Nepal has a historically relationship with immediate neighbors India and China due to geo-strategic location. As compared to the negligible contribution of Nepal, both the neighbors and other world's industrialized countries contribute significant quantity of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) which is regarded as the root cause of climate change will affect different sectors (Like hydropower, water supply, Irrigation, agriculture, biodiversity, tourism, health, infrastructures and urban, etc.) in Nepal. Nepal is one of the most affected countries by climate change in the world. Nepal lies on the top 10 countries, 9th most affected by climate extreme events based on the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) in the period 1999–2018. Climate change therefore has to be seen as important aspect of Nepali society in terms of security and sustainable development. The climate change policy, 2019 has stressed the bringing socio-economic prosperity by building a climate-resilient society in the country. But the climate change is one of the major challenges before us even achieving the target of graduating meaningfully from Least Developed Country (LDC) by 2030. In this context, diplomacy, which deals with give and take the process in various matters including economic development, security and global issues like Climate Change, can facilitate many ways. Looking at the geostrategic location climate change issues and its impacts should be kept in priority in the foreign policy. And diplomacy must be able to explore the opportunities for internationally available climate financing to resilient infrastructures and launching program to tackle the negative impacts of climate change. In this context, this article therefore tries to advocate for the need of Climate Diplomacy and describes climate change issues, particularly in environmental and water resources sectors for exploring bilateral and multilateral cooperation in those sectors.

1. Dr. Sunil Babu Shrestha is the Vice-Chancellor of Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and Chief Editor of Nepal Journal of Science and Technology. He is also life Member of NCWA.
2. Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha is a Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Environmental Science and Engineering and Coordinator of the Himalayan Cryosphere, Climate and Disaster Research Center (HiCCDRC), School of Science, Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel, Kavre.

Key words: Climate Change, Foreign Policy, Transboundary, Tri-lateral Cooperation, Water resources

Introduction

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is located strategically in South Asia. It lies between two bigger neighboring countries China and India in terms of size, economy, and military power. Nepal is about 65 times and 22 times smaller than China and India in size respectively. Nepal has a 1414 km border (15 districts) with China's Tibet autonomous region (TAR) on the north side and an 1880 km border (23 districts) with India (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh & Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim) on three sides (West, South, and East) (Baniya, 2020).

A Himalayan country Nepal has a historical relationship with both immediate neighbors India and China due to geo-strategic location and has also a close people-to-people relationship. Nepal is connected with India socially, culturally, and economically. China has been also a friendly country to Nepal since long back and the commercial transaction is also increasing. Both the neighbors are industrialized countries. Like other industrialized countries of the world, Nepal's immediate neighbors contribute a significant quantity of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) as compared to the negligible amount of Nepal. Scientists have pointed out that the root cause of climate change is GHG emission. The key driver of changes in mountain sustainability today is also identified as climate change which has environmental and social impacts to increase uncertainty in water supplies and agricultural production for human populations across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) (Wester et.al, 2019). Studies have shown that climate change affects different sectors (like hydropower, water supply, irrigation, agriculture, biodiversity, tourism, health, infrastructures and urban, etc.) in Nepal. Nepal is one of the most affected countries by climate change in the world. It lies on the top 10 countries, 9th most affected by climate extreme events based on the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) in the period 1999–2018 (Eckstein et al., 2021). Changes in precipitation and temperature as a result of climate change could have serious implications for biodiversity and the ecosystem that provides goods and services to the general population (Chettri and Sharma 2016, adopted from Wester et.al, 2019). Therefore, climate change has to be seen as an important aspect of Nepali society in terms of security and sustainable development. The climate change policy, 2019 has stressed bringing socio-economic prosperity by building a climate-resilient society in the country. As a party of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Nepal has already submitted the road map of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) (Climate change Policy, 2019). Nepal is also committed to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals leaving no one behind by 2030 and also Sendai Framework for disaster management. However, climate change is one of the major challenges before us even to achieve the target of graduating meaningfully from

Least Developed Country (LDC) by 2030. Diplomacy, which deals and negotiates in the various matters including economic development and security thus needs to be given much priority in dealing with these climate change issues and exploring the opportunities for internationally available climate financing to resilient infrastructures and bilateral and multilateral cooperation to tackle the negative impacts of climate change. Based on the review of the available literature, this article therefore tries to analyze some of the important issues of climate change particularly water resource sectors, environment and its impact in Nepal due to its geo-strategic location. It also aims to advocate the need for climate diplomacy to address those issues with bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Water Resources of Nepal

Nepal is rich with ample water resources from the accessibility point of view. Water is the key natural resource for the prosperity of the country. There are about 6000 rivers in Nepal. out of which, 33 big rivers have drainage areas exceeding 1000 sq. km with drainage density is about 0.3 km per sq. km. The water resources development of Nepal has great potentiality of generating hydroelectric power, irrigating agriculture land, and supplying water for domestic and industrial uses. It is estimated that the economic potential of the hydroelectricity production of Nepal is 43,122 MW (K. C. et al., 2011).

Based on their source and discharge of rivers, rivers in Nepal it can be categorized into three types. The first type of river originates in the Himalayas and carries snowmelt and glacier ice melt water with significant discharge even in the dry season. Mahakali, Karnali, Gandaki and Koshi rivers are of this type. These rivers are perennial and offer promising water sources for irrigation, hydropower development, and navigation. The second type of rivers are the medium type that starts in the Mid-lands or the Mahabharat range. Babai, West Rapti, Bagmati, Kamala, Kankai, and Mechi rivers falls on this category, which are fed by precipitation as well as groundwater regeneration including springs. Such rivers are also perennial but have a wide seasonal fluctuation in discharge. The third type of river originates from the Siwalik range and are seasonal with little or no flow during the dry season. These rivers without surface storage cannot be used for year-round irrigation or hydropower generation. Figure 1 represents the major basins of Nepal with 19 sub-glacierized river basins of Nepal. All river water flows down to India from Nepal.

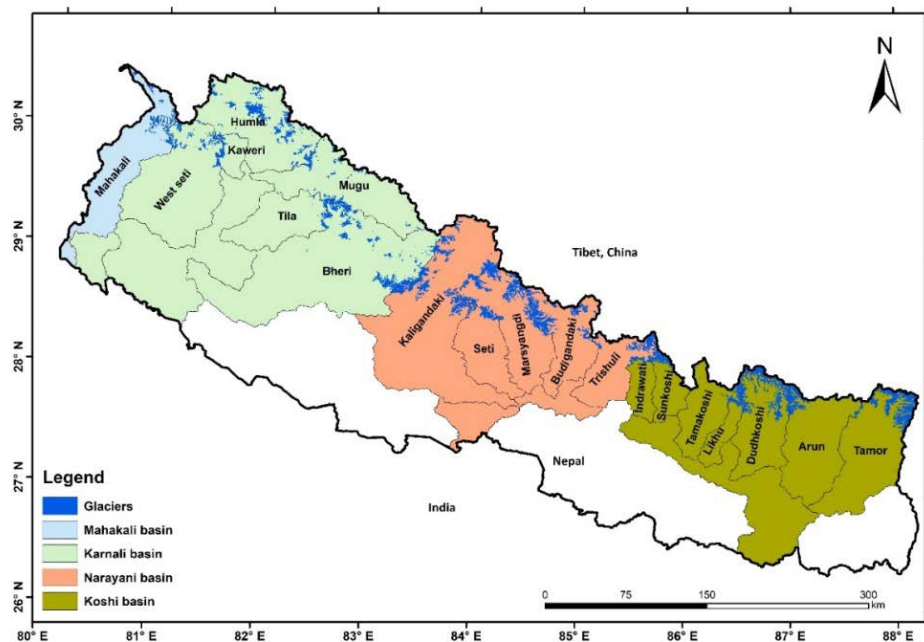


Figure 1. A map of Nepal showing major river basins and 19 glacierized sub-river basins with glaciers.

River discharge is concentrated in the monsoon season in all river systems of Nepal. Snow and glacier ice melt contribution to total runoff is mainly from March to May. On catchments below 3000 m, there is no significant contribution from snow and ice melt. There are 3,808 glaciers in Nepal. Not only glaciers but there are also 1,470 glacial lakes in the northern part of Nepal formed by the activities of glaciers. Among them, 21 glacial lakes are potentially dangerous, which means they are big and hold a vast amount of water, and if they burst, the downstream locations will be damaged considerably by the floodwater including sediment in it. There are other 26 potentially dangerous glacial lakes in Tibet, China (25), and Uttarakhand, India (1) (Bajracharya et al., 2020).

With the above background, it is clear that the importance of the water resources of Nepal for its sustainable development. Since the major rivers are transboundary in nature, it is very important that there should be good coordination and understanding for the development of the water resources of Nepal as well as to reduce damages by induced disasters in Nepal with its neighboring countries.

Water and Trans-boundary Cooperation

From the time of British India, Nepal had tried to harness its water resource for irrigation on a mutual benefit basis between the two countries. Mahakali Agreement was signed with British India on 23 August 1920 for the construction of Sharada Barrage across Mahakali River to irrigate 396,000 ha of land in UP, India. The Agreement quotes that the Government of Nepal will have a right to a supply of 460 cusecs of water. However, it was 50 years after the agreement that the Mahakali River water was utilized in Nepal with the implementation of the Mahakali Irrigation Project to irrigate 11,000 ha of land in the Kanchanpur district (Pradhan, 2018).

Nepal signed the Koshi Agreement with India on 25 April 1954, and India built the Koshi Barrage across the Koshi River. India and Nepal planned to irrigate 969,110 ha and 66 k ha of land respectively and Nepal 66,000 ha of land at that time. Similarly, Nepal and India signed the Gandak Agreement on 4 December 1959 for irrigation and hydroelectricity production. Gandak Barrage was built by India across the Gandak (Narayani) River. India got enough water to irrigate 1,850,520 ha land and Nepal 38,000 ha of land and 10,000 KW power from the Surajpura Power House. A treaty known as the Mahakali Treaty which signed between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India on February 12, 1996. This treaty was for the integrated development of the Mahakali River that included Sharada Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage, and Pancheshwar Dam Project. However, the main component of the treaty, the Pancheshwar Dam Project is still under review. Among the above four main water treaties between Nepal and India, only the first three are in place at present and the last one (Mahakali Treaty) needs serious action to be taken by both governments to harness its water resource. As mentioned by Dixit and Shukla (2017), the produced benefits and service have hardly met as per anticipation of the people. We can consider the unsettled case of compensation to the land submerged by the Koshi Barrage Project which is still unpaid to Nepali landowners.

Geo/Environmental-hazards in Nepal

Nepal is prone to geo-hazards like earthquakes, floods, landslides, debris flows, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), sinkholes, etc. Geo or natural hazards bring disasters in vulnerable areas and disturb the social system, degraded the environment, aggravate poverty and eco-system in the affect areas. The changing climate at present is leading to as increase in the number of occurrences of such hazards. Climate change is visible in terms of temperature rise and unusual extreme weather events. The country's maximum temperature has increased significantly by 0.056°C per year between 1971 and 2014 (DHM, 2017). The minimum temperature has also increased, but the rate is a little low at 0.002°C per year. The rising temperature makes the Nepal's Himalayas more vulnerable. Nepal

has many glaciers and glacial lakes in the Himalayas which are very much sensitive to temperature rise. therefore more the temperature, more melting of snow and glacier ice, that leads to an increase in the glacial lake area.

Nepal's high rank in the list of countries affected by climate change is very serious because there are 3,808 glaciers and 1,470 glacial lakes in Nepal which are directly affected by climate change. Furthermore, many glacial lakes are in transboundary in nature which needs strong collaborative action. Nepal's focus on studying glacial lakes picked up after the glacial lake outburst flood on 4 August, 1985 from the Dig Tsho Glacial Lake in Khumbu region, Solukhumbu district. The event became attention of many as it happened during the non-rainfall season on a clear sunny day. Later, it was noticed that a large amount of glacial ice had fallen into the lake and as a result floods. The 1985 event took place in a comparatively small lake but the country has several larger lakes where the impact will be higher. After this Dig Tsho event, a Chinese and Nepal's joint team carried out the first expedition to inventory glaciers and glacial lakes in the Pumqu and Poiqu river basins of Xizang (Tibet) in 1987 (LIGG/WECS/NEA, 1988). Since, then such joint study have not been carried out yet. A few studies have been carried out in China, Tibet, and Nepal separately. It is very essential to create a Joint Scientific Committee between Nepal and China so that periodic study of glaciers and glacial lakes can be done and exchange of information on flooding can be made on time when necessary. For example, on 18 June 2021, heavy rainfall triggered landslides that blocked the Rongsi River in China, a tributary of the Tama Koshi. The Chinese authorities informed Nepal about the possibility of a flash flood in case the landslide dam was breached. Fortunately, they have safely drained the lake avoiding the chance of flooding.

A similar past event was destructive flooding in the Bhote Koshi River in July 2016 which was due to a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in Tibet. The glacial lake, roughly 9,000 sq. m in area, had eroded its moraine, issuing tsunami-like flood downstream that swept away at least two dozen riverside homes and parts of the Araniko Highway on 5 July, 2016. These events and possible geo-hazards clearly show the necessity of forming a joint team to deal with such events. Not only with China, Nepal should also form such a Joint Scientific Committee with India to deal with similar disasters in the Koshi, Gandak and Mahakali river basins. In the Mahakali River basin, a potentially dangerous glacial lake exists and prior flood information will help a lot to minimize the possible damages due to floods.

Environmental hazards such as air pollution, wildfire, nuclear radiation, etc. also pose a serious threat to Nepal because of its geopolitical location between India and China. Airflow during the winter and pre-monsoon seasons will be from west to east in Nepal. Therefore, most of the big air pollution events entered Nepal from India like the one in

March 2020 which creates havoc in Nepal and the government had closed all educational institutions from 30 March to 2 April 2021. The Joint Scientific Committee will also be helpful to work closely in such events as well as other events in the future. In this context, for a small country like Nepal, mobilizing its available resources to achieve sustainable development by strengthening science and technology via international cooperation will be a valuable mechanism (Shrestha, 2020). Climate diplomacy will be a valuable tool to deal with such transboundary issues described in the following section.

Need of Climate Diplomacy

Climate change has become a global threat through resource degradation and the increasing intensity and frequency of disasters. Depending upon the geographic characters, locations and extent of risk exposures climate change can have various intensity of impacts making obstacle for the sustainable development. Sometimes, climate change can raise transboundary issues and geopolitical tensions specially in the water resource sector and level of pollution. Changing geographies of rivers or glaciers may require diplomatic initiatives to balance interests and avoid disputes over borders or water rights (Carius et al., 2017). Climate change has no boundary. To combat its negative impact, science and technology needs to be mobilize in boundary-less approach. Therefore, with diplomatic approach, it is required to possess international collaboration and cooperation for capacity development, infrastructure development, and technological transfer (Shrestha, 2018).

The basic element through which the impact of climate prevails in our surroundings is water. Adopting hydrological changes (changing pattern of rainfall, changing availability of fresh water, extreme weather events etc.) covers remarkable portion of the adopting to climate change, which results in impact for biodiversity, agriculture and water security etc. Due to such consequences of climate changes in relation to water and environment, it has valuable repercussions for international relations based on the fact that about 60% of the global river flows are trans-boundary (Carius et al., 2017). As it is already discussed in the above section, trans-boundary nature of river flows among China, Nepal and India, the interlinkage of water sector with climate change is very crucial aspect for Nepal and has valuable implication for foreign policy. Therefore, Nepal has to adopt the better climate diplomacy in this context to manage water disputes for geopolitical stability, seeking support for climate resilient infrastructures for sustainable development in the country and expediting the new opportunity of bilateral and multilateral cooperation over water and environment.

For having better climate diplomacy, the role of diplomats is vital for negotiating bilateral and multilateral collaborations. This serves as meaningful instruments for climate actions to reduce climate change impacts by investing in low-carbon development and

adaptation activities. Such climate actions can improve the socio-economic condition of affected country with green job opportunities, green economic activities and investment in resilient infrastructures. Climate action represents an opportunity for sustainable transformation, growth, and development. Climate diplomacy has multi-faceted role to deal with climate change issues. As described in the above sections, the issues and impacts of climate change for Nepal, particularly in water resource and environmental sectors, are serious and sensitive. Therefore, the inclusion of climate diplomacy in foreign policy can open the opportunity for climate change adaptation and mitigation actions (Carius et al., 2017). Diplomacy is a process of negotiation but unfortunately, some of the bilateral treaties and agreements were not done on equal footing or with sufficient diplomatic skills from Nepali side showing the need of subject experts and legal skills for every important give and take process (Nepal, 2021). This emphasizes that while negotiating climate change issues, diplomats from the Nepali side should be well informed about the matters from climate scientists and subject experts so that Nepal, being the low contribution of GHG emission but highly vulnerable country, can get benefits with justifiable compensation.

Conclusions

It was observed that Nepal's foreign policy has been influenced by the change in the domestic political system. With the change of domestic political system, Nepal has adopted a foreign policy of non-alignment, and 'equi-proximity' with its immediate neighbors (Adhikari, 2018). Nepal has also been trying its best to connect China and India becoming a vibrant economic bridge with promoting trilateral cooperation among China, Nepal, and India. As declared by late King Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nepal is a "yam between two boulders" Nepal's geo- strategic location in between both of our immediate industrialized neighbors urge special attention to highlight the climate change issues. Refocus on climate change issues faced by Nepal by virtue of its geographic condition and location, it has to be able to raise its voice to neighbors and industrialized countries at the diplomatic level to create a new discourse that will be providing support for bringing mitigation and adaptation actions against climate change in the country. Nepal will have to ensure its foreign policy serves its national interests with respect to its geo-strategic location. Diplomacy should be utilized properly to our immediate neighbors and other high GHG emission countries to realize that Nepal has to be compensated with green financing mechanism for its resilient infrastructure projects and international cooperation against negative impacts facing or will face in the future due to climate change even though the country has the negligible contribution of GHG emission. Climate Diplomacy has to be best utilized for Nepal's path to inclusive, sustainable and resilient development by maintaining a cooperative relationship with both its neighbors. Instead of asking for international support, climate change issues could be the logical basis for

diplomatic discourse for seeking such aids and grants under bilateral or multilateral cooperation. Furthermore, to materialize the trilateral cooperation, it seems necessary to start diplomatic talk with our immediate neighbors on the topic of trans-boundary or trilateral Cooperation for Water Resource Development and Geo/Environmental-hazards in Nepal and convince our friendly neighbors for sustainable development activities by reducing negative impacts due to climate change in the country. This will be helpful for Nepal to fight against climate change induced disasters and for achieving sustainable development goal of the country .

References

- Adhikari, D. R. (2018). A Small state between two major powers: Nepal's Foreign Policy Since 1816, *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 1.
- Bajracharya, S. R., Maharjan, S. B., Shrestha, F., Sherpa, T. C., Wagle, N., Shrestha, A. B. (2020). Inventory of glacial lakes and identification of potentially dangerous glacial lakes in the Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali River Basins of Nepal, the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and India. Research Report. ICIMOD and UNDP.
- Baniya, D. B. (2020). Geo-strategic importance of Nepal. *Unity Journal*, 1, 39–47. <https://doi.org/10.3126/unityj.v1i0.35693>
- Carius, A., Ivleva, D., Pohl, B., Ruttinger, L., Schaller, S., Sharp, H., Tanzler, D., and Wolters, S. (2017). Climate Diplomacy: Foreign Policy Responses to Climate Change. adelphi, 2017; Online available at: https://climate-diplomacy.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Climate%20Diplomacy_Foreign%20Policy%20Responses%20to%20Climate%20Change%20-%20adelphi%20and%20Federal%20Foreign%20Office%202017.pdf
- DHM (2017). Observed Climate Trend Analysis in the Districts and Physiographic Regions of Nepal (1971-2014). Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Dixit, A. and Shukla, A. (2017). Benefits and Burden: A Case Study of Gandak River Agreement. Kathmandu: ISET-Nepal and ActionAid Nepal.
- Eckstein, D., Kunzel V. and Schafer, L. (2021). Global Climate Risk Index 2021, Germanwatch e.V., Bonn and Berlin Office, Germany.
- Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forestry and Environment, (2019). National Climate Change Policy, 2076 (2019). Online available at: https://mofe.gov.np/downloadfile/climatechange_policy_english_1580984322.pdf

- Halden, P. (2007). The Geopolitics of Climate Change: Challenges to the International System, FOI, Swedish Defense Research Agency, December 2007, ISSN 1650-1942.
- K C, S., Khanal, S., Shrestha, P. & Lamsal, B. (2011). Current Status of Renewable Energy in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*. Volume 15. pp. 4107–4117, doi: 10.1016/j.rser.2011.07.022.
- LIGG/WECS/NEA (1988). Report on First Expedition to Glaciers and Glacier Lakes in the Pumqu (Arun) and Poique (Bhote-Sun Kosi) River Basins, Xizang (Tibet), China, Sino-Nepalese Investigation of Glacier Lake Outburst Floods in the Himalaya, Science Press, Beijing, China, 1988.
- Nepal, R. (2021). Nepal World View: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy (Author: Madhu Raman Acharya) Book Review, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Nepal: *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2021.
- Pradhan, B. K. (2018). Nepal-India Water Relations. *Telegraphnepal.com*, 17 July 2018.
- P. Wester, A. Mishra, A. Mukherji, A. B. Shrestha (eds) (2019) *The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment—Mountains, Climate Change, Sustainability and People* Springer Nature Switzerland AG, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92288-1_2.
- Shrestha, S. B. (2018). Science Diplomacy for The Prosperity of Nepal. *NCWA Annual Journal*, 36-39.
- Shrestha, S. B. (2021). Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Of Nepal. *NAM S&T Newsletter*, 31(1), 8-11.
- Thapa, G. S. (2020). Nepal's geopolitical dilemma, *Nepal Forum of International Relations Studies*, Online available at: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/07/25/nepals-geopolitical-dilemma/>

Modern Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Nepal

Niranjan Man Singh Basnyat*

Abstract

In this article, the author has tried to explain the history of the foreign policy of Nepal since the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah in a nutshell. The article explores the situation during the Rana regime including the return of four districts from the British namely Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchanpur with the efforts of Prime Minister Jung Bahadur during the 1850s. The Agreement signed in 1923 between Nepal and the British Government was very important in which for the first time a big European power of that time recognized Nepal as a sovereign and independent nation. This Agreement was made possible by the efforts of Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher. The present status of foreign policy and its basic principles and objectives, in particular, Nepal's relations with the United Nations have been analyzed. The article also elaborates on the new concepts of modern diplomacy and comments on our need to cope and adapt to the newly evolving international order. In conclusion, the article suggests an all-party consensus on the foreign policy of Nepal, failing which Nepal would have the chance of becoming a failed state in the near future.

Historical Background

Modern Nepal, as is known today all over the world as an independent nation in South Asia, came into existence with the unification of fifty-two small kingdoms and principalities by King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha in 1769 AD (Pant, 1971). Many people in the military and civil services of Gorkha sacrificed their lives to build a strong nation with a bigger territory. Some historians have stated that Nepal or Nepal Mandal had already existed since the time of Licchavi Kings till the eighth century AD, but it became fragmented into multiple kingdoms in the subsequent Thakuri period.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah started the expansion of Gorkha with his first victory over Nuwakot on September 27, 1744. Since then, he had been struggling to unite other small and big kingdoms through intense battles, it took him twenty-five years of his life to finally capture Bhaktapur on November 12, 1769 (Tandon, 2020), the last major victory over Kathmandu valley. This victory and victories over the states of Chaudandi and Bijayapur in eastern Nepal culminated in the successful unification of a modern nation-

* Dr. Basnyat is a Former Ambassador to Malaysia and Member of NCWA

state. After Bhaktapur was annexed to Gorkha, he declared Nepal as a sovereign country with Kathmandu as its capital on March 21, 1770. A noted writer on history and culture, Dr. Govind Tandon, has said that “King Prithvi Narayan Shah had actually regained the respect, esteem, and grandeur of Nepal by his good efforts, otherwise these features had been degrading and were at the state of decline for one thousand years” (Tandon, 2020).

Initially, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had assigned some officials to look after the matters related to foreign affairs. His officers as well as astrologers Bhanu Jaishi Aryal and later his son Balkrishna Aryal used to cover international relations at the outset (Acharya, 1981). Subba Dinanath Upadhyaya was appointed Nepal’s first envoy to East India Company in Calcutta in 1770 and Gajraj Mishra, who belonged to the family of King’s priest, was appointed as a head merchant (a consular officer) of the government of Nepal in Banaras (Acharya, 2004, pp. 479-482). Similarly, Lal Giri was sent to Lhasa to improve relations with Tibet, and Biswamitra Upadhyaya and Gangananda Acharya were sent to Sikkim. “Thus he [King Prithvi Narayan Shah] was also a pioneer in the institution-building of the current Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal” (Basnyat, 2021, p. 112).

Nepal’s Geo-strategic Location

Geographically Nepal was situated in the middle of the two big empires even at the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah’s reign, namely the British in the south which had occupied India, and the Chinese in the north. But the political situation was completely different then in terms of development in war technology and the norms in interacting with foreign powers. Nevertheless, Nepal, a mountainous country with primitive war technology and small military force at its disposal, was able to maintain its independence as a sovereign nation in the course of its history from 1769 to the present day, despite many upheavals and wars it had to face. Nepal fought its major wars against Tibet and China in 1791-92 and with East India Company in 1767 and 1814-16. The war with Tibet/China ended with the signing of the Treaty of Betravati in 1792. Two years before the unification of the country in 1767, Gorkha was able to crush the attack from the East India Company forces in Sindhuligadhi. It was an outstanding victory for Gorkhalis against an emerging global power of the day.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah was a visionary and far-sighted statesman. He had already contemplated about the future and had given following important instructions to his successors in his “Dibya Upadesh” (Divine Counsel) that says as follows:

“This State is like a yam between two rocks. Establish enduring peace with the Emperor of China. Establish peace with the emperor from south-sea (East India Company, King of England) but he is very shrewd. He is controlling Hindustan (India) and has taken our territory in the plains which are at our border.

If Hindustan (India) will unite, they (East India Company) will be in difficulty and they will come searching for forts. Establish forts based on the prevailing situations in the potential routes and put obstacles and hurdles in them. One day that force (East India Company) will come. Do not go to attack them but only if they attack, start the war and many of them will be slain at the Chure Pass. We can also seize the treasure-trove of weaponry which can be used by our five to seven generations. The border will be fixed up to Ganga (Ganges) river. If they cannot win the war, they will come through persuasion or using so many tactics and deceptions (against us)” (Basnyat, 2021, p. 76).

These instructions cited above have been the basis of our foreign policy and they will remain so in the future as well. The last sentence is much more important in the present context. In this connection, it is worthwhile to quote a historian who has said “it seems sufficient to add here that the foreign policy evolved by King Prithvi Narayan Shah and incorporated in his *Dibya Upadesh* (Divine Counsel) was sufficiently sound to bring the newly born Kingdom of Nepal safely through more than thirty years of very troubled times before the clash between Nepal and the Company occurred. This was no small achievement in the subcontinent in the eighteenth century (Stiller, 1989, p. 57).

As was suspected, the East India Company again attacked Nepal after 48 years in 1814 with a much larger number of forces. They won this war and Nepal had to lose thirty-three percent of its territories as per the terms and provisions imposed by the Treaty of Sugauli signed in 1815. King Prithvi Narayan Shah’s successor at that time was King Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah who was a minor. The state affairs were controlled by *Mukhtiyar* General Bhimsen Thapa and his family members. So, he chose to go for war against the British despite the opposition against it in the meeting of courtiers which lasted for nearly 11 hours. The prominent among them who was opposed to going to war with the British was *Bada Kaji* Amar Singh Thapa. They could not prudently manage Nepal’s relations with the British diplomatically or militarily.

Thus, most of the territories that Nepal had conquered earlier in the southern plains from Satlaj in the west to Sikkim and Darjeeling in the east were annexed to British India. This was a big territorial loss to Nepal. The country was thus reduced to the territories in the middle of Mechi River in the east to the Mahakali River in the west. Though the size of the country was reduced, it was, nevertheless, saved and protected as an independent nation till now with the wisdom and courage of ancestors.

Noteworthy events during 104 years of the Rana regime were the return of Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchanpur, which were taken by the British as per the Treaty of Sugauli, to Nepal after the important military assistance rendered by Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana to them to suppress the Sipoy Mutiny in 1857 in India and the

Agreement of 1923 signed by Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana with the British which recognized Nepal as an independent sovereign nation for the first time.

After the overthrow of the autocratic Rana regime in 1951 by the democratic movement led by the Nepali Congress and King Tribhuvan, and supported by India, the foreign policy of Nepal evolved in the new spectrum. King Mahendra re-initiated the steps to become a member of the United Nations, though the first step was already taken by the Rana government in 1948. Finally, Nepal became a member of the United Nations on December 14, 1955, after ten years of its creation. It had established diplomatic ties with the United Kingdom, United States, India, and France during the Rana regime.

Nepal also established diplomatic relations with China in 1955 and USSR in 1956. With the participation of Nepal at the Conference of Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Bandung in 1955, Nepal was considered an important nation in the international arena for the first time. King Mahendra represented Nepal at the highest level and also participated actively in the deliberations of the first Non-Aligned Summit held in Belgrade in 1961. Nepal adopted non-alignment as its foreign policy. The principles and policies of non-alignment based on *Panchsheel* have been incorporated in the constitutions of Nepal adopted at different times from 1961 to the present one promulgated in 2015 (Article 51 m 1 and 2). The principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter have been also enshrined in our Constitution. When one reviews the diplomatic history of Nepal, it can be concluded that King Mahendra till 1971 and later King Birendra till 2001 had promoted and protected the national interests of Nepal in a proper manner. King Mahendra's efforts to enhance the dignity of Nepal in international forums are noteworthy.

Basis of Nepal's International Relations

In today's interdependent world, the foreign policy adopted by a country should be good enough to preserve and protect its sovereignty, national independence, territorial integrity as well as promote national interests among the comity of nations. Nepal has been pursuing the policy of friendship with all the countries of the world through peaceful means. It maintains diplomatic relations with 173 countries out of 193 members of the United Nations at present. Nepal is also the second-largest contributor of peacekeepers for maintaining international peace and security under the UN flag. Among other positive activities that Nepal has been involved in, it has been calling for peaceful settlements of local and international disputes, adherence to democratic principles, values and norms, respect for human rights, and freedom of speech.

Nepal's first elected Prime Minister B.P. Koirala addressed the 15th Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1960 where he said "The primary objective of the foreign policy of every country is to secure its own political independence, sovereignty, and security, and to promote international peace and cooperation...the foreign

policy of Nepal is fully inspired by the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We regard the United Nations not only as a bulwark of our independence and security, but also as the protector of our rights and freedom” (Koirala, 1960).

More recently Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka addressed the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021 in which he has presented the views and positions of Nepal on all major issues of international concern. This has been an annual practice to address the UNGA by the leader of the delegation, but Nepal must equally remain vigilant to fulfill its obligations on various major areas of concern raised by other members, in particular on domestic issues like rampant corruption, promotion and protection of human rights, gender inequality, health, education, representation of minorities, etc. The UN has endorsed seventeen Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) and they are being implemented by the international community including Nepal for which targets have been set to achieve these goals by 2030.

Minister Khadka also called for the general and complete nuclear disarmament, but Nepal has not given any attention to ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which it signed in September 2017. This Treaty has already entered into force on January 22, 2021. As a peace-loving nation and the birthplace of Lord Buddha, Nepal should have ratified this important treaty earlier as this contributes significantly to world peace. Fellow SAARC members such as Bangladesh and the Maldives have already done so along with 57 other members of the UN. Nepal attaches high importance to the UN activities by which maintenance of international peace and security could be achieved. Similarly, other issues such as trade and commerce, and environment protection, in particular, the melting of the Himalayas have been our principal agenda.

The Present Scenario in South Asia and Beyond

Large-scale historical change has been witnessed in the international ambit during the last three decades just after the end of the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was a monumental change. Such an important change in international relations has brought about the need to have a new outlook and it generated widespread interest which changed the thinking of diplomats and political leaders alike. The emergence of China as the new world power only second to the United States has presented challenges and opportunities for many countries and businesses. It has created new realities for many observers in the context of new international economic order after such change which brought China to the center stage of the globe. Nepal signed the agreement for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects with China in 2017 which is yet to be implemented.

As regards the regional organizations, SAARC has become defunct due to rivalry between India and Pakistan. BIMSTEC has also not been able to take off properly as was expected. Many mechanisms on several important areas of cooperation set up by these organizations have become obsolete without proper implementation. It seems that BIMSTEC has given more importance to only security issues rather than other economic and social issues plaguing the region. At the same time, the outbreak of Covid-19 has negatively impacted the world economy. The health and education sectors have also been badly affected. As a consequence, the world economy has slowed down tremendously and people in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are finding it difficult to cope with the new situation.

Besides this, the world has become more vulnerable to larger-scale war in terms of emerging new flashpoints such as the cases of the South China Sea and Russia-Ukraine imbroglio which can even trigger a nuclear war between big powers at any point in time. The US and UK's announcement in September last year to export nuclear submarine technology to Australia is a breach of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). According to the treaty provisions, a nuclear weapon state cannot export nuclear technology to a non-nuclear state like Australia. Similarly, other traditional inequalities prevalent in international trade and concerns on the matters of environmental protection remain more acute. The concept of globalization proposed and implemented by the developed countries for four decades has completely failed to show positive results, in particular, to narrow the gap between rich and poor countries. Rather it has squeezed poor economies in favor of developed ones.

New Concepts in International Relations and Diplomacy

As the world changes, we need to adapt and adjust to the new diplomatic norms and values. The role of INGOs has been growing and they are regarded as change-makers. Internally, the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and line ministries is evolving fast. The ministries such as finance, agriculture, labor, energy, transport, justice, defense or commerce, supplies, etc. are claiming their roles in a country's external affairs. Thus, a need has arisen also to coordinate the increasing global governance and international cooperation which may have a long-term impact. This also entails closer coordination in policy matters with these ministries by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this connection, an expert on international relations has elaborated thus: "In international affairs, while states remain the primary unit, there are several non-state actors whose role and influence have grown considerably: supranational and international organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), uncivil society organizations like terrorist groups, arms and drug smugglers, and human traffickers, multinational corporations (MNCs), philanthropic foundations, celebrities, transnational professional associations which establish global standards and norms,

constitute networked global governance” (Slaughter, 2005). The MoFA should take into consideration such organizations while conducting diplomacy.

A well-known writer on the subject of diplomacy Ramesh Thakur has rightly observed that the concept of national interest “... is erroneous as a description of the empirical reality, substitutes tautology for an explanation, and is unhelpful to guide to policy. In addition, it captures human agency and allows for human error and multiple balances as weighed by different people reflecting their personal predilections, professional backgrounds, life and career experiences, and institutional interests and perspectives” (Thakur, 2013, p. 84). Furthermore, he has proposed to pursue ‘a balance of interests’ in international relations rather than only promoting ‘national interests’ in the present-day complicated world with multiple stakeholders.

Conclusion

The foreign policy of Nepal has not been well-coordinated internally as well as externally in the present context. Political parties are quite divided on the implementation of foreign policy objectives. The relations with India have become ‘sour’ due to its incorporation of Nepal’s territory of Kalapani, Lipulek and Limpiyadhura in its official map on November 8, 2019. Despite Nepal’s several requests to India to have official talks in this connection, India has not given any serious attention to this and it seems that it is trying to evade the talks on this matter. In another example, there was a clear divergence of views on the US Millennium Challenge Corporation agreement among the coalition partners, opposition parties, and general public before it was finally ratified by the parliament on February 27, 2022. Even on the matter of appointing ambassadors to different countries, the political parties are divided and they have their own candidates for each country. In such a scenario, the MoFA has become a silent spectator and has no alternative but to wait for whatever instructions it receives from political leaders. Such instances do not augur well for the long-term international standing of Nepal.

Late Dr. Binod Bista, the then member of NCWA, had rightly stated almost one year ago, “The situation today appears untenable: India is angry with Nepal for releasing new map challenging its claim; China fears Nepal falling into the grip of Indo-Pacific strategy designed to restrain China’s unchecked use of resources of that region; and last but not the least, the US is unhappy with Nepal backtracking on its earlier commitment to MCC. The sensitivities inherent in international relations nudge each country to be among others, accommodative, patient, understanding with top-notch diplomatic skills. It is more so for poorer countries that lack resources. The geophysical setting, the geopolitical situation today does not allow Nepal to commit any slight mistake. Nepal must be alert and active with no respite for now” (Bista, 2021, p. 15).

In view of the above context in the execution of our foreign policy, it is recommended that all political parties sit together to formulate a consensus national foreign policy if Nepal wants to really protect its independence and sovereignty in the long run. In the absence of a firm strategy to develop the country through its robust foreign policy, the country may enter into the dark phase both politically and economically leading to the declaration as a failed nation by the international community. Thus, the leaders should unite and work for resolving domestic political issues and should not in any way involve themselves in inviting foreign interference in the internal affairs of Nepal.

References

- Acharya, B. (1981). *Purnima no. 51*, Samsodhan Mandal: Kathmandu. p.2.
- Acharya, B. (2004). *Sri Paanch Badamaharajadhiraj Prithvi Narayan Shah ko Samchhipta Jivani (A Brief Biography of King Prithvi Narayan Shah)*, Second Edition: Royal Palace: Kathmandu. pp. 479-482.
- Basnyat, N.M.S. (2021). *A Short Biography of King Prithvi Narayan Shah and his Counsel to the People of Nepal*. Mrs. Renu Basnyat: Kathmandu. p. 112.
- Bista, B. (2021). *Nepal's Conduct of its Foreign Policy at the United Nations, Nepal's Foreign Policy and United Nations*. United Nations Association of Nepal: Kathmandu, p. 15.
- Koirala, B.P. (1960). Speech Delivered at the United Nations General Assembly on 29th September 1960 as a Prime Minister of Nepal.
- Pant, N. and et.al. (1971). *Shree Paanch Prithvi Narayan Shah ko Upadesh (Counsel of King Prithvi Narayan Shah)*. Jagadamba Prakashan: Lalitpur. First Edition, pp. 718-34.
- Nicolson S.H. (1969). *Diplomacy*, Oxford University Press, London Oxford New York, p. 138.
- Stillier, L.F. (1989). *Prithwinarayan Shah in the Light of Dibya Upadesh (Divine Counsel)*. Himalaya Book Centre: Kathmandu. p. 57.
- Slaughter, A.M. (2005). *A New World Order*. Princeton: University Press
- Tandon, G. (2020). *Itihas Ka Thap Pristhaharu, (Additional Pages of History)*. Shangri-la Books: Kathmandu, p. 222.
- Thakur R. (2013). *A Balance of Interests, Article published in the Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*. Oxford University Press, p. 84.

Some Nuclear Related UN Treaties and Nepal

Kamal K. Shrestha*

Abstract

Interest of Nepal in many nuclear related international treaties initiated by the United Nations is laudable. Nepal has signed important treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the past and the Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) recently, all of which deserves praise. However, only the NPT has been ratified so far. Ratification of CTBT is overdue. Status of nuclear weapons in the world, nuclear free south Asia, award of Nobel Prize for Peace to TPNW, nuclear doctrine, some relevant topic are also dealt concisely. For the best interest of Nepal, why CTBT and TPNW need to be ratified sooner than later is also discussed in brief.

Introduction

Pakistan and North Korea all of which have nuclear weapons. The peaceful uses of atomic energy program were initiated in these countries building nuclear reactors for research and production of electricity as well as other applications like food preservation, medical sterilization, use of radioisotopes for nuclear medicine, in industry and in agriculture, etc. Unfortunately, these countries ended up in developing and storing nuclear weapons. It is quite conspicuous that these countries have not signed, all important, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Like Nepal, in our neighborhood, however, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have signed NPT and both have peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Bangladesh possesses a small nuclear reactor for research and isotopes production as well as a big nuclear power plant with an aim to generate 1,000 MW of electricity to meet their energy crisis.

Nepal has been keeping abreast with nuclear related treaties by signing all the important UN initiated nuclear related treaties starting from Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) in 1963, Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1973, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1975, etc up to the recent, the Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017. However, Nepal has so far ratified PTBT and NPT only but not CTBT

* Prof. Dr. Shrestha is a Life Member of NCWA and also Former Member of National Committee for CTBT also National Steering Committee for Atomic Energy of Nepal formed as per the National Atomic Energy Policy (2007).

and TPNW. For the national interest and peace in the region, Nepal also needs to take seriously these two nuclear related UN treaties and ratify as soon as possible.

Status of Nuclear Warheads in the World

Currently, the estimated number warheads in the world are 13,132. It seems the nuclear arsenal of Russia is 6,257 and that of the US is 5,550 while China has 350, France has 290 and UK has 225. Similarly, other countries like Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea seems to possess 165, 160, 90 and 45 nuclear warheads respectively. On the other hand, Russia has deployed 1,600 and kept on reserve 2,897 warheads while the U.S. has deployed 1,800 and kept in reserve 2,000 warheads. The nuclear arsenal of France is 280 deployed and 10 on reserve while UK has deployed 120 and put on reserve 105 warheads. They, including China also have “triad system” of deployment, that is, delivery of nuclear bombs to specified targets from the air, sea and the ground. India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea are developing ever more powerful missiles and also making efforts to have “Triad system” of delivery of nuclear bombs.

Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)

The UN treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water with an exception of under- ground was launched in Moscow by USA, UK and then USSR in 1963. In short this was addressed as Partial Ban Treaty or PTBT. This treaty has been signed by almost all the States and also ratified, by many. Nepal signed PTBT on 10.10.1963 and ratified on 07.10.1964 like some of the few countries who did so as early as in the year 1963.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the important international treaty initiated by the UN with the US, the UK and then USSR, now Russia as Depositary which was signed on July 1st, 1968 and became effective from March 5, 1970. The NPT has been signed by 191 countries and many countries have ratified. However, nuclear weapons possessing countries like India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea are non-signatory States. This treaty recognizes the US, the UK, Russia, France and China as five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and all five have signed it. Furthermore, they have assured in general, not to use their nuclear weapons against Non-NWS States. They also assure not to transfer “nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” to NNWS. Similarly, NNWS countries who signed the NPT agree not to receive, acquire, manufacture nuclear weapons and also agree to the safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA is also allowed as a watch dog to verify if the peaceful uses of nuclear knowledge are observed or not by the NNWS. Nepal duly signed and ratified NPT. Nepal has also taken Membership of IAEA and the National Parliament has ratified as required by the statute of IAEA.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

The CTBT was adopted by UN General Assembly 1996. This treaty that bans nuclear tests in any environment was opened for signature in New York on 24 September 1996. This treaty bans all nuclear explosions - everywhere, by everyone. This treaty will enter into force after it has been ratified by 44 nuclear capable States that formally participated in 1996 Conference on Disarmament. Even after 26 years still eight more States have to ratify it. The Treaty provides an International Monitoring System. The IMS has installed 337 monitoring facilities in different parts of the whole world including in the remote locations such as the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Among other verification technologies, these facilities include 80 radio-nuclides stations and 16 radio-nuclide laboratories to detect radio-nuclides released especially in the atmosphere. The seismic, hydro-acoustic, infra-sound are designed to register sound and energy vibrations underground, in the sea and in the atmosphere.

The CTBT aims at eliminating nuclear weapons by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of new types of nuclear weapons. This Treaty plays a crucial role in the prevention on nuclear proliferation and in nuclear disarmament.

The Treaty of Prevention of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

World opinion is overwhelmingly against nuclear weapons and that they should be abolished. Up to now, among the 193 member countries of the UN, 70 have signed and 55 have ratified TPNW. On January 22nd 2020, the whole world celebrated as TPNW came into force. Honduras took the honor of ratifying the Treaty on 24th October 2020 by signing as the 50th instrument of ratification. It's so unfortunate that Nepal did not take the honor to be among the 50 nations. According to the chief elements of this Treaty, all nuclear tests are banned, countries possessing nuclear weapons stockpiles need to negotiate with the UN Representatives on the timetables for the phase wise dismantling of each and every nuclear device in their arsenal. This treaty is set to be eventually fully implemented and then, the world will get rid of nuclear weapons. Peace will prevail on this mother earth. To get rid of fear for the global annihilation can come to reality then and humans will rejoice forever.

Nobel Prize for Peace

The International Physician for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) was awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 1985 for their consistent efforts as the name implies. Co-President, Dr. Iva Helfand said in 2007 "Nuclear war, however, small poses a threat and is a concern for whole planet". Similarly, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was also awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 2017 for the untiring efforts for prohibition of nuclear weapons from the world. Nuclear weapons have posed

as perpetual menace for human society. The ICAN seeks to outlaw and eliminate all nuclear weapons in the world. The ICAN is praised by Nobel committee for drawing attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for ground-breaking efforts for threshold number countries to ratify TPNW.

Nuclear Doctrine

India first adopted a “No First Use” policy after its second nuclear test, Pokhran II in 1998. In the following year, the government released a draft emphasizing that nuclear weapons are solely for deterrence and India will pursue a policy of massive “retaliation” only. China also has “No First Policy” but Pakistan has stated the use for tactical purpose only in the battle field. Nuclear doctrine of North Korea is not known.

Nuclear Disarmament

As the US and Russia possess 90 percent of the total nuclear war heads in the world, nuclear disarmaments efforts have been focused between them. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) has been signed between the US and Russia. Lots of progress has been made after the signing of SALT II. However, Robert R. Monroe said in 2004 “New low-yield, accurate nuclear weapons would reduce the nuclear threshold and blur the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons, thus making their use more likely”.

Conclusion

The world’s nuclear weapons stockpile has declined remarkably from some 70,300 in 1986 to the current 13,132. Still, the sheer number of these weapons of mass destruction if used strategically can destroy the world some 30 times. Mutually assured destruction, so called MAD syndrome still persists. Due to the necessity to retire old nuclear weapons, the decline of the stockpile will continue indicating the proliferation is still underway. On the contrary, other countries like China, Pakistan and India may be perusing to increase their nuclear stockpiles. Israel, however, has never denied or confirmed their nuclear weapon program. North Korea is as unpredictable as ever.

The CTBT and the TPNW are contributing to a safer and more secure world. CTBT has been to stop for the first time development of nuclear weapons by potential countries. On the other hand, leaders of South Asia has proclaimed this region is free of all nuclear weapons which is an awesome achievement for the whole world to fellow suit. These Treaties are also contributing to regional and international peace and security. Member States can also benefit from the utilization of verification regime data in a variety of civil areas, including scientific research, disaster preparedness and meteorological and climate forecasting.

In this nuclear age, along with ratification of CTBT and TPNW, the Zone of Peace proposed by Nepal in 1975 need to be pursued with all seriousness for both security, safety and to live in peace now and assure peaceful coexistence with the world.

References

- Josse, M. R. (1976). *Nepal's Zone of Peace Proposal: A Brief Survey*, Souvenir. NCWA.
- Government of Nepal. (2007). *'National Nuclear Policy*, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Kathmandu.
- Perkovich, G. R. (2001). *India's Nuclear Bomb, The Impact on Global Proliferation*. Oxford Univ. Press, New Delhi.
- Robert, R. M. (2004). "New Threats, Old Weapons", LA Times-Washington Post
- Shrestha, K.K. (2010). "Nepal in the Nuclear Age", Bulletin. NUSON.
- Shrestha, K.K. (2021). "Ratification of Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons", RCLMT, Souvenir.
- The New York Times. (2015). *Nuclear Fears in South Asia: USA*.
- Subrahmanyam, K. (1981). *Nuclear Myths and Realities – India's Dilemma*, ABC Pub. House: New Delhi.
- Thapa, H.B. (2003). *Nuclear Disarmament through Non-Proliferation*, The Kathmandu Post: Kathmandu.

Nepal - Coping up with the National Crises

Rabi Raj Thapa*

Abstract

A prominent book authored by Jared Diamond (Diamond 2019) has postulated twelve factors of identifying whether a country is in crisis or not or whether a country has reached its 'turning point'. This article has tried to review the concurrent Nepali national crisis on the basis of his logic that today's Nepalese leaders, decision makers, elite and think-tanks need to ponder and introspect. In his book, Jarred Diamond has raised hope and optimism for small and underdeveloped countries with his examples of Finland and its struggle for survival against its big powerful neighbor Russia (Then Soviet Union). Second, the author has narrated how the Meiji Government of Japan developed and prospered by imbibing the advanced technology from the United States and the West at the same time preserving its old traditional identity, culture, tradition and civilization.

Crisis as a Turning Point

The word "Crisis" can have several related meanings. One of the numerous meanings of crisis means a "turning point" or change. (Diamond, 2019, p.7). As early as 1982, Blakie, Cameron and Seddon had written, "...Nepal is now in a state of crisis, fundamentally rooted in a failure of productive organization associated with its economic and political underdevelopment" (Blaikie P., and etal.1982). 18 years after their assertion, a prominent Nepali World Bank officer *Rajib Upadhyia* writes in his book, "Nepal descended into deeper chaos when the heir apparent to the 240-year old Nepali crown gunned his family down – including the reigning king – tempting the world to write the nation off as yet another 'failed state'."

Geo-Politics

Geo-politics has several components – geographic location, national identity, people, leaders and national policies and strategies. Among these, Geographic location can however fluctuate but cannot be changed. It is only the defense, diplomacy and development of a country that can change a nation's destiny, irrespective of its geographic location.

The other factors are dynamic in nature and changes depending upon internal political stability, law, order and peace or conflict situation; and nonetheless external threat and

* Mr. Thapa is an Additional Inspector General, Armed Police Force, Nepal (Retd.) and also Member of NCWA

environment. Unfortunately, Nepal is at present embroiled in all fronts including Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC), border dispute with India (*Lipulek, Limpiadhura*. (Paudyal, 2013)). Recently, Nepal has also become embroiled in a new border issue with China. (Subedi, 2022).

Jared Diamond opines that it is neither possible nor desirable for individuals or nations to change completely, and to discard everything of their former identities. Since the political change of 2006, the new rulers of the post-armed conflict of Nepal have changed the course of Nepalese history and its political structure may prove to be nothing other than “*a penny wise pound foolish*” political experimental adventure. Today, the urgent need for Nepal is to be able to differentiate and figure out which parts of the political system still functioning well and don’t need change; and, which are not working and urgently need changes.

Individuals or nations when they come under pressure must take honest stock of their identities, abilities goals and values. However, one needs courage and patience to recognize and to be able to change in order to deal with new ever emerging situations.

Therefore, one must introspect and decide what works for oneself; this remains appropriate even under the new changed circumstances. Similarly, a nation must be ready to figure out which parts are no longer working and need changing. (Diamond, 2019, p.6)

Based upon Jared Diamond’s twelve factors related to the outcome of national crisis, I have tried to interpret the manner in which Nepal is currently dealing with its national crisis as follows:

Is there a National Consensus that Nepal in Crisis?

Nepal must be able to acknowledge or deny whether she is being in crises. This acknowledgement requires some degree of national consensus. The accession and ratification of the MCC by the parliament on February was done in a very dubious way with neither the consensus within parliament nor from the people. The same procedure was adopted in 2008 that repudiated Nepal as a *Hindu State* and it also dissolved the age-old institution of a *Hindu monarch in Nepal*. The row on the Millennium Cooperation Compact (MCC) (WION, 2022) exacerbated by violent street protests and demonstrations; political rat-race and horse trading to get it ratified by the legislature is a glaring example of no consensus among the national stakeholders, i.e. Nepalese people and the political leaders.

Are the government, political leaders and stakeholders shouldering their responsibilities to act accordingly?

Nepalese stakeholders must be willing and able to take responsibility to take action to solve the problem, or else deny the responsibility by indulging in self-pity, denial of responsibility, blaming others, and assuming the role of victim. (Diamond, 2019. p. 51).

Nepalese must learn to stop wallowing in self-pity or focusing on oneself as the victim, and instead they need to recognize the need for change in their attitude and behavior.

Delineate the National Problems Needing to be Solved

Nepal needs to stop making ad-hoc decisions and subjective rules that it has inherited since centuries. It is time for Nepal to make selective changes in its policies and institutions as well. Nepal must prioritize and deal with crises depending upon its urgency, gravity, risk and vulnerability. Here, the question may arise – where has Nepal failed -why and how; and, what needs to be done?

Getting Material and Financial help from other Nations

A nation may receive material and financial help from other nations. But the rationale of foreign assistance based on eternal design and dictation needs to be averted as much as possible. Nepal's GDP per capita, Purchasing Power Parity 2020 – country ranking is 147 out of 183 countries (The Global Economy, 2022). In recent interview, Nepalese ministers clearly indicate that the survival of Nepalese economy is based on delicate foreign aid and remittances.

Nepal had received overwhelming material and financial help during the Great Earthquake of 2015. But it cannot take foreign aid and remittances for a ride.

Use others examples as a model as how to solve a problem

Jared Diamond gives an example of Finland as a small country and how it has successfully dealt with its assertive powerful neighbor - the Soviet Union (USSR after 1991) its neighbor. Nepal can learn a lot from Finland's experience.

Another example that he has given is of the Meiji rule (Meiji rule 1868-1912). After the Meiji restoration, Meiji rulers had very successfully learned from western political, legal, administrative infrastructural transformation and development, and at the same time, had successfully protected and preserved, almost intact, their national core values, national identity, culture and religion. (Diamond, 2019, p.60)

Nepal needs to learn from Finland how to deal with big and powerful neighbors and from Japan how to develop nation without destroying age-old Nepalese tradition and culture.

National Identity

Jared Diamond writes, " Nations do have a national characteristic called the national identity. (Diamond, 2019). It requires reaching some degree of national consensus in experienced and responsible leaders, united civilians, objective control, unified military, clear internal and external orientation (in domestic and foreign policy), convergent ideas.

If the “America First” can be the America’s identity, Nepal can have - “The Land of *Gurkhas*”, “the Birthplace of the *Lord Gautama Buddha*”, “the only *Hindu Kingdom of Nepal with a Hindu King*” has always been the symbol of Nepal’s National Identity. Currently all these century old identities have been either forcibly repudiated, eroded by wallowing for and against the Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC) which has demonstrated eroding political norms and values of political, business houses, so called think-tanks and elite circles.

Nepal Requires Honest National Self-appraisal

Jared Diamond (2019) writes, “Nations have historical experience of previous national crisis”. (Diamond, 2019). Therefore, it is not only the geography but also honest appraisals of successes, the national policy-strategies and statecrafts as national historical mile-stones. According to one of the most renowned bureaucrat, diplomat and historian *Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey*, Nepal is one of the rarest five ever sovereign and independent countries of Asia-Pacific along with other four, namely Afghanistan, Iran (Persia), Japan and *Siam* (present Thailand). This shows that it is not only geographic constraints but also statecraft that matters a lot. For example, what can be the reasons for land-locked countries like Austria and Switzerland, a sea-locked city-state like Singapore, and a small country surrounded by entirely hostile countries like Israel are all successful in their domestic and foreign relation?

It is for sure that, if the countrymen are not honest in their national self-appraisal, their country can never prosper,

Historical Experience of Previous National Crises

Jared Diamond (2019) writes,” Nations have historical experience, while individuals have personal memories of previous crises. (*Diamond, 2019*).

Nepal has been through centuries of social, political upheavals in the past. But its past seventy years have been a failure to transform, to accommodate / adapt to the changing regional and global order at large. That is the reason, Nepal is considered to be in transition for seven decades – which is paradoxical and absurd.

A prominent historian of Nepal, Ludwig F. Stiller had coined the historical period of 1816-1839 as a period of “the Silent Cry” of Nepal (Stiller, 2018). It seems that Nepal is again going through the same destiny ever since it fell into the conflict-trap since armed conflict of 1996-2006 and it still continuing through disguised proxy means and ways.

Dealing with National Failure

Jared Diamond (2019) writes, "Nations differ in how they deal with failure and in their willingness to explore other solutions to a problem if the first attempted solutions fail". (Diamond, 2019).

Seventy years of trial-and-error democratic political experimentation of Nepal has now become an ever relapsing chronic disease of state-failure. Nepal seems to have failed to learn anything from its past failures. Nepal seems to have become a victim of never-ending emotional, raw and immature political adventurism; political horse-trading despite repeatedly falling into vicious conflict traps of 1050s, 1962, 1972, 1986, 1990s, 1996 to 2005, 2006, 2015 and present). These geopolitical quagmires seem lead Nepal into a failed-state, ultimately a death-trap, threatening the sole existence of Nepal into a vanquished nation like Tibet, Sikkim and Palestine.

Situation-specific national flexibility

The rigid war-mongering of the Nazi-Germany and Japan in the past have shown extraordinary flexibility once they were decimated during the Second World War -1930-1945. As a result of their situation-specific flexibility, they were exemplary in damage control, national revival and reconstruction; saving their people from death, poverty and hunger within few decades. Since the political change of 1950, Nepal as a government has behaved like spineless except for the 12 years of *King Mahendra's* rule; even though his term is looked at with disdain. This political roller-costar ride, trial-and-error experimentation, policy of appeasement has eroded the once effective institutional and political infrastructural development of Nepal, and sent it into a regressive mode.

Need to protect and preserve Nepal's national core values

What are the core-values of Nepal?

Decades ago, Kathmandu valley was coined as a City of Gods. Nepal is still one of the oldest living culture and civilization in the world. Politically, Nepal has remained ever sovereign and independent since it came into existence in 1769.

Firstly, Nepal has got the Mount Everest; secondly, Nepal is also the birthplace of Lord *Gautama Buddha*; thirdly, King *Prithivinarayan Shah* had coined Nepal as an "*Aas-ali Hindustana*", a pure Hindu nation of the world, that existed intact for 240 years; fourthly, Nepal was the only nation with *Hindu Monarch* on the world-map that was repudiated in a questionable manner by the first Constitutional Assembly of Nepal in 2008. Paradoxically, there are still many Christian Queens and kings in the world today. Similarly, there are many kings and princes as absolute rulers in the Arab and Muslim countries (Huntington, 1997). Finally, Nepal being the source-country of world's renowned *Gurkhas*, it is also gradually being reduced and replaced by infamous manual labor forces who are dying in the desert of the Gulf countries in a large number like a fallen soldier. Then what is the difference? – may be only hardship, humiliation and disgrace being a Nepali in the outer world.

Geopolitical Constraints

Finally, Jared Diamond concludes with the geopolitical constraint that no country of the world can possibly ignore. (*Diamond, 2019*).

Geopolitically, the greatest disadvantage of Nepal is that it is land-locked and totally surrounded by two ambitious emerging powers of the world – China and India. The second most sensitive point is that Nepal has become vulnerable as a conflict flash-point, bridgehead between the world arch-rivals USA and China, a possible strategic land-mass like Afghanistan and Ukraine.

The relationship between India and China in trade and transit looks friendly but their military and strategic relation is hostile. Positively Nepal as a buffer zone could be the best for both the countries. But due to weak and poor diplomatic acumens, Nepal is losing its trust and credibility with both the countries. Now, the US assertiveness to get its MCC contract through the parliament has divided the country politically that has provoked Nepal's northern neighbor to become vocal. Nepal's sweet-and-sour relationship with its southern, eastern and western neighbor India has always been unpredictable since India got its independence in 1947.

Conclusion

Nepal's aspiration to develop and modernize has been stalled due to numerous factors. When the just in three decades Germany recovered from the devastation of two World Wars fought within three decades. Japan did recover and restructure and restore its national identity and robust economic power after the defeat and two Atom bombs killed an estimated 140,000 in Hiroshima, and further 74,000 in Nagasaki. (ICAN, 2022).

When Germany and Japan could recover and reconstruct their countries within decades after such crippling devastation, what are the reasons for Nepal to get entangled into a boiled spaghetti situation? After the war Japan was forced it to be ruled by the USA and Germany was divided into communist East and democratic West. Why cannot take full advantages of its all what we have in Nepal. Nepal has always failed to introspect and its leaders after 1950 been infatuated by external ideas and influences, contrary to what Jarred Diamond has stipulated.

Nepal can learn from Finland to defend its national interest diplomatically using soft and smart power. Nepal can learn from Japan to modernize and develop by preserving its rich culture, tradition and civilization. Nepal need to do realistic-assessment of its geopolitical advantages and vulnerabilities and adapt with a combination of selective changes as required.

To be on the safe side, Nepal can play a preventive diplomacy like that of Finland and national development in a manner Meiji Japan had done in the 1800.

Geography will never hamper if the politics can take smart and constructive measures.

To sum up, Nepal is deeply embroiled into a complex and complicated chaos and crisis; so much so that it is going to be a Herculean Task and Achilles Hills to whoever aspire to be the ruler of this modern Nepal.

Reference

- Blaikie P., Cameron J., Seddon D. (1982). “*Nepal in Crisis*”, Oxford University Press: Delhi. p.5.
- Diamond J. (2019). “*Upheaval, How Nations Cope with Crisis and Change*”, Penguin Random House: UK.
- Huntington P.S. (1997). *The Clash of Civilization and Remaking of World Order*. Penguin Books: India.
- ICAN. (2022). *Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings*. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN): <https://www.icanw.org>
- Paudyal, G. (2013). “Border Dispute between Nepal and India”, Research 1– II, July–December 2013, (pp. 35-48), Kathmandu: Tribhuvan University.
- MCC. (2022). Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) <https://us.nepalembassy.gov.np/mmc/>
- Meiji Period. (1868-1912). Japan-guide.com: <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2130.html>
- Stiller, F.L., S.J. (2018). “*The Silent Cry, the People of Nepal. (1816-1839)*, Revised Edition: Education Publishing House: Nepal.
- Subedi, T. (2022). *Border Disputes Between India and Nepal: Will India Act as a Responsible Rising Power?* January 8, 2021, Australian Institute of World Affairs: <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/20832>
- The Global Economy (2022). https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/GDP_per_capita_PPP/
- WION, (2022). Slogans rejecting MCC echoes in streets of Nepal. Latest World English News: WION. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss_aVH-GC1k. Accessed 25 February 2022.

Foreign Policy of Nepal: The Changing Security Spectrum of South Asia and Beyond

Gopal Pokharel*

Introduction

Foreign policy is rightly understood as the extension of domestic policy. It has also been a rational explanation of a country's external behavior. The foreign policy of any country truly represents its core national interest and is taken as a judicious mix of continuity and change. As a country with a long and unbroken history of political independence and national sovereignty, Nepal's foreign policy largely reflects continuum and encompasses a fine blend of principles and pragmatism with a view to protecting and promoting our national interests in the changed political context in an increasingly competitive and globalizing world of the twenty-first century.

Nepal is one of the few ancient countries that has had a long existence in the annals of world history followed by intermittent setbacks and ups and downs. On the whole, this country has aptly handled the statecraft which enabled it to preserve and protect the sovereign identity even under the adverse situation. Nepal has been continuously involved in the UN peace-keeping mission, being the second biggest contributors of military personnel whenever and wherever deemed urgent under the auspices of the UN. During the cold war period, Nepal pursued a foreign policy of constructive engagement with all the powerful and peaceful countries adhering to the fine principles of "Pancha-Sheel" and Non-Alignment, giving utmost priority with both of its immediate neighbors; China and India based on equi-proximity and mutuality of interest. Nepal's unique geo-strategic location has shaped and guided the country's foreign policy formulation and implementation ever since the "yam between two boulders" strategy was adopted more than two centuries ago.

In order to achieve the desired and set goals of foreign policy, the apt and skillful handling of diplomacy is imperative. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in tandem with other sectoral ministries, is to take a lead nonetheless, diplomacy is not exclusively under the domain of MOFA alone now being practiced by all the decision-makers of the government dealing with the international community. Concomitantly, the role of the private sector, the civil society, and non-governmental organizations along

* Prof. Pokharel is a former Vice President of NCWA

with intellectuals, professionals, and imminent individuals should be geared to the vision of foreign policy matters without making compromises on their independent views. This obviously helps in fine-tuning the process of attaining the set objectives of foreign policy. All the actors and sub-actors involved in the administrative and bureaucratic machinery of the government must bear in mind Six 'Cs' to effectively handle the business related to foreign policy issues. The first C denotes clarity of subject, the 2nd C emphasizes on consistency, the 3rd C encourages capability building, the 4th C insists on consensus building with all major political figures, 5th C talks of co-ordination and the 6th C indeed demands effective communication and cooperation between and among agencies concerned, to name a few.

To systematize the institutionalization process, Nepal needs to enact a separate Foreign Service Act and revamp the Ministry of Foreign Affairs(MoFA) and diplomatic missions and strengthen the organizational capacity for result-oriented outputs.

Foreign Policy of Nepal Under the Republican, Democratic Dispensation

What role can foreign policy play in the present-day context? There has to be a critical yet constructive examination of the anomalies and missing elements in Nepal's foreign policy which sometimes creates a sense of vagueness and incoherence about the intentions and likely reaction to issues affecting her vital interest.

The institutionalization of Nepal's foreign policy is the need of the hour. To systematize the process, Nepal needs to enact a separate 'Foreign Policy Service Act' and revamp the ministry of foreign affairs(MOFA) and diplomatic missions. In order to strengthen the organizational capacity, a well-equipped and resourceful 'think-tank' like the Institute of Foreign Affairs(IFA)and Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA)should be made further effective to get essential feedback on current trends in bilateral, regional and global relationships and affairs. Besides, a provision should be made to constantly promote the professional skills and efficiencies of diplomats and officials working in these organizations. But unfortunately, we have created a filthy atmosphere under which Nepali officials and diplomats hesitate to work with their full potential. To give a boost to Economic Diplomacy which has been a high agenda in Nepalese foreign policy after 1990's political change, Nepal needs to explore all the possible avenues of its comparative advantages and create a conducive climate to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) backed by suitable technology transfer.

At present, a sizable number of Nepalese youths are joining the international labor market mainly to the Gulf countries in search of better livelihood. The demand for middle-level manpower from Nepal is relatively higher in international labor markets, for they are honest, hardworking and available at cheaper wage rates. Recent trends suggest that foreign employment has been a perennial source of remittance over the

years which has been instrumental in reducing the extent of poverty. The increasing number of Nepali workers employed in the Gulf, and South Asian countries suffered a setback due to the spread of COVID 19 pandemic whose ramifications have affected the overall global economy as well.

Since the restructuring of the state after the Constituent Assembly polls, in response to people's interests, aspirations and expectations has become a prime agenda of Nepali polity and as such the people are at the centers of politics and other activities involving them, their interest invariably reflected in foreign policy decisions and the measures that the government has taken from time to time taking into consideration the changing international situation.

Nepal's Foreign Policy Under Stress

After the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union followed by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, there has been a dramatic shift in the global balance of power. The end of the Cold War followed by the wave of globalization has made it possible to integrate the economies of both developed and developing countries in an increasingly interdependent and globalized world. Conventional diplomacy has undergone a paradigm shift owing to the growing relevance of trade, investment, and other economic activities to developing countries like Nepal under increased pressure to uplift the living condition of their people. But unfortunately, once again military superiority and security concerns figure dominantly in the global high politics and a wanton arms' race between and among powerful countries is posing a serious threat to world peace and order in a form of neo-colonialism. In recent years, a Cold War type of situation with the indulgence of major powers (the US, Russia, China and India) has threatened world peace and caused further stress on the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy. Under such a precarious condition, all the peace-loving countries big or small, developed or developing across countries and continents should forge an alliance and put moral pressure through UN forums and other suitable platforms and come up with modalities so that the likely confrontation and catastrophe be averted. For Nepal, Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) agreement initiated by the US and China respectively have assumed greater currency as Nepal's tacit involvement in both the projects are the two burning issues that has alarmingly eroded the credibility of Nepal's foreign policy at present. To get rid of the present conundrum, perceptual clarity, seriousness and skillful and apt handling of diplomacy is called for, meticulous efforts and consideration on the part of Nepal is urgently needed so that the vital national interest of the country is not put in jeopardy. Instead of indulging in political gimmick, Nepal should open free and frank dialogue assuring both immediate neighbors and other powerful partners. Under no circumstances should Nepal allow its steps and actions to adversely affect the genuine interest of our friends.

The Paradox

The conventional and nuclear arrangements alone are not adequate in safeguarding the vital interest of the nations mainly of small and weaker ones. So, there is a global emphasis on human security which includes social and economic security.

Trade, not aid is the prevailing motto in economic relations among nations today. Indeed, it is a more powerful catalyst of sustained development than aid. After obtaining membership in World Trade Organisation (WTO), it is imperative for Nepal to increase capacity building and explore the possible avenues of comparative advantages and compete with other partners in the world market for which Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), capital and technology would play a crucial role to accelerate the pace of economic development. Due to lack of policy consistency, Nepal's credibility is eroded in attracting FDI in the recent years.

Credible, current and appropriate measures are immediately called for to attract FDI in such areas as hydropower, tourism, bio-diversity and education where Nepal has both comparative advantages and competitive edge.

Conclusion

How Nepal can enhance its effectiveness in the international system is a pertinent concern. In today's expanding diplomatic relations with a large number of countries, the rapidly changing international system demands greater understanding with a wide comprehension of the field incorporated by international relations. South Asian member states with their collective efforts and wisdom eventually succeeded in establishing a regional entity named as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) by signing its charter with a strong resolve for a common cause realizing the full potential of South Asian people to achieve collective well-being within the shortest possible timeframe. The modus-operandi was based on respecting the sovereign independence of individual states through interdependence.

Tremendous efforts and befitting arrangements were made in consolidating SAARC activities which successfully concluded its 18th summit, in Kathmandu in date. The blending of the state-centric approach (Track 1) and people-centric steps (Track 2) promoted and protected the organizational efficacy of the regional body to a considerable extent. The 19th Summit proposed in Islamabad is overdue because of misperceptions and differences between the two regional heavyweights India and Pakistan. At present, SAARC stands in limbo. Nepal, as a founding member and incumbent chair, should have worked out modalities and tried to create a congenial atmosphere to bring a rapprochement between India and Pakistan but the portion of onus basically rests on these two regional heavyweights for the successful functioning of SAARC. The

perceptional, military and nuclear irritants in the region should be done away with and of SAARC should be brought back on right track. Further, the recent developments and trends to encourage unilateralism, interventionism, intrusiveness both globally and within the region has raised pertinent concern regarding the traditional and non-traditional approaches which might further exacerbate the existing conditions and most of the regional states continue to face uncertainty and insecurities arising out of the antagonistic relations between the two neighbors.

References

- IFA. (2008). A Generic Guide Line for development through Economic Diplomacy. IFA publication: Kathmandu
- Pokharel G. (2008). Expansion of SAARC; challenges and opportunities, ede.: IFA publication: Kathmandu.
- Pokharel G.(2008). Foreign Policy of Nepal, Challenges and Opportunities. IFA publication: Kathmandu.
- NCWA, Annual Journal 2010-11: Kathmandu.
- IFA. (2013). Foreign Policy of Nepal; Enhancing Effective Participation of Nepal in the regional and International system and risk of climate change, IFA and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung(FES): Kathmandu.
- IFA. (213). Institutionalization of Foreign Policy. IFA: Kathmandu.
- ‘Vision to Action’- Selected Speeches of KP Sharma Oli, Volume-3: Kathmandu.
- Joshi, B.L. and Leo, E.R. (2022). Democratic Innovations in Nepal: Kathmandu

Strategic Importance of Nepal

Yuba Raj Adhikari*

Abstract

The fate of any country depends on its geopolitical situation and its role in world politics. At any given time, a small and less powerful country's independence can be threatened by geopolitical uncertainties and big power politics. Big powers are interested in the natural resources of their neighbors. They are also concerned about their national security and hence try to expand their influence in the neighboring countries. Nepal is located in a crucial geostrategic position between big and powerful neighbors India and China. Nepal's longstanding foreign policy of non-alignment is key to maintaining its sovereignty and independence in today's complex geopolitical environment. This article analyzes the importance of Nepal's geo-strategic position and the means to get benefits out of it.

Keywords: geo-strategic, connectivity, foreign policy, border, security

Introduction

Nepal is one of the landlocked countries in the world. Nepal is surrounded in the East, West and South borders by India and the northern borders are surrounded by Tibet, the autonomous region of China. Nepal does not have direct access to the sea. It has to depend on India and China for sea access. Despite not having access to the sea Nepal has been becoming a center of strategic attraction for many of the world's most powerful countries in terms of geopolitics. Nepal has been maintaining balanced relations between India and China, and other emerging countries of the world, for its economic benefit. Nepal is connected by Himalayas, rivers and strategic borders and road network with India and China. It has been strategically influenced by the two neighboring countries China and India. Nepal's political and economic stability is important for China and India. Therefore, we should use Nepal strategically for the geopolitical balance in South Asia.

Regional Power Balance

Although there is still a border dispute with India, which became independent in 1947, Nepal-India relations have been friendly. The unannounced embargo imposed by India for two months in 2015 is clear sign that India wants its presence in Nepal. Considering

* Mr. Adhikari is an Administrative Officer of NCWA.

India's behavior and repeated blockades in Nepal, the country need to be self reliant. South Asian countries including Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan based on geography and population have to adopt restraint and mutual relations with neighbors. Due to the geography of the country, Nepal can become a buffer zone for international powers. Therefore, regional balance if oiwter is important for Nepal's interest.

Internal Stability

Geopolitical activities by international powers can lead to internal instability in the nation. For that, political parties and leaders need foresight for the sake of nation. The short-sighted approach of political parties and leaders can harm democracy. The country was plunged into an armed conflict due to mishandling of situation by the concerned political parties. It is only natural that conflicts in the country affected the people a comprehensive peace agreement was signed between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists in 2004 with the active factilation of India. Since then, Nepal has been moving forward through a process of peaceful transition. Nepal, located between two-thirds of the world's population and economically prosperous China and India needs to take advantage from their technological know-how. Nepal has to strictly implement its non-aligned foreign policy for maintaining good relationship with all.

Influencing Factors in Foreign Policy of Nepal

Geographical reality is a foreign polity determinat that cannot be changed Nepal's geostrategic position has had an impact on its international relations. Foreign policy depends on the country's population, region, national resources, natural resources and military capabilities. Nepal is a small country by the standards of developed countries. The leaders and people of small countries do not succeed in playing a greater role in the international game. Therefore, due to the small size of Nepal's economy and population compared to India and China, Nepal has lesser involvement in international affairs. So, we cannot express our views clearly which is affecting the foreign policy. In such a situation, adopting a appropriate foreign policy is a big challenge for Nepal.

Nepal's Role in Regional Geopolitics

Nepal is bounded by a perimeter of 3222.88 km; of which 1808 km length falls along India's Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. Nepal's border with China is about 1414.88 km (Shrestha, 2003). Therefore, the stability of these areas depends to some extent on Nepal's security, so India always strives to secure its rights in Nepal. Realizing this importance, India signed the Peace and Friendship Treaty in 1950. Similarly, China wants

stability in Nepal too. The West countries are looking to enter Nepal to bring emerging China and India to size, in the words of author Bhim Bhurtel:

Nepal has not seen either China or India as a threat to its “territorial integrity” and “sovereignty,” although Nepal has accused India of unfair treatment since 2015 and it tends to turn to China when it is in dire need of support. The political and foreign-policy elites of Kathmandu also know only too well that the US tends to follow India’s policy lead when it comes to dealings with Nepal. Besides that, all Nepalese political parties, including the pro-Indian fringe Madhesi parties, firmly believe in the “one China” policy. (Bhurtel, 2018)

India does not want Nepal to get out of its sphere of influences. Therefore, India has always wanted Nepal to move according to its own interest. In his article, Jagat S Mehta, an Indian writer, has said:

It is acceptable for Nehru to be cautious and restrict contact with the outside world to a minimum. Nehru who encouraged Nepal’s participation in Bandung (1955) at the first Asian Relations Conference, sponsored it for membership of the United Nations and eventually gave consent for the establishment of other resident embassies in Kathmandu, which British India, even while accepting Nepal’s independence, had steadfastly resisted (Mehta, 2004).

This example shows a contrast in the relationship between Nepal and India. The geopolitical reality is not changeable. Nepal needs to pursue an independent policy. Nepal cannot allow anti-Indian activities and anti China activities in our territory. Nepal's geopolitical reality non-alignment policy and geographical location have played a major role as foundations of its foreign policy.

Strategic Capability of Nepal

Nepal has been contributing to the United Nations peacekeeping mission for more than 50 years, and has enhanced its global image in spite of weak economic and military strength than powerful countries. In the backdrop of a weak economy and political instability, Nepal cannot build effective relations with its neighbors. Due to the lack of a strong military and economic sector in Nepal, there has always been a fear of domination from powerful neighbors. As a member of the UN, Nepal wants peace and does not want to go to war with any country. That is why Nepal became a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, established in 1960. Nepal prohibits the production and use of any type of nuclear and biological weapons within its territory. The radioactivity

emanating from the biological weapons factories of the nuclear-armed nations poses a threat to Nepal's security. Dr. Kamal Krishna Shrestha writes:

Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) of the US supports permanent threat reduction by eliminating nuclear weapons-usable excess stockpiles located at civilian sites. GTRI is cooperating with more than 90 countries. IAEA provides worldwide technical and other assistance to enhance physical protection of radioactive sources used for oncology, industrial use, medical sterilization, food preservation, etc as well as research work. In addition, the US is collecting and transporting up to a safe depository to deny radioactive and nuclear materials to the terrorist. Global threat reduction program of UK, Department of Energy and Climate Change, is on the other hand contributing towards creating awareness of the importance of nuclear security and conducting training activities in collaboration with IAEA and the US, EU, Soviet Union and many concerned countries including Nepal. (Shrestha K. K., 2020)

In today's changing world, the topmost power is strategic, the second is economic and the third is ideological. If the non-aligned policy is universally accepted by the global powers, this policy of Nepal can become its strategic capability.

Conclusion

Nepal does not compromise with sovereignty and does not allow its land to be used for any activities against neighboring and other countries. Nepal should not be identified as a buffer state. However, it cannot ignore the influence of its neighbors. Nepal is in between vast neighboring countries. While analyzing the national security policies of India, China and the United States, they have a direct geopolitical, strategic and security interest in Nepal. In the current situation, a triangular rivalry could undermine Nepal's national interest in the future. Therefore, it is important to understand the reality of the long-term impact on Nepal due to the growing game of geopolitical power between them. It is also important for Nepal to study the policies, strategies and diplomacy of the world powers and to make an objective analysis without being provoked or opposed by anyone. Nepal must protect and promote its national interest while respecting its fundamental strategic interests. If Nepal can maintain diplomatic and strategic balance between the world powers, it can avoid geopolitical games.

References

- Bhattarai, U.K. (2016). Geopolitical Dimension of Nepal and Its Impact in South Asia. *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 1, No. 1.
- Bhurtel, B. (2018). US tries in vain to pull Nepal into its orbit. *Asia Times: Hong Kong*.
- Dahal, R.K. (2009). Emerging role of Nepalese diplomacy in regional and global politics. *The Weekly Mirror: Kathmandu*.
- Mehta, J.S. (2004). India and Nepal Relations: A Victim of Politics, in *India Nepal Relations: The Challenge Ahead*, ed. Rupa. New Delhi: Rupa.pg 26.
- Mehata, J. S. (2015). *The Tryst Betrayed: Reflections on Diplomacy and Development*. India: Penguin.
- Ojha, H. (2015). *The India-Nepal Crisis. The diplomat*. Diplomat Media Inc: Arlington, VA, USA.
- Paul, N. and Eric, W. (2018). Who runs the international system? Nationality and leadership in the United Nations Secretariat. Open access: Springer link.
- Shrestha, B.N. (2003). *Border Management of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Bhumichitra Co. P. Ltd.
- Shreshta, K.K. (2020). *Nuclear Security in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Nepal Council of World Affairs Journal.

Part III
International Relations and Related Issues

Out -of -the -Box Approaches to Mitigating Forever Problems in Asia

Chiran Shumsher Thapa*

Abstract

Containment of disputes, the border issue between China and India, the partition of Kashmir between India and Pakistan, and the unrealized potential for irrigation of Nepal's water for the Indian landmass have continued along with the simultaneous development of mutually beneficial relations of trade and, to a lesser extent, of investment, tourism, airlinks, people-to-people contact and participation in international fora. Movement of people, goods and services across prohibited jurisdictions will reduce mistrust advancing confidence-building measures which may open vistas for cooperation to tackle global problems, pandemics, the climate emergency, where the four countries situated at different locations of the Himalayan chain have vulnerabilities. All four countries, Nepal, China, India, and Pakistan have the human capital and the endowment to rise to the challenges for the welfare of their own peoples and the greater good of humanity.

Introduction

At a time when all countries of the world are facing problems of global magnitude where no country is spared, wisdom lies in tackling with international cooperation where necessary problems posed by global pandemics and the climate emergency, among others, by mitigating, if not solving, forever issues which bedevil relations between nations. This holds for the biggest continent, Asia, as for other areas of the globe.

Sino-Indian Relations

Looking at Sino-Indian relations, it appears that the border issue is the single big problem in their relations. Most of the long border is demarcated and delineated but problems arise in certain portions from time to time. The two countries have low-level conflict without resorting to firearms using slingshots, shoving soldiers of the other nation with bellies and even resorting to fistfights! This is hardly the warfare between two of the strongest military powers in Asia and in the world. It was said of the Schleswig-Holstein boundary dispute in the nineteenth century between Germany and Denmark that of three people who understood the contentious issues, one died after, another lost his mind, and the third one, possibly Britain's foreign secretary, forgot what the contention was! There

* Mr. Thapa is a Life Member of NCWA

may be elements paralleling the nature of the nineteenth century dispute in the India-China border but as both Germany and Denmark now work closely in the European Union and the Schleswig-Holstein border issue is a thing of the past, is it too much to hope that the Sino-Indian border dispute will continue to be contained while moving kilometer to kilometer toward a solution satisfactory to both sides.

In the boundary dispute India claims Aksai Chin under Chinese jurisdiction and China claims Arunachal Pradesh under Indian administration as south Tibet. There have I believe been feelers towards accepting the reality on the ground through dropping of claims by both sides. Be that as it may, an imaginative attempt at defusing the claims would lie in India giving visa facilities to residents of Aksai Chin and China doing the same to residents of Arunachal Pradesh. Both China and India have highly-developed computer and digital facilities which could accurately report the numbers and names of visa claimants but this would, if carried over some period, while not affecting the claims of the governments of the two countries, benefit the residents of both territories with ability to visit the neighboring country. China has been known to have proposed imaginative solutions even on issues such as Taiwan, while laying down clear red lines, and India has solved some contentious issues such as those of enclaves/exclaves with Bangladesh and maritime issues with Sri Lanka in the past. Countries which can maintain peace and tranquility for long periods on a border thousands of kilometers long can surely rise to making confidence building measures which could benefit the inhabitants of territories in contentious claims. At a time when the border issue between China and the erstwhile Soviet Union led even to armed hostilities, the late King Birendra hoped in his first speech to a nonaligned summit in Algeria in 1973 a peaceful resolution of the long border between the largest countries of the world. Twenty, thirty years later this has come to pass. It is not unreasonable to expect over time some resolution between the only two countries with a billion-plus population.

India- Pakistan Problems

Both India and Pakistan agree that the partition of Kashmir in the 'core issue' between them. While much of the Indian subcontinent had been partitioned to the mutual satisfaction of the two countries, with India administering two-thirds of the Kashmir area and Pakistan administering about a third, a confidence-building measure of benefit to the people inhabiting the partitioned region would be in allowing the inhabitants under the other country's jurisdiction to visit all parts of partitioned Kashmir. This could be done through measures insuring that the visits are of a peaceful nature. As both Pakistan and India have a military and paramilitary presence among the densest anywhere, visits of a peaceful nature would not allow for hostile encounters, let alone terrorism of any kind. Providing visa facilities to the inhabitants under the other country's jurisdiction may be practical after some years of visits with no hostile encounters, suspicious or

actual. This would build confidence between the two jurisdictions with further moves towards improving life for the inhabitants without necessarily changing the claims of the contending parties while possibly leading to talks on security and over time mutually agreed-upon territorial adjustments. What is advocated is movement of people, goods, services which may lead to a consideration of larger potential and territorial issues. People-to-people and peaceful contact would be the forerunner of mitigation and over time even solution of problems left over from the partition of the subcontinent more than seven decades earlier. This would also move the regional organization, SAARC, toward realizing the amity and cooperation envisaged and bring SAARC more in line with other regional organizations like ASEAN or even the European Union which with all their problems do cooperate to the satisfaction of all the constituent members. In the 8-nation SAARC, the lack of forward movement toward cooperation on a regional basis is the hostility between Pakistan and India for which above all the Kashmir issue is the main impediment.

Nepal-India Relations

Compared to India-Pakistan and China-India issues, the problems between Nepal and India are certainly less hostile and more cooperative, even though on trade and other interactions of a peaceful nature, China-India relations continue to be cooperative, such that China is the country from which India imports the most goods. Unlike for Pakistan and India, China is the neighbour second to India for trade, as for both Pakistan and India, as for so many countries in the world, including the United States, China ranks first as the source of imports. As Nepal has huge trade deficits both with India and China, if commerce continues as it has for decades, remittances and international assistance will not suffice to plug the annual gap in trade flows. While policies could be formulated to mitigate and solve the bilateral trade problems, the more challenging issues lie in the bilateral problems posed by the open border, the asymmetric gap between arable land and water availability between Nepal and India and the promise it holds for both countries, the unrealized potential of religion and cultures and security issues. Taking the potential of irrigation first with the Indian landmass having more than 50% of arable land, but with less than 1500 cu.m. of water per capita, the prospect of cooperation in water use with Nepal which has less than 20% arable land but with more than 7500 km of water per capita most flowing into lower-riparian India are nature-determined. In a few years, India will overtake China as the most populous country in the world reaching more than 1.5 billion projected for 2035, when China will have less than 1.4 billion. Nepal's population is projected to rise 3 million between 2021 and 2035 when it will reach 33 million. While Nepal-India cooperation has made some headway in hydroelectric generation and more recently trade in power, the cooperation in irrigation and flood control between the two Himalayan neighbours has not received the policy formulation due given the potential.

The open border between Nepal and India has had to be regulated from time to time. During elections in either country, flow of people has been controlled with the border closed to prevent elections from being hampered. Movement of returnees from India has necessitated health checks and clinical support at the border for the returnees' health and control of infections as they travel to their home destinations. We have not seen the last of the COVID-19 pandemic and other infections will arise in the future, which is to say, circumstances will impose the necessity of control and regulation of people and goods for which a mutually agreed and organized border regulation is in the interest of trans-national movement.

On security matters, Nepal faces no hostile military danger from either of its two neighbours, China and India. Peace and friendship treaties with Asia's two most powerful countries provide Nepal security not only in its geography but security also from any hostilities emerging from third countries which require the acquiescence if not the support of at least one neighbour. Nepal's perception is not only that there are no security implications vis-à-vis her own relations but that the two neighbours themselves are unlikely to engage in military combat in the neighbourhood while there will be competition and even confrontation in the region and elsewhere as is to be expected between two big countries successfully unlocking and realizing potential of great-power status in domains comprehending the economic, technological and military. China is already powerful and rich and India is powerful and expanding the income of its citizens. This determines the nature of their confrontations while also setting the contours of their neighbourly coexistence and in areas of mutual benefit cooperation such as in peaceful commercial exchange.

Conclusion

Thus we see in Asia whether in big-power relations as between China and India or in regional relations as between India and Pakistan, and as between relatively small country Nepal and big power India, decades-long problems have been contained while co-operation on mutually beneficial relations of trade, and to a lesser extent investment, tourism, air links, people-to-people contact, participation in international fora have in some areas advanced while overcoming setbacks in the four countries on either side of the Himalayas situated at different locations of the mountain chain. All four countries, Nepal, China, India, and Pakistan have the human capital which exists for further development to confront the global challenges of pandemics, the climate crisis while containing the forever problems posed by geography and inherited from a colonial order. These challenges will be met regardless of whether border issues, the legacy of partition and the unlocked potential in the mismatch between the amount of arable land and water availability continue to be contained while fresh perspectives are yet to be brought into implementation focus. With mitigation of forever disputes as in other parts of the world, the global challenges could be met and overcome in the spirit of good-neighbourly

solidarity when, over time, on the ground kilometer by kilometer progress and in water cumec by cumec progress is made to the benefit of over a billion inhabitants and a large portion of the area of the largest continent, Asia.

References

Ministry of Communications. (1970). Nonaligned Nations' Summit Conference in Algiers. The late King Birendra: Kathmandu.

Schleswig-Holstein. (2021). The New Statesman: London.



**Gautam
Education
& VISA SERVICES**

STUDY ABROAD

Test Preparation

IELTS

PTE

JLPT

NAT

 Bagbazar, Kathmandu

 **01-4244309, 9851236954**

 info@gautameducation.com

AUSTRALIA



UK



USA



JAPAN



Global Geopolitics in its Present Manifestation Does Nepal Need any Strategy to Deal with it?

Madhavji Shrestha*

Abstract

Geopolitics across the globe is recently developing with its own surge affecting geographical, social, economic, security and foreign policy domains. The inauguration of U.S President Joe Biden in January 2021 after his decisive victory over his rival Donald Trump and his subsequent foreign policy actions have explicitly impacted the global politics. The developing trend has visibly made its effect strategically noted as the announcement of AUKUS(Australia, United Kingdom and United States) as the organization of the nuclear weapon powered submarine alliance has its ripples felt on the security concerns over the huge Asian continent. Tensions between the United States and China have also been growing apparently concerned with the Taiwan issue, Indo-Pacific Strategy and QUAD in Asia. Meanwhile, the United States with support of NATO has been harping on the suspected Russian invasion of Ukraine as Russia has allegedly deployed a large number of its troops in the three directions of the Russian Ukraine borders. Obviously, the global geopolitics has been dominated by the three great power politics of the United States, Russia and China.

True, Nepal has to be sensitive and cautious about the emerging geopolitics since it is happening in its next door, especially involving China and India to some extent. Naturally, Nepal must navigate its foreign policy and conduct its diplomatic affairs with the farsighted vision as dictated by its geographic location and also guided by the provisions of the constitution of Nepal 2015. Also, it has to take note of how climate change and coronavirus have affected the developing global geopolitics. For all that to handle, appropriate visions and relevant policy actions by the top political leaderships of Nepal are highly warranted for the stability and peace.

Introduction

Even common people around the globe with some knowledge about geopolitics are aware of the emerging global scenario. Interest on the subject is ever increasing as the inflow of the relevant information on the developing events. Today, geopolitics has

* Mr. Shrestha is a former Executive Member of NCWA

become a much talked about topic as it has implicitly or explicitly impacted the masses in general and national authorities of states, especially the decision makers of diplomatic domain and top leaders of the super and major powers alike.

The Webster Dictionary describes geopolitics as “a study of the influence of such factors as geography, economics and demography on the politics and especially the foreign policy of a state.” At the moment, this definition appears little limited in its description and ramification. Experts on the thematic extent of geopolitics point out that the said definition does not cover the sensitive concerns of the security and strategic concerns which do indeed prominently figure up in the most recently evolving geopolitics across the world.

The initial years of the third decade of this 21st century have witnessed new developments and events in the global geopolitics. They are the inherent products of policy initiatives and actions taken by the influential powers especially the super power the United States and the emerging super power China as they deem necessary to safeguard their interests.

The years 2020 and 2021 brought in new elements in the global geopolitics although the seed of some emerging developments have already been sown, which have sprout up and helped the current geopolitics to spurt in the strategic regions in the world at large.

Emerging Global Geopolitics

The inauguration of President Joe Biden in January 2021 following his victory in the U.S. election in November 2020 has made visible impacts in the global geopolitics. He did not lag behind to revive and re-invigorate the military alliance like NATO in Europe and security alliance with the East Asian countries Japan and South Korea, which were reduced to the lesser interest of the United States during the Trump administration. The other strategically sensitive alliance that Biden initiated is the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and US). The newest military alliance created on September 15, 2021 has ensured to equip Australia with the nuclear weapons powered submarines within a specific timeline. This fearsome trilateral act to provide nuclear weapons powered submarines to hitherto a non-nuclear weapon power Australia has caused rising ripples of security concerns in the whole of Asia especially in East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Pacific region and the world at large. Experts of security affairs and the international media have abserved this newly launched military alliance as an act to contain China by encircling through military pact.

President Biden has also continued to maintain the U.S. policy toward China as spearhead by his immediate predecessor Trump. However, Biden’s China policy seems little nuanced and a little polite with regards to the matters concerned with trade, technology, intellectual property rights etc. But on the sensitive and touchy concerns of weapon

competitions and more on the question of Taiwan issue, Biden's approach is not less hardened than that of his predecessors. The Taiwan issue has been drawing the global attention as if the issue has emerged as a flash point in the Pacific region. China has taken the Taiwan issue as a core concern of its national sovereignty as the said territory belongs to the main land China which the US had already recognized under the One China policy during the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 1979. It is evident that under no circumstances, China will tolerate any act of the United States to make Taiwan as an independent entity. But the US seems to maintain Taiwan's current status as a democratic society. The conflicting policies of both great protagonists are much feared to disturb the peace and stability in the region, which, if not managed through diplomatic foresight, might have profound effects around the world.

The region has also continually drawn the attentions of the global politicians and diplomats. The US has also stretched its big hands in the formation and strengthening of the Indo Pacific Strategy and Quad as well. Both those two organizations are reportedly said to contain military contents and security concerns mainly targeted toward China. However, they have yet to appear in their true forms with their clear intent and motive developing in the course of times to come. Experts believe both contain military and security concerns rather than other matters related to socio-economic and trade affairs.

India is involved in both organizations in some form. It has also participated in another QUAD like organization with the United States as a lead member alongside Israel and the United Arab Emirates as partners, which has been initiated in the fall of 2021. The development of geopolitics in Asia is more tinged with the military and security matters than with socio-economic interest.

As a global super power equipped with techno-economic might and military prowess, the US has also been displaying its strategic policies not alone in Asia but also in Europe and else where in the world. The simmering trouble in Ukraine might also play out to be a grave issue since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. The main teasing issue is the security fear of Russia about the possible inclusion of Ukraine as a member of NATO. Russia considers Ukraine to fall under its sphere of influence as the later was an integral part of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Ukraine has still a sizable number of the people of Russian origin with their culture, language, and life style of the similar nature and day-to-day life pattern, who are reported to desire to get assimilated with Russia and as allegedly encouraged and instigated by Russia.

The international media have reported that the US has supplied Ukraine with 90 tons of weapons and fatal materials. It has also warned Russia with a threat to impose economic sanctions including personal sanction on Russian President Vladimir Putin, if it invades Ukraine as it has deployed about 130000 troops in the eastern, northern and southern

borders of Ukraine. This rising tension between NATO members led by the US and Russia is also a notable development in the global geopolitics that might turn up highly disturbing as two mighty powers might get involved in a head on collision. How this straight tension between two former protagonists of the Cold War era will turn up is to be watched with caution and strategic concern.

The global geopolitics ensnared by the great power politics of the US, China and Russia with the lesser roles played by the big powers like Japan, South Korea, the UK etc. has dominated the thinking of experts and analysts of the West and East alike.

In the last two years, no less significant disturbances have been noted with the sudden onset of Covid-19 which first appeared in Wuhan of China in the late December 2019. This pandemic has indeed wrought great havocs in the lives of the people globally and pummeled the socio-economic growth around the world. In the meantime, its has also caused new waves in the interstate relationships, the worrying ripples of which are still not under any effective control despite the spectacular feat of medical sciences' great contribution to save human lives through the invention and widespread use of vaccines across the globe. The third wave caused by the Omicron after the first and second ones is still ringing its toll in the world.

No far-fetched and tangible efforts are yet in sight to effectively control and prevent this ferocious disease. However, Asian countries, especially East Asian countries, in particular China, Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries have made great strides in nixing the disease. Effective governance and efficient management in East Asian countries have indeed earned a remarkable and worthy appreciation for the amazing achievement. The shift of the power balance happening since about two decades ago is no doubt re-energized in favor of Asia as an added outcome of controlling the deadly pandemic. That has ensured the safety of human lives and invigorated the economic growth in the huge region of East Asia and South East Asia, which is taken as a good progress toward the stepped-up endeavor to realize the 21st Century as the Asian Century. Albeit appreciable this good development, this has indeed induced a great rivalry between the United States and China as the former seems much indulged in remaining the number one in all spheres of national activities. This tendency has greatly ramped up the tension and competition between the United States and China. Meanwhile, microchips and technology are also the main reason of conflict and tension between the two.

The Stance Nepal Should Embrace

Nepal ranks at the 103rd position in the global economy and even in terms of the territorial area it stands at the 93rd position. However, in terms of the size of the population, Nepal lies at the 49th status with its moderately bulging demographic dividend that could

play a very significant role in enhancing economic growth despite the current lag in properly managing this dividend to the wider benefit of the country. The hard work and contribution made by the people would largely make up any economic deficiency in the long run, because the people are the greatest and highly valued asset any country can count on. Proper policy and well-crafted planning would do a great service to the country. What is essentially required is a good policy directed by a strongly committed political leadership to ramp-up the national strength. The statesmanship exhibited by a trustworthy leadership could be of immense value to make up all deficiencies, be that on the domestic front or on the foreign policy activity. Consolidating domestic strength politically and economically would reinforce national unity and national consensus which, in turn, would invigorate and arm the country with good spirit and good attitude to strategically navigate the foreign policy both in normal times or in the complexity-ridden geopolitical environment.

It is well-known that Nepal is the oldest nation seated in the sub-continent of South Asia. It has long pursued the peaceful and non-aligned foreign policy to the best of its national advantage as a sovereign nation.

Nepal has to be sensitive and careful enough about the emerging geopolitics around it. Care and caution in minutia matters are strategically significant to marshal the foreign policy direction. Omission to act in time and failure to comprehend as required would greatly harm the country and hurt the proud sense of the people. We need to mind the fast developments happening around our proximity. At the moment, geopolitics evolving in Asia has much to do with Nepal's neighbourhood policy. China and India are both drawn and involved in several actions and events caused by the geopolitics in recent days. It is well-known that China, with which Nepal's borders run 1415 kilometers long in its north, is in great power competition with the United States, which might have likely implication on Nepal whether we like it or not. Similarly India is also involved in tension-ridden geopolitics with which Nepal's borders are connected in its three directions running 1880 kilometers long. Both China and India are equally and strategically important for Nepal. For the security and economic growth of Nepal, both these neighbors have to be kept in assurance with regard to its good intention of maintaining and promoting friendly and neighborly relations. It is also necessarily preferable that there will be no reason at all to let any unwanted elements to disturb stability and good relations with them. Strict observance of tranquility should be maintained to stave off any bad intention to disturb in the bordering areas of both big neighbours at any cost. Constant diplomatic touch sustained by communications and exchange of views would be highly serviceable to win their assurance for Nepal too. In the meantime, Nepal's diplomatic endeavors sustained by diplomatic skills and dexterity need to be energized to take assurances from both the neighbours that there would be no

unwanted and undesirable act to unnecessarily draw Nepal into own choices and options which would likely harm Nepal's independent identity so far very doggedly maintained. It is also necessary to assure them that Nepal's tilt towards any of them would not be favorable to either. There is a pressing need to explain the situation regarding Nepal's stability and border security as a security asset to both. Which will not incur any sizable amount of defense expenditures unlike in other border areas of both countries. This significant aspect of security needs to be often emphasized and also on the appropriate occasions too.

In addition, Nepal's steady economic growth could be a beneficial to both India and China as due to advantages brought by the steadily increased trade. It is advisable how Switzerland, a small country of less than seven million people, has been trading with its giant neighbours Germany, France Italy and Austria in mutually beneficial way.

Conclusion

Nepal can maintain a balanced relations with both China and India with our national interest deeply taken into consideration vis-à-vis the respective interests of both China and India. There should neither be push nor pull from any quarters for Nepal to be involved in any geopolitical tensions. Nepal's diplomatic authorities are required to be fairly balanced, not showing any sign of tilt toward either side.

Nepal's long pursued non-aligned foreign policy has gained traction and commanded respect in the regional and international forums. With super and major powers as well, Nepal has, in the past and even in recently developing relationships, maintained cordial relations with all countries its support of major powers. No doubts should be cast as far as Nepal can maintain its traditional foreign policy of non-alignment and also a policy of neutrality when the situational exigency demands. It entirely rests in good hands of the national leadership to fairly handle the complex matters of foreign policy with clear judgment of any issues and also good conscience serving the national purpose. Let the history of Nepal's independent journey guide the vector of Nepal's glorious foreign policy to safeguard its own national interest through the wise conduct of an independent foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, principles of Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace as enshrined in the Articles 51(m) (1) of the constitution of Nepal.

Climate change and coronavirus have induced simmering impacts on the global geopolitics, which need to be tackled by global efforts. In the meantime, nationalism and mercantilism are making their headway as a natural consequence of changes in various, social, economic and political spectrums of the world. Experts have also noted the steady deceleration of globalization amidst the interdependence and interconnectivity that the

world has been moving with in the past three decades. Contradictions and constraints are surfacing in the global dealings. Weak states with ineffective governance and fragile economy are naturally bound to struggle for their survival. The current global geopolitics is indeed not favorable for weaker states. Amidst the above backdrop, Nepali people earnestly aspire to see great statesmanship in the top political leaderships of the country to enable them to navigate Nepal's foreign policy through the turbulent geopolitics in our region as well as across the world for the peace and stability.

References

- Foreign Affairs, November/December 2021 and January/February 2022 Issues, Council on Foreign Relations, New York U.S.
- Hass, R.N. (2017). *The World in Disarray*, Council on Foreign Relations: New York.
- IFA. (2020). *Covid 19, Multidisciplinary Narratives, Contribution to Nepal's Foreign Affairs*. Institute of Foreign Affairs: Kathmandu.
- Legrand, T. and Diane. (2018). *Science Diplomacy and Transnational Governance Impact*. London.
- Marrian Webster's (1998) *Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition. M-W Inc.: Springfield, US.
- MoFA. (2021). *Reports on Nepal's Foreign Affairs, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal: Kathmandu.
- Ministry of Law and Justice. (2015). *Law Book Management Board, Ministry of Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs*: Kathmandu.
- The Economist (Weekly)*, November 2021 to January 2022: London.
- The Himalayan Times (English Daily)* November 2021 to January 2022: Kathmandu.
- The New York Times (Intl. Ed.)* November 2021 to January 2022, New York U.S (Printed in Kathmandu).

Non-Alignment Movement and Nepal

Shreedhar Gautam*

Abstract

This paper examines the relevance and sustainability of the Non- Alignment Movement in the present context of the world where the hegemonic trends of colonial period are still lingering. The topic has been chosen with nostalgia of Bandung Conference held in the Indonesian city, Bandung, in 1955, which proved to be the prelude for the NAM foundation later in the then Yugoslavian capital city, Belgrade, with the initiatives of the leaders assembled in Bandung from Asia and Africa. Nepal happens to be one of the founding members of the NAM, so this paper will sum up why and how this organization is still a viable forum to enhance the image of the independent and sovereign countries .Nepal needs to play a balancing role for having been situated between two giant neighbours with their own distinct political systems. Also Nepal is perceived as a strategically important country for the countries geographically faraway, but having interest in this part too because of the lately emerging geo political realities. The paper aims to conclude that NAM has to be revived in spite of the setbacks it has confronted over the years, especially after the end of the cold war.

Key words: Sustainability, hegemony, neutral, co-operation, common interest, and survival.

Background

The Bandung conference was composed of the countries either independent or near independent belonging to Asia and Africa, and they were invited not on the basis of ideology but geographically because of their common history of having been colonised or near colonized at the hands of the western countries with the leading part played by Britain. The conference, also known as Asian- African conference, was opened by the then Indonesian President Ahmad Sukarno, who in his speech said:

Let us not be bitter about the past, but let us keep our eyes firmly
On the future. Let remember that no blessing of God is so
Sweet as life and liberty. Let us remember that the stature of all
Mankind is diminished so long as nations or parts of nations are
Still unfree. Let us remember that the highest purpose of the man is
The liberation of man from his bonds of fear, his bonds of poverty,

* Dr. Gautam is Professor of English, Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

The liberation of man from the physical, spiritual and intellectual
Bonds which have for long stunted the development of humanity's
Majority.

And let us remember, Sisters and Brothers, that for the sake of all
That, we Asians, and Africans must be united.

The introductory speeches made in the plenary session of the conference underlined the diversities as well as the common outlook that prevailed then, and also projected the common purpose of the conference. The decisions of the conference proclaimed to the reaching out of Asian countries to one another and their determinations to profit by one another's experience on the basis of mutual co-operation. The delegates termed the conference as the renaissance of Asia and Africa, and they expressed the belief that the Asian and African countries should develop cultural co-operation in the larger context of the world co-operation. The conference was unanimous in regard to the condemnation of the colonialism, with its attendant evils, and it voiced protest against the production of the weapons of mass destruction too. The countries assembled there set out the principles which should govern the relations between them and the world as a whole. The conference endorsed the five Principles known as *Panchsheel*, and registered its opposition to grouping of nations into rival camps detrimental to world peace. It opposed any kind of external pressure on nations, and rejected the concept of collective defence arrangements, fearing that they could serve the interests of Big Powers only.

Bandung conference has been referred to with a view to showing that it was in Bandung where the political emergence of the Asian-African countries became pronounced, and it served a clarion call to those still dependent then, and to the newly independent countries to sustain their courageous fight in their struggle for freedom and justice. The birth of NAM in 1961, in Belgrade, was the follow-up of the Asian-African countries' resolve to embark on new path as dictated by the history. The alignment of the Latin America started with the foundation of the NAM in 1961 and the tri-continental conference held in Havana in 1966, further strengthening the Bandung spirit.

The first NAM conference assumed significance as it was held amidst the cold war between the two super-powers then-USSR and the USA. Of the two powers, the latter considered the grouping of neutralist and communist countries as anti-American; therefore, it had tried hard to dissuade its ally nations from attending the Bandung conference, the prelude of the NAM. The emergence of the Asian-African block was not a welcome development in Washington which replaced the British Empire after the Second World War.

The pioneering countries of the NAM like India, Egypt, Ghana, then Yugoslavia, and Indonesia knew the dangers of aligning with a particular super power, but the NAM was not a neutral camp standing equidistant from either block. It was guided by the issue on merit in regard to the national interest of the individual countries. When the two nuclear power rival countries were endangering the future of the humanity by their war escalating views under the guise of spreading their influence, the voice of NAM countries could act as a deterrent to some extent in 1960s and 1970s. However, the relevance of the NAM came into question after the disintegration of the Soviet Union that culminated into the end of the cold war.

The first casualty of the disintegration of the USSR resulted into the invasion of the coalition countries on a non-aligned and UN member country, Iraq, under the leadership of the USA on the pretext of evicting Iraq out of Kuwait after having passed a resolution in favour of using force against a member country because by that time the USSR leadership had lost its dignity and authority to act independently to counter the unilateral move of its erstwhile rival in world affairs. Had there been the earlier USSR, the UN would not have gone against its own motto of preventing war, and becoming itself one of the participants in war. Mikhail Gorbachev, the last General Secretary of CPSU, after having been successful to thwart the coup attempt against him with the tacit blessing of the western powers headed by the USA, banned the communist party and ensured the end of socialistic system, which was in a fractured form after the 20th Congress of the party in which the new leader Khrushchev denounced the policies of his predecessor Joseph Stalin. Gorbachev's action caused a great jolt in the NAM because in those days the USSR was considered to some extent a balancing power in the world affairs, though its image had been tarnished after its interference in then Chekoslavia and later in Afghanistan

In the initial days, NAM played a Progressive role with its focus on anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racism without being part of the world socialist system. However, the organization has gone a tremendous transformation because of the political differentiation in it and also because of the geo-political changes in the world. For example, the NAM summit held in February in Malaysian capital in Kuala Lumpur in 2003 could not take unified stand on the American invasion on Iraq, a member country, which could not hold the NAM summit in Bagdad due to its ongoing war with Iran. Earlier too, it had failed to stop American led war on Yugoslavia too. Nonetheless, it was a consolation in Kuala Lumpur summit when the former premier Mahathir Mohamad declared the war on Iraq unjust and termed a war on entire Muslim world in particular.

It is a sad development that the founding members of the NAM are not playing a bold role. For instance, in the 2003 Summit in Malaysia India was led by its prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but he could not be as assertive and categorical as his Malaysian

counterpart while opposing invasion on Iraq and western powers' interference in the internal affairs of the less developed countries. However, Vajpayee's presence in that conference was a positive development. Lately, India has not shown the seriousness displayed by Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Vajpayee, and India has given up the practice of sending delegation to NAM summit under the leadership of prime minister.

It is true that the organization does not have leaders of Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, and Castro' stature, still it can be a relevant grouping if it acts independently without seeking guidance from any big power, and if it opposes all sorts of suppression and exploitation by the hegemonic and colonial powers. It should show courage to oppose all unilateral actions and war mongering policies from any quarter. No country of the group should surrender its national independence to court a favour of a particular power and ready ever to be a launching pad of military attack on a member country as seen during the gulf war.

NAM can be still relevant if it raises voices against foreign interferences, coercive and unilateral actions as seen in Venezuela where in the recent past a genuinely elected government was threatened by the outside forces to install an illegitimate government. It should be remembered that whole his life the late Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez had fought against the foreign forces bent-upon usurping the power of people by coercive methods. Such tendencies are still endangering the world peace. At a time when nuclear power forces are posing great threat to the survival of humanity, NAM can and should play a balancing role representing the common goal of the right thinking people.

Relevance for Nepal

Due to its geographical location and the emerging geopolitics in the world, Nepal, as one of the founding members of the NAM, needs the continuity of such organization to assert its independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty in opposition to all kinds of external pressures and interference, still active in the world politics. Nepal needs to oppose all military groupings and power blocks that threaten the survival of countries like ours. Panchsheel or the Five Principles still remain valid measures to conduct internal affairs when hegemonic tendencies are still displayed by the big powers reminding the dark days of the colonial period. The Bandung Spirit and the NAM objectives have become indispensable for us when we are having serious border dispute with our next door neighbour which has encroached upon our land by ignoring all international laws and norms.

Nepal has strongly registered its opposition to the unilateral act of the neighbouring country by bringing out its own new map, but the response from India is so far disappointing, and if the issue is not resolved bilaterally and peacefully, Nepal will be compelled to take the case to international forums like the NAM. We hope India

will heed to the call of the time remembering its own first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who played a pivotal role in the Bandung Conference as well as in the first NAM conference to propound the five Principles. At present, we have the best option of pleading in favour of strengthening the NAM despite the severe set-backs it has suffered over the years.

Conclusion

International politics has seen tremendous changes since the inception of the NAM, but the core values of the movement are still relevant for countries like Nepal. The emerging new realities of World politics after the crisis generated by the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine reminds the need of giving new life to the NAM. NAM has always opposed the unilateral tendency from any country irrespective of its size and ideology. NAM has voiced in favour of bilateralism and multilateralism to resolve the dispute between countries. In the present geo-political situation, no country should behave unilaterally and the independence and sovereignty of all countries should be respected. No single country can impose its will on other countries. To uphold the principles of NAM means to safeguard the future of humanity too. So, let us strengthen the Bandung spirit to make this world peaceful and prosperous.

References

- Arnold, G. (2010). *The A to Z of the Non-Aligned Movement and Third World*: Scarecrow Press.
- Lüthi, L.M. (2016) The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War, 1961–1973. *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18.4: 98–147.
- Miskovic, N. and etal. eds. (2014). *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War*: Delhi-Bandung-Belgrade
- Potter, W. (2017). *Nuclear politics and the Non-Aligned Movement: Principles vs pragmatism*: Routledge.
- Sukarno, (1955). *The Declariation of Bandung Conference. a meeting of Asian and African states*:Indonesia.

Nepal in the Face of Geopolitical Rivalry of Great Powers

Yuba Nath Lamsal*

The world is interconnected and inter-dependent. The advancement of science and technology has reduced the world into a small global village. In this interconnected world, no single country is fully self-sufficient and self-reliant on all facets. All countries, big or small, powerful or weak and developed or developing, are intertwined together requiring cooperation and coordination among nations. This is the defining feature of globalization from which an individual, a society and a nation cannot escape.

Right from the time when Homo sapiens moved from African jungles to Asian and European landmass forming dots of civilizations, the concept of nationhood evolved. Civilization is the product of human interaction and endeavours. States were born and developed. In the human history, since the first state evolved in Sumeria (present Iraq), several states were born and disappeared from the map of the world. The process of birth and disappearance of states continues even now albeit in slower pace.¹

States are de-facto and de-jure. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of the States has defined the state and its features. According to the Montevideo Convention, the state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: 1. permanent population; 2. a defined territory; 3. government; and 4. capacity to enter into relations with other states. Territory, government, population, a set of rules or constitution are only part of key features and attributes of a modern state. However, these features only make a de-facto state. A state requires recognition from other states to become a de jure or a sovereign state. International recognition is, thus, a key component in the formation and development of modern states. It is only after international recognition as a de jure state, a country acquires the right to establish diplomatic relations with other countries, be a member of the United Nations and enter into treaties with other countries and international organizations under the international laws.

This is why and how the concept of foreign policy evolved which appeared as a dominant feature of the statehood. In other words, the concept of foreign policy was born along with the drawing of boundaries of countries.

Foreign policy is thus, as observed by Christopher Hill, is “the sum of official external

* Mr. Lamsal is a Former Ambassador to Denmark.

relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations”. In other words, foreign policy is the extension of domestic policy. The domestic policy influences and, to a large extent, determines foreign policy of a country. The domestic policies and priorities may change but foreign policy goals remain permanent as national interest is the principal guide and drive of foreign policy of any country. In the words of *Lord Palmerston, there is no permanent enemy and permanent friend but there is only permanent interest.*

The national interest is determined by geography and other geopolitical considerations. As far as the national interests of Nepal are concerned, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has clearly defined Nepal’s national interests and foreign policy goals and priorities. The Constitution, in its Article 5 (1), has defined national interests as: “Safeguarding of the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationality, independence and dignity of Nepal, the rights of the Nepalese people, border security, economic wellbeing and prosperity”. The core objectives and goals of Nepal’s foreign policy are, thus, protection of these above mentioned national interests.

Similarly, the fundamental objective of Nepal’s foreign policy, as enshrined in the constitution, is to enhance the dignity of the nation by safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and promoting economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nepal. It is also aimed at contributing to global peace, harmony and security.

The Directive Principles of the Constitution (Article 50.4) states: The State shall direct its international relations towards enhancing the dignity of the nation in the world community by maintaining international relations on the basis of sovereign equality, while safeguarding the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and national interest of Nepal, while the State Policy (Article 51) on priorities of foreign policy are defined as to: 1. To conduct an independent foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, principles of *Panchasheel*, international law and the norms of world peace, taking into consideration of the overall interest of the nation, while remaining active in safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and national interest of Nepal; 2. review treaties concluded in the past, and make treaties, agreements based on equality and mutual interest.

Based on the constitutional provisions, Nepal’s foreign policy is to be guided by the following basic principles, which are:

1. Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Non-interference in each other’s internal affairs;
3. Respect for mutual equality;

4. Non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes;
5. Cooperation for mutual benefit;
6. Abiding faith in the Charter of the United Nations;
7. Value of world peace.

Foreign policy is a dynamic vocation, which requires both continuity and change depending upon national political dynamics and international context and situation. A country adopts its foreign policy priorities as a whole or in part while dealing with a particular country or with a particular international event taking into account its national interest. The national interests of a country or countries may enlarge and its priority may change due to geopolitical considerations and international dynamics. Thus, the dynamics of foreign policy priorities also change. The rigid foreign policy often handicaps a country to act and manipulate in the particular international and regional situation and context to maximize national interests of a country. In such a scenario, foreign policy of a country may take a paradigm shift especially at a time when international diplomacy is in disarray. Thus foreign policy needs both continuity and change to adjust its position and protect its national interest in the given international situation.

Nepal's foreign policy is also marked by both continuity and change. The geopolitical reality of Nepal has been the permanent feature, which guides our foreign policy conduct. Nepal's location between world's two giant nations—India and China-- has posed both challenges as well as provided opportunities to us. China has already been a global power with its mighty economy. According to a recent research report of McKinsey & Company, US-based worldwide renowned consulting company, China has already emerged as the world's wealthiest country surpassing the United States for the top position. In terms of military might and technological innovation, too, China is capable of challenging the world's sole superpower the United States. India, too, is the world's fifth largest economy. These two countries have rising clout in the international arena. Both of these our two neighbours are important players in the international power politics.

Some tend to define Nepal's geopolitical position as a 'yam between the two boulders'—the dictum late king Prithivi Narayan Shah advocated back in the second half of 19th century referring to Nepal's delicate position. Analysing the geopolitical situation of the time and behaviour of our two powerful neighbours namely the British India in the South and China in the north, late king Prithivi Narayan Shah provided the basis for Nepal's foreign policy underscoring the need for handling our foreign policy more delicately and sensibly.

Nepal's foreign policy basis has been guided by the same dictum since then, whether we accept it or not. The geopolitical situation has not changed as Nepal continues to

remain between the two powerful countries. This geopolitical situation and our location requires us to handle our foreign policy and diplomacy more skilfully, which alone can serve our national interest.

If we prudently, delicately and skilfully handle our foreign policy at the best interest of our national interest, we can definitely extract maximum benefits from this geopolitical reality. But it requires soul searching and self-assessment whether we have been able to capitalize this new geopolitical reality for our national interest. If we look critically at our behaviour and handling, we have utterly failed to maximize our national interest and taken due benefits.

The international power is shifting to Asia. The 19th century was European century in which Britain was the leader and Europe was the epicentre of world power. Britain had dominant presence worldwide. There used to be saying that ‘sun never sets in the British empire’ referring to Britain’s colonies in all continents of the world. However, after the Word War II, national liberation movements surged across the world and Britain lost its colonies one after another thereby marking a sharp decline in its global presence and power. After the World War II, international power shifted to America as the United States emerged as the world leader, thus, creating 20th century as the American century. With the Soviet Union’s disintegration in 1991, the United States turned out to be the sole superpower having dominant role in the international politics and order.

With the dawn of a new millennia or the 21st century, the world order has seemingly started to change. The Europe-American centric international power has slowly started shifting again—this time to Asia. Asia is rising fast both economically and militarily. Predictions have it that the 21st century will be the Asian century. There are 28 countries in Asia of which some countries have already become world powers and some are in the process of emerging as global powers. China has risen as a global power in terms of economic strength, military might and technological advancement capable to challenge the sole superpower United States. India is currently the fifth largest economy and has the potentials and ambition to rise as a global power. Similarly, Japan is third largest economy. Israel is yet another Asian country which has superior military and technological prowess. Turkey is a transcontinental military giant in West Asia. Indonesia is also a potential power of Asia. So Asian countries are rising powers in the new millennia.

Nepal’s location between the two great powers of Asia--China and India—is very significant from geopolitical standpoint. China and India are not only global powers but also geopolitical and strategic competitors. India and China have unique relations as they are both competitors as well as partners. They are competing strategically and cooperating economically.

The Cold War has resurfaced in the world, the epicentre of which is Asia. The genesis of the Cold War goes back to the Potsdam conference in 1945. However, some are of the opinion that the US act of dropping the atomic bomb in Hiroshima of Japan on August 6, 1945 without informing its wartime allies, in reality, gave birth to the crisis of trust between the United States and the Soviet Union and sowed the seed of the Cold War.

The Potsdam Conference which was participated in by the United States, Soviet Union and United Kingdom, charted the post-war Europe's map. Germany was partitioned into different zones and Europe was divided on the basis of ideology. It is not only Europe but the entire world started getting polarized into two camps—one was led by the United States and the other by the Soviet Russia. Even some Asian countries aligned with different power blocs.

Nepal and many countries in the developing world could not afford to align with any of the two power blocs and chose to be neutral thereby creating a new group called the Non-aligned Movement. However, some countries despite being the member of the Non-aligned Movement, had in a way or the other strategic and security alliance with either of the two big powers. India, for instance, is one of the founders of the Non-aligned Movement but had entered into a long-term comprehensive security partnership with Soviet Union, while India's rival Pakistan was US ally. China distanced itself from the communist Soviet Union and, after Nixon-Mao historic meeting in 1972, moved closer to the capitalist United States. In fact, the Non-Aligned movement did not function, in practice, and is, now, in the moribund state although its relevance still exists especially for weaker countries.

In the lexicon of realist foreign policy, non-alignment has a little relevance. Countries conduct their foreign policy based on their national interest. Alignment cannot be permanent and countries may change position depending upon the national and international situation. In the conduct of foreign policy, the non-alignment can only be a tactics but not a strategy. In the views of propagators of realist theory of international relations, a country takes and should take position in the turn of event or events in the international arena taking into account the national interest. But most of the countries in the developing world took non-aligned position during the Cold War, which was then appropriate for their national interest as they could not afford to take side of one bloc antagonizing the other in the bitter rivalry of two superpowers. Nepal, too, joined this bandwagon of non-aligned movement and still continues to be, which is in Nepal's best interest. However, the non-alignment does not mean to remain indifferent from the events taking place in the international arena and non-aligned countries did raise their voice loudly and clearly on issues that were contrary to the international law, norms and values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the principles of non-aligned movement. The concept of non-alignment is more relevant for Nepal in the present

context in which two of our immediate neighbours are in two different poles in the newer Cold War.

Many people are of the view that the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. It is true that after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, US remained the sole superpower and there was no other country to challenge US' dominant role in the global power politics. The United States dictated whereas the rest of the world took notes. However, the Cold War, in reality, did not end but remained only in a dormant state for some years or decades since 1989 which has recently resurfaced with the rise of China as a global power player. Only the form of the Cold War and its actors have changed. The Cold War earlier was ideological and now it is economic. However, the United States is trying to give ideological colour to this new form of the Cold War.

Asia has come to be a new theatre of geopolitical rivalry between big powers. The big power rivalry in Asia is of quadrangular nature: 1. between the United States and China, 2. between China and India, 3. between US-India combined and China, 4. between China-Russia combined and USA. These countries are recalibrating their power projection and building their own strength in Asia. China containment has been the primary strategic goal of the United States at present with which Washington has devised new strategic initiatives and accordingly created a number of Asia-focused alliances. China, too, is building counter strategy to its strategic benefit. The Indo-Pacific Strategy, Australia-UK-US alliance or AKUS, Tran-Pacific Partnership and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) of the United States, India, Japan and Australia are some Asia-focused alliances and initiatives undertaken by the United States primarily aimed at containing China, while Washington has entered into bilateral security and strategic arrangements with a number of countries in Asia and the Pacific region. India's Act East Policy is also guided with the motive of playing its active role and building grater collaboration with countries in the Indo-Pacific region clearing aiming to check China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is China's strategic project apparently under the façade of economic cooperation seeking to enlarge its presence in Asia and beyond, although Beijing denies it and says the BRI is purely an economic initiative for the shared benefits for all countries. Similarly, China has built strategic partnership with a number of individual countries and also with some regional groupings.

The new scenario in the international arena in which Asia is emerging as the centre of gravity, Nepal's strategic and geopolitical position demands more strategic culture and pragmatic approach in dealing with the newly emerged powers of Asia and in the conduct of our foreign policy and diplomacy. It is said that foreign policy is an assertion of sovereign power in the international arena and we, accordingly, need to direct and reorient our policy and conduct in a way from which we extract maximum benefit out of the situation for our national interest. If we fail to handle this situation prudently in

commensurate with our larger interest and also without jeopardizing our friends' core interests, there is always danger that Nepal may be caught in the crossfire of this fierce geopolitical rivalry of great powers.

References

Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. (<https://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/01/1-02/rights-duties-states.xml>)

Christopher Hill -The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Constitution of Nepal

Dibya Upadesh of late king Prithivi Narayan Shah

Yuba Nath Lamsal- <https://risingnepaldaily.com/opinion/asian-century-in-the-making>

Mc Cauley M, The Origin of the Cold War

भिमेश्वर नगरपालिका वार्ड नं. ७ स्थित मकैबारी, चरिकोट, दोलखामा जिल्लाकै पहिलो अत्याधुनिक मेसिनद्वारा सम्पूर्ण लुगाधुने साबुन, डि टर्जेन्ट, मांडा धुने साबुन, वासिङ मेसिनमा प्रयोग हुने सरफ र भोल साबुन चैत्रको दोस्रो हप्ता मित्र बजारमा आउँदैछ । होलसेल तथा डि लरसिप लिन चाहनुहुने इच्छुक महानुभावहरुले केसी सोप ईन्डस्ट्रिज प्रा.ली.का व्यवस्थापक शिव केसी ९८५१०९४०१४ मा र अफिस नं. ०४९-४२१७७१ मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।

K.C. Soap & Chemical Industries Pvt. Ltd.

Bhimeshwor-7, Charikot, Dolakha

Tel: 977-049-421771

Email: khatruiuttar4444@gmail.com

Dag Hammarskjold- A Diplomat of Multidimensional Personality and Relevance in Present Context

Nir Bahadur Karki*

Abstract

This article ventures to highlight some of the major contributions made by the late UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjold in maintaining peace and security, economic recovery of the war devastated countries specially in the European continent and finally at the global level as the United Nations secretary general, the world's highest civil post with his diplomatic acumen, following the end of the devastating World War Second

Also it depicts a career sketch of Dag in displaying his dynamic shift from national to European continent then to the whole world through adorable roles starting from his country's Central bank, Ministry of Finance, Foreign Ministry then finally to the post of UN secretary-general

Finally this article concludes by suggesting the need of a time responsive roles of the incumbent UN secretary -general in the present COVID-19, climate change, problems of landlocked countries and geopolitical situation of many of U N member states like Dag at his time, also need of emergence of some trouble shooting crisis statesmen and economists like John Maynard Keynes during the Great Depressions of 1930s following the advancement of his employment theory and Milton Friedman with his publication of monetarism principles among others as an effective instrument in the financial reform and economic recovery in order to appropriately address the post COVID- 19 crisis that has stalled the economy at the global level irrespective of the size of the countries i.e. big or small, rich or poor numbering over 200 in all continents.

Introduction

Of the nine UN secretaries- general as of now Dag Hammarskjold, the second one in this post, is the one who reached to the world's highest civil post of UN secretary general starting his career as an economist- secretary of his country's Central Bank called The Riksbank of Sweden within a short span of time i.e. 17 years. He remains to be the most talked about UN SG amongst his one predecessor and seven successors

* Mr. Karki is a Former Member of NCWA.

who occupied this position since the advent of this world body in 1945 to date for successfully spearheading the global affairs from April 1953 till his tragic end in an air crash the cause of which is under investigation even today.

Following the recommendation of UN Security Council consisting of Five Permanent Members that include Great Britain , China, France, Russia and the United States of America with veto powers, and other 11 None Permanent Members he was appointed to this post by the UN General Assembly on 10 April 1953 for a five year term as per the provision of the UN Charter by fulfilling the post vacated as a result of resignation of the first UN secretary general Trigve Lie of Norway who for the first time astonishingly had asserted that the job of UN SG was “the most impossible one” that had sparked on the sensitiveness of the enormous challenges that the post holder would face after assuming the assignments. His assertion had aroused great sensation to both the appointers and the interested candidates in fray that made more aware of the vast and complicated roles, responsibilities and duties to be carried out by the occupant of this post. Entering into his public career from a post of secretary of his country’s central bank the Riksbank , Dag is the first one to atop the most coveted yet the most challenging world’s position of UN secretary general occupying this rank till his tragic death in September 1961 without completing his extended second term commencing from 1957 and due in 1962.

Coincidentally the month of September that brought the life of Dag to an end is probably the most coined month in the world as this ninth month of the calendar has brought up many events of far reaching historical consequences touching future successive generations with effects on global development, peace, security, defense and diplomacy mostly with undesired impact on the humanity specially so during the second half of the immediate past century and first decade of 21 centuries. These events were mainly originated in the European Continent sparking all over the world. Germany’s invasion of Poland on the 1st September 1939, the declaration of war on Germany by Britain and France on the 3rd September same year germinating the seeds for the World War Second (1939-1944) and the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers of New York and Pentagon in Washington DC are some among many examples that look place in September what to talk of the Black Septembers that has different perspectives in the regional and global context.

It was also the very month of September in which the life of a great world statesman and peace maker Dag Hammarskjold, the then U N secretary general, had come to an end in a mysterious air crash in Zambia, the then Rhodesia, during his mission in the ill-fated night 17-18 September 1961 that too, sadly on the eve of convening annual General Assembly of the U. N. in New York which begins from the third Tuesday of every September and runs for three months. As known to all, this world body that officially got birth on 24th October 1945 after the end of Second World War to protect

and promote peace and security round the globe commences in September to deliberate on political, economic, social and other humanitarian issues with effects on world peace, development and security to save the world from the scourge of such world wars that had brought untold sorrow twice to the mankind during the first half of 20th century. Dag Hammarskjöld died in one of his such quests for peace and security missions as an incumbent then UN secretary general.

An Agent of Global Peace and Security and Development

Borne on 29 July 1905 to a prosperous Swedish family Dag (his full name Dag Agne Hjarman Hammarskjöld) at a place called Jonköping, Upasala as the fourth and the youngest son of Hjalmar Hammarskjöld who was his country's prime minister for four turbulent years 1914 -1917 as that period coincided with The Great World War First (1914-1918) and his wife (Dag's mother) Agnes Marie Caraline Hammarskjöld. Dag latter attributed to his father in inspiring him for public services and to his mother for motivating him towards spiritualism (The Marking, 1963, New York).

Economist cum Lawyer

Graduated from a native local college when aged 18, then he was enrolled at the Upasala university majoring in French history of literature, social philosophy and political economy for two years, received bachelor's degree in arts, went on continuing his further studies for another three years earning another degree "Called " filosofic licencial" in economics, again spent another two more years obtaining a bachelor's degree in law. He received all these academic credentials under his age of 31 years. Then he moved to country's capital Stockholm, joined the University of Stockholm wherein he earned a Ph. D in economics producing a thesis entitled "Konjunkturspridnigen (literarily The Spread of Business Cycle) in 1933 that heralded his additional academic profile qualifying him to be a renowned economist which popularized him first in his own country Sweden then to the whole of Europe,

Advent in Public Service

After teaching for a short period as an assistant professor of political economy at the University of Stockholm with a doctorate degree, he persuaded his professional career, as stated above, in his country's central bank The Rosebank, wherein he was appointed as secretary in 1936. After one year of his joining the Central Bank of Sweden as secretary the Swedish Government additionally appointment him as a permanent undersecretary at the Ministry of Finance He became chairman of this bank's General Council during 1841-1948 after being appointed by the Government (six board members of the bank would be appointed by the Swedish Parliament and chairman by the Government) reflecting an upward curb in his career with loaded responsibilities. While leading the

Central Bank as the chairman he simultaneously went on managing the Finance Ministry as entrusted to him by the Government as a permanent undersecretary. Concurrently holding two such posts was considered to be an exceptional act/decision of Government which amply displayed recognition of Dag's capability to walk an extra mile in response to the need of country's economy.

As an advisor to the cabinet in 1945 on financial and economic problems, he was rated to be very successful in shaping Swedish financial and economic policies, had led series of trade and financial negotiations on his country's behalf with different European Countries specially with the United Kingdom and the United States by reasonably benefiting his country in the context of economic and financial crisis of post-World War Second that had adversely affected Sweden like many other countries.

Overall involvement of Dag in senior government position of Sweden seems to revolve around the Central Bank, Rosebank, Ministry of Finance, cabinet secretariat as an advisor, then to the Foreign Ministry as permanent under-secretary in 1947, and secretary of state in 1949 in the same Ministry, then deputy foreign minister.

Expanded Role Beyond Home Country

Dag was included as a delegate of the Swedish Government to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) during 1947 -1953, then followed by his appointment as the cabinet secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with his tenure of 1949-51, also became a minister without portfolio spanning the year 1951 -53. He was well hailed for strategically coordinating the Government plans and programmes aimed at alleviating financial and economic problems of Post-World War Second. It is interesting coincidence to Hammarskjold family that while Dag's father was the Swedish premier during the World War First, his own son Dag was tasked to handle financial and economic issues created as a result of devastations of the World War second that had an adverse effect in the financial and economic front of Sweden.

Dag did not formally join any political party though severed in bureaucratic, diplomatic and political positions under the Social Democratic Cabinet.

Shift to the UN

The representations of Sweden by Dag Hammarskjold in several European forums and the UN General Assembly as a delegate, deputy chairman and chairman, and his vibrant exposition in such occasions had enormous influence of his credentials throughout European continent and beyond that opened the gate to his advent to the post of UN secretary general in early 1953.

During his tenure at the OECD on behalf of his country and then reached to the rank of chairman of this continental organization his image was extended to all OECD members. Thus Dag had immersed as one of the most towering personalities in the European continent, had exposed himself as a diplomat, economist and bureaucrat-turned statesman as his biographer Emery Kellen puts “that of a brilliant economist, an unobstructed technician and an aristo-bureaucrat.”, These qualities of Dag followed to his latter position of UN secretary general as well. It was during his tenure as the chairman of the OECD that he was watched not only from the European eyes but also beyond as was seen in the scenario that surrounded the selection process of the second UN secretary general that chose Dag in April 1953. Earlier to this he was enlisted as a delegate to several UN meetings, General Assembly Sessions. In the Paris Conference that brought the Marshal Plan into existence Dag was a Swedish delegate. He was vice chairman of the Swedish Government to the UN General Assembly in Paris in 1951 and was chairman when the same event started being convened in New York City in 1952 onwards.

Selection of Dag as Chief of the UN

The selection of UN secretary general always draws eyes to many UN member countries as there exists conflict of interests among the members of the Security Council specially between United States and Russian.

After Trygve Lie quit this job, a series of brainstorming interactions were held among these countries’ diplomats and leaders in arriving to a point of consensus for an acceptable candidate to be voted for the post.

In one of such series of meetings, the French Ambassador Henri suggested four possible candidates which included the name of Dag Hammarskjöld also whom he had known during the tenure of Dag in OECD. It is also reported that Dag was considered less harmful to Russia as was revealed by its permanent representative to the UN Valerian Zarin. However, the then USSR remained to be critic of Dag in course of his managing global affairs later on.

Prominence as UN Secretary General

Dag has been widely hailed as the UN SG because of his commendable contributions made by him in maintaining international peace, security and development and for his untiring efforts to meet this goal as envisaged in the UN charter. His negotiation skills with diplomatic apt is viewed as of extraordinary weight that averted conflicts among the concerned nations to the largest possible extent.

Among many other negotiations that he held with different Governments on various issues the release of 15 detained US fliers, who served under the UN command in Korea, by the People's Republic of China following Dag's hectic negotiation in Peking during 30 December 1954 to 13 January 1955 is considered to be of a great diplomatic trumps even today.

He led a series of negotiations during his tenure as the UN SG. He died on 18th of September 1961 in a suspicious air crash while in a peace mission in Congo of Africa continent whose real cause is still to be known. It is viewed by some international analysts and observers that Dag would earn a great name as negotiator in that mission if not killed.

The cause of Dag Hammarskjöld's death is mysterious from that ill-fated date to present date as to whether it was an air crash due to technical fault or human error or a planned sabotage to shut down the aircraft by bombing down through a second plane in which Dag and his team was on board.

He is considered to be a benchmark against which later secretary's general is judged. Historian Paul Kennedy opined that Dag perhaps was the greatest UN secretary general because of his ability to shape the events in contrast to his successor. Many books are written on and about him by different authors highlighting his wisdom and vision on world peace and security, spirituality, humanity and actions initiated and deeds done by him as the chief of this world organization. A number of books by renowned authors like Roger Lipsey's book on "Hammarskjöld- A Life", Susan Williams' book on "Who killed Dag Hammarskjöld?" Brian Urquhart's book on " Hammarskjöld", (Brian Urquhart served as one of UN undersecretaries general under Dag and also a lucky man who is currently running the 100th year of his age) Rajeshwar Dayal's book on "A Life of Our Time- Dag Hammarskjöld" (coincidentally Rajeshwar's brother Harishwar Dayal was accredited as an Indian ambassador to Nepal in the early 60s) and Paul R. Nelson's book on " Courage of Faith- Dag Hammarskjöld" are some among many books that amply reflect various aspects on Hammarskjöld's personality, life and contributions in the world peace and security for the sake of humanity while many other writers have authored different books with different focus on Dag's time responsive personality portraying him as a statesman , a renowned diplomat, top negotiator, poet, philosopher and spiritualist. Among the many books on Hammarskjöld, the British scholar Susan Williams's book entitled " Who Killed Dag Hammarskjöld? The UN, the Cold War and the White Supremacy in Africa "published in 2012 gained a great momentum with regards to the mysterious air crash raising additional questions whether Hammarskjöld's plane crash was an accident or that was intentionally shot down by a second aircraft killing Hammarskjöld and other 15 on board including the crew.

Dag's own book that he authored entitling the "Markings" posthumously published by Leif Belfrage, one of his close associates and also Sweden's permanent undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with foreword by W.H. Auden, a noted British poet has earned an additionally immortal name to Hammarskjold from spiritualistic point of view, too. Though The Markings came up in 1963, Dag's spiritualistic philosophy was already reflected through his well hailed radio interview that he had given to Edward R. Murrow, an eminent American broadcast journalist who had established himself a great name throughout the world during his career with Columbia Broadcast System (CBS) specially in covering the news during the Second World War.

That Dag would stand by solution to any burning issue acceptable to many world stake holders could amply be seen through the mostly coined phrase "Leave it to Dag" in the 38th floor, the office of UN SG in the UN headquarters, New York. In the words of John F. Kennedy, the US president at the time of Hammarskjold's death in 1961, "I realize now that in comparison to him, I am a small man. He was the greatest statesman of our century" further eulogizing him for his dedication to the cause of peace, his untiring labor to achieve it, his courage under attack, willingness to accept all responsibility in trying to strengthen the United Nations to make it more effective instrument". In another reference he had remarked Dag's death as organization's death. In contrast to Kennedy's remarks of such kind his Russian counterpart the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's (USSR) president Nikita Khrushchev, however, blaming Hammarskjold for his handling the Kalanga, Congo conflict had called for his resignation from the post to which Dag had responded "It is very easy to bow to the wish of a big power, it is another matter to resist".

Dag's role as a mediator during the Suez Crisis and capture of a US reconnaissance plane by the USSR had established him as a great negotiator in 1960. The UN peace keeping force that Dag established in 1957-58 as proposed by the then minister for external affairs of Canada Lester B Pearson that went on getting a great leap forward from that time onwards to date in UN's peace keeping endeavor clearly manifests how farsighted he was in initiating an instrumental solution for maintenance of peace and order in the world without adverse effect on development..

Need of New Dag Hammarskjold in the Present Context

As an effect of the COVID- 19 the present era's world has been facing a great setback in the economic field since last two years and is expected to continue such handicaps further unless some concrete efforts are made at national, regional and global level that requires initiation from the world's statesmen, incumbent UN secretary general like Dag Hammarskjold in his time firstly in Sweden, then in Europe as the chairman of the OECD , multinational business houses, top UN diplomats, finance and foreign ministers of

highly industrialized countries including those of petroleum exporting countries, some great economists as was the case with John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman who came into prominence by their respective publications of General Employment Theory and Monetarism Theory respectively that had played a critical and instrumental roles in addressing the economic crisis of their time in addition to other leading economists.

The Keynesian employment principles had played key role in relating to occupation of labor force as demanded by prevailing situation in the economic sphere during and post Great Depression of 1930s and later the theory of monetarism advanced by Friedman that took up money matter as tool in the financial realm in balancing and integrating monetary devices/means with the whole gamut of economy. Now the time is reaping for immergence of such personalities in economics at academic front and leaders of national, regional and global height for taking initiation at policy level to address the present COVID 19 situation for the world as a whole with a view to turn the world into a safer place to live in by way of fast recovery from the chaos of the COVID -19 as was the case during 1930s Great Depression and post World War Second with passing reference to the financial crisis in the first half of the present century.

Dag's Link with Nepal

Dag Hammarskjold was associated with Nepal in multiple ways. It was during his tenure as the UN SG that Nepal got admitted as its 75th U N member on 14 December 1955 although the membership process follows through the recommendation of the Security Council and subsequent endorsement of the General Assembly.

As Nepal occupies a rank of the fourth largest contributor in sending her military cum police contingents for the UN Peace keeping purpose for which Dag had played great an instrumental role in establishing the UN Peace Keeping Force in 1957-58 as proposed by the then minister for external affairs of Canada Lester B. Pearson that went on getting remarkable recognition as peace builder in different troubled countries around the world since that time onward to date.

Dag is the first UN SG to pay an official visit to Nepal during which he met some leading leaders and diplomats of Nepal in addition to his audience with king Mahendra reportedly that impressed him quite well, Likewise BP Koirala as the premier of Nepal and leader of Nepali delegation to the UN GA in 1960 had met Dag in his office at the 38th parallel of the UN headquarters in New York that was further supplemented and complemented by effective role played by the then Nepal's permanent representative Rishikesh Shaha who latter headed an International Investigation Commission constituted by the UN to investigate the cause leading to the death of Dag in an air crash.. That a Nepali diplomat chosen to chair such a prestigious yet very sensitive commission was a reflection of Nepal's reputation abroad in the arena of international

affairs when Nepal was not as well exposed as today.

His profound love for Nepal can be construed beyond a normal diplomatic formality. That he was quite enchanted with the natural beauty of Nepal visibly can be seen in his own poem that he penned and published in *The National Geography* after his visit to the famous Swayambhu Nath and Lumbini during his official trip to Nepal a part of which reads:

“The brilliant notes of the flute
Are heard by the God in the cave of birth
Himalayan ice cliffs A lace of rest Charcoal fires
Deep in the mirror Vishnu is at peace “

That Dag was fascinated with the flora and fountain of Nepal is self- explanatory from this stanza of his poem.

The world awaits for a global economist like Dag in the aftermath of COVID -19, a great diplomat well equipped with profound diplomatic skills and expertise to play the roles of peace maker and negotiator to avert the conflicts in many countries including in the case of Ukraine currently.

References

- A New Look at the Everest, National Geography Magazine 1961.
- Hammar skjold, Dag *The Marking* , Ballatine Books, New York, NY 1964.
- Different publications of Dag Hammar skjold Foundation Upasala, Sweden.
- Dag Hammar skjold [se//about. -us](#)
- 50 years of Foundation Report 2012, Upasala, Sweden.
- Annual Reports, Lumbini Development Trust
- Annual Journal , Nepal Council of World Affairs. 2019, Kathmandu
- Various speeches of Dag Hammar skjold
- Bhattarai , Madan Kumar, Dr. Parastraka Patra , 2019, Kathmandu
- Karki, Nir Bahadur, (1) “Remembering Dag Hammar skjold –A Memorable Peace Maker”, 26 November 2021 *The Himalayan Times*, Kathmandu
- (2). “Dag Hammar skjold- A Diplomat of Great Eminence” Nepal Council of World Affairs, 2019, Kathmandu.
- (3) “Hammar skjold and Nepal” 10 October 2014, *The Rising Nepal*, Kathmandu
- (4) “Dag Hammar skjold”: Some Reminiscence” 9-22 October 2018, *Global Nepali Patra*. London, United Kingdom

Nepal-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Close Friend in the Middle East

Bharat Khanal*

Bilateral Relations

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the oldest friend with whom Nepal established her diplomatic relations in the Middle East. Previously, many countries of the Middle East were accredited to embassy of Nepal in Riyadh. The relationship between Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are marked as bonds of friendship, goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation ever since the establishment of diplomatic relation on March 15, 1977 AD. The friendly relations between the two countries have been further complemented by growing people to-people contacts, mainly facilitated by the presence of a large number of Nepali migrant workers in the country. The Embassy of Nepal to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established in 1978 in Jeddah the former capital of Saudi Arabia and shifted to Riyadh in 1984. The Embassy has been playing an important role in promoting the bilateral relations mainly based on economic and social cooperation between Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy in Riyadh is concurrently accredited to the Republic of Yemen and Republic of Somalia. KSA is spread over 2.15 million square kilometres (two-thirds the size of India), covering 80 per cent of the Arabian Peninsula.

Nepal greatly values the bond of friendship it enjoys with the Saudi Arabia. Our relations have progressively evolved over the years to cover political, economic, social, cultural and educational dimensions. It is a multidimensional partnership. Continued engagements at various levels and mutual cooperation in the areas of common interest have nurtured our friendship. Full spectrum of our friendship is much more than the formal contacts. People-to-people relations has given added value to Nepal-Saudi Arabia relations.

Nepal and Saudi Arabia have been enjoying best of relations with each other. Bilateral relations have continued to be strengthened on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence, friendship and cooperation. Both the nations have expressed avowed commitments and loyalty to the principles of the United Nations Charter and work together in the United Nations as well as other international forum for the common benefit of the humankind. On cultural fronts, every year a large number of people from

* Mr. Khanal is a Section Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal

the Muslim Community pay a visit to the holy sites of Mecca and Medina to perform Hajj. Around 1200 pilgrims visited these places in 2019. Harmony and co-existence make essential ingredients of our culture.

Bilateral Agreements

We agreed to work together to take our relations to the next level through enhanced political engagement and promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. We underlined

the importance of exchanging high level visits between the two countries, establishing bilateral political consultation mechanism and concluding a host of agreements and understanding to further cooperative partnership. With the growing importance of the Saudi Arabia in the Gulf region and the world, Nepal looks forward to strengthening its relation with the Saudi Arabia in a newer height in the days to come. An important agreement on trade, investment and tourism is in preparation. Labor agreement between the countries is also in the final phase. Nepal firmly believes that labor agreement should be in the interest of the labor.

Trade and Investment

A great prospect of economic cooperation exists between the two countries. Saudi Arabia is a country with vast oil and mineral resources and Nepal can explore possible avenues for cooperation in this sector. The trade between Nepal and Saudi Arabia has remained in favor of Saudi Arabia. The major export items included handbags, carpet, CD cassette, and woolen shawls. Major imported items were plastics, mineral fuels and oils, Aluminum, floor covering textile and copper. Nepal should explore the ways and means to bridge the gap by way of increasing its export to Saudi Arabia. We have to increase our export volume so as to reduce the trade deficit.

Production and export of the organic agricultural products can be one of the potential areas in the development of Nepal-Saudi Arabia relations. The fertile land and suitable climate for the organic products in Nepal could be one of the attractive areas of joint venture for the Saudi Investors. The potential Saudi investment in this sector basically could be mobilized in large scale for the scientific and mass production to fulfill the demand of the Saudi markets.

Other major exports from Nepal to the Saudi Arabia include Woolen shawls, Scarves, Carpets, chewing tobacco etc. whereas Gold, Silver, Petro-bitumen, Lubricating Oil etc. are the major importable items from the KSA. Nepal has been exploring the trade market in the KSA in recent years and it might be a lucrative market for the Nepalese

cereals, food items and herb-products. Trade experts should explore the potential areas by which trade can be promoted for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Tourism Attractions

Tourism holds great scope for promotion between the two countries. Tourism can be one of the potential areas in the development of Nepal-Saudi Arabia relations. Nepal can become a destination for the Saudi local population who visit abroad during the summer to avoid the adverse climatic conditions. There is a need for increasing direct flights to Nepal keeping in view the increasing traffic. Similarly, Nepal has tremendous scope for eco-tourism. Family tourism for a longer duration is another way to attract the Saudis because of its climatic conditions. Nepal has been one of the nearest and affordable tourism destinations.

Right from the airport to every touch point that a visitor to Nepal experiences must be converted to the best possible hospitality we as a country offer our guests. Strategically, positioned between two of the world's largest economies - India and China – Nepal has immense opportunity for growth in the tourism sector. To build the resilience and competitiveness of the tourism industry and grow its economic contribution, the government has identified key areas of focus in all the provinces with emphasis on infrastructure development and connectivity. Primary focus areas are building of road and rail networks, airports and cable cars, opening of new trekking and mountaineering routes, air safety and aviation expansion, stadiums and convention centers. Operation by Himalayan Airlines since September 2017 has definitely been a boost for promoting tourism in Nepal. Similarly, operation by National Carrier Nepal Airlines and Himalayan Air lines between Kathmandu-Riyadh-Kathmandu is in final phase. Similarly, from the Jan 2021 direct flight between Kathmandu and Riyadh is operated by Himalayan airlines.

Our country is exceptionally gifted in nature, culture and heritage. Many of our beautiful locations are yet to be explored and accessed. Beautiful majestic Himalayas, deep valleys and plains of Terai are so mesmerizing. Even without adequate infrastructure and sophistication, our country is already featured in the top lists of various travel related evaluators. With enhanced publicity, we aimed to host two million tourists in 2020 but this dream was shattered due to Covid -19 pandemic. Similarly, we have very simple visa procedure. Tourists from many countries can get visa on arrival at different points in Nepal. Saudi nationals can also obtain visa on arrival. But Nepal lacks publicity. Many Saudi tourists are not aware about the beautiful aspects of Nepal. Halal food, security and recreation activities are mostly needed by Saudi tourists. Technology shall be used for the promotion of tourism. Nepal is a prized destination for travelers as well as investors who want to do profitable business in the travel and tourism industry.

High level official and business visits

High-level visits between the two countries have greatly contributed in enhancing the relations between the two countries. From Nepalese side, late king Birendra and late queen Aishwarya also paid a visit to Saudi Arabia in 1983. Former king Gyanendra visited Saudi Arabia on an official visit in 1983 in his capacity as prince. Similarly, several Ministers and State ministers have visited Nepal on different occasions.

Similarly, From Saudi Arabia His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud visited Nepal in November 2010 and Saudi High Level delegation arrived in Kathmandu on 24 December 2011 for their three days official visit. Both countries have realized the need of high level visits at political level for cementing our ever-expanding brotherly relations. We have to initiate high level visits and engagement, youth exchange programs, provide trainings and scholarships in the field of expertise, visa simplification and exemption for the diplomats and government officials etc.

Every year hundreds of people climb Mount Everest. Currently, many climbers from the Gulf region have made their journey to the top of the world successful. Nepali Embassy in the Gulf region and my own Embassy in Riyadh we are organizing functions every year to recognize and honor the successful summiteers. Many businessmen visit Nepal to recruit workers for different companies.

Saudi Fund for Development Aid to Nepal

International development cooperation has an important role to play in Nepal's development efforts. The financing agreement between Government of Nepal and Saudi Fund for Development (SDF) concluded on October 11, 2019 in Ministry of Finance at Kathmandu with an aim to support the reconstruction of individual houses, health and education facilities that were devastated by the earthquake. The concessional loan of 112.5 million Saudi Riyal (Rs 3.33 billion) will support the "Program for Reconstruction of Houses, Health and Education Facilities in Earthquake Affected Areas".

Nepal had received loan assistance from the Saudi Fund for Development for several hydroelectric projects including Marsyangdi Project. There was also a substantial contribution from Saudi Fund for Development in the construction of East-West Highway of Nepal. Presently there is Saudi cooperation in Bagmati I & II Irrigation Project. The economic cooperation extended by the Saudi Government has been primarily focused towards upliftment of rural community, agricultural development and emergency assistance. Further, there are many possible areas of cooperation in the future.

Nepalese Expats and Remittances

Saudi Arabia has been one of the popular destinations among Nepali migrant workers over the past two decades. Nepalese have been welcomed by the Saudi people very much due to their dedication to work, loyalty, honesty, sincerity and integrity. The prospect of employment in Saudi Arabia is ever growing due to ongoing development works being undertaken by the Saudi Government.

Nepal is one of the most important sources of labor destination for the KSA as well, constituting the fifth largest group of expatriates in this country. Nepalese work in the field of Driving, Sales, Hospitality, Construction, Cleaning etc. Provided that Nepal trains and sends the semi-skilled and skilled labor-force in this country, there is lots of demand for the Nepalese workers for their hard work, sincerity and performance at par excellence in their fields.

Nepal is a remittance based economy as it constitutes more one fourth of its total GDP. The contribution of the remitters from the Gulf Countries like the Saudi Arabia for sustaining the economy of the country is praiseworthy. The Saudi Arabia is the second largest source of remittance income for Nepal. The Embassy has been providing its services and other required activities to the Nepalese nationals who are nearly four hundred thousand in number working in the Kingdom as well as in other countries to which the Embassy is concurrently accredited.

Priorities and Challenges

Both Nepal and the Saudi Arabia have shared values and commonalities in their relations and the combined duties towards the world polity. We have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations and this would be at its zenith as the Saudi Arabia has opened their residential mission to Nepal and pave the way for more engagement not only at government level but also at the level of people-to-people relations, business and cultural engagement. The current development pace of the Saudi Arabia would not have been possible unless the contribution made from the Nepalese labors alike. Likewise, the remittance the migrants earned here has significantly contributed in the living standards of their families back in Nepal. Therefore, the relation as a labor sending and receiving countries has to be redefined to the optimum benefit of both the countries and the workers.

Malpractices in recruitment at home to exploitation at the destination country for lack of appropriate and swift legal protection to foreign workers is a big challenge. With limited human and other resources, the Embassy has to handle the ever-growing demands of the citizens abroad. Most of the workers who are unskilled come to the Kingdom without proper training and experience who are prone to face many challenges. Saudi Arabia

being a very big country in terms of geography it's a challenge to meet the consular and other demands of the citizens travelling to their workplace. Similarly, diaspora management and managing ever expanding Nepalese community organizations also requires special craftsmanship for the embassy.

Prospects and Opportunities

Diverse geography, warmhearted and hospitable people are the hallmark of Saudi Arabia that has similarity with Nepal. Rich history, heritages, historical sites and unique culture are the peculiar features of Saudi Arabia. The rapid changes and reforms that are taking place in the Saudi Arabia in a breath taking pace is a great lesson for many countries to learn. Moreover, vibrant and energetic youths are assets of Saudi Arabia. All the way from Eastern to Southern and down the northern many similarities exists in this country. Moreover, the development activities that are taking place under the current leadership of Saudi Arabia is exemplary.

A new democratic and inclusive Constitution promulgated in September 2015 has settled long-standing political issues. Now the whole state mechanism is focused towards economic growth and development. We are now focused on socio-economic transformation. Many investment and labor related laws have been changed to attract the Foreign Direct Investment in Nepal. During the Covid pandemic Saudi Arabia provided health facilities and other support to Nepalese migrant workers.

In nutshell, the constant engagement in political, cultural and business front, sharing of information in any critical matters and common view on major regional and world issues will make the bilateral relation strong.

References

<https://mofa.gov.np/foreign-policy/bilateral-relation/>

<https://sa.nepalembassy.gov.np/>

https://mofa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Report-on-Nepals-Foreign-Affairs_MOFA_2019-2020.pdf

Eye on the Kingdom: About Saudi Arabia', Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saudi Arabia, <https://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/aboutKingDom/Pages/KingdomGeography46466.aspx>



**DOLPHIN
EDUCATION**

STUDY IN



Australia



Canada



China



New Zealand



UK



USA

UPTO

100 %
SCHOLARSHIP

IELTS & PTE



977- 1-4797331, 5909331
5904583, 5904584



Level 1, 2 & 3 (Above MINISO)
New-Baneshwor, Kathmandu

WhatsApp/Viber : +977-9851313747, 9851312046, 980202100