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FOREWORD

Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) is committed to achieve the institutional objective of knowledge production on several dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy. In the implementation process of the above, Volume 3 Issue 1 is the present publication.

The present volume incorporates several of crucial issues regarding domestic as well as foreign affairs continuing to provide a place to the studies on different aspects shaping Nepal's external relations. IFA views journal's publishing as a contribution to policy suggestions and knowledge generation. Despite a lack of required human and financial resources, the Journal of Foreign Affairs is a proof that IFA has maintained a strong network of foreign policy experts and practitioners, academics, and experts by encouraging the review, revision, and publication of studies on various aspects of Nepal's foreign relations.

The primary duty of the Institute is to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal in its discharge of effectively conducting foreign policy practices and understanding. The current Volume of the Journal of Foreign Affairs includes domestic aspect of foreign policy, digital diplomacy, Nepal's boundary diplomacy, regional affairs, climate diplomacy, including other current affairs. Despite the obstacles and challenges faced, the outcome, we feel, will help academics and stakeholder institutions and enhance the purpose of IFA.

IFA extends sincere gratitude to the Honorable Foreign Minister N. P. Saud and the responsible officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Nepal in facilitating researches on the matters of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy in the present perspective. The contributions of Mr Madhavji Shrestha (senior resource person), Mr Matrika Poudyal (resource person), Mr Sanu Raja Puri (information officer), Mr Mahendra Prasad Joshi, Mr Dron Prasad Lamichhane, Ms Renuka Khadka and all the IFA staffs are worth mentioning in this regard.

Rajendra Pandey

Officiating Executive Director

EDITORIAL

Journal embodies the soul and spirit of the organization that brings it out. Indeed, it presents its true visage before the public in general and its readers in particular. The publication of the Journal of Foreign Affairs (JoFA) stands as a testament to the organization's unwavering dedication to advancing the field of foreign affairs. It is not merely a compilation of scholarly articles; rather, it represents a significant contribution to the realms of policy recommendations and knowledge production. Through this journal, Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) plays a crucial role in shaping the discourse around Nepal's foreign relations and fostering a deeper understanding of the country's position in the global arena.

Despite grappling with challenges in terms of human and financial resources, IFA has not wavered in its mission to create a robust and vibrant network of foreign policy experts, practitioners, academics, and specialists. The journal serves as a platform that unites these diverse stakeholders, encouraging them to collaborate, engage in critical dialogue, and contribute their insights to the field. By doing so, the IFA effectively nurtures a community of thought leaders and fosters an environment where innovative ideas and well-researched studies flourish.

JoFA, as a cornerstone of this endeavor, plays a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge and facilitating the exchange of ideas. It serves as a conduit through which cutting-edge research, policy analyses, and informed perspectives on various aspects of Nepal's foreign relations are shared with the wider academic and diplomatic communities. By actively encouraging the review, revision, and publication of such studies, IFA ensures that the journal remains a vibrant repository of the latest developments and scholarly insights in the field.

The third volume of the Journal of Foreign Affairs presents a collection of scholarly articles that delve into various contemporary issues affecting the global landscape. Authored by prominent experts in their respective fields, these articles provide valuable insights and analyses on critical topics in international relations and diplomacy with close connotations with Nepal's foreign policy. Prof. Dr. Hem Raj Subedi's article "Domestic instability, global order and Nepali foreign policy" focuses on the intricate dynamics of domestic instability, global order, and Nepali foreign policy. Through an in-depth examination, Subedi

sheds light on how these interconnected factors shape Nepal's role and position in the international arena. Madhavji Shrestha contributes to the volume with a compelling piece titled "Is Cyber Diplomacy Essential in the Present Perspective?" Shrestha explores the growing significance of cyber diplomacy in the context of modern diplomacy and addresses its potential implications on international relations. He pleads for the embrace of this newly emerged travel of diplomacy by Nepali authority to put it in array along side the recent development around the world.

Similarly, Matrika Poudyal's article delves into "Nepal's Quest for Secure Boundaries and International Border Regime." By analyzing Nepal's efforts to safeguard its territorial boundaries and the establishment of a robust international border regime, Poudyal offers a comprehensive perspective on the country's approach to border security. Kamal Dev Bhattarai examines the interface between climate change and national security threat in his scholarly contribution. Titled "Interface between Climate Change and National Security Threat," Bhattarai's work critically assesses the potential security implications of climate change and the necessity of addressing this issue in the realm of national security. Naresh Giri's article, "Nepal's Transit Route Negotiation with India and China," delves into the intricate negotiations and diplomatic maneuvers undertaken by Nepal in securing its transit routes with its neighboring giants, India and China.

Hari Prakash Chand's piece, "Dilemmas, Debates, and Development of BRI in Nepal," offers an insightful examination of Nepal's perspectives, challenges, and debates concerning its involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Dr. Damaru Ballav Paudel contributes a comparative study titled "Emerging Trends in Economic Diplomacy: A Comparative Study G7 and BRICS," which analyzes the economic diplomacy strategies of G7 and BRICS countries and identifies emerging trends and best practices. Dr. Bimala Sharma's article, "Nepal's Diplomacy through Rhetorics at UNGA," provides a critical analysis of Nepal's diplomatic approach and rhetoric while representing its interests and concerns at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Lastly, Rajendra Pandey's book review on "Four Diplomats" authored by Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai offers a valuable assessment of this publication, providing readers with an informed perspective on its content and relevance. The diverse range of topics covered in this volume

of IFA underscores the journal's commitment to advancing knowledge and promoting scholarly discourse on pressing global issues. As readers engage with these articles, they are presented with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary challenges and potential pathways for constructive diplomacy and international cooperation.

Thus, IFA wholeheartedly expresses its profound appreciation to the Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Mr. Narayan Prasad Saud, and the esteemed officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) for their invaluable support and facilitation of critical research endeavors concerning Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy. The collaborative efforts and unwavering assistance provided by the Hon'ble Foreign Minister and the MoFA officials have been instrumental in fostering an environment conducive to rigorous academic investigations and scholarly analyses of Nepal's engagements with the international community.

Through their support, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister and the MoFA have played a pivotal role in facilitating a deeper understanding of Nepal's foreign policy objectives, challenges, and opportunities. Their unwavering dedication to promoting scholarly investigations on matters of national and global significance has contributed to a more nuanced and informed discourse surrounding Nepal's diplomatic engagements, regional partnerships, and global affiliations. The organization looks forward to continued collaboration and endeavors to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge in this specific field, with the ultimate aim of promoting Nepal's interests and aspirations in the international arena. IFA deems it appreciable if it could receive any worthy opinion and ideas from its readers for the further development of the journal in its next issue.

Editors
Journal of Foreign Affairs

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DOMESTIC INSTABILITY, GLOBAL ORDER AND NEPALI FOREIGN POLICY

Hem Raj Subedi¹

Abstract

The foreign policy of Nepal is not hindered by a lack of understanding of its principles but rather by the complex relationship between domestic and external factors. In an ideal scenario, Nepal would define its interests clearly and engage with foreign powers in a rational manner to achieve its objectives. For example, if Nepal recognizes the need for foreign aid to improve its infrastructure, it would approach relevant external powers. Before doing so, Nepal would conduct thorough due diligence to assess the benefits of the project and ensure its economic viability. The entire process would be conducted transparently, allowing external actors to receive a similar deal and comprehend Nepal's reasoning. This approach would help Nepal maintain control over foreign influence. Unfortunately, Nepali leaders and policymakers have often treated foreign powers as tools to retain or gain domestic power, and at times, to serve their personal interests. This reliance on foreign powers makes them more dependent and impairs their ability to make decisions in the best interest of the nation. Therefore, it is crucial for Nepali policymakers to take matters into their own hands. The first step is to strengthen domestic unity concerning foreign and security policies, which may require leaders to sacrifice their personal or party interests. The future of Nepali foreign policy hinges on whether these leaders are willing to make such sacrifices.

Keywords: *domestic power, foreign policy, geography, global order, policymakers, politics*

¹ Dr. Hem Raj Subedi, PhD is Professor in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies at Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Introduction:

Nepal is a rare non-European state to enjoy formal independence from colonial domination even while civilizational powers such as China and India suffered direct or indirect colonial control until mid-20th century. The sovereign status Nepal enjoyed was the result of its geographical location and the kind of internal governance evolved within the country. In modern history, King Prithvi Narayan Shah's dictum 'yam between two boulders' has served as the base for Nepal's foreign strategies². Nepal has reached out to both China (and Tibet) in the North and India in the South, with some variations during different times.

During the Rana regime, Nepal pursued a policy of global isolationism, but largely bandwagoned with the British rulers of India, in exchange for Rana regime's autonomy at home³. Rana regime actively supported the British to maintain control over India. For instance, Jung Bahadur Rana led a Nepal Army to support the British in their efforts to put down the rebellion in 1857. Similarly, Nepal sent troops to fight alongside the British during the World War I.

The relations turned into 'special relations' between the Nepal and India after India got independence from the British colonizers and Nepal transitioned to democracy in 1951. It was signified by the signing of 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries⁴. The agreement has formed the basis of Nepal's modern relations with India, though the agreement itself has come under scrutiny and criticisms from most quarters of Nepali foreign policy establishment⁵.

Nepal diversified its relations with the world since the mid-1950s, after then King Mahendra's takeover of the government. Besides establishing diplomatic relations with major powers, Nepal became a member of the United Nations in 1955. Nepal began to assert its independent foreign policy and sought to balance its relations not just with India and China, but also engaged with global powers to further its interest. The United Nations too became a critical element of Nepali foreign policy.

2 Shah, P.N. (1774-75). *Divyopadesh*. Available online at: <https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/dibbaya-upadesh-of-prithivi-narayan-shah.pdf>

3 Muni, S. D. (1973). *Foreign policy of Nepal*. Delhi: National Publishing House.

4 Muni, *ibid*.

5 Nayak, N. (2010). India–Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty (1950): Does it Require Revision?. *Strategic Analysis*, 34(4), 579-593.

The 1960s and 1970s were the heydays of Nepali foreign policy. Nepal, a small and poor country, was able to engage with global powers and became a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council from 1969-70 (and later in 1989-90)⁶. Nepal was able to attract aid from India, China, the US, the Soviet Union and the European powers⁷. Nepal was a founding member of Non-Aligned Movement, a forum of countries from the Global South, which followed a middle-path in the global competition between the US and the Soviet Union. In the 25-year period between 1955-1980, Nepal established diplomatic relations with almost 70 countries⁸. The last major Nepal-led initiative in terms of Nepali foreign policy relating with the world was the ‘Zone of Peace’ concept. Though it could not succeed, more than 100 countries had signed up to it.

Nepali presence, status and influence in global arena have declined steadily since the 1990s. In the early 2000s, Nepal faced internal instability due to a Maoist insurgency, which led to a shift in its foreign policy towards seeking greater international support for peace and democracy.

In recent years, Nepal has sought to balance its relations between its two giant neighbors, India and China, while also deepening its ties with other countries in the region and beyond. At the same time, the interest from global powers such as the US and Europe has increased rapidly. There is a perception that Nepal is increasingly at the center of global geopolitics in which Nepal finds itself with less control over its own policies and greater influence from external forces.

Conceptual framework

International relations theories help explain the predicament of Nepali foreign policy. On one hand, the strategic significance of Nepal in regional and global power politics has increased. On the other hand, Nepal’s status in global order is slipping. In this context, the neo-classical realism offers an explanation and the way forward. Neoclassical realism is a theory of international relations that seeks to explain how states behave in the

6 The Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, 2023. Available online at: <https://www.un.int/nepal/#:~:text=Nepal%20served%20twice%20in%20the,Nepal's%20involvement%20is%20ever%20increasing>.

7 Dixit, K. M. (1997). Foreign aid in Nepal: No bang for the buck. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 2(1), 173- 186.

8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023. Nepal’s Bilateral Relations. Available online at: <https://mofa.gov.np/foreign-policy/bilateral-relation/>

international system by taking into account both systemic factors (such as the distribution of power and the nature of the international system) and domestic factors (such as the role of domestic politics and institutions)⁹. Neoclassical realism builds on the insights of classical realism, which emphasizes the role of power and the competitive nature of international politics, but adds a more nuanced understanding of how domestic politics and institutions shape a state's foreign policy.

According to neoclassical realism, a state's behavior in the international system is not solely determined by its relative power or the nature of the international system, but is also influenced by the domestic political constraints and opportunities facing its leaders. Neoclassical realism argues that leaders must balance both domestic and international considerations when making foreign policy decisions, and that the balance between these factors can shift over time, depending on changes in the international or domestic context.

This perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding the domestic political dynamics within a state in order to fully comprehend its behavior in the international system. Overall, neoclassical realism provides a more nuanced and complex view of international relations than classical realism, by recognizing the role of domestic politics and institutions in shaping a state's behavior in the international system.



The following section will analyze Nepal's foreign policy dichotomy based on the neo-classical realist framework.

Goals and structure of Nepali foreign policy making

The fundamental objective of Nepal's foreign policy 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

9 Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy. *World politics*, 51(1), 144-172.

security. Nepal also aims to contribute to global peace, harmony and security¹⁰.

Nepal's foreign policy is guided by principles. They include the UN charter, principles of *Panchasheel*, and values of world peace.

The constitution provides the guiding framework for the conduct of the foreign policy. Article 50.4 of the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 directs that 'Nepal conduct 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.'¹¹ Article 51 State Policy states the following:

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. To review treaties concluded in the past, and make treaties, agreements based on equality and mutual interest.

Article 51, Constitution of Nepal, 2015.

The directives in the constitution are clear, but the federal government is responsible for developing appropriate strategies and policies to the end. Ministry of the Foreign Affairs is the primary agency responsible for the conduct of the foreign policy, though other ministries and security agencies such as the Nepal Army also play critical roles.

In this context, the government's understanding and interpretation of Nepal's national interest, domestic political calculations and external factors affect the conduct of foreign policy.

10 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023. Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077. Available online at: <https://mofa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B7%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%9F%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%BF%E0%A5%A8%E0%A5%A6%E0%A5%AD%E0%A5%AD.pdf>

11 Constitution of Nepal, 2015. Nepal Law Commission. Available online at: <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Constitution-of-Nepal.pdf>

Domestic political context

Domestic cohesion and foreign policy are closely intertwined. A country's domestic cohesion, or the level of unity and agreement among its citizens and policymakers, can have a significant impact on its foreign policy. When a country is internally divided or lacks domestic cohesion, its foreign policy decisions become less clear and less effective. Domestic divisions can lead to conflicting views on foreign policy, making it harder for a country to present a unified front when dealing with other nations.

On the other hand, when a country enjoys strong domestic cohesion, its foreign policy decisions may be more decisive and effective. A united domestic front can help a country project a stronger image to other nations and can make it easier for the country to pursue its foreign policy goals. Furthermore, domestic cohesion can also influence a country's approach to foreign policy issues.

There is general consensus among Nepali foreign policy makers about the principles and the larger goal. To reiterate, there is hardly any dissension that Nepal should have independent and non-aligned policy vis-à-vis major powers¹². There is also a universal agreement on the need for Nepal to have a 'balanced' foreign policy vis-à-vis India and China, Nepal's neighbors. This uniformity provides Nepali foreign policymakers and diplomatic partners with clarity and enhances Nepal's credibility.

However, there is no such agreement at policy level. The constant change in government/leadership¹³ with little institutional memory, and foreign policy based on political expediency, combined with a lack of transparency, have hurt Nepal's credibility.

Nepal had relatively stable government under unitary leadership during the Panchayat regime. While the government changed frequently, the King and the foreign policy remained stable. During the reign of King Mahendra, Nepal pursued a policy of diversification in foreign and economic policy, while enhancing nationalism at home. The reign was remarkably successful from Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal was able to

12 Khanal, G. (2019). Foreign Policy of Nepal: Continuity and Changes. *Journal of APF Command and Staff College*, 2(1), 97-102.

13 Nepal has seen 29 government changes since the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990. Similarly, individual foreign secretary each has served for just over two years on average during the period. For details, see Former Secretary List, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available online at: <https://mofa.gov.np/former-secretary-list/>

punch above its weight in global affairs during the period. It expanded relations with all major powers, source of aid diversified and aid increased, and Nepal was able to participate respectably in multilateral forums. For the first time, Nepal became a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 1969-70.

King Birendra pursued Mahendra's foreign policy but with a more neutralist tilt. His foreign policy was focused on efforts to get them to recognize Nepal a 'Zone of Peace'. More than 130 nations acceded Nepal's request, and it became one of the central pillars of Birendra's foreign policy for more than a decade.

The principles established during the earlier period continued after Nepal democratized in 1990, and the Cold War ended globally. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala outlined his foreign policy in 1992. He summarized Nepal's foreign policy as 'continuity in terms of stable relationship of trust and mutual benefit with immediate neighbors; central role for the UN; and changes in value for democracy and evolution in the traditional understanding of security'¹⁴. Yet, domestic political preoccupation among the major parties and political instability meant that the government could hardly have coherent policy.

Since 1990, Nepali governments have lasted barely a year in power.

In addition, the start of Maoist insurgency in 1996 brought entire attention to domestic security. In doing so, Nepal's foreign policy was the victim. During the period, there was no major foreign policy initiative or strategy. Most government conducted foreign policy on an ad hoc basis, and reacted to regional and global developments, rather than making any concrete efforts to change them to Nepal's national interest. Also, multilateral agencies and development partners assumed the role of investing in development, firstly for the Millennium Development Goals and later for Sustainable Development Goals. The country was ravaged by the insurgency and counter-insurgency and Nepal fell down steeply in global order.

The end of Maoist insurgency also brought about a change in political system and constituent assembly elections for a new constitution, but not any change in political instability. Leaders preoccupation with trying to hold onto power if in government, and bring down the government if in

14 Koirala, GP (1992). Nepal's foreign policy: an outline, Nepal Council for World Affairs Journal, pp 1-5)

opposition or if it was disgruntled faction of the party in government, continued. Besides, the post-conflict reconciliation and constitution consumed the rest of the oxygen. In this period, the UN again became a critical part of Nepali foreign policy through the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). Again, the country at large was preoccupied with internal issues.

Nepal first had its foreign policy, in form of Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077, when a supposedly strong leftist government came to power after elections in 2018. Yet, the constant politicization of the foreign policy establishment has weakened Nepal's diplomacy.

The debate on the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) provides a stark example. Nepal and the US started negotiating about the compact since 2013 and the compact was signed in 2017¹⁵. The agreement was finally ratified in 2022. During the phase, all the three major establishment parties, namely Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and CPN-MC led the government, and were aware of the development. However, all the major political party and leaders spurned the issue as it befitted their personal/ party goals¹⁶.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal co-wrote a letter supporting the MCC in private, but continued to oppose the agreement in public until he did the volte-face at the last minute¹⁷. Oli championed the issue when he was in power, but was ambivalent when he was in opposition.

The narrative regarding the MCC almost exclusively focused on what U.S. intentions are. This can be read clearly by the kind of questions that the Ministry of Finance sent to the MCC for clarification. Of the nine questions asked, most related to U.S. intentions. For instance, questions interrogate the basis of U.S claims that its "support under MCC is selfless" or that its interest in Nepal is "not prioritized under military strategy" or Nepal's strategic location. These questions reflect

15 Millennium Challenge Account Nepal, 2023. Available online at: <https://mcanp.org/en/>

16 Poudel, SS (2022). Nepal's MCC debate reflects its flaws in decision-making. *The Diplomat*. Available online at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/nepals-mcc-debate-reflects-flaws-in-its-decision-making/>

17 Poudel, SS (2022). What lies behind Prachanda's volte face on Nepal's ratification of the MCC. *The Diplomat*. Available online at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/what-lies-behind-prachandas-volte-face-on-nepals-ratification-of-the-millennium-challenge-compact/>

the ministry's thoughts and mirror the public debate. Clearly, Nepali policymakers had no confidence that they negotiated in good faith and understood the US intentions when signing the agreement, nor do they have any confidence in their own ability to decipher the US intentions, thus the need to rely on American 'assurance' that the MCC is not part of the Indo-Pacific strategy or that it is self-less. Besides, the focus on policymaking was not on Nepal's ability to manage and minimize the potential implications of the US engagement. The saga reflected Nepal's inferiority complex and a lack of belief in its own decision-making.

It is safer to assume that even grants come with strings attached. The relentless focus on the U.S. intentions can be a result of the inferiority complex that Nepali decision-makers have. Some discount the agency of Nepal and argue that the superpower will get what it wants; therefore, it is better to focus on their intentions. Others believe that Nepali institutions are very weak; therefore, Nepalis cannot trust their own institutions to allay fears of American meddling, and hence need to seek assurance from the

U.S. itself. The debates also showed that the leaders were insecure in bringing the issue up for vote in the parliament and trust the sovereign parliament to make the right decision. This reflected the institutional weakness of every institution involved.

Such weakness lies with the political parties and the bureaucracy. Since 2008, Nepal has seen fragile coalitions. Therefore, keeping a grip on power has sucked the energy of all the prime ministers. There has been almost a government every year since the 1990s. Besides, Nepal's foreign policy establishment lacks the continuity in policy formulation and implementation due to frequent changes in government and leadership. Another challenge is the lack of capacity and expertise among government officials responsible for foreign policy. This has hindered the country's ability to effectively navigate complex international issues and engage in strategic partnerships with other nations.

This is reflected in Nepal's inability to implement agreements with foreign countries. Nepal's political leaders have sold the idea of a trans-Himalayan road/rail network for decades now. They have touted the connectivity with the Northern neighbor as the way to end Nepal's India-lockedness¹⁸. Accordingly, Nepal signed the Belt and Road Initiative

18 Poudel, SS, 2023. With China's help, Nepal chips away at its India lockedness. The Diplomat. Available online at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/12/with-chinas->

(BRI) agreement with China in 2017. However, not a single project under the BRI has been concretely implemented despite the concern of every visiting Chinese delegation to Nepal.

This is not to suggest that the Nepali foreign policy establishment has been toothless. When there is national cohesion on a specific agenda, it has been able to thwart major regional powers. In 2019, India released a new map that included the disputed Lipulekh-Limpiadhura-Kalapani region as part of its own territory, further escalating tensions between the two countries. Nepal responded by issuing a statement rejecting the Indian map and calling for a dialogue to resolve the dispute. In June 2020, Nepal's parliament passed a constitutional amendment that officially included the disputed region in Nepal's map. This move was seen as a significant escalation of the territorial dispute and drew strong criticism from India. Despite India's pressures, Nepal remained steadfast in its claims. Though Nepal has not taken any further activities to lay the claim on ground, and the area remains under the 'de facto' Indian control, the episode shows that Nepal can stand up for its national interests and territorial integrity when there is political consensus among the establishment.

Global order and Nepal

Nepal is a small power situated between two large neighbors with whom it shares deep historical, cultural, and economic ties. The competition between India and China for regional dominance has created a complex environment for Nepal, forcing it to navigate carefully between the two powers. Besides, Nepal also had to contend with 'external' powers, and their influence.

Nepal had to manage regional and global power balance at the same time, though the regional power balance has larger impact on Nepali foreign policy. In the immediate aftermath of Nepal's democratization, the US was the first to engage Nepal via aid. However, the Soviet Union soon followed suit. Nepal engaged with both the superpowers without leaning one way or the other. She also developed relations with the rest of global powers to diversify her diplomatic and strategic interests. Neither of the superpowers had any 'direct' interest in Nepal during the Cold War¹⁹. South Asia was hardly of primary interest to them. However, given

[help-nepal-chips-away-at-its-india-lockedness/](#)

19 McMahon, R. J. (1994). *The cold war on the periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan*. Columbia University Press.

Nepal's strategic position, both the superpowers wanted to maintain their presence in Nepal. The American engagement in Nepal ebbed and flowed depending upon its relations with China²⁰. After the rapprochement with China in the 1970s, its engagement, if measured in terms of aid, declined significantly.

The Sino-American cooperation and competition continues to have a significant impact on Nepal in the post-Cold War era²¹. As they compete for economic dominance, this has resulted in a trade war and the imposition of tariffs, which has had an impact on the global economy. Additionally, the two countries have differing ideologies and approaches to governance, which has led to tensions in areas such as human rights, cyber security, and territorial disputes²². This has created a divide in the international community, with countries being forced to choose sides or navigate between the two superpowers. The competition has also had a significant impact on global supply chains, with many companies rethinking their reliance on China and the US.

The evolving global order, caused by rising China (and India in recent decades), affects Nepal in two ways. First, the cooperation and competition between the US and China largely sets up the global agenda²³. They are dominant in the international institutions and creating norms. For instance, the rise of China has challenged the 'universality' of the 'Washington Consensus'²⁴ or Western understanding of human rights. Meanwhile, the cooperation between China and the US is critical towards reaching any substantive progress in mitigating climate change²⁵. In this context, the relations between them shape the global debate.

20 Poudyal, B. (2022). Why Nepal Matters in the Geopolitical Chessboard. *Unity Journal*, 3(01), 13-26.

21 KC, K. (2023). Changes in global power relations and Nepal. *The Annapurna Express*. Retrieved from: <https://theannapurnaexpress.com/news/changes-in-global-power-relations-and-nepal-39011>

22 Fels, E. (2017). *Shifting power in Asia-Pacific?: The rise of China, Sino-US competition and regional middle power allegiance* (pp. 225-340). Cham: Springer.

23 Allen, S. H., & Yuen, A. (2022). *Bargaining in the UN Security Council: Setting the Global Agenda*. Oxford University Press.

24 Jisi, W. (2021). The Plot against China?: How Beijing Sees the New Washington Consensus. *Foreign Aff.*, 100

25 Lianhe, W. (2015). Sino-US Cooperation on Climate Change. *China Int'l Stud.*, 50, 96.

Second, it has an effect on the regional dynamics. China's rise has challenged the South Asian regional order, where India was the de facto hegemon. China's economic and strategic engagement in India's

Neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan has changed the South Asian dynamics altogether²⁶. China has substantially increased its economic engagement and investment in the region, investing in some strategic assets such as the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka and Gwadar Port in Pakistan. It has invested heavily in infrastructure projects and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the largest project under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The changed regional dynamics has an impact in Nepal.

At the same time, the global competition, which some have even called a new 'Cold War', between China and the US has also affected Nepal's security policy²⁷. However, in recent years, China has increased its involvement in Nepal's economy and infrastructure development through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while the US has been increasing its engagement with Nepal through development assistance and strategic partnerships.

The competition between China and the US in Nepal can have both positive and negative implications for Nepali foreign policy. On the one hand, increased competition between these two global powers can provide Nepal with greater opportunities for economic growth and development. For instance, China's BRI initiative could help Nepal develop its infrastructure, which could in turn boost economic growth.

Nepal has already seen the direct impact of the competition. Last year, Nepal had to reject the State Partnership Program (SPP) fearing that the disaster mitigation program between the Nepal Army and the State Guard of Ohio state of the US would antagonize China²⁸. At the same time, Nepal also refused to participate in the Global Security Initiative, a Beijing-led security forum. President Bidhya Devi Bhandari participated

26 Chung, C. P. (2018). What are the strategic and economic implications for South Asia of China's Maritime Silk Road initiative?. *The Pacific Review*, 31(3), 315-332.

27 Koirala, K. R. (2020). Managing national security interests amidst military major powers' military engagements. *Unity Journal*, 1, 66-73. <https://doi.org/10.3126/unityj.v1i0.35696>

28 Balachandran, K, 2022. Nepal backs away from the US State Partnership Program. *The Diplomat*. Available online at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/epal-backs-away-from-us-state-partnership-program/>

in the forum despite the government's reservation²⁹. It sent the wrong message to Beijing and the world because of the conflicting signals sent by different government agencies.

Similarly, the US has been providing development assistance to Nepal, which could help support Nepal's development priorities. On the other hand, increased competition between China and the US in Nepal could also create challenges for Nepali foreign policy. For example, Nepal may face pressure to choose sides in the competition between these two powers. This could lead to a situation where Nepal is forced to choose between its historical ties with India and its growing relationship with China.

Similarly, increased competition between China and the US could lead to increased instability in the region, which could have negative implications for Nepal's security. In order to navigate this complex geopolitical environment, Nepal will need to adopt a pragmatic and balanced foreign policy approach that takes into account its national interests and priorities. This may involve engaging with both China and the US in a manner that promotes economic growth and development while safeguarding Nepal's sovereignty and security interests.

The regional order, defined by Sino-Indian competition, too has an impact in Nepal. India and China are two civilizational powers with both on the path to be major global powers. The Nehruvian doctrine, whereby New Delhi considers Nepal a buffer zone between India and China, and considers Nepal within Indian sphere of influence, still dominate the Indian foreign policy establishment in the South Block in New Delhi. China had been tacit, and engaged with Nepal at a much smaller scale compared to Nepal. However, it has changed in recent decades.

With China's 'look west' policy, devised to bring development to its impoverished inland, it is increasingly engaged in Nepal. One of the key drivers of this engagement has been China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive infrastructure project aimed at enhancing connectivity and trade between China and other countries. Nepal is a key part of this initiative, with China investing heavily in projects such as the construction of highways, railways, and hydropower plants³⁰. In

29 The Kathmandu Post. Bhandari attending Beijing's GSI event after foreign ministry's bungle. Available online at: <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2022/09/21/bhandari-attending-beijing-s-gsi-event-after-foreign-ministry-s-bungle>

30 Adhikari, M., & Ma, Z. (2022). The Belt and Road Initiative as a Gateway to the

addition to the BRI, China³¹ has also increased its political engagement with Nepal. In 2017, Nepal signed a memorandum of understanding with China to participate in the BRI, and in 2018, the two countries signed a transit agreement allowing Nepal to use Chinese ports and roads for international trade. China has consistently been the biggest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nepal in recent times³².

China has also increased its political engagement. High-level visits, both at government-to-government and party-to-party, between Beijing and Kathmandu have become thicker and at a higher level. Beijing largely refrained from engaging in domestic politics overtly, but it changed in recent times. China has traditionally had close ties with the communist parties in Nepal, and there were reports that Chinese officials were involved in negotiations to bring the two parties together in 2018. Chinese officials reportedly met with leaders from both parties, and there were allegations that China was exerting pressure to facilitate the merger. Even when unified Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) was on the verge of split, China sent a high-level delegation to keep the communist unity intact. Such overt interference by Beijing in Nepal's political development is a new phenomenon. It partly reflects increased Chinese stake in Nepal's political development as its economic engagement grows, but it also reflects an emboldened Beijing not hesitant to pull its weight.

China also pulled its weight in response to the MCC grant, a USD 500 million grant by the US for infrastructure development. It argued that the MCC was part of broader American strategy to increase its strategic presence in South Asia. It called the MCC a 'Pandora's box' and insinuated that the US was coercing Nepal to ratify the deal³³. Beijing's attempt at keeping the Communist parties together and MCC unratified, but they clearly point to a more 'active' role for Beijing in Kathmandu.

Therefore, owing to the global and regional order, Nepal's challenge can be summarized in the following areas:

Sea for Land-Locked Countries: With Reference to Nepal. SAGE Open, 12(1).

31 Lamichhane, D. P. (2023). American Engagement with Nepal: Concerns of China and India. *Unity Journal*, 4(01), 280-301.

32 Choudhury, R. N. (2023). Chinese Investment in Nepal: Capturing the Himalayan Hills. In *Mapping Chinese Investment in South Asia* (pp. 121-144). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

33 The Global Times (2022). How can US 'gift' to Nepal be delivered by ultimatum, asks Chinese FM. Retrieved online from: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202202/1253002.shtml>

1. **Balancing act:** Nepal needs to maintain a balance between India and China to avoid getting caught up in their power struggles. Nepali foreign policy has traditionally favored India due to their close historical, cultural, and economic ties. However, Nepal has been increasingly engaging with China in recent years, which has created concerns in India. As a result, Nepal needs to navigate carefully between these two powers and maintain a delicate balance to safeguard its sovereignty and interests.
2. **Economic implications:** China has been investing heavily in infrastructure projects in Nepal, including the construction of roads, airports, and hydropower plants. However, India has been traditionally Nepal's largest trading partner and source of remittances. Nepal needs to balance its economic ties with both India and China to maximize the benefits and avoid being overly dependent on either country.
3. **Geopolitical implications:** Nepal's strategic location between India and China makes it a significant player in the region's geopolitics. India sees Nepal as part of its sphere of influence, while China sees Nepal as an essential partner in its Belt and Road Initiative. Nepal needs to ensure that its foreign policy decisions do not undermine its national security and interests in the face of geopolitical competition between India and China.
4. **Regional implications:** The India-China competition has regional implications that could impact Nepal's foreign policy. For example, the ongoing border dispute between India and China has created tensions in the region, and Nepal has been caught in the middle of the standoff. Nepal needs to navigate carefully to avoid being dragged into any conflicts between these two powers and ensure regional stability.

The reverse logic and cause for concern

Nepali foreign policy-makers, and hence the foreign policy, suffers not from a lack of understanding of the principles, but from the reverse relationship between the domestic and external factors.

In an ideal case, Nepal would clearly identify its interests and engage with external powers in a rational way to achieve those targets. For instance, if Nepal identifies the necessity of foreign aid in improving its infrastructure, then Nepal would reach out to relevant external powers.

Before reaching out, Nepal would carry due diligence about the benefits of the project and ensure that it is economically viable. It will also make the process 'transparent' so that any external actor gets a similar deal and understands Nepal's rationale. It would help Nepal maintain its grip on foreign influence.

However, Nepali leaders/policymakers have often used foreign powers as tools to hold onto power or gain power domestically or, at the worst, serve their personal interest. It makes them more beholden to foreign powers, and hence obscures their ability to make the best decision on behalf of national interest.

Therefore, it is time that Nepali policymakers take matters in their own hands. The first way to do that is enhance domestic unity in matters of foreign and security policy. That would require some sacrifice of personal/party interests from the leaders. The future of Nepali foreign policy rests on whether the leaders are willing to make such sacrifice.

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IS CYBER DIPLOMACY ESSENTIAL IN THE PRESENT PERSPECTIVE?

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Abstract:

It is now obvious that cyber space is the last frontier of man's research and relevant activities to empirically learn about its multi-dimensionality and its immensely huge prospect. The quest is certainly increasing each passing day. The meteoric development of information technology together with scientific development has tremendously helped to push ahead its advance in recent decades, and in particular, the advanced and developed countries of the world have steadily made their efforts in carrying out their preferred activities and to know about what lies in the future for humanity on the earth. They have, at their disposal, human resources, capital resources, and material resources with compatible managerial skills to move on toward what they have projected as their goals for their countries and citizens. As cyber space has drawn the attention of the people around the world, it has emerged as the common concern of humanity. In reality, it has touched upon human activities mainly related with scientific, technological and socio-economic domains. Naturally, diplomatic activities that regulate and act on state-to-state and government-to government relations could not remain exempt, and nor touched upon as human security, and social and economic security are closely linked together. The human security and human welfare are closely related with activities in the cyber space. As a consequence, diplomacy connected with the cyber space has now come up as an unavoidable activity, not alone in technologically advanced countries but even in all the countries of the world as humans have to live and work in their respective territorial domains. Cyber space is the common concern of all the mankind. Hence, a pressing need for cyber diplomacy

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is essentially felt to have its own traction that can ensure amicable and friendly relations among all independent and sovereign countries of the world. A globally acceptable convention and practice of cyber diplomacy is also required to regulate its handlings and relevant activities. This piece tries to show how cyber diplomacy has come to occupy an iconic status in diplomatic ventures worldwide with its importance growing rapidly as pushed by information technology.

Keywords: *Cyber space; Cyber activity; Cyber research; Cyber diplomacy; Cyber security.*

Introduction:

The consequential contribution of the meteoric development of information technology (IT) to the diplomatic art and practice is unmistakably the emergence of cyber diplomacy in recent decades. The term has gained its own currency and significance, and made its own traction in the diplomatic dealings across the globe. For the people of the ancient Greece, it means an art of governing a vessel in the sea induced and driven by the techniques and strategies of information governance. Currently, how this branch of diplomacy has come to be connected with the cyber space and cybernation to be operated by cyberneticians as guided by responsible diplomatic authorities as well as by private and non-state actors alike.

Although the term has been in use both in the state and non-state action areas, it has yet to gain its recognized own currency along with, which can be formulated either through the world body like the United Nations (UN) or all tech-advanced countries with a purpose to make it acceptable for and embraced by the global community. Doubtless, the term is inseparably linked with sensitive concerns like cyber security, cyber-crime and cyber espionage as well as cyber-hacking on one hand, and on the other, it is also related to national economies, scientific researches, human rights and human welfare as well as a host of national interests of the global society.

The fast-paced development of the internet and cyber-relevant technologies constitutes one of the pivotal foreign policy and diplomacy actions in these early decades of the 21st century. The potential benefits of cyber space seem numerous and boundless. In the meantime, technical threats and technical sabotages in cyber space posed by state and non-state actors have considerably increased in their sophistication, and

dimension and volume simultaneously.

In our time, scientific and technological advance together with research and development in the sphere of cyber space has largely contributed to better understanding in its field. While viewing the current activities with an eye to its future development, its march toward the infinity of its contributions can ensure as much benefits as its increasing utility could provide for.

Its notable development

Man's inquisitiveness to learn about cyber space has dramatically increased when the erstwhile Soviet Union launched the world's first space-craft Sputnik in 1957 and successfully put its first human Gagarin in orbital space flight in April 1961. Finally, Neil Armstrong, the first American astronaut put his legs on the moon in July 1969 ever first in the human recorded history. Those events have tremendously raised the strong competition in the space flight race between the United States and the then Soviet Union, which had remarkably induced research activities in the space resulting in the current shape of space race as well as culminating in the application of cyber space diplomacy and its concomitant actions.

It is well-known that the space is the last frontier of human exploration and human venture with the preparedness and tech- savvy available at the disposal of advanced and developed countries with fierce competition to win over the targeted rival against each other. Its resultant effects could affect international relations with likely repercussions in the relationships between influential and powerful countries. In turn, that would prevail over the international community involving even smaller and weaker countries. Hence a compelling need for cyber diplomacy is inherently felt all over the world, both advanced and less advanced included, depending on their technological capability and willingness to forge ahead in the targeted direction of their choice with apparent importance attached to the alliance of their preferential priority.

The current global situation demands that super and major powers should envisage cyber diplomacy as an inherent opportunity to provide another strategic platform for global connectivity. That is, however, easier said than done in actuality as the world today is too divisive with intense conflicts of national interests gaining ground conspicuously. The Russia-Ukraine war since February 2022 has amply demonstrated the emerging

trend-setting in the context of narrower national interests and flaunting their prowess in the external dealings with priority significantly attached to the domestic needs both economic as well as strategic interests primarily preferred by respective governing clique at the helm of the state power.

In recent time, experts of diplomatic practice with a constructive bent of mind are in search of art and tools to find strategic and situation-compatible approach to get started with the acceptable traction in both maintaining strategic balance of relationships in existing troublesome dealings among the states in conflict of national interests. However, it must be stated that no easy way of finding solution to problem / problems existing between nations, and more so, in case of those states and governments whose borders are closely linked with each other. The question of borders along with the border dwelling peoples has come up as the unavoidable concern of contention between states. More often, the conflict situation emerges where there appears the greed for valuable natural resources, which has now been playing out as primary concern for big and non-amenable difference between nation states. This undesirable trend-setting has to be arrested if the world is to be made a live-able place for humans who aspire for the march toward continued progress and prosperity. Considering the knowledge obtained by scientists and experts the planet of Mars is most likely to become habitable for humans as the continued exploration and deeper research done by the United States and China in most recent years demonstrate that the planet Mars may become habitable in the years to come. However, that will not happen in the near future.

The relentless exploitation of natural resources both above and beneath the template of the earth has its devastating impact on our planet coupled with climate change effects all around. Humans both being rational as well as caring social beings must see the futuristic prospects in their proper perspectives. Space being the last resort for human activities together with the prospective for immense future promises can ensure for the mankind to move forward for its befitting survival and undisturbed journey in several eons to come. The progress and prosperity achieved through the ingenuity and human effort since the early 19th century to date have changed the face of the earth for betterment of human well-being. Of course, the path to the unprecedented development is not without its adverse impact as well. Humans have to become more sensible and rational if any achievements have to be made by walking through the

charted and uncharted trajectory that can encourage and induce diplomacy primarily intended to bring about its use in channeling through the cyber space that would enable both state and non-state actors to adopt and adapt upcoming cyber diplomacy. Its importance now looks impressive and its utility pervasive. Its future is shining and in the meantime, promising to render useful services to all the countries and peoples of the world with each moment around the year.

Defining cyber diplomacy

To move on for clearer understanding of this newly emerging cyber diplomacy, it would be useful to ponder over some of its definitions as offered by some well known experts. It would be pertinent here to quote here some of them, which run: “Cyber diplomacy is broadly defined as the use of diplomatic tools and initiatives to achieve a state’s national interests in cyberspace that are commonly crystallized in the national security strategies (Manantan 2020). “Cyber diplomacy can be defined as diplomacy in the cyber domain or in other words, the use of diplomatic resources and the performance of diplomatic functions to secure national interest with regard to the cyberspace. Such interests are generally identified in national cyberspace or cyber security strategies” (expert). Some more definitions need to be cited: “Cyber diplomacy can be defined as diplomacy in the cyber domain or, in other words, the use of diplomatic resources and the performance of diplomatic functions to secure national interests are generally identified in national cyberspace or cyber security strategies?” (Christian 2019). Finally it is appropriate to quote one more definition. It states; “Cyber diplomacy is defined as the use of diplomatic techniques and the performance of diplomatic tasks by governments, organizations or individuals in cyberspace to protect their interests” (Ziegler, 2023). All definitions quoted in the foregoing lines point out the most sacrosanct duty of serving and promoting the national interests of each state. The only difference is that cyber diplomacy is carried on and activated through cyberspace unlike under the conventional diplomacy performed through the offices based on political capitals. However, cyber diplomacy is applied in all or in part by assigned diplomats, meeting either in bilateral forums or in multilateral forums. Besides all that, diplomats also interact with various non-state actors, such as executive bosses of the internet companies, technology entrepreneurs, civil society organizations etc. This new stream of diplomacy requires an additional skill of handling necessary affairs of diplomatic domain with adequate training on internet and information technology. Efficient

handling is a 'must' to effectively conduct cyber diplomacy. If not, it may bring chaos and confusions. Such probable situations are not liked by anyone, nor could that enable anybody to contribute anything concrete. Strategic management donned by well-trained personnel and supplied with adequate resources is indeed the primary situation that can create an environment for successful performance through cyber diplomacy which is being fast pushed by the rapid development of information technology now. The practical use of cyber diplomacy has now emerged as one of emerging factors in the conduct of the ultramodern diplomatic businesses that has come to stay as an irreversible trend.

Main functions of cyber diplomacy

In recent decades, the rapid development of information technology and internet has come to contribute an integral part of the foreign policy formulation and its execution. In fact, cyber diplomacy is the pinnacle of such fast development of diplomatic business. It is, therefore, very important to have a closer look at main functions of cyber diplomacy. Let us see what an expert has enumerated following functions (Painter, 2018) as enunciated by him:

1. Building strategic partnerships and engaging multilaterally
2. Enhancing cooperation, collective action, incident response and capacity building
3. Advancing strategic policy and building consensus for global cyber stability
4. Deterrence
5. Mainstreaming cyber issues in the development process

Another expert on the subject describes the following functions (Ziegler, 2023):

- A. The formation of dialogue and communication between state and non-state actors
- B. The collective response to cyber threats
- C. The non-proliferation of cyber arms
- D. The advancement of national interests in cyber space through diplomacy and cyber security policies

E. The protection of human rights in cyber space

F. The development international cyber laws

From above two sets of functions as offered by the two experts, we can conclude that multilateral and global cooperations stand as an essential ingredient to proceed toward the actual conduct of cyber diplomacy. Only on that condition, it can work properly without any hitch.

No doubt, cyber diplomacy is emerging fast. It has now appeared unstoppable in the past one and half a decade i.e. since 2007. However, the development has also faced some challenges that need to be practically met for its normal operation. An expert on the emerging aspect of challenges has enumerated following challenges (Ziegler, 2023)

- The reluctance of states to participate in cyber diplomacy
- The rapid growth of cyber technology
- Cyber diplomacy creates a political divide among states.
- Questioning the legitimacy of international law
- Cyber diplomacy preserves the interest of non-state actors

The rapid evolution of cyber technology has indeed brought in awkward situation of confusion and chaos in the present global and international order, because it has not yet assumed globally recognized standard, nor enacted rules to be followed by the international community. In the absence of such accepted standards and rules, misunderstanding and wrong communication may naturally take place. Under such circumstances, undesirable disadvantages and disruptions might appear to the detriment of national and global interests of various dimensions. The challenges coming out of this latest technology of the cyber space, therefore, need to be primarily grasped and clearly understood to put it in an agreed array.

The fast-paced development of relevant technology closely related to the cyber space has indeed colonized the entirety of the planet earth, never seen before its advent under the development of any civilization around the globe. It is, indeed, the gift of great ingenuity of humans and material facilities available mostly in the economically advanced and technologically better off countries.

Cyber security threats

Often, the user faces security threats while in work at the public or private place. The user, whether be an individual or group or state is required to understand and bear responsibility for non-disrupting works. He may face threats like cyber hacking, cyber theft, cyber disclosure, cyber disruption or any other disturbance etc. To work in an efficient manner to obtain desired outcome, the user must understand cyber threats and vulnerabilities posed by the negative mindset and disruptive behavior of individual or state actor. Threats are several in number, but some experts have identified six sorts of them (cyber security best practices, 2021), which are enumerated below:

1. Phishing – A malicious individual or organization may ‘fish’ for information by using communication, such as emails, to try and gain login credentials or other sensitive information
2. Malware – Malicious software designed to perform an attack on the device or server that down loads or runs it.
3. Ransome-ware – This is a type of malware that essentially looks down a victim’s files, encrypting them so they cannot be assessed.
4. MITM- when expanded this explains a man-in-the middle (MITM) attack is when an attacker establishes a position between the sender of a message or information, and the recipient, allowing them to intercept any correspondence.
5. Trojan – Trojan viruses are other forms of malware
6. DDOS attacks- A denial of service distributed denial of service attack (DDOS) occurs when a handler uses multiple devices (often numbering in the thousands) and uses them to overload target system.

Additionally, the threat of cyber security in general may also come under various forms of attack, for example, network security attacks, wireless security attack malware attack, social engineering attack depending on the choice of attack.

The user, whether individual, group or organization needs to realize that no system is perfect or hundred percent vulnerability-free or “hacker proof” The threat committer may have enough time, necessary resources and sufficient manpower to commit an attack. He will find chance or chances to commit his misdeed with the way he finds easy.

Knowing well in advance some potential threats to the cyber security, group or organization maintains and monitors the defenses of a network and its system while other group or organization of evil doers stimulates real attack in an attempt to break into system either externally or internally. As a consequence, companies gain a better understanding of various types of threats that exist to pose toward their functioning system. In reality, the most robust and effective security system will have a continuous and real-time level of defenses such as security operation centre (SOC) managed detection and response (MDR) or active threat.

Hunting and analysis

It is to be noted that threat groups exist everywhere. Cyber attacks happen in all shapes and sizes from deploying an application specific attack against a data base server, posing disruptions and damage even at the time when it is most needed for the active performance of cyber diplomacy. One notable quote from the well-known diplomat of the United States states: “Serious study on the problem from the information technology is needed to face off with challenges originating from this fast and uncontrollable development. Nation-states could not be blamed for this particular development as even a tiny group of talented people could emerge effective imposing serious threat” (Haass, 2017)

This newly emerged practice of cyber diplomacy is considered as strategically central to the use of “global common” as no powerful single or a group of the powerful would not be capable enough to protect various segments of national interests ranging from highly secretive security interest, economic interest to the maintenance of privacy and freedom of citizens. Unified approach and strategy sustained by trust and confidentiality of each other is essential.

One important quote will further clarify: “To respond to cross national cyber attacks” and harmful acts, for example, states must extend cooperation in “information sharing evidence collection and criminal persecution of attack perpetrators”. In fact no state can single-handedly protect itself against cyber threats”. (Khabbaz, 2021)

Notwithstanding encountered as well as presumed threats, the current application and conduct of cyber diplomacy is indeed on the increase on the global scale. Some global efforts could be cited. In 2004, the “UN General Assembly instituted the UN Group of Government Experts on Development in the Field of Information and Telecommunication in the

Context of International Security (UNGGE)”. In its report made public in July 2015, the adoption of international cyber norms and international cooperation and communications technology (ICTS) were discussed. But UNGGE negotiations met failure during the June 2017 session of the group.

In September 2019, 26 countries issued a joint statement at the UNGA on the norms of cyberspace. The signatories in this statement included the United States and European countries. No other countries seemed willing to become signatories as their national interests are hardly likely to be met by provisions contained in the statement. Non signatories happened to be most countries of Asia, African and Latin America which are either at the developing status or the least developed ones, especially in the field of cyber related technology and its relevant branches of utility. All that occurred in the pre pandemic years could not make any breakthrough on any of remarkable successes but they made some footprints in the realm of preventing cyber threats to ensure protection from cyber threats.

With the unprecedented development of information technology, have come various threats before the user whether he be an individual or group or the state organization as discussed above. Information technology has now become an integral part of the human life around the globe. Its benefits are abuzz with its growing importance. Hence, experts have also developed protectionist measures. One of well-known experts, Mathieu Chevalier of Genetec Inc. of Canada has developed at least 5 steps to help the user / users for the safe handling of IT and its relevant uses. He has offered 5 steps as listed below.

1. Learn how to detect a potential social engineering attacks
This first step requires from handlers of computer system their personal credential, financial information and personal information along with their links and files as well as their suspicious phone calls.
2. Educate users and devices
Refraining from using third party applications that have not been approved by the IT department is also a key factor.
3. Implement multi-factor authentication and password management
Password management policies and multi-factor authentication (MFA) are essential when it comes to securing devices. This is crucially important to protect cyber security.
4. Keep up with the best software and hardware practices

Software and hardware physical security with best practices help to ensure that the user is doing all he can to secure his organization. And products updates often provide critical fixes for new found vulnerability.

5. Choose the right technology

Selecting the right technology is pivotal to a strong cyber security, as operating with transparency and maintaining clear and correct communication around vulnerabilities allows the user's organization to create an optimal cyber security strategy.

Cyber security best practice is an endless process while it begins at on-boarding, both new and existing employees require constant reminders and updates on the steps that they must take, every day to protect the organization against an evolving numbers of cyber threats.

In addition to the above 5 steps, another expert David Bianco has offered 10 ways to protect cyber security from different systems and quarters. They are as follows:

1. Security policy first
2. Don't neglect physical security
3. Screen new hires
4. Use strong authentication
5. Secure desktops
6. Segment LANs
7. Plug information leaks
8. Investigate anomalous activities
9. Refocus perimeter tools and strategies
10. Monitor for misuse.

Generally considering, the organization can safely employ these as a matter of policy for all employees, using information technology at the computer system.

In the meantime, it is essential to keep the computer system and applications updated. There is also a need to avoid links, programs, devices and attachments from unknown sources and unfamiliar visitors.

Need for training of cyber security

Values and norms of practical trainings assume greater importance for normal and smooth functioning of the computer system. Timely and

appropriate trainings for employees would lie at the root of minimizing security threats. Good trainings imparted to employees would adequately pay off to the organization. Experts suggest the following topics for trainings to be imparted to employees who diligently work for the organization.

1. Cyber security operations
2. Cyber security foundations
3. Start building the employees career in cyber defense
4. Digital security training
5. Digital security design and development
6. Network defense management
7. Introduction to cyber security
8. Introduction to cyber security for teachers

It needs not be much emphasized that everyone using the computer system for cyber diplomacy can benefit from some basic cyber security training and with a range of micro-credentials, courses, and expert tack, the user can soon start mastering this crucial skill. The trainings are basic requirements that would confer benefits and required skills on both the organization and its employees institutionally and individually.

The 21st century has both profusely and profoundly witnessed an extensive application of information technology in the areas of both individual and national life with its unprecedented development. It has entrenched almost all shades and dimensions of human life in an undeniable way. Now there arises no question of going back from its ever expanding application. Indeed, it has gained deeper and wider significance in human life. It is also expected that its meteoric progress at the moment would certainly keep transforming the shape of the world in not too distant a future.

Nepal's status in the perspective of cyber diplomacy

In general, people keenly interested in cyber diplomacy have rarely heard about Nepal's cyber diplomacy in action. It is not yet even in its infancy in Nepal. But the pressing need for it is being felt as cybercrimes and cyber espionages, cyber thefts etc. are reportedly on the increase. To be on the safe side, decision making authorities need to be carefully circumspect and ever vigilant in initiating reliable steps to put cyber diplomacy on its track. Various media reports have it that Nepal has in the past enacted the Electronic Transactions Act 2006, Nepal Information

and Communication Policy 2015, Digital Nepal Framework 2019 and so on. All those Acts and relevant regulations might become an embryo of cyber diplomacy. Hence, forward looking with strategic acts and actions to place Nepal in the interface of fast accelerating cyber diplomacy across the globe would be helpful to put it on track. The Kathmandu Post of July 3, 2021 in its column described that Nepal has moved up to the 49th position in the global cyber security in 2020 from the 106th slot in the 2018 edition, showing that its commitment to cyber security has increased, according to the International Communication Union (ITU). According to ITU, Nepal scored 44.99 out of 100 points among 182 countries of the world. It was placed 17th among 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

Globally, the United States topped the chart scoring 100 points, followed by the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia with 99.54 points each. In South Asia, India topped the list in the global cyber security index scoring 97.5,

Nepali media has it that the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology had prepared a draft National Cyber Security Policy 2021 to control and minimize cyber attacks in information technology and provide security from possible future attacks. As of mid-May (2021) 90.56 percent of the population of Nepal had access to the internet. The number of internet users in the country stand at 27.37 million.

On May 2, 2023, the incumbent Minister for Communication and Information Technology of Nepal had expressed the commitment of the government for cyber and data security on the occasion of the National ICT Day, during which the Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal had emphasized the need to provide reliable and equitable access to IT to ensure inclusive prosperity (Rising Nepal, 2023)

Succinct discussions above have shed some light on the cyber realm and cyber activity in general. However, the main concern here is the conduct of cyber diplomacy that has emerged to occupy the position of compatible and comfortable process of the recent adoption of diplomatic activities., To walk on fairly with the embrace of the recent practical trend, there is a need to put up essential mechanism equipped with meticulously trained and highly skilled manpower. Also, no need to mention here that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal together with the close cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology as well as other relevant Ministries of the Government could proceed to put in place the launching of cyber diplomacy that has

been embraced as a reliable process of handling diplomatic affairs by advanced countries of the world and big power of our South Asian region alike. Certainly, cyber diplomacy has conferred benefits and facilities on its users, which have been proved useful even during the recent complex diplomatic dealings, because the conduct of cyber diplomacy is now appearing safe with possible threats largely removed from the scene, but not yet eliminated completely. Threats still exist from the individual, group or even state actor.

It may be, however, noted carefully that for the safe and smooth handlings of cyber diplomacy, need for the installation of good hardwares and soft- wares of internationally branded companies are very essential. And employees handling those wares should be honest and dedicated with the sense of and devotion to the sincere duty toward the institution which has employed them in view of serious challenges and imminent threats as highlighted in the foregoing lines. Nepal must not lag behind in conducting cyber diplomacy as it is being adopted and adapted by prominent countries of the world. The feeling and attitude of less developed status need not be a barrier. Forward Nepal must to stand in the interface with the other countries of the global community.

Experts of cyber diplomacy recommend to any user institution to employ reliable averters who are well trained on the subject to control and prevent any disturbance and disruption frequently committed by saboteurs, hackers, wrong-doers, etc. No need to worry, if wares and devices were installed in a technically sound way by meeting accepted international standards and if users perform their duty with sincerity and devotion

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DILEMMAS, DEBATES, AND DEVELOPMENT OF BRI IN THE HIMALAYAN NATION: A NEPALI PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Nepal-China-India relations from BRI perspective is complex. Nepal joined the BRI in 2017 whereas India has not joined officially yet. But India is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) which generally provides loans to the countries along the BRI route. Though Nepal is a part of BRI, the projects signed under the BRI are still in dilemma due to the diverse views from Nepali and Chinese sides. Against this backdrop, this paper is focused on assessing the BRI relations with Nepal and India. Moreover, the paper has assessed why India has not joined BRI and why Nepal could not implement the BRI projects even after five years of the BRI agreement. In doing so, the paper is basically descriptive under the qualitative method and no theory testing approach is adopted due to the nature of the topic of the paper. The paper concludes that Nepal should revisit its approaches and policies to effectively conduct BRI diplomacy for the sake of national pride and benefits even in Nepal-China-India complex BRI relations.

Key Words: *Belt and Road Initiatives, Sino-Indian Relations from the BRI Lens, Nepal-China Relations from BRI Lens, Dilemmas in BRI in Nepal, Diverse Views*

Introduction

A geopolitical theorist, Alfred Mahan, had a Eurasian-centered worldwide perspective, but his emphasis was on maritime power mediating between a two-fold global framework – a Western and an Oriental system (Saran, 2015). Despite this perspective, China has begun the continental-

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maritime geo-strategic realm structured as ‘One Belt One Road’ having the abbreviation OBOR and later termed Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). Xi announced One Belt in September 2013 in Kazakhstan and One Road in October 2013 in Indonesia (Chand, 2016). *Materializing this initiative is the core objective of building the “Community of Common Destiny” among countries in South Asia and beyond as envisioned by Xi Jinping (Chand, 2016).* The initiative includes two components – the Silk Road Economic Belt which is the revival of ancient land-based Silk Road trade routes of China to Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. This is also called the “Modern Silk Road.” It consists of a network of rail links, highways, oil and gas pipelines, energy power plants, and other infrastructural development projects stretched from Xian in Central China to crossing Kazakhstan through Central Asia and Russia. In the meantime, the other pass-through Mongolia nevertheless both routes are linked up with the trans-Siberian railway for going to Moscow, Rotterdam, and Venice.

And the next one is the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, also known as the “Maritime Silk Road”. It consists of a network of ports and other coastal infrastructure from China’s eastern seaboard stretching across South East Asia, South Asia, the Gulf, East Africa, and the Mediterranean, forming a loop terminating at Piraeus (Greece), Venice (Italy) and Rotterdam (Netherlands) in Europe and Mombasa (Kenya) in Africa (Saran, 2015). Therefore, it is envisioned that the BRI will connect China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe (Enright, 2016).

Both the Belt and the Road connect more than 148 countries physically, culturally, commercially, and in other ways. Almost 4.4 billion combined populations have belonged to those countries. The Belt and Road will run through the framework of inter-continentals i. e. Asia, Europe, and Africa. This will further connect the vibrant East Asia economic circle ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) at one end and on the other side the developed European economic circle. Overall, the initiatives will encompass countries with huge potential for economic development and prosperity. The BRI is also considered China’s foreign policy toward developing countries (Chand, 2017). This is because; it is assumed that developing countries will be benefitted from BRI for their infrastructural development.

Development

Chinese academics and policymakers interpret that the BRI is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, 2015; MoEA India, 2004). The BRI outlines five major action plans to be accomplished which also can be understood in our context as five different wings of BRI. The overall success of BRI depends upon the effective operation of those action plans. The action plans are Policy Coordination, Facility Connectivity, Unimpeded Trade, Financial Integration, and People-to-People Bonds (Chand, 2017).

Policy coordination means frequent diplomatic communications among the participant states along with diplomatic and foreign policy agendas among all the countries which are located along the route of BRI. Similarly, since the central part of the BRI is the infrastructural development, facility connectivity comes after the policy coordination. It refers to the key projects related to infrastructural developments like railway links, highways, gas pipelines, ports, energy plants, airports, etc which are the bedrock of the development (Bhandari, 2017). To achieve the objective of facility connectivity, financial institutions for investment are inevitable. The unimpeded trade and financial integration are related to those institutions to be established which creates the ample fund to invest. It may generate impressive work of institution building like the Silk Route Fund (SRF), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), etc. among all the countries along the BRI (Du, 2016, p. 5). The fifth aspect is the people-to-people bond. The destination of the BRI is the community of common destiny which imagines the enjoyment of all humankind worldwide as claimed by Chinese scholars and think tanks. People-to-people bond further brings the situation of intercourse and interaction among the people of all countries along the route in spite of having cultural disparity among them. Thus, the BRI has five different major action plans as above which cannot be separated from each other.

Debates

China's India policy seems just the opposite of the offensive and defensive realist foreign policy approach from the BRI perspective. The BRI has formed a development strategy that focuses on economic integration as well as cooperation among all the countries primarily in the Eurasian continent. It seems that the BRI also reflects China's emerging need to

export products and commodities of overcapacity such as manufactured steel, to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and beyond (Caixin Online, 2014). A document entitled “Visions and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” which was issued by the National Development and Reform Commission on March 28, 2015, outlined the cooperation mechanisms and the areas of cooperation regarding the BRI. According to the conceptual framework, the Belt and Road aim to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa along the following five routes: (1) Linking China to Europe through Central Asia and Russia, (2) Connecting China with the Middle East through Central Asia, (3) Bringing together China and Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, meanwhile, focuses on using Chinese coastal ports, (4) Link China with Europe through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, (5) Connect China with the South Pacific Ocean through the South China Sea.

The BRI relates six international economic corridors for vibrant cooperation among a number of countries in multi-region and sub-region. The corridors have been identified as: a) The New Eurasia Land Bridge, b) China-Mongolia-Russia, c) China-Central Asia-West Asia, d) China-Indochina Peninsula, e) China-Pakistan, and f) Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (HKTDC, 2016). Thus, BRI includes five major routes and six major corridors. The seventh economic corridor has also been added to it i.e. Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network which is related to the connectivity between Nepal and China. The cooperation between China and India in Belt and Road has been affected due to two major routes and one major corridor. The routes written above at points three and four and the corridor written above point ‘e’ are the key components behind India’s reluctance to the Belt and Road.

From the side of India, there is a strong belief that only India has enough potential to catch up with China and even overtake it. This mindset manifests those Indian intellectuals, bureaucrats, academicians, diplomats, and the government considers China as a major competitor in the region whereas Chinese scholars opine that China seldom considers it as a rival but the USA is the main rival of China in Chinese perspective. The next reason for the reluctance of India to the BRI is that India has not had enough resources as well as the political and economic weight to put in place competitive and alternative connectivity on a global scale for India’s competitive prosperity. If India participated in the BRI, India may only be the tool of Chinese resources, technology, industry,

and production as well as political and economic weight which will be focused on the Indian Ocean Region and beyond for the enlargement and extensions of Chinese trade in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe as the Indian perspective. Shyam Saran argues that for the time being, it may be worthwhile to carefully evaluate those components of the BRI which may, in fact, improve India's own connectivity to major markets and resource supplies and become participants in them. It means India will further do the cost-benefit analysis before participating in the BRI. The view of Soni is also almost similar to Saran. But India has not officially been involved in the BRI till 2023.

Instead of involving in BRI, India has highly prioritized a Spice Route², Cotton Route,³ and even a Mausam project⁴ expecting strongly tie the allied countries in the periphery of the Indian Ocean. Indian strategic calculation is that in spite of spreading their resources for responding and involving China's BRI, it may be the more sensible task to be focused on strategic routes and ports along India's adjacent seas as well as islands for safeguarding their equities. Shyam Saran has written in his article that:

“To recapitulate, the first priority would be developing our own Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a modern transport and shipping hub for the Bay of Bengal Basin. At the next level would be Chahbahar port to the west with road/rail links to Central Asia; Trincomalee port to the east, with shipping links to the Bay of Bengal littoral ports and beyond; the Mekong-Ganga corridor linking India's east coast with Indo-China; and the Kaladan multi-modal transport corridor in Myanmar's Rakhine province, including the port of Sittwe (Saran, 2015).

Despite having this unclear scenario of bilateral cooperation in the BRI,

2 Spice Route is India's historical route and government of India has begun to revive it in changing context to counter China's BRI in Indian Ocean Region. For detail, open this link: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-reclaims-spice-route-to-counter-Chinas-silk-route/articleshow/49915610.cms>

3 Cotton Route is Indian ancient Ocean pathways through which the fabric was exported to both the east and west. Currently India has begun to revive that route in changing context to counter China's maritime ambitions. For more detail: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/to-counter-chinas-silk-road-india-is-working-on-cotton-route/articleshow/46655130.cms>

4 **Project 'Mausam'** is a Ministry of Culture project to be implemented by **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**, New Delhi as the nodal coordinating agency with support of **Archeological Survey of India and National Museum** as associate bodies.

China invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and six cabinet colleagues giving high importance to them in her “new Silk Road” summit on 14th – 15th May 2017 but New Delhi rebuffed Beijing’s diplomatic push, incensed that a key project in its massive initiative to open land and sea corridors linking China with the rest of Asia and beyond runs through Kashmir which are claimed by India (South China Morning Post, 2017). The Belt and Road Summit was one of the biggest ‘Diplomatic Summit’ as one of the going global events of China which organized the next Belt and Road Summit in 2019 for the purpose of promoting its grand globalization strategy (Cai, 2017). The USA, one of the biggest strategic partners of India, participated in that summit whereas India did not send any delegates for the summit. Therefore, it seems that China continuously is trying to make involve India in BRI for the purpose of meaningful cooperation with India however; India has been refusing to sign and involve in the BRI.

Strategic Concerns of India

India prioritizes security concerns first which is quite serious for her core national interest however; there are different views of Indian scholars on the BRI. Some of them argue that the perception, process, and implementation of Belt and Road do not inspire the trust of Indians to involve in the initiatives. Moreover, Indian scholars believe that the participatory approach and collective venture are not included in BRI. The unilateral ideation and declaration and the simultaneous lack of transparency further weaken any sincerity towards an Asian entity and economic unity (Passi & Saran, 2016). But Chinese scholars do not agree with that argument. They argue that Beijing is committed to pursuing wider consultation with the 150-plus nations and their think tanks for the establishment of ‘Global Level BRI Think Tanks’ to make involve scholars from all the countries along the route of the Belt and Road. Based on this initiation, they argue that the Indian argument of unilateral ideation and declaration of Belt and Road is denied practically because the ‘Global Level BRI Think Tanks’ will bring up new ideas and initiation based on the context of their own country which will support to the counter-argument of unilateral ideation and declaration. The next fear from the Indian side is that Indian scholars believe the future strong military presence of China along the route of the BRI. It was clear that China is willing to underwrite security through a collaborative framework.

There is a strong belief in Indian scholars that China wants to bring great rejuvenation through political expansion via economically ambitious BRI. Moreover, the political dream and economic ambitions of China are two sharp edges of the same knife, say Indian scholars. According to Samir Saran and Ritika Passi, 'India needs to be more focused on the Indian Ocean Region for providing enough security there to enhance Indian security unlike investing Indian resources in BRI which will make sure the Chinese double-edged regional and global missions. It means the political and economic growth of India will be emerged from its own security priorities rather than being one of the stakeholders of the BRI. At the same time, there is another view on India's involvement in BRI. Some Indian intellectuals believe that the BRI can offer India political opportunities. China wants a serious partnership with India for making the BRI successful. If India can attempt for reworking the CPEC by Beijing in return for India's active participation in BRI, this will be a great opportunity and achievement for India but there is a very slim chance of reworking of CPEC because the CPEC is the dream project of China to reach Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and even East Asia Pacific region through the Gwadar Port of Pakistan.

Likewise, BCIM is one of the major economic corridors under the BRI and AIIB is the biggest financial institution to invest in major infrastructural projects in Asia under the initiative in which India has already participated officially. But, India argues that the CPEC, which goes through the disputed areas between China-India and India-Pakistan, is a crucial reason why India emphasized a provision in the charter of AIIB that requires investment in the infrastructural projects in the disputed territory where the agreement of the disputants is must.

S. Jaishankar remarks that

"The key issue is whether we will build our connectivity through consultative processes or more unilateral decisions. Our preference is for the former...But we cannot be impervious to the reality that others may see connectivity as an exercise in hard-wiring that influences choices. This should be discouraged, particularly in the absence of an agreed security architecture in Asia (Madan, 2016).

Mutual consultation mitigates the doubts and suspicions which creates a cooperative environment for bilateral and multilateral projects in the region.

The above-mentioned argument is that India is not feeling ownership in BRI due to unilateral initiation and its less consultative way of beginning as per the words of Indian intellectuals. Until China does not change the way of implementation, India does not seem to officially participate in this ‘going global’ project of China. Connectivity is essential for the growth and development of Asia and India’s approach to achieving this is based on mutual cooperation and trust and not unilateralism (Asiatimes, 2016). Beyond the previous opinion of Susma Swaraj, some of India’s strategic community considers BRI as a beginning of constructing a “string of pearls” or strategic initiation encircling India which may create a geopolitical challenge in the coming days. Indian hardliner scholars say that it is unwise for India to join either the land segment or the Maritime Silk Route (MSR) which only benefits China with very marginal benefits to India even if it joins the initiative at a later date (Vasan, 2016).

China on the other hand rejects allegations that the BRI is its exclusive initiative (Haidar, 2016). On the other hand, Chinese scholars argue that India should accept China’s BRI concept not only in the case of BCIM but also in the case of the Indian Ocean and the beyond for a win-win situation for both countries. The win-win situation comes from close cooperation between the countries. Similarly, China’s former Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing says:

BRI was not unilateral or restrictive. China viewed South Asia as a vital partner in the project and was ready to focus on roads, manufacturing, and free trade zones in the region. China welcomed the participation of other countries and regions and supported the BCIM initiatives on roadways and trade routes (Asiatimes, 2016).

As per the discourses by Chinese scholars, China is adopting mutually cooperative policies to India in BRIs for a win-win situation whereas Indian scholars argue that China’s policy to India seems more coercive keeping China’s core interest in the center and its aims encircling India in the future. The arguments put forward above from the side of both countries and from the different views of Indian scholars, the BRI dynamism is critical for Sino-Indian relations which is also reflected in ‘the Belt and Road Summits 2017 and 2019’. Because of this dynamism and the suspicion of the BRI, Nepal is the third crucial party between them which has been suffering for some the years in case of the initiatives.

Prospects and Challenges for Nepal

Nepal had signed a preliminary agreement principally in December 2014 just one year later of OBOR was announced by the Chinese president Xi Jinping (Setopati, 2017). Only after three years of preliminary agreement, Nepal signed an agreement with China on the BRIs on May 12, 2017 (Khanal, 2017, p.25). Nepal was delayed in being a member of the initiatives due to internal political instability whereas most of the US-allied countries also already signed the agreement (Chand, 2017).

The perspective of Kathmandu-based academics is Nepal would already sign an agreement with the BRI if KP Oli's government was not toppled in 2016 (Shrestha, 2017). After the BRI agreement signed between Nepal and China in May 2017 then former Nepali Ambassador for India Deep Kumar Upadhyaya stated, "It is important to look at the overall situation. We are aware of India's reservations about CPEC (one of the major parts of the BRIs) but Nepal is not taking any position on the issue by joining the BRI (Parashari, 2017)." This diplomatic reply of Upadhyaya to an Indian journalist makes clear the Indian disenchantment with Nepal in the context of BRI.

The agreement made is not final but just beginning to enter towards five major action plans of the BRI. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat says, "Once the agreement has been signed, we will start negotiations with Beijing on various sectors included in the OBOR, namely infrastructure (rail, road), investment, trade, commerce, using Chinese and other ports, currency arrangements, financial institutions, and others" (Giri, 2017). Mahat's statement confirms that there is a long route to go for full fledged implementation of that agreement.

Nepal had agreed only on facility connectivity during the agreement out of five major action plans of the BRI (Khanal, 2017, p. 29). As the destination of BRI is the community of common destiny, to achieve the destiny like other countries, Nepal still has to do many things under the BRI at the level of agreement and at policy coordination. The agreement made on the BRI's nine projects in Nepal is still in the dilemma due to diverse views on policy coordination from both sides. Nepal wants to gear up the projects totally on Chinese aid assistance whereas China wants to provide loans rather than aid. Since being shared projects, Nepal also should invest as per its capacity, Chinese academics argue. But, due to the smaller GDP in comparison to total investment in BRI projects, Nepal is unable to invest in BRI projects.

The policy coordination is not related only to the facility connectivity but also relates to unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bond which still Nepal seems reluctant due to the reason of very sensitive geopolitical situation of Nepal and the interest of neighboring countries. The BRI agreement has allowed only collaboration in the construction of cross-border railways and highways, transmission grids, parks, special economic zones, airports, and dry ports (Ghimire, 2017). But China has been emphasizing in all action plans. Unimpeded trade and financial integration are highly important parts of the BRI for China for her trade, commerce, and economic interest whereas it may be the point to seriously rethink those countries like Nepal which has no specific production of commodity based on the research on demand of China and other countries. Only importing goods and commodities is not the right way to the rapid economic growth of Nepal. Nepal has to work seriously for producing the goods and commodities first which is the major demand of our neighboring countries. Only a balanced trade in Nepal will have the potential to rescue Nepal from highly asymmetric dependence and trade deficit faced since long ago.

For symmetric dependence, the BRI agreement is a milestone for Nepal. Its background is the “Transit Trade Treaty” (TTT) inked during the official visit of former prime minister KP Oli from March 20 to 27, 2016. The avenue of sea access of Nepal via the Chinese Tianjin port which is almost 3500 kilometers away from Nepal is opened under this treaty made by Oli’s government (Chand, 2017). After full fledged implementation of the treaty, it seems a very high possibility that Nepal will shift from geopolitics to geo-economics, and globalism based on realpolitik be created after that. Sridhar K. Khatri has written in his article published in 1997 that from the emerging trends, it is, nevertheless, possible to surmise that the international environment will be quite conducive to the diversification policy followed by Nepal earlier (Khatri, 1997). As per Khatri, ‘Nepal significantly has opened the future possibility of diversifying her relation and trade through the trade treaty and agreement. Nepal has started her journey of global relations from geopolitical complexities towards her relations’ globalization, diversifying her foreign policy since the 1960s, and it will not get back but will expand further. Therefore, Transit Trade Treaty is one of the breakthroughs in Nepali history for the diversification of its relations and trade. Additionally, there are following more project agreements made by Oli’s first government which are as below:

1. Nepal to use China's seaport facility via Tianjin seaport
2. Transit transport agreement to be reviewed every 10 years
3. China to build a regional international airport in Pokhara
4. China and Nepal exploring the possibilities of signing a bilateral free trade agreement
5. China to explore the possibility of finding oil and gas reserves in Nepal
6. China to provide economic and technical support to Nepal to implement the project at Pokhara airport
7. China to distribute solar panels in Nepal's rural areas by tapping its Climate Fund
8. China to build, manage and maintain the Xiarwa Boundary River Bridge at Hilsa, Humla
9. Nepal, China to strengthen intellectual property system in both the countries
10. Nepal and China to extend cooperation and exchange information on banking regulations (Sharma, 2016).

All the points are more or less related to the framework of the BRIs which are the Nepali model of reform and opening up policy⁵. Therefore, in the future, agreement on the BRI and the above ten points agreement including the transit trade treaty will be the gateway for Nepal to diversify her trade, dependency, and relations if the agreements were fully implemented by current governments in Nepal. Oli's second visit to China as the Head of the Government also has oriented towards enhancing Nepal's neighboring and global relations however, there are tangible and intangible challenges to implementing the overall BRI-related agreements signed between Nepal and China during his first and second visits as the Head of Government, geographical hazards, investment incapacity, technical and bureaucratic incompetency in Nepal and other various factors may impede to implement connectivity and other set projects within the stipulated time frame.

5 Dai Yonghong (Professor at Sichuan University, China) had expressed his opinion on 5th May 2016 during the seminar organized by Institute for South Asian Studies (ISAS) that the Transit Trade Treaty and other agreements made with China is the initial stage of Nepalese model reform and opening up policy.

Discussion and Conclusion

Nepal needs to review current foreign policies in the changing dynamics of regional and global power relations and endeavors to build consensus among the neighbors and major powers on issues of national interest and foreign policy priorities. She has to attempt to diversify foreign policy; through connectivity and trade; while dealing with regional and beyond regional powers, she better needs to assure the immediate neighbors of their sensitivity. Despite the neighborly and friendly relations between Nepal and China, ample specific research has not been done to comprehend each other's strategic and economic interests. Chen Xiao Chongyang Institute under Renmin University, during the Sino-Nepal Think Tank Dialogue 2017 from 17-18 January says that from the time when the BRI initiatives have been launched, most of the researchers have been paying heed to Nepalese culture, history, and hotspots news in Nepal like earthquake and geopolitics. Firstly, China could enlarge its investment in transportation and building communication systems. Secondly, China could also build and develop the economic corridor and multilateral economic special zones. Thirdly, China could exploit the existing comparative advantage of Nepal like hydropower and tourism. Fourth, China with Nepal could make trade more convenient. Fifth, China could help Nepal to construct its industrial system and zones. Sixth, China could invest more to help Nepal improve its agricultural products, and offer Chinese experience in agricultural science and technology. BRI projects are not only expected to render more economic opportunities to Nepal but also strategic benefits. China needs to realize the importance of Nepal joining BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar) to make it BCIMN since BRI itself accommodates different economic corridors including BCIM and CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). Moreover, the proposed China-Nepal-India Economic corridor is also anticipated to bring significant changes in South Asia by lifting millions of people out of poverty. Against this background, if Nepal crafts her diplomacy successfully; persuading, and convincing the stakeholders to speed up BRI project despite having diverse views of Nepal and China, implementation will create ample opportunities to increase economic transactions. However, amid the Indian reservations on BRI Nepal's unilateral engagements may add complexities among the stakeholders.

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NEPAL'S QUEST FOR SECURE BOUNDARIES AND INTERNATIONAL BORDER REGIME

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Abstract

The pursuit of secure and peaceful borders in Nepal encompasses the practice of boundary diplomacy, which operates within the existing geostrategic context influenced by neighboring states India and China. While Nepal has made progress in addressing some boundary issues with its neighboring states, there remain unresolved matters that necessitate the incorporation of comprehensive legal principles and norms of border management systems observed worldwide. This scholarly study revisits the fundamental aspects of Nepal's boundary diplomacy, specifically with regard to international border regime. The primary focus of the study centers on the diplomatic processes related to boundary delineation along the Nepal-India and Nepal-China frontiers. It discusses Nepal's border issues and boundary diplomacy with India and China with reference to the international border regime. It adopts content analysis and comparative studies in order to address the concerns it has identified.

Keywords: *border, boundary, China, diplomacy, demarcation, India*

Introduction

Nepal's boundary diplomacy includes Nepal's diplomatic efforts and tactics for managing and resolving border-related issues with its neighbors. It entails peaceful and mutually beneficial talks, dialogues, and diplomatic contacts aimed at preserving Nepal's territorial integrity and resolving border disputes. It, in fact, incorporates bilateral negotiations with its neighboring states—involving discussions on historical documents, treaties, maps, and other relevant evidence to determine the accurate demarcation of borders. It prioritizes the preservation of its territorial sovereignty, asserting its rights and interests, ensuring that any

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agreements or resolutions are consistent with international law and do not compromise its sovereignty.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah's *Dibyopadesh* continues to serve as a guiding light for Nepal, inspiring generations with its wisdom and vision for a prosperous and sovereign nation. His teachings emphasized the need for Nepal to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty by engaging in strategic diplomacy and negotiation. It serves as a guiding principle for future leaders of Nepal, highlighting the significance of maintaining peaceful and respectful relations with bordering states, which has had a lasting impact on Nepal's boundary diplomacy. It emphasizes the importance of unity, discipline, and strategic thinking in order to safeguard Nepal's independence and territorial integrity. It highlights the need for strong leadership, wise decision-making, and the establishment of a strong military to protect the nation from external threats (Stiller, 1968).

Nepal upholds the principles of international law and respects the sanctity of treaties and agreements (Upreti, 2022). Peaceful coexistence and cooperation are elemental aspect of it since Nepal emphasizes the importance of maintaining peaceful coexistence and fostering cooperation with neighboring countries, recognizing significance of cordial relationships to promote regional stability and shared prosperity. Nepal also actively participates in regional frameworks, such as SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN etc. where boundary issues can be discussed in a multilateral setting (Ain & Shah, 2019). Nepal's historical boundary issues with neighboring countries are complex and multifaceted. Historical documents, differing interpretations, and overlapping claims can complicate the process of resolving border disputes. Navigating through these complexities requires meticulous research and a nuanced understanding of historical records. Nepal's diplomatic resources and capacity in dealing with boundary issues are terribly limited compared to larger and more influential nations. This poses challenges in terms of conducting in-depth research, maintaining a robust diplomatic presence, and effectively advocating for Nepal's interests in negotiations though resolving boundary disputes is definitely a time-consuming process (Upreti, 2003).

Additionally, negotiations and diplomatic efforts often require extensive discussions, consultations, and legal assessments. This often leads to delays in reaching concrete solutions, prolonging the uncertainty surrounding certain border areas. Geopolitical dynamics adds crucial

impact to this regard because Nepal's boundary diplomacy is largely influenced by regional geopolitical dynamics and power asymmetry (Baral, 2018, p. 32). And, domestic political factors, public perception and awareness of boundary issues equally play a significant role in shaping the approach and outcomes. Ensuring accurate information dissemination and fostering public understanding of the complexities involved is essential for garnering support and maintaining a cohesive national stance.

Nepal accommodates international norms for establishing international boundaries and addressing the conflicting issues in this regard. It adopts the global legal practices for boundary management systems since they shape identity of states and peoples by delineating, demarcating, and managing the geographical territories. They often lead to conflicts among the bordering states but serve primarily to define and distinguish space (Bhusal, 2020). Such borders also separate the social, political, economic, and cultural implications of one geographic place from those of another.

Lord Curzon (1907), Sir Henry McMahon (1935, and previous presentations since 1896), Col. Sir Thomas Holdich (1916), and C.B. Fawcett (1918) developed the foundations of current theory of practical border making. Their actual engagement in establishing boundaries in various situations gave their articles a unique influence. Significant emphasis was placed on distinguishing terminology of boundary-making phases, particularly between the words delimitation and demarcation. According to Trotter (1897), delimitation reflects the preliminary work and specifies the border in the treaty either by words or on maps, whereas demarcation represents the putting down of the line on the ground after the treaty has been signed--Mc Mahon in 1896 (Srebro, 2013, p. 17)

However, boundaries, in Nepal's case, are the contentious issues in the international arena with disagreements resurfacing (Baral, 2018, p. 29). In this regard, borders of Nepal are both open and secure—open to allow for the cross-border movement of lawful trade and business, and secure to defend governments' national security interests (Shrestha, 2021, p. 74).

Nepal's Boundary Diplomacy

The Sugauli Treaty, signed in 1815/16 by Nepal and the British Dominion in India marks the turning point in Nepal's geopolitical strategy as observed by Eminent geographer Pitamber Sharma. The Sugauli Treaty and the Boundary Treaty of 1860, he renders, established Nepal's borders

with India. Nepal's boundary diplomacy with India sustains problems due to the disputed territories such as Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh, differing interpretations of historical agreements, political sensitivities, and the need to balance bilateral relations. With China, Nepal has had a relatively stable border relationship, but challenges arise due to potential differences in interpretations or changes in geographical features. Asia's two of the largest countries China and India border Nepal. The 1439 km northern border with China was delineated with the signing of the Nepal-China Boundary Agreement in 1960, the Nepal-China Boundary Treaty in 1961, and the Nepal-China Boundary Protocol in 1963. The location of the tri-junction point between Nepal, India, and China may add 50 kilometers to the Nepal-China boundary. The border with India is roughly 1880 kilometers long, having 1233 kilometers of land border and 647 kilometers of riverine border. The riverine boundary is formed by over 60 rivers and streams, the longest and most famous of which are the Mechi River (80 km) in the east and the Mahakali River (nearly 225 km) in the west (Sharma, 2022, p. 1).

Nepal's relations with India and China mark as unique in character in the world. The geographic accessibility, ethno-cultural and religious affinities, and many other multidimensional causes have ascertained this fact. Despite, the economic, geostrategic, and regional factors also are some of the elements behind it. Among them, economic elements, as the crucial parts of bilateral ties which are based on the infrastructural development on airports, irrigation, agriculture, roads, power projects, industrial estates, communication, surveys, forestry, building construction for health, education, human resource development among others have principally played the significant role between them.

Intriguingly, though, one of the neighbors is aggressively expanding its sphere of influence in Nepal, while the other does not want to lose its historical presence in the nation due to its social, cultural, and economic ties. The center has made very little effort to build infrastructure in those areas, including roads, telecommunications, schools, hospitals, and other services (Bhusal, 2020).

Additionally, the people who live along the border of Nepal and India benefit most from an open border system, which serves as a role model for other nations. However, there is no such reciprocity between the citizens living on either side of the Nepal-China border. India and China both have the fastest-growing economies in the world, thus Nepal should benefit as much as possible from them (Tripathi, 2019).

International Border Regime

Every sovereign state in the international system has got its own sovereign territories with clear demarcated borders and regulated with the globally accepted legal binding. Borders establish a state's territoriality and allow for state sovereignty, but its relational character also infringes on that sovereignty. As a result, a boundary may be both a reflection of internal conflicts and the source of an interstate conflict in and of itself. Because borders are a relational, complicated, and potentially conflict-causing factor, preventative diplomatic measures such as discussions can de-escalate boundary conflicts throughout the world (Agnew, 2005, p. 457).

The international border regime has a significant impact on Nepal's boundary diplomacy with India and China for several reasons. Firstly, it provides a legal framework that guides the resolution of boundary disputes, as international laws and norms related to territorial integrity and border management influence Nepal's approach to negotiations. Secondly, the regime offers mechanisms for mediation and arbitration, enabling Nepal to seek international assistance or engage third-party mediators in resolving disputes. Thirdly, the international border regime shapes the geopolitical dynamics surrounding boundary issues, as it affects the involvement of external actors and the level of regional and international support Nepal receives. Lastly, the regime provides guidelines for dispute resolution, including recourse to international courts or tribunals if bilateral negotiations fail. Therefore, the international border regime plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing Nepal's boundary diplomacy with its neighbors (Becker & Sanchez, 2010).

International law provides the most fundamental means of resolving territorial disputes amicably. International law governs state interactions, and any disagreements between nations should be settled peacefully and in conformity with international law principles (Sargsyan, 2003). The main goal of international law is to ensure international peace and security, which is why the League of Nations was established in 1919 and the United Nations was established in 1945 (Shrestha, 2021, p. 27). Border diplomacy is a component of international relations that uses international law and diplomacy to address issues such as border management, migration, refugees, immigration, maritime boundaries, people movement across borders, peaceful dispute resolution, and others.

Boundary, as a political body, influences people's lives inside it and has a huge impact on the lives of others who reside nearby. Borders, or state

demarcation lines, are also related with natural phenomena such as rivers, mountain ranges, summits, narrow passages, lakes, and others. If the conflicting parties do not comply with the standard legal frameworks, the counter diplomacy should take place within the confines of international law. The use of force against any state in a disagreement is not regarded appropriate (Aiyadurai, et al., 2017, p. 372).

Thus, the essential premise to create trust in the international community to international laws' commitment to global peace is the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The use of international arbitration or tribunals creates the merit of depoliticizing a conflict by sending it to technical specialists, which generates the merit of depoliticising a dispute. In this light, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) serves as a beneficial and effective judicial tool for current issues (Chetail, 2003, 241).

Nepal-India Border Issues

The Nepal-India boundary issues hold significance in both regional and global politics due to several reasons. Firstly, the South Asian region is strategically important, with both Nepal and India being key players. Any disputes or tensions between these two countries can have wider implications for regional stability and cooperation. Secondly, the boundary issues can attract the attention of other global powers who have vested interests in the region, potentially influencing the dynamics between Nepal and India. Thirdly, the resolution of the boundary issues can set a precedent for handling similar disputes in other parts of the world, thereby impacting the global discourse on territorial disputes. Finally, the boundary issues have the potential to affect trade, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges between Nepal and India, influencing economic and cultural ties within the region (Upreti, 2003). Therefore, the Nepal-India boundary issues are critical for both regional and global politics, as they have implications for stability, regional cooperation, global interests, and normative frameworks surrounding territorial disputes.

Border delineation between Nepal and India began with the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816 and was completed in 1817-1820, 1859-1860, 1880-1883, and 1940-1941. (Baral, 2018, p. 31). During the British occupation, Jange Border Pillars were placed every 5-7 miles. Because of certain hazy borders, straight lines were not generated between the pillars. A Nepal-India Joint Technical Level Border Committee was founded in 1981 to build subsidiary and minor pillars on the zigzag boundary between two primary pillars, and it worked until 2007 (Shrestha, 2021,

p. 45). Nepal-India boundary demarcation from 1981 till 2007 concluded with preparing 182 strip-maps. Though it demarcated about 97 percent borderline, the critical 3 percent remains as the root of all geopolitical complications. Formulating other remaining strip-maps and maintaining boundary pillars are essential now. The encroached Nepali territories, occupations and cross-border land holdings require to be resolved immediately.

The available maps and archival documents pertaining to the Nepal-India border disputes predominantly originate from British-Indian sources. Consequently, they reflect the perceptions prevalent during that era. It is important to note that official documents and correspondence from Nepal's side are not accessible to the public. Valuable insights into the perspectives held by the Nepali central and local authorities regarding the disputed areas could be obtained from official correspondence between local revenue collectors, district administrations, and the central government in Kathmandu (Upreti, 2022). These historical records span from the time of the Sugauli Treaty up until the 1950s.

The public discourse surrounding these disputes has primarily relied on British-Indian archives, as the contribution of Nepal's official documents and relevant materials has been relatively minimal. Additionally, both the Nepali and Indian governments have refrained from issuing formal position papers concerning the disputes, except for sporadic communiqués responding to contemporaneous political developments. These supporting documents can help resolving Nepal-India boundary issues (Shrestha, 2014).

Within the Nepal-India border landscape, a multitude of areas, numbering around 86 according to one account, find themselves entrenched in lingering disagreements. However, among these, two significant regions emerge as the focal points of dispute. The first lies along the northwestern boundary, intricately intertwined with the origin and course of the powerful Mahakali (Kali) River in its upper reaches. The second area of contention resides in the downstream expanse of the Gandak River, specifically the Susta-Narshahi region, which rests adjacent to the Gandak barrage in the southern terrain. Notably, both of these disputed territories bear the hallmark of riverine borders, adding another layer of complexity to the ongoing disputes.

Efforts have been made to shed light on a diverse range of perspectives, with the intention of fostering a more objective understanding of Nepal's position on these contentious matters. The boundary disputes concerning

the Mahakali River and the Susta-Narshahi areas have endured through the ages, tracing their origins back to the immediate aftermath of the Sugauli Treaty. Remarkably, both of these disputes are legacies of the British rule in India, where independent India has not only perpetuated the path set by its colonial predecessors but has adopted a quietly entrenched position that disregards its smaller neighbor. The Indian side has displayed resistance in providing a political platform for sustained and rational discussions on these disputes, further exacerbating the situation (Sharma, 2022, p. 3).

However, India maintains its stance, emphasizing that the boundary protocols must receive joint endorsement as sector-wise strip maps are finalized. On the other hand, Nepal advocates for a comprehensive boundary protocol that would be jointly endorsed by both countries upon the completion of the entire process. This approach aims to achieve a lasting resolution of contested areas and disputes, putting them to rest once and for all. When sector-by-sector strip maps are developed, India would push for joint approval of border procedures. Nepal wants the two countries to jointly ratify a comprehensive border convention at the end of the exercise to settle areas of conflict and dispute once and for all. The Indian tactic is to continue to overlook the problem in disputed areas, so preserving the status quo in a field that favors India. Nepal's aim is to address the issues directly in order to permanently eliminate irritants in bilateral relations. India's strategy appears to allow the problems in disputed regions to persist, neglecting their resolution and effectively preserving the existing status quo that favors India. In contrast, Nepal earnestly seeks to address these issues comprehensively, aiming to eliminate persistent sources of tension in bilateral relations. By doing so, Nepal aims to pave the way for a harmonious and stable relationship, free from recurring irritations.

Nepal-China Border Issues

The Nepal-China border spans more than 1,400 kilometers, and the two countries have historically maintained a relatively stable and peaceful border relationship. However, it is important to acknowledge that border disputes can arise over time due to varying interpretations, changes in geographical features, or other factors. Therefore, although there have been no significant boundary issues between Nepal and China, it is crucial to stay vigilant regarding any potential developments in this matter.

Regarding the resolution of specific issues, certain Nepali communities, such as Chyanga and Lungdep in the Kimathanka VDC of the

Sankhuwasabha district, as well as some pasture areas in the Humla and Dolakha districts, have been designated as part of China. Similarly, several Chinese villages have been designated as belonging to Nepal. Currently, Nepal and China are addressing two particular matters: border marking number 57 in Lapchigaun, located in the Lamabagar region of the Dolakha district, and the accurate measurement of Mount Everest's height (Jha, 2010, p. 65).

To foster friendly border relations, Nepal-China border management diplomacy prioritizes the resolution of critical issues. Nepal and China share a border management system; however, there is a need to enhance border management on both sides to curb unlawful migration and travel, as Tibetans often enter Nepal illegally through the borders. Constructing border outposts and immigration checkpoints near border crossing points would help prevent any anti-China activities on Nepali territory. Currently, these posts are situated 10-20 kilometers away from the frontier. For instance, the Lamabagar Police Post in the Dolakha district has been established 22 kilometers south of the border crossing site, but it should be set up at Lapche Gaun to ensure effective monitoring.

To combat unlawful Tibetan infiltration, it is advisable to implement a policy that increases the number of Armed Police Force Border Observation Posts (BOPs). Additionally, there should be stricter scrutiny of Nepali lumber, Himalayan plants (especially the valuable Yarsagumba of Nepal), and Red Sandalwood imported from India to prevent illegal exports to China's Tibetan Autonomous Region. Building BOPs near border passes would aid in these efforts (Shrestha, 2013).

The border between Nepal and China's Tibet province spans 1,415 kilometers along the Himalayan range. Diplomatic relations between Nepal and China were established in 1955, and resident ambassadors were exchanged in 1960. In that year, Nepal encountered border confrontations with China in 35 locations, including Mount Everest. Consequently, a Nepal-China Joint Border Commission was formed on October 5, 1961, to address boundary issues with China.

As a result, the boundary between Nepal and China was jointly delineated between 1961 and 1962. The settlement was achieved amicably, based on the values of kindness, fraternity, equality, and mutual respect, and in accordance with the principles of Panchasheel. It is worth noting the commendable resolution of disagreements at the technical level. Notably, concerns regarding Mount Everest were resolved at the prime ministerial level during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Chou-en-Lai to Nepal on

April 28, 1960. On January 20, 1963, the Boundary Protocol was signed (Shrestha, 2003).

According to the Boundary Protocol, the border will be administered and maintained amicably by Nepal and China through specified procedures. The Border Protocol must be renewed every ten years following a joint border inspection. During the process of renewing the previous Protocol, collaborative supervision and monitoring of the borderlines will take place, and a joint report will be issued.

Furthermore, any damaged or missing boundary pillars and markings must be repaired and replaced. Utilizing modern technologies such as Global Positioning System (GPS) observations and Geographical Information System (GIS) data, new strip maps will be created based on previous maps. Additionally, India-Nepal-China Tri-junction Points and Zero Markers must be established on both ends of the boundaries, with equal participation from India and China (Shrestha, 2013). Maintaining a peaceful border relationship between Nepal and China necessitates controlled border monitoring and supervision. Therefore, certain administrative responsibilities should be conducted diplomatically by both parties to effectively manage the boundaries (Sargsyan, 2003, p. 25).

As for the cases of Nepal's border-related issues with its neighbors, it has to deal with it through pacific measures. To overcome this issue amicably, Nepal and its neighbors should use border management diplomacy (Nayak, 2020, p. 7). Nepal should be prepared for any eventuality by having plans, policies, and tactics in place to reclaim its sovereign land from Indian occupation in a diplomatic and peaceful manner.

Hence, several steps have yet to be taken for resolving Nepal's boundary issues with India and China. Clear and comprehensive agreements on the exact demarcation of borders are still pending. Adequate documentation, including updated maps and border pillar placements, is needed to establish a shared understanding of boundary lines. Expert surveys and technical support utilizing modern technologies are yet to be fully utilized for accurate demarcation. The exploration of legal and international frameworks, such as historical treaties and dispute resolution mechanisms, has not been fully pursued. Enhanced diplomatic engagement, public awareness and participation, and regional cooperation are also areas that require further attention. Resolving these outstanding issues will necessitate sustained efforts, dialogue, and cooperation between all parties involved.

Conclusion

Nepal's boundary diplomacy is characterized by a complex and sensitive nature due to its geographical location and historical context. As a landlocked country nestled between two giant neighbors, India and China, Nepal's foreign policy regarding its boundaries is crucial for maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Nepal has historically pursued a policy of maintaining friendly relations with both India and China while seeking to protect its national interests. However, boundary disputes with India, particularly regarding the demarcation of the shared border, have been a significant challenge in Nepal's diplomacy. These disputes have required diplomatic negotiations, dialogue, and occasional tensions to address territorial claims and ensure the integrity of Nepal's borders since the nature of the international border regime is multifaceted and shaped by various factors, including historical, political, economic, and security considerations.

The International border regime refers to the set of rules, agreements, and practices that govern the management and control of borders between sovereign states. Firstly, borders serve as physical and symbolic boundaries between nations, defining territorial jurisdictions and marking the extent of state sovereignty. Secondly, the international border regime encompasses legal frameworks and regulations that govern the movement of people, goods, and services across borders. Thirdly, border regimes are influenced by political dynamics and power relations between states. Border disputes, territorial claims, and historical conflicts can impact the nature of the regime. Diplomatic negotiations, border demarcation processes, and regional cooperation initiatives play a crucial role in resolving border-related issues and maintaining peaceful relations.

Additionally, the border regime also addresses transnational challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, smuggling, and illegal migration. International cooperation and information-sharing mechanisms are established to enhance border security and promote joint efforts in combating cross-border threats. It is a complex interplay of legal, political, economic, and security factors. It reflects the balance between state sovereignty, national interests, regional cooperation, and the need for efficient and secure cross-border interactions in a globalized world.

Thus, direct communication channels, confidence-building measures, border management cooperation, technical expertise, documentation and research, Track II diplomacy, regional and international mediation

and stronger national unity can be Nepal's sustainable approaches for resolving boundary issues with its neighbors. They crucially support Nepal to foster a conducive environment for resolving its border problems with neighboring countries, promoting peaceful relations, and safeguarding its territorial integrity.

Recommendations

Nepal needs to pursue multi-pronged approaches to resolve its boundary issues with its neighbors. Firstly, engaging in diplomatic negotiations is crucial. Nepal should actively initiate dialogue and maintain sustained communication with its neighbors, particularly India and China. Meaningful discussions, based on mutual respect and understanding, can help find mutually acceptable solutions. Secondly, Nepal should focus on historical research and documentation to strengthen its claims. Thoroughly studying historical records, treaties, and agreements related to boundary demarcation can provide valuable evidence to support Nepal's position. Thirdly, exploring legal recourse, such as international arbitration or adjudication, can be considered if diplomatic efforts prove insufficient. Additionally, active participation in regional cooperation initiatives, fostering people-to-people exchanges, implementing confidence-building measures, and seeking international support are essential steps. Resolving boundary issues requires patience, perseverance, and political will from all parties involved, with the ultimate goal of maintaining peaceful and cooperative relations with its neighbors.

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INTERFACE BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT

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Abstract

Climate change has emerged as an existential threat to the planet and humanity. It is fueling natural disasters, migration, energy, health and food crises across the globe. Flood, sea-level rise, intense wildfire, heatwave, hurricanes, precipitation are threatening both civilian lives and vital infrastructure. Put together, they all have a potential to create security threats, and no country is immune from it.

In June 2022, much of Pakistan was inundated by heavier than usual monsoon rain. More than 1,700 people perished and properties worth billions were destroyed in the disaster, which also triggered food and energy crises in its wake. Likewise, on June 15, 2021, Melamchi Bazar of Sindupalchok district in Nepal was ravaged by a flash flood that claimed five lives — dozens of people are still missing. It damaged several private and public properties, and damaged the infrastructure of the Melamchi Water Supply Project (Annapurna Express 2022). The above incidents show the extent of vulnerability posed by climate change-related disasters on human lives and settlements. With this context in place, this essay tries to explore the new risks posed by the effects of climate change to Nepal's security landscape, as well as the preparations made so far to deal with possible crises. It will offer some policy recommendations.

Key words: *Climate Change, Nepal Army, National Security,*

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Introduction

The deadly or say destructive impact of climate change is prompting countries to embrace climate change as a vital national security threat. Security concerns linked to climate change include impacts on food, water and energy supplies; increased competition over natural resources; loss of livelihoods; climate-related disasters; and forced migration and displacement (UN Environment, 2019). A disaster- and crisis-ridden areas are also at risk of becoming breeding grounds for terrorist and anti-social groups. In fact, it's the non-traditional security issues which are giving birth to the traditional security issues from time immemorial; and it's only their intensity which has increased in recent years due to climate catastrophe.

This precisely is the reason, among others, as to why many countries are including non-traditional security issues into their larger security framework. Of all the factors, climate change is becoming more threatening; and countries are undertaking it as a national security threat and incorporating it in their comprehensive security policy documents. Academic deliberations of climate change from the national security perspective have gathered momentum across the globe, and it is more so in America and European countries, followed by South Asian countries.

Since 2007, the United Nations has been holding discussions on the link between climate change and insecurity. The first ever meeting of the Security Council examining the linkages between climate change and insecurity happened in April 2007. Since then, the UN body has increasingly taken steps that effectively acknowledge that the two issues are related.

In July 2011, another open debate on the matter was held, and in March 2017, resolution 2349 was adopted, highlighting the need to address climate-related risks in order to tackle the conflict in the Lake Chad basin. Similarly, in July 2018, a debate was held on "Understanding and addressing climate-related security risks (UN, 2019).

In a sign of how important the discussion is to many countries, the debate was attended by over 70 Member States and included statements in the Council chamber from a dozen ministers, including from Kuwait, Belgium, Indonesia, Germany and Poland (UN 2019).

Their collective efforts have been helpful in highlighting the agenda more strongly and thereby stopping problems that deserve significant attention

and resources. All these efforts have now regarded climate change as a climate crisis (Mathew, 2011) and this realization is certainly good to take the timely initiatives.

Since 2011, Germany has been making every effort to integrate climate security concerns into the works of the Security Council of the United Nations. During its two-year term as a non-permanent member on the UN Security Council in 2019-2020, Germany, time and again, highlighted the security implications of climate change and advocated greater Council engagement with this issue (Stefan Talmon, 2021).

Likewise, the new National Security Strategy of the United States unveiled in 2022 mentions the climate crisis as an existential threat of our time. It outlines people around the world are risking food and water supplies, public health, and at the cost of infrastructure and national security.

In South Asia, discourse on the national security dimension of climate change has received pace since a decade ago. In addition to this, there are activists and activities such as ‘save soil’ who are putting pressure on stakeholders to focus on climate change. South Asian security policy circles must recognize that nontraditional security threats like those emanating from climate change will ultimately be as intimidating as traditional security threats (Pandey Avasana South Asian voices, 2018).

She observes:

They must look both inward and outward, simultaneously rethinking conceptions of security internally while cultivating regional cooperation. We will only fully realize the gravity of the climate change-security nexus when we stop equating security with warfare and make adequate space for confronting the destabilizing effects of climate change.

In the context of Nepal, too, there certainly is a greater realization about the possible threats that climate change may unfold in the days to come, creating a serious security problem. But it hasn't been incorporated in the policy document. There is also the lack of commitment to take the discourse in a more coherent manner. Climate change has not really been seen from the security perspective. Although the National Security Strategy unveiled in 2016 briefly describes environmental security, it does not necessarily recognize climate change and its other aspects as a national security threat. Impact of climate change could affect critical infrastructure including roads, highways and electricity networks, which

could affect social stability.

Nepal at high risk of climate-induced disasters

More than one factor is responsible for climate disaster. Some come up with excessive misuse of Basudha – the mother earth. While there are others who claim that naked industrialization of various types should be held responsible.

Taken together, all these bring different types of challenges in the form of emissions. Nepal's contribution to global emissions is very low but it is facing the brunt of climate change. Due to the temperature rise, glaciers are receding and snowfall is decreasing in Nepal's mountains. Around 80% of Nepal's population is at risk from natural and climate-induced hazards, and in the last 40 years, natural disasters have caused close to \$6 billion worth of physical and economic damage in Nepal (MOFA, 2021). The effects of climate change are already seen in the sources of water, crops and other sectors.

Nepal's share in causing climate hazards is very less compared to developed countries. Yet, Nepal is one of those few countries in the world that is prone to various natural hazards such as landslides, avalanches, debris flow, flash floods, glacial lake outburst floods, earthquakes and thunderstorms. This is because of Nepal's fragile and complex geological setting, physical diversity and climatic variation (ICIMOD, 2021).

Nepal's three geographical regions — Himal, Hill and Terai — are vulnerable to separate disasters and crises. In the high mountains, there are the risks of avalanches, snowstorms and GLOFs, while the middle mountain is likely to witness hailstorms, landslides and droughts. In the hilly region, there is a growing risk of rainfall, landslides, thunderbolts and fires; Siwalik is vulnerable to forest fires, thunderbolts, floods, and landslides. Meanwhile, Terai is vulnerable to floods, heatwaves, cold waves, epidemics, and fire. So, preparations should be made accordingly.

Nepal is experiencing unprecedented disasters, prompting authorities to take the climate crisis more seriously and urgently than before. Many disasters that took place over the past years are attributed to climate change. On June 14, 2021, debris flow in the Upra valley of Jomson ravaged many villages and disrupted road access to the area.

Likewise, on November 15, 2021, an avalanche in the forest of Thasan Rural Municipality-2 of Mustang district swept away

more than 125 yaks and injured some people. Both of these incidents were attributed to climate change, and such disasters are likely to become more intense and frequent in the coming days. Though the Melamchi flood mentioned in the beginning cannot be completely attributed to climate change, it was certainly one of the prominent factors that caused the disaster. The Melamchi disaster was a result of multiple factors and processes such as weather conditions, processes in the high altitude glacial environment among others (ICIMOD 2021). According to ‘Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, 2021,’ published by the Ministry of Forest and Environment, about eight percent of Nepal is flood-prone and about 59% of its land area is landslide-prone.

On average, as the report states, about 56% of Nepal is affected by droughts, with an average drought lasting 3.4 months (102 days) a year. Based on the available data on losses and damage from different climate-induced disastrous events between 1971 and 2019, about 647 people on average die from climate-induced disasters in Nepal each year. Another report titled ‘Climate Change Scenarios in Nepal,’ prepared by the Ministry, says annual precipitation is likely to increase by 2-6% in the medium-term and by 8-12% in the long-term (Annapurna Express 2022).

Similarly, the average annual temperature is likely to rise by 0.9-1.1 degrees Celsius in the medium-term and 1.3-1.8 degrees Celsius in the long-term. The temperature rise would directly affect the Himalayan region (Annapurna Express 2022). The possible glacier outbursts are another factor, which has a high potential of causing large-scale disasters.

A 2020 joint study by ICIMOD and UNDP identified that 47 potentially dangerous glacial lakes (PDGLs) lie in Koshi, Gandaki, and Karnali river basins of Nepal and in Tibet. The study found 3,624 glacial lakes in the three basins, of which 2,070 lakes are in Nepal, 1,509 lakes in the Tibetan, China, and 45 lakes in India (ICIMOD 2020). The final report says: “As many as 1,410 lakes are larger than or equal to 0.02 km, which are considered large enough to cause a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF). Lakes associated with a large, retreating glacier and steeply sloping landforms in their surroundings are susceptible to a GLOF.”

ICIMOD Report (2019) says: “As the Nepal earthquake in 2015 laid bare, mountain cities and settlements are vulnerable to disasters — from landslides and erosion to debris flows and floods. As the number and

intensity of these disasters increase, more than one billion people are at risk.”

In Nepal, climate-induced disasters cause around 65% of all disaster-related annual deaths. Nepal has experienced at least 24 GLOF events in the past, according to the report. Of these, 14 are believed to have occurred in Nepal itself, and 10 were the result of flood surge overflows across the China-Nepal border (Tibet Autonomous Region). The eastern Himalayas are the hotspots of GLOF hazards. Mostly GLOF is concentrated in Province 1, Bagmati Province, Gandaki Province, Karnali Province, and Sudurpaschim Province (MoFE, 2021).

The Terai region has its own set of climate change-related vulnerabilities. A strong “tornado” hit Bara and Parsa districts on March 21, 2019, killing 30 people and injuring 1150 others. As many as 2890 families were rendered homeless.

Why Climate-induced disaster is a threat to security

As stated above, many countries have prioritized climate change as a core element of their development, economic, security and foreign policy documents. In our context, there has not been much realization among the politicians and policymakers that the climate crisis is reshaping all aspects of the society.

Nepal government came up with National Security Policy in back 2016, as mentioned above, which for the first time touched some issues relating to environmental security. The national document mentions the possible security threats that emancipates from the climate-induced disasters. The problems such as massive and unmanaged exploitation of natural resources, uncontrolled growth of population, spread of endemic diseases, food insecurity, and lack of drinking water are on the rise and problems have emerged in supply side due to international, regional and local conflicts and instability (NSP, 2016).

The document further states that disasters emerged by human-induced problems such as unmanaged settlement, forests degradation, pollution; natural disasters such as earthquake, soil erosion, flood, landslide, and water submergence. Similarly, the document talks about the unmanaged and irregular exploitation of natural resources, climate change and environmental loss, and chemical, radiation and technology-induced disaster.

The document, however, falls short of making a clear vision of how climate change has security dimensions. A big-scale disaster at any point could create big security threats. For instance, damages of critical projects like the Melamchi project could create a water crisis which thereby creates security challenges.

Big floods and landslides could sweep the big hydropower projects, prompting an energy crisis. In many countries, floods and energy crises have led to massive migration thereby creating political and social instability which cannot be ruled out here. Due to Nepal's geography, vital security installations could be destroyed by the extreme weather events making it difficult to mobilize the army. And failure to mobilize the army could create big security problems. Nepal's snow-capped mountains are turning bare, adversely affecting the country and the entire South Asian region, thereby amplifying food insecurity, violence and migration in the Himalayan basin area (Rawal 2021).

Due to a monsoon pattern shift, the area suffers from droughts, inundation and landslides, the increasing natural disasters demand extensive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, compromising military preparedness for core military operations (Rawal 2022). Climate change and global warming are caused by deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and melting of glacial ice etc. which are global environmental problems today (Bhandari, 2022).

Such environmental issues keep threatening the security of countries around the world and there are a number of national and transnational issues affecting nations, regions, and the entire globe as a whole: that is why this kind of security threat is included in the Global Commons, Bhandari argues (Bhandari, 2022).

Environmental Security issues need to fit into our national planning because it is the most important issue to Nepal and regionally within South Asia. There is a need for institutional reform. For instance, there is a National Security Council which consists of members from Home, Foreign Affairs and Finance but not representatives from the Ministry of Environment and there is a need to include representatives from the Ministry of Environment as well to mainstream (Rimal, 2022).

Though the issue of climate change has been mentioned in the national security documents, as mentioned earlier, there is no mention of climate change in other government documents. Nor is there any coordination

between the Environment Ministry and security agencies. Not only in national security and strategies, the issue of environmental security should be placed in all government policies, strategies and procedures (Upreti 2021).

Failure to manage the natural resources properly could lead towards conflict posing challenges to national security (Upreti 2022). Dozens of policy documents prepared by the Ministry over the past few years have not mentioned anything about the security implications of climate change and there is a need for further academic study to explore the linkages between environmental security and security (Upreti 2022).

In 2019, the Ministry of Forest and Environment came up with a new climate change policy which mentions disaster risk reduction and management but it falls short of highlighting the security aspects of climate change. Loss or damage to be caused by climate-induced disasters to lives and property, health, livelihoods, physical infrastructures and cultural and environmental resources will be reduced (MoEF, 2019). Apart from the impact on society, an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events directly impacts military assets and undermines military readiness (Niraula, 2011). The climate change Policy 2019 talks about the food, energy, water and other wide-range of security but remains silent on how all these crises could pose a threat to national security.

Preparing NA to tackle the effects of climate change

Due to the above mentioned factors, our security deployment in the mountainous, hilly and Terai region are always vulnerable to large-scale disasters. The increasing cases of avalanches, landslides and flood has increased the risks of impacting the both defense and civilian infrastructures. The possible outbursts of glacier lakes as mentioned above provides another vivid example of national security and climate change. In 2016, NA drained water from the Imja glacial lake to a safe level.

Under the guidance of the Nepal Army, about 40 personnel working in high altitude regions were selected for the pilot project located at an altitude of over 5,000 meters. The involvement of some 100 high altitude workers from the local areas made the task a bit easier (My Republica, 2016). The glacier lake outburst can sweep the downstream human settlement if the actions are not taken on time. NA still falls short of

resources and trained manpower to deal with such a situation.

Among others, disaster management is a key responsibility that the Nepal Army has been taking charge of for the long time. The primary role of NA is to conduct search and rescue missions, medical assistance and evacuation, air rescue and mass evacuation and flood control (NA, 2022). NA has historically provided vital relief during floods, earthquakes, avalanches, fires, landslides, air and other transportation disasters (NA 2022). As Nepal government places NA at the forefront of any disasters and a leading and inseparable agency it is imperative to deliberate on how equipped and prepared NA is to undertake the tasks.

Considering the worst effects of climate change, NA has made some preparations but it falls short of resources. The total number of concrete infrastructure of NA is 4060 out of which mud infrastructure is 1449 and there are still 111 bunkers where army personnel live. As a preventive measure, NA is planting trees in the flood and landslide-prone areas. The construction sites are being selected considering the possible natural disasters. NA has intensified the tree plantation and has adopted a policy of planting 25 plants in the compensation of one tree. Similarly, environment friendly procedures have been implemented. Similarly, an anti-lightning system has been implemented. But NA lacks sufficient resources to deal with possible climate-induced disasters.

NA is the only organization which can handle the large-scale disasters in the coming days as it is engaged both on preventive measures and in the areas of preparedness (Silwal, in person communication, 2022). Due to the effects of climate change, the intensity and frequency of natural disasters are sure to increase so NA will have to face an even greater crisis in the days to come. First, policy makers should pay attention to how to make our military installations safe and secure from disasters.

For example, large-scale climate disasters can sweep the army barracks and other infrastructures making it difficult to mobilize the army personnel. Some of the resource allocation agreements and migration policies in India, and other parts of South Asia, are not comprehensive enough to deal with the added impacts of climate change (David Antos, 2017). With these points of tension already threatening the region, the added stressors of climate change could result in several intrastate and interstate security risks (David Antos, 2017). The more climate-induced disasters demand higher cost of military infrastructure maintenance, training and availability of more equipment and technologies. In our

case, there have not been assessments to determine the required response to growing threats.

Conclusions and recommendations

The severe effects of climate change are already visible everywhere. As mentioned above, we have already started facing unprecedented natural disasters which are causing the loss of life and property. NA, being at the forefront of rescue and rehabilitation efforts, is playing a pivotal role in the preventive stage and response. But government agencies are not well prepared to deal with the situation nor has there been any coordination. There is a need for effective institutional arrangements to ensure coordination among state institutions. The world is failing to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. The planet will grow dangerously hot so policymakers need to implement radical ways to respond to possible crises. First and foremost, this issue should incorporate all vital policy documents of the country and law. There is no presence of NA and other security agencies in the national and international climate framework and negotiations.

For instance, we can hardly see the presence of those agencies in the ongoing discussions on the effects of climate change in Nepal. Another immediate task is to build strong and resilient military barracks in order to save them from landslides and floods. Many NA barracks in the hilly and mountainous region remain vulnerable to climate change. Still, thousands of our military personnel live in the bunker and weak infrastructures. The current investment on disaster management is not sufficient so that NA should be equipped with high-technology to cope with the security threats that emancipates from the effects of climate change.

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NEPAL'S TRANSIT ROUTE NEGOTIATION WITH INDIA AND CHINA

Naresh Giri¹

Abstract

The geographical disadvantage faced by landlocked countries hampers their overall development, prompting international law to grant certain rights to secure their access to coastal areas. Nepal, as a landlocked country, has encountered numerous challenges in negotiating transit routes with its immediate neighbors, China and India, in order to realize the rights guaranteed by international law to landlocked nations. The transit right serves as a lifeline for Nepal to access third countries, but recurrent blockades from its southern neighbor have created uncertainty regarding the southern route to seaports. While Nepal has signed the Transit Transport Agreement and its protocol with its northern neighbor, China, there has been limited progress in developing connectivity infrastructure. This paper argues that ensuring uninterrupted access through the southern route is vital for Nepal from an economic perspective. However, the development of an alternative route through the north is not only crucial for contingency situations but also for unlocking new opportunities.

Keywords: *International Law, Law of Sea, Land Locked Country, Transit rights*

Theoretical Debate on Law of Sea

The Mare Liberum and Mare Clausum debate is a historical and legal dispute concerning the ownership and control of the seas. The Latin terms “Mare Liberum” and “Mare Clausum” stand for “Open Sea” and “Closed Sea,” respectively. The debate originated in the 17th century when the Dutch jurist and philosopher Hugo Grotius argued for the concept of

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Mare Liberum in his influential book of the same name. Grotius asserted that the seas were a common resource and should be open for navigation and trade to all nations. According to this view, no single nation could claim exclusive sovereignty over the seas (Grotius, 2004). In contrast, the concept of Mare Clausum, promoted by John Selden in his book *Mare Clausum*, asserted that certain seas could be closed or controlled by individual states. This idea was based on the principle of territorial sovereignty, suggesting that states could claim exclusive rights over the seas adjacent to their territories. Shelden was supporting the claim of England that it was possible for the sea to be occupied and subject to full ownership. It is claimed that England occupied sea both in fact and in law. Permission of King of England is required to engage fishing, navigating and engaging an enemy (Van Ittersum, 2021).

The ideas put forth by Hugo Grotius are widely regarded as the cornerstone of modern international law. Grotius' concept of the law of the sea recognizes the high seas as the common heritage of humankind established as global norm. This principle establishes that regardless of whether a country is coastal or landlocked, every nation has the generally accepted right to access and navigate the seas. While Grotius' notion of sea freedom holds universal significance, it does not completely invalidate Shelden's perspective. In contemporary international law, there is acknowledgment of coastal state control over internal waters, territorial seas, contiguous zones, and exclusive economic zones. Modern international law has become more predictable with the codification of customary practices through treaties and conventions. However, the tendency to hinder other countries from benefiting from sea routes and resources remains a persistent challenge that has not been entirely overcome.

Transit Rights of Land Locked Country in International Law

The principle of equality before the law serves as the foundational element of the rule of law. Within the realm of international law, states are recognized as the primary actors, and ensuring equal protection for each state is of paramount importance. However, inherent inequalities among countries create asymmetry, hindering states from fully benefiting from the legal provisions of international law. Specifically, landlocked countries face geographical disadvantages as they lack direct access to the sea. Various treaties and conventions, which serve as fundamental sources of international law, aim to safeguard the rights of landlocked countries. Nonetheless, the implementation of these progressive provisions heavily

relies on the bilateral relations between the landlocked country and the transit country.

Landlocked countries are defined as those surrounded by other countries. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in Article 124, characterizes landlocked states as those having no coastline. According to data retrieved from www.geographyrealm.com, there are currently 49 landlocked countries, with 5 of them being partially recognized. Among these, there are 44 recognized landlocked countries, including unique cases such as Liechtenstein and Uzbekistan, which are doubly landlocked, meaning they are surrounded solely by other landlocked countries. Geographically disadvantaged, landlocked countries face the challenge of being cut off from direct access to the sea. These nations must traverse at least one neighboring country to reach the coastline. Access to the sea holds great importance for international trade, the utilization of maritime resources, research, and other developmental activities. The absence of a coastline directly impacts a landlocked country's maritime trade and hinders its ability to exploit the maritime resources considered the "common heritage of humankind." In an effort to integrate landlocked countries into sea-borne trade and facilitate their access to maritime resources, certain international legal provisions have sought to secure their rights to free access to the sea.

a) The Barcelona Convention and Statute on Freedom of Transit, 1921

This convention is the first international instrument ensuring right of transit. It provisioned "freedom of transit" under its 15 articles. In its article 1, it described about transit as "Persons, baggage and goods, and also vessels, coaching and good stock, and other means of transport, shall be deemed to be in transit across territory under the sovereignty or authority of one of the Contracting States, when the passage across such territory, with or without trans-shipment, warehousing, breaking bulk, or change in the mode of transport, is only a portion of a complete journey, beginning and terminating beyond the frontier of the State across whose territory the transit takes place" (Convention and Statute on Freedom of Transit, 1921). Technically this convention is still alive, applicability of the convention is limited as the convention is ratified by only 50 countries (Acharya, 2021).

b) Convention on Transit Trade of Land Locked States, 1965

This convention is specifically codified to recognize the special status of landlocked countries and provide them with adequate facilities in terms of international law and practice. This convention made provision of 'Arbitration Commission' as a dispute settlement mechanism (Convention on Transit Trade of Land-Locked States, 1965). The binding nature of the convention is limited as only 38 countries ratified the convention (*ibid.*). Even all landlocked countries have not ratified it.

c) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a landmark multilateral treaty that straightforwardly secures the rights of states. Coming into force in 1994, it currently has 167 countries and the European Union as parties to the convention. Although some countries, including the United States, have not signed the convention, it is widely regarded as a universal treaty that should be respected by non-party countries as well. UNCLOS is the product of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, considered one of the most significant law-making events of the twentieth century. This conference introduced a revolutionary law-making technique based on consensus decision-making and universal participation. The convention includes various articles that specifically safeguard the rights of landlocked countries (Upadhyaya, 2013). Article 69(1) grants landlocked states the equitable right to participate in the exploitation of living resources in the exclusive economic zones of coastal states within the same subregion or region. Article 124 defines terms such as "landlocked state," "transit state," "traffic in transit," and "means of transport." Article 125 secures the landlocked country's right of access to and from the sea, as well as freedom of transit. Article 126 excludes the application of the most favored nation clause in providing rights and facilities to landlocked countries. Article 127 ensures that traffic in transit is exempt from customs duties, taxes, or other charges, while other service charges should not exceed those imposed by the transit state for the use of means of transport. Article 128 allows transit states to establish free zones and other customs facilities. Article 129 encourages cooperation in the construction and improvement of means of transport in transit states to benefit landlocked countries. Article 130 instructs transit states to take measures to minimize technical delays or difficulties in transit traffic. Article 131 ensures equal treatment for landlocked countries in maritime ports. Article 132 guarantees that

the convention does not oblige transit states to provide greater transit facilities to landlocked states. In addition to these specific provisions, UNCLOS safeguards the rights of landlocked states regarding innocent passage in territorial seas, laying submarine cables and pipelines, and the lawful use of the sea, as well as equal rights to the high seas (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982).

d) World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization comprising 164 members, with an additional 25 governments holding observer status. Established in 1995 as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the WTO's primary objective is to promote rule-based trade among its members by reducing both tariff and non-tariff barriers. The core of the WTO's work lies in its agreements, which serve as legal frameworks for international commerce and bind governments to adhere to agreed-upon trade policies. For landlocked countries that face various trade obstacles imposed by transit countries, the removal of all trade barriers is crucial for promoting their trade. The WTO operates through three key agreements: the GATT, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and the Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. The organization's overarching goal is the elimination of trade barriers, which ultimately strengthens the transit rights of landlocked countries. Within the GATT, Article V ensures freedom of transit through the territories of each contracting party (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1986). Among the 44 landlocked countries, 32 are classified as landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). The WTO has implemented preferential treatment for least developed countries and developing countries, recognizing their specific needs in trade (World Trade Organization, 2012).

e) UN Charter

The United Nations (UN) is a supranational organization that was established in 1945 after the devastating aftermath of World War II (WWII). The UN charter is primarily focused on safeguarding human rights and ensuring global peace and security. One of the core principles outlined in the UN charter is the concept of "nonintervention," which prohibits transit countries from interfering in the internal affairs of their neighboring landlocked countries. Chapter 7 of the UN charter grants the Security Council the authority to impose embargoes or blockades on

any country solely as a countermeasure in response to threats to peace or acts of aggression. Imposing such measures outside the criteria specified in the UN charter would be considered a violation of international law (Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice, 1945).

f) Regional agreements

From Nepal's standpoint, the country is an active member of regional organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Within the SAARC framework, Nepal benefits from the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) arrangement, while BIMSTEC provides a Free Trade Agreement. These regional arrangements play a crucial role in promoting trade facilitation and ensuring transit facilities for landlocked countries like Nepal.

Nepal's transit route negotiation with Southern neighbor India

Nepal is surrounded by India in its east, west, and south. Nepal has age-old relation with India marked by a common religion, tradition, festivals, customs, social values, and people-to-people relations. According to Hindu methodology, Nepali princess Sita married Indian prince Ram. Nepali civilization and Indian civilization were both enlightened by Vedic philosophy. The open border between Nepal and India is the symbol of the closeness of these two countries. "Having been the neighboring countries with many similarities, the two countries have huge potentials of expanding the relations in a number of areas of mutual interest" (Hamal, 2014, p. 73).

Though Nepal is also connected with China on the northern side, the nearest Chinese seaport from Nepal is the Lianyungang Seaport which is about 4000 KM far from Nepal. The nearest sea from Nepal is the Bay of Bengal which is only 1127 KM far. In this context, Nepal's primary choice is to access the sea via southern neighbor India. Nepal had diplomatic relations with independent India in 1947 AD. However, Nepal already had diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom from 1816 and with its East-India Company which ruled India till 1947 AD.

Sugauli Treaty between Nepal and East-India company is humiliating one for Nepal which undermines the independence of Nepal. But later on, the Rana regime maintained a close relationship with the British

and achieved some sort of recognition as a sovereign country from the British. “Nepal signed the first Trade Treaty in 1792 with the East India Company, under which it agreed to pay equal tariffs on exports and imports through Indian territory. The tariff arrangement was removed after the signing of a Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and British India in 1923” (Nayak, 2016, p.104). Treaty of Trade and Commerce, 1950 between Nepal and independent India nullified previous treaties, agreements and engagements concluded between Nepal and the British Government on behalf of India (*Nepal-Bharat Ra Chin Sandhi* [Treaties Among Nepal, India and China], 2066).

Treaty of Trade and Commerce, 1950 in its Article 1 assured ‘full and unrestricted right of commercial transit of all goods and manufactures through the territory and ports of India’ however that unrestricted right was limited and dependent on other Articles of the treaty. Nepal and India signed the Treaty of Trade and Transit in 1960 which ensure Nepal’s right to trade with a third country. However, Nepal from its very beginning demanded to have a separate treaty for transit only because trade could be a bilateral matter between Nepal and India but transit is Nepal’s inherent right as a landlocked country provided by international law.

In 1969 AD, Nepal asked India to remove Indian military checkpoints from its northern border. India was dissatisfied with Nepal for this cause and denied renewing the Treaty of Trade and Transit. This is the first time Nepal faced Indian blockade. “The political situation normalized with the change of governments in Delhi and Kathmandu in the late 1970s. Nepal’s transit demand was agreed in a separate treaty in March 1978” (Nayak, 2016, p.106). Nepal hoped that having a separate trade treaty and transit treaty ensure Nepal’s access to India and third countries by using facilities of any of these two treaties. However, the intention remains the key factor. In 1989 AD, Nepal purchased arms from northern neighbor China. Dissatisfied India informed Nepal that both Trade Treaty and Transit Treaty would expire at the same time and India will not renew them. Ultimately with the expiry of these two treaties, Nepal faced a second blockade which only ended with political change in Nepal in 1990 AD.

As India and Nepal engage in negotiations for the renewal of the Treaty, Nepal has insisted on including an auto-renewal provision in the Transit Treaty. The original treaty, signed in 1999 AD, included this provision, ensuring automatic renewal every 7 years. During the recent visit of

Nepal's Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', to India from May 31 to June 3, 2023, the two nations signed revised Treaty of Transit. This renewed provision encompasses the access of new railways and inland waterways for Nepal. In the joint press conference, the Indian Prime Minister announced that, in addition to the introduction of new rail routes for the people of Nepal, provisions have been made to facilitate the use of India's inland waterways (Modi, 2023).

At beginning Nepal thought separate trade treaty and transit treaty will ensure the uninterrupted access the to and from the sea. As the separate treaty became insufficient and faced second blocked, Nepal thought auto renewal of treaty will be the remedy. However, the focus has shifted from the treaty's provisions to the intentions of the involved parties. In 2015 AD, Nepal introduced a new constitution without obtaining India's consent. Consequently, India imposed a blockade on Nepal for the third time. Despite the auto-renewal feature of the Treaty of Transit, India pointed out border obstructions within Nepal caused by Madheshi parties, leading to transportation disruptions.

The relationship between Nepal and India regarding Nepal's transit rights through Indian territory has been characterized by ups and downs. India, being a signatory to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and a member of the WTO, is obligated to provide transit facilities to Nepal. Additionally, both Nepal and India are members of SAARC and BIMSTEC, which have agreements on the establishment of a Free Trade Area. Despite India's legal obligations under international law, it has repeatedly imposed blockades on Nepal, often citing technical and irrelevant issues.

Nepal's transit route negotiation with northern neighbor China

Nepal is geographically surrounded by Tibet, the autonomous region of China, in its northern part. Nepal shares a close relationship with its northern neighbor as well. According to legends, there was once a large lake in the Kathmandu Valley. Manjushree, believed to be from China, arrived in Kathmandu, chopped the Chovar hill, drained the lake, and transformed the valley into a habitable area. The Malla kings of Kathmandu Valley and Tibet maintained strong trade relations dating back to ancient times. During that period, Nepal had the right to mint silver coins for Tibet (Acharya, 2019; KC, 2004).

The geographical proximity between Nepal and China has played

a significant role in strengthening the ties between the two countries. People living near the border have close connections in terms of religion, culture, family ties, and economic and commercial interactions (Hamal, 2014). Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 AD, Nepal and China established diplomatic relations in 1955 AD. Nepal has consistently supported the "One China" policy and considers Tibet as an integral part of China.

Although Nepal has always maintained a good relationship with China, using China as a transit country to access other countries has never been a priority for Nepal in the past. The relatively long distance to Chinese seaports and the challenging mountainous terrain have discouraged Nepal from utilizing the northern route. However, due to the unofficial blockade imposed by India in 2015 AD, Nepal was compelled to seek an alternative. In 2016 AD, Nepal and China signed the Transit Transport Agreement (TTA), followed by its protocol in 2018 AD. This agreement allows Nepal to use seven transit points, including four seaports (Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang, and Zhanjiang) and three land ports (Lanzhou, Lhasa, and Xigatse), for trading with third countries. The TTA effectively ended India's monopoly on providing transit facilities to Nepal. However, this facility limited only in paper.

The viability of using the northern route by Nepal to access third countries is always questionable. Even goods from Shanghai, China come to Nepal via Kolkata seaports of India. "Without robust land connectivity (railways and highways) and integrated check posts (ICPs), accessing Chinese seaports would prove expensive for Nepali traders" (Nayak, 2018). China is hesitant to encourage Nepal to utilize the northern route due to the sensitive nature of China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Following the 2015 AD earthquake in Nepal, the Tatopani border point remained closed for an extended period due to infrastructure damage caused by the quake. Furthermore, China closed the northern border citing concerns related to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the closure of the Tatopani border point was not solely attributed to these reasons. China is also wary of potential anti-Chinese activities by Tibetan refugees using this route.

The signing of a transit agreement between Nepal and China was a breakthrough for diversifying Nepal's transit rights. However, after normalizing relations with India, Nepal does not display a sense of urgency in developing a functional northern transit route. The northern route is indeed more expensive than the southern route due to the long distance to seaports and challenging mountainous terrain. Nevertheless,

India has repeatedly used the provision of transit facilities as a bargaining tool to pursue its own interests, imposing blockades to exert pressure on Nepal. Regardless of the cost involved, Nepal needs to reduce its dependency on India by developing alternative transit routes in order to maintain international stability and national security. It is crucial for Nepal to lessen its reliance on a single transit route and open for diverse options.

Opening up northern connectivity provides more than just an alternative transit facility for Nepal. It also holds the potential to significantly boost Nepal's trade and tourism with China itself. By establishing efficient transportation links and trade routes with China, Nepal can tap into new markets, expand its export opportunities, and attract Chinese investments. Increased connectivity can facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people between the two countries, fostering economic growth and diversification.

Observation and conclusion

Indeed, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the UN Charter, regional agreements, and various other treaties explicitly and implicitly uphold the unrestricted transit rights of landlocked countries. The effective implementation of these legal provisions of international law relies heavily on the mutual understanding among states. States are sovereign entities, and coercion is not the ideal approach to maintain the international legal system. Incentives to adhere to international law provide a better framework for promoting compliance.

Nepal, being a landlocked country surrounded by India on its east, west, and south, and by China on its north, faces the challenge of accessing the sea. Although India and China are both coastal states, the nearest sea to Nepal is the Bay of Bengal. To reach the nearest sea, Nepal must either utilize Indian seaports or rely on Bangladeshi seaports, both of which require transit through India. While Nepal and India have a Treaty of Transit with an auto-renewal provision, India imposed an unofficial blockade on Nepal in 2015 AD, citing border disruptions on the Nepali side.

Following the blockade, Nepal demonstrated enthusiasm to open a northern transit route by signing the Transit Transport Agreement with China in 2016 AD, with its protocol signed in 2018 AD. However, it

appears that after normalizing relations with its southern neighbor, Nepal has not displayed the same level of commitment to realizing the agreement with China. The closest Chinese seaport is located about 4,000 kilometers away from Nepal, encompassing challenging geographical terrain. On the other hand, the Bay of Bengal stands as the nearest sea to Nepal, positioned merely 1,127 kilometers away, and it is connected through a relatively dependable network of roads and railways. Under normal circumstances, Nepal's third-country trade is ideally conducted via the southern route. While the southern transit route proves to be more practical and cost-effective, Nepal should learn from the three blockades imposed by its southern neighbor. It is crucial for Nepal to prioritize the development of an alternative transit route from the northern side to ensure national security and cater to emergency situations. By doing so, Nepal can mitigate the risks associated with overreliance on a single transit route and ensure its long-term stability and preparedness.

In summary, while international legal provisions protect the transit rights of landlocked countries, relation of landlocked country with transit country will eventually determine the exercise of those rights. Nepal's geographical location necessitates reliance on transit through India or Bangladesh to access the nearest sea. There is no doubt, Nepal's primary focus should be achieving smooth access to the sea through southern side maintaining good relation with India. However, Nepal should actively pursue the development of alternative transit routes, including from the northern side, to ensure national security and emergency preparedness. Absolutely, opening up the northern route holds immense significance for Nepal beyond providing transit facilities. It has the potential to enhance trade and tourism with Nepal's northern neighbor, China. By developing efficient transportation links and trade routes with China, Nepal can expand its trade opportunities and tap into a vast market. Increased connectivity through the northern route enables smoother movement of goods, reducing logistical challenges and costs.

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AN ANALYSIS OF EMERGING TRENDS IN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN GROUP OF SEVEN (G7) AND BRICS ALLIANCE

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Abstract

Economic diplomacy is the use of diplomatic apparatuses and strategies to promote a country's economic interests abroad. This involves negotiating favorable trade agreements with other countries, attracting foreign investment, or facilitating international cooperation in areas such as technology transfer or development assistance, tourism promotion and use of economic intelligence to promote the economic wellbeing of a country. The conventional international economic order comprises Breton-wood institutions, world trade organizations and global resource control of advanced economics such as G7 group. However, the emerging order involves the rise of new economic powers in the developing world such as BRICS group, AIIB and the rising economic power of their currency including proposed BRICS currency. In this article, I will attempt to analyze the traditional as well as emerging trends that shape the new economic world order.

Keywords: *advanced economies, developing world, economic diplomacy, emerging trends, new economic world order,*

1. Introduction

Economic diplomacy is at the heart of modern foreign policymaking. The bargaining power of the negotiating parties are supposed to play an active

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role in achieving economic objectives through economic diplomacy (Chatterjee, 2020). The use of diplomatic instruments and strategies to promote a country's economic interests abroad is referred to as economic diplomacy. The ultimate purpose of economic diplomacy is to boost a country's economic competitiveness and international influence through leveraging relationships and collaborations with other countries. Some scholars use the term new economic diplomacy which explains how states conduct their external economic relations in the 21st century, how they make decisions domestically and how they negotiate internationally and how these processes interact (Bayne & Woolcock, 2017).

Economic diplomacy and development diplomacy are two related but distinct fields of diplomacy. Economic diplomacy is focused on promoting a country's economic interests and objectives through diplomatic means. This includes negotiating trade agreements, attracting foreign investment, promoting exports, and addressing issues related to finance, investment, and economic development. The primary goal of economic diplomacy is to create a favorable economic environment for a country and its businesses, while also addressing global economic challenges. Development diplomacy, on the other hand, is focused on promoting economic, social, and political development in developing countries. Development diplomacy seeks to support the development goals of these countries through diplomatic efforts such as foreign aid, technical assistance, and capacity building.

While there is overlap between economic diplomacy and development diplomacy, the two fields have different objectives and approaches. Economic diplomacy tends to focus on promoting a country's economic interests, while development diplomacy is focused on supporting the development goals of other countries. However, both fields can work together to promote economic growth and development, particularly in the context of international cooperation and addressing global challenges.

In the modern world, economic concerns are paramount. The great powers are competing with one another to promote their economic well-being. The growing China, India, Brazil, and their economic alliance such as BRICS are strongly opposing to US hegemony in the global market. The single means of international trade, the US dollar, is under scrutiny. BRICS is exploring for an alternative currency to the US dollar

in international trade. Proposed BRICS currency would be like a new union of up-and-coming discontents collectively outweigh not only the reigning hegemon, the United States, but the entire group of seven advanced economies (G7) weight class put together (Sullivan, 2023).

2. Historical perspectives

Since the early years of global trade and commerce, economic diplomacy has existed. Economic diplomacy was best demonstrated by the old Silk Road, which linked China to the Mediterranean and promoted trade and cultural interchange between various nations and civilizations.

As nations started to establish diplomatic missions and conduct economic negotiations with one another, economic diplomacy became more structured in the modern era. The development of the modern nation-state system and the expansion of global trade and investment were key factors in the birth of economic diplomacy as a separate branch of foreign policy.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, economic diplomacy played a critical role in promoting trade and investment between countries. This period was characterized by the emergence of new economic powers, such as Germany and the United States, which sought to expand their economic influence through diplomatic channels.

After World War II, economic diplomacy became even more important as countries sought to rebuild their economies and establish new trading relationships. The creation of Bretton Wood Institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), now World Trade Organization (WTO), helped to facilitate economic diplomacy and promote international cooperation on trade and investment. The Bretton Wood Institutions support to establish US dollar hegemony as the means of international exchange in foreign trade. The monetary diplomacy of hegemonic power suggests that a necessary and sufficient condition for starting and sustaining regimes is cooperation among the leading economic powers in a system (Gallarotti, 2022), which can be done using effective economic diplomacy.

In modern days, economic diplomacy has become even more important as globalization and technological change have transformed the global economy. Countries now engage in economic diplomacy to promote their economic interests in a range of areas, including trade, investment,

and innovation. Economic diplomacy is also used to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. Overall, the history of economic diplomacy reflects the changing nature of the global economy and the role that diplomacy plays in promoting economic growth and development.

In the changed context of global power balance, economic diplomacy is a powerful tool for countries looking to expand their influence on the global stage and achieve their foreign policy objectives. The future of economic diplomacy is likely to be shaped by several factors, including the changing dynamics of the global economy, new technological advancements, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and social responsibility.

In the recent years, one of the emerging trends we are seeing is an increased focus on strategic alliances and partnerships between countries. These collaborations enable stakeholders to pool their resources, combine their expertise, and tackle complex economic challenges together. At the same time, new technologies like blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics are redefining the ways in which we approach economic diplomacy. These tools can help us develop new trade and investment models, predict market trends more accurately, and improve transparency and accountability in economic decision-making.

Moreover, there is a growing recognition among policymakers and business leaders that economic growth must be balanced with environmental protection and social equity. As a result, we can expect to see a greater emphasis on sustainability in future economic diplomacy efforts, such as promoting energy-efficient industries, supporting local communities, and investing in eco-friendly infrastructure.

3. Top Ten Economies of the World

The top ten influential economies of the world are presented in figure 1. According to World Bank USA has the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which counts 23.32 trillion American dollars in 2021. US economy is followed by Chinese economy with the GDP of 17.73 trillion American dollars. Similarly Japanese economy ranks third largest with GDP of 4.94 trillion American dollars. The fourth to tenth ranked economies are Germany (GDP of 4.26 trillion USD), India (GDP of 3.18 trillion USD), United Kingdom (GDP of 3.13 trillion USD), France (GDP of 2.96 trillion USD), Italy (GDP of 2.11 trillion USD), Canada (GDP of

1.99 trillion USD), and South Korea (GDP of 1.80 trillion USD).

These top ten countries always try to seek their economic interest in the negotiations in international forum. They try to influence the policies of world bank, international monetary fund, and other development banks. They also try to pursue their economic interest in the United Nations. They are influential in international trade, investment, income and employment. The size of economy matter for economic diplomacy.

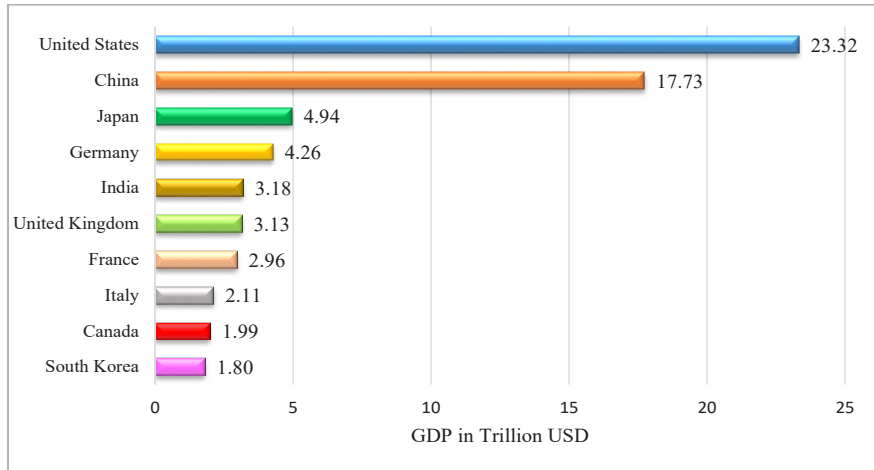


Figure 1: Top Ten Economies and Their Size

Source: Prepared by the author based on World Economic Indicators 2023.

These top ten economies are also big donors for poor countries in terms of foreign aid. They spend millions of dollars to support least developed countries in terms of technical assistance, humanitarian assistance, program and project-based assistance to influence the economic policies in their favor. In some respects, foreign aid has emerged as a new form of dollar diplomacy, with financial support used to advance diplomatic objectives (Adams, 2019).

4. The Conventional Economic Order

The advanced and industrialized economies are the main players in shaping the conventional economic order. The group of seven developed countries also called G7 is a powerful informal group which is influential in economic diplomacy. The World Bank, IMF, WTO, ADB and other international development finance institution set conventional economic order. The World Bank plays a large role in economic diplomacy providing development assistance to countries around the world, helping them to

build infrastructure, reduce poverty, and promote economic growth.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization that promotes international economic cooperation and provides financial assistance to member countries in need. IMF provides its members the credit facilities to maintain balance payment, and foreign exchange stability.

The WTO is an international organization that promotes free trade among its members. Through negotiations, agreements and dispute settlement procedures, the WTO works to help companies conduct their business across borders as smoothly as possible, while also enforcing fair competition and protecting consumers' health and safety. Economic diplomacy is a key component of the WTO's work, as it seeks to foster cooperation and collaboration between countries on issues ranging from investment to trade in services, intellectual property, and tariffs.

The conventional economic order is facing global economic challenges which can be characterized by significant imbalances, with some countries running large trade surpluses while others run large trade deficits. This can lead to tensions and conflicts as countries seek to protect their own interests. Similarly, economic nationalism can lead to trade wars and undermine the principles of free trade. The global financial system is subject to frequent bouts of volatility, with stock markets, currency markets, and bond markets experiencing sharp fluctuations in response to economic and geopolitical developments. Rapid advances in technology are transforming the global economy, creating winners and losers, and disrupting traditional industries. This can lead to job losses and economic dislocation, particularly in developing countries. Climate change and other environmental challenges are placing increasing pressure on the global economy, with the potential to disrupt supply chains and cause significant economic damage.

To address these challenges, countries need to engage in effective economic diplomacy and work together to promote a stable and sustainable global financial order. This requires cooperation on issues such as trade, investment, and financial regulation, as well as a commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law.

5. Emerging Alternatives to Current Economic Order

These alternative proposals are often controversial and require significant changes to the current global economic order. However, they offer different approaches to addressing some of the key challenges facing the global economy, such as inequality, environmental sustainability,

and economic instability. The new international economic order (NIEO) refers to a proposal for a more equitable distribution of wealth and power between developed (industrialized) and developing countries. It was first proposed in the 1970s as a response to concerns about the unfairness of the global economic system, which favored wealthy countries at the expense of poorer ones. The NIEO called for measures such as debt relief, greater access to markets, and new international institutions to promote economic and financial cooperation. While some elements of the NIEO have been implemented, others have not, and the idea continues to be debated today.

We can take group of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as alternative emerging order for comparison to conventional order. BRICS countries are leveraging their collective economic clout to exert more influence on the global stage, and are using economic diplomacy to support their own national interests and those of other developing countries. Recently, BRICS has proposed an alternative currency replacing US dollar. BRICS alliance could soon expand and become BRICS+ in a joint effort to take on the U.S. dollar's global status.

The number of nations that are eager to join the BRICS partnership and adopt the new currency for international trade is expanding. Russia and China are pleading with other developing nations to join the global campaign to dethrone the U.S. currency. The U.S. dollar is being sought after to be replaced by local currencies or new forms of exchange in developing nations in Asia and Africa. The development is impeding the dollar's ambitions and putting its position as the global reserve currency in jeopardy. In August 2023, South Africa will host the leaders of BRICS. Among the items on the agenda is the creation of a new joint BRICS currency. A BRICS currency is unlikely to dislodge dollar any time soon but it signifies growing challenge to established economic order (Papa, 2023). Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe have shown interest to join BRICS alliance.

Similarly, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is a multilateral development bank founded in 2015 to promote infrastructure and economic development across Asia, is also an emerging institution for financing infrastructures in the world. AIIB focuses its investments

on sectors such as energy and power, transport and telecommunications, rural infrastructure and agriculture development, water supply and sanitation, and urban development and logistics.

There are several proposed alternatives to the current global economic order, including fair trade, localism, socialism, degrowth and universal basic income.

6. Comparison between Group of Seven (G7) and BRICS Alliance

In this article, we can take World Bank, IMF and WTO as conventional order while group of seven (G7) as a representative of advanced economies for the further analysis between conventional and emerging trend. Similarly, we can take BRICS as emerging representative of developing world to compare with group of seven countries (G7).

The G7 is a grouping of seven of the world's advanced economies. This group includes the countries named Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Three of the countries of this group (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) are the permanent members of United Nations (UN) Security Council and have veto power. All these seven countries are in the top ten economy of the world. They have great economic power in the world. They can influence economic policies of World Bank, the IMF, WTO and the UN and other international forums. They are the leading countries in influencing global economic diplomacy.

In the other hand, BRICS refers to the acronym of group of five emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. As an alliance, BRICS countries are increasingly important players in the global economy, and have been working together to increase trade among their respective nations. This could potentially lead to greater opportunities for economic growth and development. They are increasingly emerging economies which can influence economic diplomacy and set up new economic order.

G7 and BRICS represent different groups of economies. G7 members represent advanced economies with high income while BRICS members represent developing world with higher or lower middle income. In this article, I compare market size, economy and income, investment and investment capacity and trade engagements of both the groups so that we can identify the emerging economic powers that can shape future international economic order.

A. Market Size

Group of seven (G7) and BRICS both has big market size. G7 covers 15.57 % of the global surface area and 7.73 billion people (9.80% of the global population) live in these countries. Canada and USA are the two biggest countries in this group while the United Kingdom and Italy are the smallest in size. USA has the largest while Canada has the smallest population among the countries of this group (see table 1).

Table 1: Surface Area and Population of G7 Members

Country Name	Surface Area		Population in 2021	
	in 1000 sq. km	% of World	in millions	% of World
Canada	9,985	7.34	38	0.48
Italy	301	0.22	59	0.75
France	552	0.41	68	0.86
Germany	357	0.26	83	1.05
Japan	378	0.28	126	1.59
United Kingdom	243	0.18	67	0.85
United States	9,373	6.89	332	4.21
G7	21,188	15.57	773	9.80
World	136,060	100.00	7888	100.00

Source: World Development Indicators 2023 and UNFPA, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/>

BRICS covers 29.27% of the global surface area and about 3.28 billion people (41.04% of the global population) live in this BRICS member countries. Russia, China, Brazil and India are the are the four biggest countries in surface areas while South Africa is the smallest in size among BRICS members (see table 2).

Table 2: Surface Area and Population of BRICS Members

Country Name	Surface Area		Population in 2021	
	in 1000 sq. km	% of World	in millions	% of World
Brazil	8,516	6.26	214	2.72
Russia	17,098	12.57	143	1.82

Country Name	Surface Area		Population in 2021	
	in 1000 sq. km	% of World	in millions	% of World
India	3,288	2.42	1408	17.84
China	9,707	7.13	1412	17.90
South Africa	1,221	0.90	59	0.75
BRICS	39,830	29.27	3237	41.04
World	136,060	100.00	7888	100.00

Source: World Development Indicators 2023 and UNFPA, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/>

Compared to G7, BRICS is about two times bigger in surface area and four times bigger in population. BRICS alliance has huge market compared to G7. For the consumption of finished goods and services, the size of market matters. Therefore, BRICS alliance is an emerging group which can provide a better alternative to the advanced economies as G7.

B. Economy and Income

G7 members collectively has 44.24% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world. It has 47.2 trillion economies. Average economic growth of this group is 5.27% which is slightly lower than world average (5.87%) in 2021 (see table 3).

Table 3: GDP and Per Capita Income of G7 Members

Country Name	GDP in 2021			Per capita Income in 2021(USD)
	In Billion USD	% of World	Growth (%)	
Canada	1,988.34	2.06	4.54	48,310
Italy	2,107.70	2.18	6.74	35,990
France	2,957.88	3.06	6.82	44,160
Germany	4,259.93	4.41	2.63	51,660
Japan	4,940.88	5.12	1.66	42,650
United Kingdom	3,131.38	3.24	7.52	44,480
United States	23,315.08	24.15	5.95	70,930
G7	42,701.19	44.24	5.27	59,163
World	96,527.43	100.00	5.87	12,026

Source: World Development Indicators 2023

G7 members are among the richest countries in the world. The average per capita income of this group is 59,163 USD which far better than average per capita income of the world (12,026 USD).

BRICS alliance has 24.72 trillion USD economy which is 25.61% of world GDP in 2021. Average GDP growth of this group is 7.66% which is larger than world average (5.87%). India and China are the fastest growing economics among the BRICS group members (see table 4).

The average per capita income of BRICS alliance is 10,250 USD which is lower than the world average per capita income (12,026 USD). China and Russia have almost similar per capita income (11,880 USD and 11,610 USD) while India has the lowest per capita income (2,150 USD) among the BRICS members.

Table 4: GDP and Per Capita of BRICS Members

Country Name	GDP in 2021			Per capita Income in 2021(USD)
	In Billion USD	% of World	Growth (%)	
Brazil	1,608.98	1.67	4.62	7,740
Russia	1,778.78	1.84	4.75	11,610
India	3,176.30	3.29	8.68	2,150
China	17,734.06	18.37	8.11	11,880
South Africa	419.02	0.43	4.91	6,530
BRICS	24,717.14	25.61	7.66	10,250
World	96,527.43	100.00	5.87	12,026

Source: World Development Indicators 2023

G7 is richer group than BRICS in terms of economy and income. However, BRICS has lower GDP and per capita income than G7, it has a greater prospect and room to grow. The economies of G7 members are almost saturated as these countries has gained efficiency in using factors of production. But, the economies of BRICS members are in the phase of gaining efficiency. Labor market efficiency, higher education, use of higher technology can grow that economy of BRICS countries while research and development and new innovation is necessary for the growth of G7 economy.

C. Investment and Investment Capacity

G7 has lower average foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflow (1.72 % of GDP) in 2021 compared to the world average FDI net inflow of the same period (2.26 % of GDP). However, average foreign direct investment (FDI) net outflow (2.85 % of GDP) is higher than the average world FDI net outflow (2.31 % of GDP) in the same period (see table 5).

Data shows that Canada has the highest FDI net inflow (3.265 % of GDP) while United Kingdom has the lowest FDI net inflow (0.19 % of GDP). The number of globally ranked dollar billionaires is 1,123 in G7 Members out of total 2,640 in the world. United States has largest number of billionaire (735) in 2023.

Table 5: Foreign Direct Investment and Number of Billionaires in G7 Members

Country Name	Average FDI Net Inflow/ Net Outflow in 2021 (as % of GDP)		Number of Globally Ranked Billionaires in 2023
	Inflow	Outflow	
Canada	3.26	0.83	63
Italy	0.90	2.70	64
France	2.99	2.60	43
Germany	1.73	4.55	126
Japan	0.67	4.27	40
United Kingdom	0.19	5.14	52
United States	1.92	1.81	735
G7	1.72	2.85	1,123
World	2.26	2.31	2,640

Source: World Development Indicators 2023 and Forbes 2023

Compared to G7, in an average BRICS has higher FDI net inflow (2.05 % of GDP) and lower FDI net outflow (0.92 % of GDP). FDI net inflow and outflow of BRICS is lower than world average (2.26% of GDP and 2.31 % of GDP). Among BRICS members South Africa has the largest FDI net inflow (9.86% of GDP) and India has the lowest FDI net inflow (1.41% of GDP). Similarly, among BRICS members Russia has the

largest FDI net outflow (3.70 % of GDP) and South Africa has no the lowest FDI net outflow (no outflow).

Out of total 2,640 globally ranked dollar billionaires of the world in 2023, 925 are from BRICS members. China has the largest number of globally ranked dollar billionaires (595) among BRICS members while South Africa has the lowest number of globally ranked dollar billionaires.

Table 6: Foreign Direct Investment and Number of Billionaires in BRICS Members

Country Name	Average FDI Net Inflow/ Net Outflow (as % of GDP)		Number of Globally Ranked Billionaires in 2023
	Inflow	Outflow	
Brazil	2.89	1.01	51
Russia	2.27	3.70	105
India	1.41	0.54	169
China	1.88	0.72	595
South Africa	9.86	0.00	5
BRICS	2.05	0.92	925
World	2.26	2.31	2,640

Source: World Development Indicators 2023 and Forbes 2023

As the country grows rapidly, some of the rich business houses accumulate billions of dollars and invest them in their multinational companies. Increasing numbers of billionaires in a country will help in employment generation and the growth of the national economy. However, if not directed in the productive sectors by the government policies, it may also widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

D. Trade Engagements

The G7 Members have open economy and they are open to foreign trade. They are day by day exploring new innovative ideas in international trade. They have gained economies of scale in their products and economies of scope. I have mentioned their trade volume, share in world trade, number of partner countries with trade agreements and top five trading partners in 2022 in table 7.

Table 7: Trade Volume and Trade Engagements of G7 Members

Country Name	Trade Volume in 2022		Trade Agreements with Countries	Top Five Trading Partners
	in billion USD	% of World Trade		
Canada	1,187	2.38	51	USA, China, UK, Japan, Mexico
Italy	1,354	2.72	46	USA, UK, France, Switzerland, Poland
France	1,503	3.01	46	Germany, Italy, USA, Belgium, Spain
Germany	3,282	6.58	46	USA, France, China, Netherlands, UK
Japan	1,623	3.25	16	China, USA, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore
United Kingdom	1,214	2.43	99	USA, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, China
United States	5,303	10.63	20	Canada, Mexico, China, Japan, Germany
G7	15,466	31.01	46	
World	49,872	100.00	154	

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics 2023 and WTO Database 2023

Total global trade was US\$ 49.87 trillion while global trade of G7 was US\$ 15.47 trillion in 2022 constituting 31.01 % of total global trade. The G7 members are engage in international trade with partner countries with average of 46 trade agreements out of 154 countries with trade agreements with at least one county. United Kingdom has the largest number of countries with trade agreements (99) while Japan has trade agreements with only 16 countries. USA is top trading partner of Canada, Italy, and United Kingdom and among top five trade partner of Japan and Germany. China is in top five trade partners of five G7 countries except Italy and France.

BRICS members are also open for international trade but have more restrictive policies in imports than G7 members. The BRICS group constitutes US\$ 8.64 trillion trade with 17.33% of world trade. China

solely has 11.54 % share in global trade. They have in average trade agreement with 16 countries. China is the top trading partner of Brazil, Russia, and South Africa and second largest trade volume with India. USA is top trading partner of India and among top five trading partner of all BRICS members (see table 8).

Table 8: Trade Volume and Trade Engagements of BRICS Members

Country Name	Trade Volume in 2022		Trade Agreements with Countries	Top Five Trading Partners
	in billion USD	% of World Trade		
Brazil	648	1.30	28	China, USA, Argentina, Netherlands, Spain
Russia	838	1.68	12	China, Netherlands, Germany, Belarus, USA
India	1,105	2.21	13	USA, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Russia
China	5,757	11.54	16	USA, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, India
South Africa	297	0.60	13	China, USA, Germany, Japan, UK
BRICS	8,644	17.33	16	
World	49,872	100.00	154	

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics 2023 and WTO Database 2023

Trade agreements increase trade engagements. Trade agreements are the result of economic diplomacy and they are one of the best ways to open up foreign markets to domestic exporters. The G7 group has in average more trade agreements in force with 46 countries than BRICS group (16 countries). USA and China are the number one trading partner of most of the countries in the world In 2022, China's global trade volume of US\$ 5.76 trillion (11.54 % of global trade) is higher than USA's trade volume of US\$ 5.30 trillion (10.63 % of global trade).

As technology is rapidly changing after COVID-19, trade and technology are growing together. The powerful and rich countries are making the poor developing countries their market. According to Pigman (2020), we need collectively to control and manage emerging technologies so that trade in the future global economy benefits everyone. To succeed, we must be prepared to negotiate our economic future on the global diplomatic stage.

E. Summary of G7 and BRICS Comparison and Findings

The summary of the above analysis is presented in table 9.

Table 9: Summary of Comparison between G7 and BRICS

Category	G7	BRICS	Remarks
Members	Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Japan, UK, USA	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa	G7 has seven members while BRICS has five members
Permanent member in UN Security council	France, UK, USA	Russia, China	Out of 5 permanent members of UN security council, 3 are from G7 and 2 from BRICS
Countries with nuclear weapons	USA, UK, France	Russia, China, India	Russia has the largest numbers of nuclear weapons
Claim in UN Security council	Germany, Japan	Brazil, India, South Africa	Powerful countries of both groups seeking their role in UN Security council as permanent member
Total surface area of world	15.57 %	29.27 %	BRICS is 1.88 times bigger in size than G7
Total population of world	9.80 %	41.04 %	BRICS has 4.19 times larger population than G7
Share of GDP of world	44.24 %	25.61 %	G7 has 1.73 times higher share of GDP than BRICS
Average GDP growth in 2021	5.27 %	7.66 %	BRICS has higher average GDP growth than G7

Category	G7	BRICS	Remarks
Average per capita income in 2021 (USD)	59,163	10,250	G7 has 5.77 times higher per capita income than BRICS
Average FDI net inflow in 2021 (% of GDP)	1.72 %	2.05 %	Average FDI net inflow is larger in BRICS than G7
Average FDI net outflow in 2021 (% of GDP)	2.85 %	0.92 %	Average FDI net outflow is larger in G7 than BRICS
Number of globally ranked billionaires in 2023	1,123	925	G7 has larger number of billionaires than BRICS
Share of total world trade	31.01 %	17.33 %	G7 has larger share of trade than BRICS
Trade partners among top five from another group	China	USA, Japan, Germany	USA and China are the two largest trade partners in both the groups.

Source: prepared by author using different sources

G7 and BRICS both are powerful groups with three all five permanent members in UN security council. Three members of G7 (USA, France and China) and two members of BRICS (Russia and China) are permanent members of security council having veto powers. France, USA and UK of G7 and Russia, China and India from BRICS have nuclear power. Russia is a country with largest number of nuclear weapons (about 6,000) followed by USA (5,400). They were competitors of cold war and now both are involved in Russia-Ukraine war. G7-Russia economic relation is almost cut off due to the sanctions imposed to Russia since Russian force invaded and occupied parts of Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War beginning in 24 February 2022.

The surface area and population of BRICS group is larger than G7 group which shows that the size of market in BRICS is bigger than G7 for international trade of goods and services.

The size of G7 GDP is bigger than BRICS GDP but the average GDP growth of BRICS is higher than G7 showing that BRICS is a rapidly growing group. In future BRICS members such as China and India will grow to become the top first and second economy of world.

In terms of size of economy and per capita income, G7 is a group of rich, high income and economically advanced countries while BRICS is a group of developing countries with better prospects of economies. Foreign Direct Investment is inflowing in BRICS countries while outflowing from G7 members. Increasing number of dollar billionaires in BRICS shows that they are increasing their investment capacity and competing G7 group. G7 group has more trade engagement as a result of more trade a

7. Emerging Trends

There are many emerging trends in economic diplomacy such as digital diplomacy, regional and multilateral economic cooperation, sustainable development and climate change financing, public-private partnership, economic sanctions etc. These are just a few examples of new trends in economic diplomacy. It is a continuously evolving field as policy makers seek new tools and strategies to promote their country's interests in the global economy.

Means and ends dilemma in economic diplomacy is closely linked, as the means used to achieve economic goals can have significant implications for the outcomes of economic diplomacy. The ends of economic diplomacy are the economic goals that a country seeks to achieve through its diplomatic efforts. These goals can include promoting trade and investment, protecting domestic industries, attracting foreign investment, and advancing national economic interests.

The choice of means is crucial in economic diplomacy, as different approaches can have different outcomes. For example, a country that prioritizes free trade agreements may benefit from increased trade and investment, but may also face challenges in protecting domestic industries and addressing concerns about job losses and inequality. Conversely, a country that prioritizes protectionist measures may benefit from protecting domestic industries, but may also face challenges in attracting foreign investment and participating in global markets.

Effective economic diplomacy requires a careful balancing of means and ends, considering the interests of different stakeholders and the broader implications of economic policies. This requires a deep understanding of economic trends, political dynamics, and social and environmental issues, as well as a willingness to engage in dialogue and compromise to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

There are some triggers for new economic order. Some are mentioned as below.

- a. **USA-China economic conflict:** the trade war between the United States and China has had a significant impact on the global economy, creating uncertainty and slowing growth. While there have been some recent efforts to reduce tensions between the two countries, the long-term impact of the trade war remains uncertain.
- b. **Russia-Ukraine conflict:** the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has had a significant impact on the global economy, creating uncertainty and slowing global growth and causing economic recession.
- c. **Impact of COVID-19 in global economy:** the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy, with widespread disruption to trade, investment, tourism, production, and employment.
- d. **Post COVID-19 Economic Diplomacy:** post COVID-19 economic diplomacy is a critical topic that could navigate the economic challenges ahead. The challenges are: focus on building strong trade relationships with key partners, diversify supply chains, strengthen regional integration, leverage innovative technology solutions, advocate equitable distribution of resources. By implementing strategies like these, nations can make steady progress towards rebuilding their economies through diplomatic negotiations and collaborations that can meaningfully recover the global economy.
- e. **Emerging role of an economic diplomat:** Most of the country appoint economic diplomat to conduct economic diplomacy abroad. The role of a diplomat in economic diplomacy is to promote the economic interests of their country and to develop and maintain strong economic relationships with other countries. This involves working closely with government officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and to develop policies and strategies to maximize economic benefits. Diplomats also play a key role in negotiating trade agreements, investment treaties, and other economic agreements. They can also provide information and analysis to their home government about economic trends, policies, and developments in other countries. This information can be used to formulate better economic policies and strategies, and to identify opportunities for economic cooperation and partnership.

8. Conclusion

There are emerging issues and emerging players in economic diplomacy. BRICS alliance is an emerging economic group with huge market. BRICS is trying to establish a new global economic order by dislodging the hegemony of US dollar as a means of international trade. The conventional economic powers such as G7 alliance and the current global economic order has many challenges ahead.

However, economic interest of countries, groups and forums can collaborate each other to influence international economic policies in their favor. Emerging economic order, by means of effective economic diplomacy, requires enhanced commitment to multilateralism, a willingness to engage in dialogue and partnership through the recognition of the interdependence of national economies of developing world. It also requires a focus on sustainable development and environmental stewardship, as well as efforts to address poverty, inequality and promote social justice in the world.

There are also numerous opportunities for countries to work together to create a more stable and sustainable economic system. Through effective economic diplomacy and international cooperation, countries can promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve the lives of people around the world. The developing world can work together in international forum to influence the global economic policies and create a new global economic order.

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NEPAL'S DIPLOMACY THROUGH RHETORICS AT UNGA

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Abstract

The paper concentrates on investigating Nepal's Diplomacy through rhetorics. To do so the discourse of the diplomatic speeches presented by Nepal in UN general assembly are critically examined. A special category of communication known as the language of diplomacy is employed in all kind diplomatic endeavors. Diplomatic language is formal, accurate, disciplined, and is mindful of its use of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary to make it easier for people of all nationalities and cultures to communicate clearly and effectively. Euphemisms or indirect language is employed to communicate to avoid aggressive language which can be offensive. Respecting all cultures is must hence diplomatic language is culturally sensitive. Diplomatic discourse is fundamental device to cultivate global cooperation and resolve differences. The paper essences on primarily exploring the speeches of Nepal's Statespersons: Minister of Foreign Affairs Chuda Nath Sharma (1958), Prime Ministers BP Koirala (1960), Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bist (1968) and Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay (1988) at UN General Assemblies respectively from the lenses of critical discourse analysis. Hence, it confines itself within the speeches (the selected primary texts), their rhetorical patterns, contents delivered through diplomatic language, their domestic ideology and power politics.

Keywords: *communication, critical discourse analysis, diplomacy, foreign policy, negotiation, etc.*

Introduction

In international relations and other diplomatic endeavors, a specialized type of communication known as the language of diplomacy is employed. It is distinguished by its formality, accuracy, and nuance, and it is made to make it easier for people of all nationalities and cultures to communicate

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clearly and effectively. Diplomatic language is often formal, disciplined, and mindful of its use of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Diplomats frequently employ euphemisms or indirect language to communicate ideas without offending anybody in an effort to avoid using emotive or aggressive language. Language used in diplomacy is also culturally sensitive, taking into account the traditions of various nations and cultures. The language of diplomacy is a crucial instrument for fostering global collaboration and resolving disputes.

Diplomatic discourse is a type of text that is distinguished by the participation of actors. Furthermore, it primarily deals with the words and writings of professional politicians or diplomatic institutions such as the International Relations Committee of Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Nepal's overseas missions, and the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), as well as the diplomatic parties of any state at the local, national, or international levels. All kinds of texts and the discussion are viewed as the diplomatic activity that determines the path of persons who are a part of that diplomatic process in diplomatic discourse.

Discourse analysis is a vast topic and is concerned with how language is used in context. It works as a wide term with several definitions that integrate a full palette of meanings. Discourse analysis incorporates a variety of theoretical and methodological methods, including linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and sociology (Gill, 2000, p. 175).

Critical discourse analysis is a method based on the integration of language studies and social philosophy. It looks at how social power is abused, as well as how text and language reflect, reproduce, and oppose dominance and inequality in social and political contexts. Norman Fairclough is the most well-known person in this field, having created a three-dimensional framework for researching speech (Fowler, 1997, p. 425). The goal of this paradigm is to incorporate three aspects into another language text analysis. In other words, it applies to discourse practice analysis—processes of text generation, dissemination, and consumption as well as discourse event analysis (Neumann, 2008, p. 67).

Halliday's systematic functional grammar is one of the most prominent linguistic theories associated with a critical discourse approach. Some linguists, such as, embrace it because systematic functional grammar plays an important role in critical interpretation of language expression

in many contexts (Almurashi, 2016, p. 76). In fact, the systematic functional linguistic (SFG) model was used as a tool for text analysis.

Diplomatic language is typically focused on the message rather than the method. Examining language usage in diplomacy, on the other hand, can lead to a greater understanding of how diplomacy works and why some diplomatic procedures are more effective than others (Wheeler, 2014, p. 56). The speeches delivered in the UNGA carry content and character of concerned states. They are focused on promoting national interests, bilateral as well as multilateral diplomatic priorities of the states (Oglesby, 2016, p. 247).

Statesmen can profit from understanding rhetoric's good and bad features. The words and deeds of national leaders and politicians set off global events. However, their language does not always carry straightforward messages to the concerned audience. So, this kind of language inherently possesses ambiguity and abstraction in senses. Statesmen must pay close attention to political speeches in order to learn about national leaders' and political figures' concerns, objectives, and goals. At the same time, statesmen ' work is heavily reliant on their ability to use language effectively - to persuade and convince. Statesmen must be aware of, and in command of, the power and impact of their words (Ku et al. 2022, p. 21).

In diplomacy, choosing the right words is of utmost importance. A very carefully balanced, restrained, moderate vocabulary has evolved over the centuries, ensuring a particular way of refined control over nuances in the meaning of words - both when agreeing with one's interlocutor but taking care not to give the impression of excessive enthusiasm and when rejecting their views, again with appropriate concern to avoid unwanted offence (Eiser, 1996).

Hence, the language of diplomacy must not be expressing direct meanings and addressing the issues right away; it has non-committal attributes regarding the approaches of issues put forward by the other parties. In this light, it obviously becomes frozen in nature and formal in feature. Then does it have to be deceptive? Not necessarily so. But to the large extent, it has to be deceptive in delivering the contents of the expressions. That said, it sounds to be indirectly made expression, or the statement put in 'not blatant' way.

This research paper discloses the forms of language and its rhetorical strategies in the speeches delivered by Nepali at the United Nations General

Assemblies in different times. The speeches by Nepali statespersons carry abundant information on Nepal's foreign policy priorities and tools of diplomacy at those historical junctures. The choice of words, patterns of rhetorical strategies and the inherent messages implanted within the textuality of the speeches collectively impact the strategic achievement on behalf of the nation.

Politicians are known to modify their speeches depending on the audience they are speaking to.

When the politician is in charge of the situation, their words and deeds may easily be consistent; nevertheless, the less power he has, the less their deeds will be consistent with their words. No politician has perfect control, therefore there will always be some discrepancy between words and deeds (Dahal, 2011, p. 41).

One may think of formalization and persuasion as two opposite endpoints of a continuum. Even if both types of political discourse are theoretically available to all politicians, choosing to utilize one over the other will not be a matter of chance (Oglesby, 2016, p. 245). Understanding the power dynamics present between the speaker and listener can help to explain the choice of speaking technique. The similarity between political speech and ritual, as well as the autonomy of speech in influencing speaker-audience relationships independent of the former (Chilton, 1990, p. 216) is also crucial. Thus, this paper substantiates on principally surveying the speeches of Nepal's Statespersons: Minister of Foreign Affairs Chuda Prasad Sharma (1958), Prime Ministers BP Koirala (1960), Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bist (1968) and Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay (1988) at UN General Assemblies respectively from the lenses of critical discourse analysis. Thus, it restrains itself within the speeches (the selected primary texts), their rhetorical patterns, contents delivered through diplomatic language, their domestic ideology and power politics.

Despite, Nepal as one of the small states, have a wide range of viewpoints on the world stage, including their opinions on the consequences of a country's size and their attitudes toward UN diplomacy. While some small state ambassadors maintain that size is unimportant and that there is no connection between size and UN performance, others emphasize that size does have real-world repercussions. On the plus side, size can foster cooperation among nations with similar geographical conditions. Size has a negative impact on capacity and can reduce influence. However, some small state ambassadors contend that a state's effect is determined

more by the caliber of its mission and its representatives than by its size (Mahbubani, 2022, p. 137).

Nepal has many interactions through UN agencies like Human Rights, Climate Change, International Organization for Migration, Colombo Process, Engagements with UN Specialized Agencies and including many Inter-Governmental Bodies. Nepal acceded to the UN on December 14th, 1955. In 1956, H.E. Rishikesh Shah was chosen to serve as Nepal's first Permanent Representative to the UN. Eleven Permanent Representatives have held that position since his tenure ended in 1960. Since joining the UN, Nepal has consistently taken part in the annual General Assembly meetings. Nepali delegations to the UN General Assembly have occasionally been led by the Permanent Representative as well as ministerial and head of state-level representatives. The Nepali delegation to the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was held essentially in 2020, was led by the Rt. Hon. K.P. Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal. The honor of serving as the commission's chairman during its investigation into the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate loss of Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, the then-Secretary-General, in an aircraft accident in Lusaka in 1961, fell to Nepal. This significant duty was given to Mr. Rishikesh Shaha, Permanent Representative and head of the Nepalese delegation to the 16th GA session (Koirala, 1991, p. 137).

Additionally, Nepal has participated actively in UN projects including development, human rights, and the upkeep of global peace and security. Nepal, among other countries, was a key player in the 2011 talks of the Istanbul Program of Action and made contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Voeten, 2013, p. 54). Nepal is the fourth-largest nation currently sending soldiers and police. Nepal participated in the UN Security Council as an elected non-permanent member in 1969–1970 and 1988–1989. For the year of 2018 to 2020, Nepal will serve as a representative on the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) (The United Nations in Nepal, n.d.).

Hence, the speeches of the Nepali statesmen presented at the UN general assembly throughout history till date can be seen through the diplomatic lenses in order to explore the content and characters of foreign policy priorities and contemporary global concerns. Speeches of the statesmen impact the moods and motifs of the national interests and foreign policy priorities of the state. The domestic affairs extend beyond the borders through tangible as well as intangible means and takes shape of the

foreign affairs.

Analysis of Diplomatic Speeches

The leaders of the world address the global agenda along with their domestic affairs when they deliver their speeches across the global platforms (Wellman, 1992, p. 394). Their sentiments are carried through their choices of the words and content of the composition. Speech of Chuda Prasad Sharma, minister of foreign affairs (1956–1957), illustrates on Nepal through elegant composition. He describes Nepal as sandwiched between the two great landmasses of Asian civilizations, symbolizes the fusion of two very different spheres of thought and culture. (Bull, 1979, p. 115).

In the course of its lengthy history, Nepal has developed a pattern of national life and civilization that bears the imprint of its own genius. Ethnologically connected to the hardy stock of the north, but more easily accessible and receptive to the civilizing and cultural influences of the south. As a result of Nepal's achievement in assimilating influences to its national features while maintaining its own uniqueness and balance, its national culture is a synthesis of numerous influences from both the north and south as well as from other places (Mathias, 1980, p. 975). Additionally, Sharma outlines Nepal's foreign policy priorities and presenting to the world through UNGA for the first time in history, as presented in the UNGA in 1958 goes:

“...without pitting one neighbor against the other, Nepal is eager to contribute in its own modest manner to the upkeep of friendliness and goodwill between the two neighbors. All nations in the globe should have the warmest relations with Nepal...”

The speech vigorously sketches out what and were Nepal's national interests were and how they could be achieved. He begins with simple political phrases for salutation of the distinguished delegates of the world. Nepali representative Chuda Prasad Sharma applauds that Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and the other continents are not separate continents, but rather one continent where the trees and flowers bloom and fade, the earth is laden with grain and harvested, the rivers cheer and gladden the plain, and the sun, moon, and stars can be seen. There has never been an incident in Asia that did not have implications in Europe or America. This is what Nepali people and government have kept in mind. He asserts that they have urged us to be more valuable to our nation by

cooperating intelligently with the United Nations on a level beyond the petty bickering of politics and power blocs.

Likewise, B. P. Koirala in the UNGA, 1960, the first ever prime minister of Nepal who was elected by the popular vote after the installation of democracy in the country, led a team of delegates to the United Nation in 1960 (Chhetry, 2010). He proceeds through considerate words in order to convince the international community that Nepal was trading the course of democracy. He terms Nepal as one of the small uncommitted nations of the world during the Cold war. He emphasizes the strength of number of the member states and treats the people of the world as the peoples of the United Nations. He sees challenges of the states of the world in securing political independence, preserving sovereignty and security, and promoting international peace and co-operation. He states:

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 co-operation. The foreign policy of Nepal is wholly inspired by the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. 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. We look upon the United Nations as an instrument for promoting peace and justice among nations. It is our firm conviction that an enduring peace and a stable world order can be achieved only on the basis of freedom and justice. To this end we wish to co-operate with other nations within the framework of this Organization.

He is well aware of not only the economic and military might of his country, but of its responsibility to the global community too. He cautiously chooses the varieties of the words and sentence structures catching the tempo of the semantic and symbiotic essence of the entire corpus. PM Koirala acknowledges in front of international leaders that the true answer to the world's issues, particularly the problem of global peace and prosperity, rests in strengthening and expanding the power of the United Nations. This authority will be increased and fortified as he progresses if the judgments of the United Nations are faithfully and loyally recognized by all Powers, large and small. In carrying out these judgments, we must remain faithful to the spirit of man, regardless of race, region, or nation. Nepal, he explains, would prefer the United Nations to evolve along these lines and will support measures that it believes will further these goals.

In 1968, Prime minister Kirti Nidhi Bista in UNGA, *New York* outlined the current global incidents during 1960s statements. The Vietnam War, Civil Rights Protests, assassinations of US Presidents John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and eventually the first moon landing brought an end to the turbulent 1960s. However, he concentrates on the world peace and unity. The United Nations Charter and system are much respected in Nepal, and nothing would make Nepal happier than to see them strengthened and made more universal. His delegation fervently hopes that nations like Germany, Korea, and Vietnam, who are split against their choice, would one day be free to live in peace and harmony without intervention from the outside world. The sooner these countries occupy their proper positions inside the UN, the better for the UN, for them, and for the rest of the world.

He admires the human excellence achieved till then. The incredible accomplishments of the American astronauts, remind that so perfectly that the super-Powers are on the verge of conquering space. The super-Powers have made enormous strides in both obtaining stronger means of destruction and acquiring greater means of advancement.

PM Bista discusses the major issues confronting the world today in a nutshell. Nepal adopts a strategy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence in international affairs. He emphasizes Nepal's viewpoint and attitudes toward these difficulties, which are primarily influenced by these principles, which Nepal has accepted not for pragmatic reasons, but because they are an article of religion for Nepal. Similarly, he demonstrates Nepal's firm belief in the ideals and goals of the United Nations Charter. Nepal is adamant that the future of humanity can only be secured by the concentrated and undivided efforts of everyone in the United Nations. He urges fellow global leaders to join him in this goal and work together to make the United Nations an effective tool for international peace and prosperity.

Similarly, Sailendra Kumar Upadhyay in 1988, delivered his speech at the UNGA in New York. In his speech, Mr Upadhyay initiates with the brilliant sense of hope i.e., '...we meet today in an atmosphere of renewed hope...' through which he propels his motifs in front of the global leaders that Nepal, albeit relatively small in geography, economy and military, has proven to be one of the leading active global actors in every front. He offers the domestic affairs in acutely intellectual manner. His choices of words are tacit in meaning and expressive in messages. From welcoming foreign aids to catering the pious act of peace keeping

across the world, he demonstrates the urgency of the time through chronological patterns of historical development of world affairs. He was addressing the UNGA when Nepal was elected for Non-permanent Member of the UN Security Council for the second time. Constricted phrases, figurative sentences and merged paragraphs have expressed the entire gamut of what he actually intended to speak.

Upadhyay promises the world leaders of Nepal's unwavering support and cooperation for the sake of world peace and humanity. He advocates Nepal's continued participation in any concerted effort aimed at realizing the noble goals of the United Nations Organization, arguing that the UN is not only an accurate mirror of an ever-changing world, but also the most effective international agent for bringing about timely, peaceful, and meaningful change.

Conclusion

The investigation of Nepal's Diplomacy through rhetorics discloses the fact that diplomatic language is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships between states. Diplomatic language helps to communicate ideas and positions in a way that is respectful and non-offensive, which can help to build trust and cooperation between nations.

Diplomatic language is also critical for resolving conflicts between states. By using non-inflammatory language, diplomats can help to de-escalate tensions and promote constructive dialogue, which can lead to peaceful resolutions of disputes. It's used by diplomats to represent the interests of their respective states in negotiations and other international forums. Using diplomatic language can help to ensure that the interests of the state are effectively communicated and protected.

It is an essential tool for promoting international cooperation on issues such as trade, security, and human rights. By using respectful and constructive language, diplomats can help to foster a spirit of cooperation and collaboration that is essential for addressing global challenges. It is crucial for promoting effective communication, building and maintaining relationships, and resolving conflicts between states. By using diplomatic language, diplomats can help to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the international community.

Without a doubt, language forms the fundamental framework of diplomacy. Depending on the resources allotted to diplomacy in their different countries, statesmen get varying degrees of training in the

local language and culture of the foreign country where they would be stationed. Politicians, in addition to career foreign service officials, do engage in international talks. Many members of the latter category could be lacking the knowledge or intercultural skills necessary to interact with other countries in a respectful way. However, there must be both some cultural sensitivity and conscious use of that sensitivity in order for there to be global discourse.

These formal exchanges between the parties have their roots in national and state customs. The idea behind a language of diplomacy, however, is that it shouldn't be culture-bound but rather an effort to overcome such frontiers to provide a generally neutral communication vehicle; a vehicle of interchange that transmits the message while appearing to be the least ego-damaging. When letters took weeks or even months to reach their recipients, this was just as important then as it is now. The need for polite, diplomatic language has not diminished as a result of how mass communication and transportation have altered diplomacy in modern times.

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**A READER'S OBSERVATION ON *FOUR DIPLOMATS*
BY DR. MADAN KUMAR BHATTARAI**

Rajendra Pandey ¹

In the current century, marked by unpredictable and uncertain foreign affairs and diplomacy, books that delve into the experiences of senior diplomats play a crucial role in enhancing, grooming, and excelling in the realms of international relations, foreign policy, foreign affairs, geopolitics, geostrategy, and diplomacy for a country like Nepal. These books provide invaluable insights into the intricate world of diplomacy, shedding light on the challenges, successes, and failures faced by seasoned diplomats who have navigated complex international landscapes. By studying these experiences, aspiring diplomats and policymakers in Nepal can gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies and nuances involved in conducting successful diplomacy.

A book on senior diplomats' experiences offers a pragmatic perspective on the decision-making processes, negotiations, and strategic thinking involved in foreign policy formulation—*Four Diplomats* (2023), scribed by one of the bona fide foreign secretaries and exalted ambassadors of Nepal, Madan Kumar Bhattarai (PhD, D'Litt.), has shed adequate light on Nepal's recent diplomatic history. It provides a wealth of knowledge and practical wisdom that can be applied to contemporary diplomatic challenges. In an era characterized by shifting alliances, emerging power dynamics, and unconventional threats, the wisdom shared by experienced diplomats can help Nepalese policymakers navigate the changing landscape with greater agility and foresight.

Furthermore, the book offers valuable historical context and analysis of pivotal diplomatic events, giving readers a deeper appreciation of the factors that shape global affairs. By studying the successes and failures of senior diplomats, Nepalese diplomats and policymakers can learn from past experiences, identify patterns, and develop effective strategies for promoting national interests and issues of strategic interests.

In addition, the book serves as a source of inspiration and motivation for

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the younger generation of diplomats in Nepal. They provide role models and mentors who exemplify the qualities of leadership, adaptability, and diplomacy. By learning from the experiences of these diplomats, aspiring Nepalese diplomats can gain invaluable insights into the practical aspects of diplomacy, such as negotiation techniques, cultural understanding, and effective communication skills.

Moreover, the unpredictable nature of contemporary foreign affairs and diplomacy requires diplomats to be agile, innovative, and adaptable. By studying the experiences of senior diplomats who have navigated complex and uncertain situations, Nepalese diplomats can learn valuable lessons on crisis management, conflict resolution, and maintaining national interests amidst global uncertainties.

In fact, books on senior diplomats' experiences hold immense significance for Nepal in the current century characterized by unpredictable and uncertain foreign relation dynamics. They provide a treasure trove of knowledge, practical wisdom, and historical context that can enhance, groom, and excel in international relations, foreign policy, foreign affairs, geopolitics, geostrategy, and diplomacy. By learning from the experiences of senior diplomats, Nepalese diplomats and policymakers can navigate the complexities of the global stage with greater insight, adaptability, and strategic thinking, ultimately contributing to Nepal's diplomatic success and its pursuit of national interests in an ever-changing world. Hence, former diplomats can play several key roles on behalf of Nepal to navigate geopolitical traps. Some of these roles include:

Strategic Advisers: Former diplomats possess extensive experience and knowledge in international relations. They can serve as strategic advisers to the government, offering insights on complex geopolitical issues, emerging international trends, analyzing risks and opportunities, and formulating diplomatic strategies to safeguard Nepal's interests.

Negotiators: Former diplomats can be engaged as negotiators in international forums and bilateral or multilateral negotiations. Their diplomatic skills and understanding of diplomatic protocols can help Nepal in resolving disputes, advancing its agenda, and securing favorable outcomes in negotiations.

Diplomatic Envoys: Former diplomats can be appointed as special envoys to represent Nepal in diplomatic missions or other countries with specific responsibility. They can engage with foreign governments, international organizations, and key stakeholders to promote Nepal's interests, address

challenges, and build diplomatic alliances and network and express the position of Nepal abroad.

Track II Diplomacy: Track II diplomacy involves informal, non-governmental dialogues and discussions to facilitate better understanding and resolve conflicts. Former diplomats can initiate and participate in Track II initiatives, fostering dialogue, trust-building, and conflict resolution between Nepal and other nations or regional actors.

Public Diplomacy and Advocacy: Former diplomats can engage in public diplomacy efforts, representing Nepal at international conferences, seminars, and events. They can communicate Nepal's positions, promote its culture, tourism, and economic opportunities, and advocate for Nepal's interests on global platforms.

Capacity Building and Training: Former diplomats can contribute to enhancing Nepal's diplomatic capacity by providing training, mentoring, and sharing their expertise with current diplomats. This can include conducting workshops, seminars, and specialized training programs on diplomatic skills, negotiation techniques, and crisis management.

Policy Advisers: Former diplomats can serve as policy advisers to the government, offering recommendations and guidance on foreign policy formulation and implementation. They can contribute insights on regional dynamics, emerging trends, and potential opportunities or threats to Nepal's geopolitical position.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation: Former diplomats can leverage their experience in conflict resolution and mediation to assist in resolving internal or external disputes involving Nepal. They can act as impartial facilitators, helping parties find common ground and peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Cultural Diplomacy: Former diplomats can promote cultural diplomacy by showcasing Nepal's rich heritage, arts, and traditions abroad. They can organize cultural events, exhibitions, and exchanges, fostering people-to-people connections, and enhancing Nepal's soft power on the global stage.

Crisis Management and Emergency Response: Former diplomats can provide valuable insights and guidance during times of crisis or emergencies. They can assist in coordinating international assistance, managing diplomatic communications, and ensuring the protection of Nepal's national interests in challenging situations.

Development Diplomacy: Former diplomats have a good understanding of both sending and receiving countries including the knowledge of global context. They can play an important part on trade promotion, tourism expansion, aid assistance programs among others.

It's important to note that these roles can vary based on the specific expertise and interests of former diplomats, as well as the priorities and needs of the Nepalese government.

In this light, *Four Diplomats* has shed adequate light on Nepal's recent diplomatic history. The four diplomats in this volume are no other than Ram Prasad Manandhar, Shobhagjang Thapa, Padmabahadur Khatri and Jharendranarayan Singh.

This volume hardly carries pure biographical details of these veteran diplomats. They, of course, share some common diplomatic prowess they had earned and honed in long course of time through the posts they achieved, through missions they were assigned to and through the line of duties they were deployed for. However, they were the stalwarts of different spheres. Among the four senior diplomats, Ram Prasad Manandhar and Major General Shobhagjang Thapa represented the beginning of a formative period in the political background of the 1951-59 period government and the modern perspective of Nepal's foreign policy. Two other foreign secretaries, Major General Padmabahadur Khatri and Jharendranarayan Singh entered the service during the Rana period, but they were diplomats who played a special role during the non-partisan system. There are many similarities and differences between these diplomats in Nepal's foreign relations.

Thapa, who served as Defense Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Chief Secretary twice, retired as part of the administrative reorganization in early 1961 with the demise of the multi-party system. He was solitary and fun-loving and did not take any public responsibility after his retirement. Not only that, he did not show any thought or activism to handle any political or constitutional responsibility except for the symbolic position of a member of the Raj Sabha. And spent a long life in complete retirement. He did not participate in any public event except the felicitation program given in his honor.

The author has tailored his prosaic eloquence and mosaic renderings to emphasize their contributions, to underpin their sacrifices, to exalt their rhetorics and to retribute their impact between the lines. All the four diplomats, Bhattarai portrays, represented Nepal's diplomacy as a bridge

between the administration of the Rana period and the post-democracy period. All four had the experience of serving in the first embassy of Nepal in the embassy in London. Manandhar was in the United Kingdom as a counselor for a few years from 1949 and as an ambassador from 1956. Thapa was initially the head of the Nepali mission in British India when his father Chandrajang Thapa was the head of the mission and later became the head of the said office. In 1934, he was the head of the Nepali Mission until he was upgraded to the Consulate General of the Nepali Diplomatic Office in New Delhi. Later, he became the first military attaché at the Nepali Embassy in London. Khatri was the military attaché of the Nepali Embassy in London, which was opened at the beginning of the reign of Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer (1932-1945), and was the liaison officer (liaison officer) on behalf of the Government of Nepal at the liaison office of the British security unit, the Brigade of Gurkhas in Malaya at the time.

All four foreign secretaries had a deep understanding of the period known as the “special relationship” in the context of Nepal-India relations. To some extent, Manandhar and Thapa, who held the position of foreign secretaries for a brief period, were involved in shaping this relationship. Khatri's involvement, on the other hand, was associated with his senior position in the Ministry of Defence. Despite being at a junior level, Singh has consistently been engaged in the various ups and downs of this extensively discussed and even controversial relationship, including participating in high-level exchanges between the two countries. Following the conclusion of the special relationship, both Khatri and Singh continued to actively contribute to diplomatic endeavors as foreign secretaries. The extent of Manandhar's diplomatic work as an ambassador was extensive and far-reaching. During his time as a non-resident ambassador of Nepal to Europe, the United States, including the then Soviet Union, his responsibilities encompassed maintaining relations with the United Kingdom. This exceptional record is one that only a few diplomats in the world can boast of.

Manandhar held various important positions such as counselor, foreign secretary, and education secretary. However, his reputation primarily stemmed from his exceptional academic prowess and enlightened perspectives rather than his administrative skills. While he fulfilled his roles within the government, Manandhar's intellectual pursuits and deep knowledge were what truly distinguished him. His contributions to academia and his profound understanding of a wide range of subjects

were widely acknowledged.

Thapa and Khatri, on the other hand, were distinguished military veterans who had previously served as defense secretary and military assistant respectively. Despite their similar levels of education and extensive experience in military administration, their personalities and inclinations diverged greatly. Thapa was known for his directness, frankness, and occasional bluntness. He was unafraid to speak his mind and express his opinions openly, often providing a straightforward and no-nonsense approach to situations. In contrast, Khatri exhibited a more reserved demeanor. Bhattarai takes a closer look at the historical accuracy and meticulous researches on how they catered their tasks to their respective deployments. He spoke less, listened attentively, and was meticulous in observing people's emotions and adhering to proper etiquette. Khatri's preference for reading and contemplation allowed him to approach matters with thoughtfulness and introspection.

Singh, though not necessarily recognized as an intellectual or an administrative figure, possessed a moderate level of knowledge and expertise in matters of etiquette, cuisine, clothing, and traditional diplomacy. His familiarity with these cultural aspects played a significant role in his diplomatic endeavors. It is worth noting that Singh held a unique distinction among senior Nepalese diplomats as the only one who had the opportunity to work closely with four different kings: King Tribhuvan, King Mahendra, King Birendra, and King Gyanendra. This experience provided him with invaluable insights into the intricacies of Nepalese monarchy and its impact on diplomatic affairs, contributing to his understanding of the historical and cultural context in which he operated.

Overall, Manandhar's reputation rested on his academic excellence and intellectual pursuits. Thapa and Khatri, despite their shared military background, possessed contrasting personalities, with Thapa being forthright and frank, and Khatri being more observant and introspective. Singh, while not an intellectual or administrator in the conventional sense, possessed knowledge and expertise in cultural matters and had the rare distinction of serving under four Nepalese kings. Together, these individuals brought diverse perspectives, experiences, and skills to their respective roles in the Nepalese government and diplomatic sphere.

Thus, Bhattarai takes the readers to explore the captivating world of four prominent diplomats through the chapters he has organized. He dives

into the thought-provoking themes and messages conveyed in the book. The art of writing a book on diplomats' experiences lies in capturing the authentic essence of diplomatic life. The author must conduct thorough research, drawing from firsthand accounts, interviews, and historical events to provide accurate and realistic portrayals of diplomatic challenges, negotiations, and cultural exchanges. By incorporating genuine details, the book can transport readers into the diplomatic world, making them feel immersed in the experiences. One effective approach is to weave personal narratives throughout the book.

By sharing individual diplomats' experiences, readers gain insight into their motivations, dilemmas, and emotional journeys. These personal narratives create a human connection and allow readers to empathize with the diplomatic professionals, making the book more relatable and engaging. Ultimately, the art of writing a book on diplomats' experiences lies in presenting a nuanced and compelling narrative that combines authenticity, personal narratives, insightful analysis, and engaging storytelling. By capturing the essence of diplomatic life and offering readers a glimpse into this unique world, Madan Kumar Bhattarai has excelled his art of illustration in this book which can both educate and inspire, shedding light on the challenges, triumphs, and importance of diplomacy in our interconnected global society.

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