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**Enter to Neo-Realist Era?
Major Trends of Nepali Diplomacy in Federal Republic Era**

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Abstract

Nepal entered to federal republic era after promulgation of new constitution in 2015. An alliance of communist parties – now unified into a single party, Nepal Communist Party (NCP) – obtained nearly two-third majority in 2017 legislative election. Four major diplomatic activities of in this new era are remarkable: frequent visit of high level delegates to Nepal, diversification of foreign relations, military exchange in bilateral and multilateral sector, and active participation in strategic projects of global superpowers. Where Nepal is emphasizing in its foreign relations? What is the Nepal government's interpretation with new changes? This study examines these questions to identify and access Nepal's contemporary foreign policy. It, moreover, examines whether we can interpret these change based on (neo) realist perspective - a predominant worldview in interpreting Nepal's role and position in international relations.

Keywords

Foreign policy, geo-strategy, diplomacy, military exercise, BRI,

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Introduction

Chinese president Xi Jinping visited Nepal in October 2019. It was the first visit by a Chinese president to Nepal in 23 years since Jiang Zemin visited in 1996. Likewise Nepal had several international events in recent year's which attract interest of both domestic and international watchers. The issue of continuity or reorientation of foreign policy of Nepal often discussed in each events. Unlike public and media debate, there is not enough academic inquiry on contemporary trends of Nepal's foreign policy. This study aims to fill this gap.

A deep and systematic observation on major trends, patterns and shifts in Nepal's foreign policy is necessary for further research on Nepal's foreign policy and international relations. Often, the discussion on issue of Nepal's foreign policy is dominated by predictive analysis such as Nepal's role as balancer, Nepal as buffer zone for power game and so forth. For both identification of causes and future prediction, we need proper understanding on overall phenomenon: the dependent variable of the research. This study examines the recent trends in two steps: major events of foreign relations in federal era and identification of newness and focus.

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter two reviews the major arguments on trends of Nepali foreign policies. It also provides Nepal's changing context and domestic politics in recent years – which are keys for continuity and change in foreign relations. The major events of foreign policy in federal republic era, particularly during K.P. Oil's government, are presented in chapter 3. The newness of foreign policy and Nepal's focus are examined in chapter 4. Chapter five concludes the study by summarizing main findings. It also discusses on relevancy of neo-realist centric interpretation of Nepal's contemporary foreign relations.

Literature Review: Why Expectation of New Foreign Policy?

The foreign policy of Nepal is guided by the abiding faith in the United Nations and policy of nonalignment. The basic principles guiding the foreign policy of the country include: Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; Non-interference in each other's internal affairs, Respect for mutual equality, Non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of dispute, Cooperation for mutual benefit (Nepal's Foreign Policy, 2015).

The discussion on Nepal's foreign policy is basically centered on the issue continuity & discontinuity of panchasil. B. N. Baral, (2018) has identified seven major trends of Nepal's foreign policy where he first stated the Independent foreign policy. It covered the tenure of Pritihivi Narayan Shah to Nepal's involvement in war with Tibet and British in 1792 and 1814 respectively. In that period there is no any specific foreign policy. It was the process of unification so there was no specific foreign policy. It was depended upon the rulers own perspective.

He further discussed the policy of isolation as a second trend of Nepal's foreign policy. British India-centric foreign policy had introduced in Nepal after Sugauli Treaty. Jung Bahadur's rise in power after KotParva on the night of September 14, 1846 established Rana rule and resulted in a major redefinition of Nepal's foreign policy (Lamsal, 2017, p. 4). Nepalese Rana Rule was more centric only in British India and to protect and promote their rule. During Rana days Nepal was thus isolated

from the current of world opinion, parochial conservatism, distrust and doubt- all these elements cast their weight on the foreign policy in the past (Khanal, 2000, p. 2).

Baral further discussed the policy of special relation as another trend of Nepali foreign policy. The political change of 1950 brought 104 years old Rana oligarchy into an end. The newly introduced democratic system paved new pattern in foreign policy outlook. However, Nepal's external relations during king Tribhuwan's rule were dominated by India. The two countries were described as having had "special relation" with each other (Muni, 2016, p. 59). Being as similar geography, culture and religion relations between two countries is popular as relation of "Roti Beti".

The tie of special relation between Rana ruler and British India was rooted during Rana rule. After British departure from sub-continent, no substantial changes occurred in the situation. Signing of tripartite agreement providing for the British recurrent of the Gurkha soldiers in India, peace and friendship treaty of 1950, extradition treaty with India in 1953 etc. were the major events to have special relation with India (K.C. 2072, p. 1-22).

The fourth trend of Nepal foreign policy as Baral mentioned about non-alignment foreign policy. The devastating Second World War brought sea changes in world politics. The pre-war friends started to form their own alliances just after the post war international relations. Nepal also witnessed a new chapter in its foreign policy. An important political development that contributed to the new state of affairs was king Mahendra's coming to power. Two outstanding events took immediately after the accession of king Mahendra to the throne on March 13, 1955. One was Nepal's admission to the United Nations and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the communist Chinese government (Rose, 1971:208). The year 1955 was to be the most significant year in Nepal's foreign policy. Another was Nepal's participation in Afro-Asian conference held at Bandung later paved the way for Nepal's non-aligned foreign policy. It was Bandung conference which provided the bases for nonalignment movement in the form of principles of Panchasheel.

According to Baral, the fifth trend of Nepali foreign policy is considered as The most important and original strategic policy adopted by Nepal in order to project its changing security was the proposal of Zone of Peace. When king Birendra ascended the throne of Nepal, he introduced new foreign policy decision to declare Nepal as a 'Zone of Peace'. The concept was first mooted in 1973 at the non-aligned summit held at Algiers. It was formally forwarded at the coronation ceremony of king Birendra held in Kathmandu on 25 February 1975 (Sharma 2006). The proposal was mostly based on the spirit of nonalignment and principles of Panchasheel. So, it received overwhelming support from 116 countries (Srivastav, 2016).

Baral mentioned the policy of equidistance /equi-proximity as sixth trend of Nepali foreign policy. In course of dealing with foreign policy matters, Nepal's geopolitical and geostrategic location has obligated it to adopt a balance policy with its immediate neighbors. Nepalese foreign policy was under the dominance of India till mid-1950s. Nepal's entry into global environment was opened after its membership in UNO in 1955. The then king Mahendra adopted the policy of maintaining equal relation between India and China.

During the Panchayat Period, Nepal had emphasized the policy of equidistance regarding its relation with the two immediate neighbours. After 1990, the concept of equi-proximity was introduced to justify the closeness with Nepalese power centers basically with immediate neighbours. According to Dhruva Kumar as quoted by Dahal (2009) the term "equiproximity" as "a conception guaranteeing a balanced relationship with both India and China.

The last trend of Nepali foreign policy as Baral mentioned about the Nepal and Trilateral Cooperation. Although, globalization has created inter-dependency and countries are unable to exist and develop in isolation, still the politics of power and hegemony discourages the interest of small powers on an equal footing. Nepal has been experiencing the direct impact of enmity, cooperation and competition of India and china. Their relation is full of enmity, cooperative and competitive from the point of view of border, trade and strategic issues (khanal, 2073).

Nepal's Changing Political Context

Nepalese foreign policy choice has remained changing. The tendency to change foreign policy tilt with every change in government has posed difficulty for Nepal to maintain internal cohesion and external adaptation (B. N. Baral, 2018)

Since the Rana regime was overthrown almost 70 years ago, governments have changed 42 times and the Nepali state desperately needs a semblance of permanence. Carrying forward the optimism seen during the elections, with almost uniform focus on economic growth by all parties, Oli has made some good early choices in picking ministers with clean image and technocratic abilities. This has gone down well with the public (Nepal, 2018).

Henry Kissinger once said

“For centuries, Nepal skillfully balanced its diplomatic posture between the ruling dynasties in China and those in India- offering letters and gifts that were interpreted as tribute in China but recorded as evidence of equal exchanges in Nepal, then holding out a special tie with China as a guarantee of Nepal’s independence via- a-vis India” (Acharaya, 2019).

None of the majority governments since 1958 has survived full term. Major reasons are intra-party feuds and personal rivalry of leaders. KP Sharma Oli’s two-thirds majority government stands on complex relationship among top five leaders Oli himself, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam (Bhusal, 2019).

The Oli administration is arguably the strongest government Nepal has had since 1990. It wields de facto control over the legislature, executive, the judiciary and the security agencies. In addition, the constitutional organs are heavily influenced by the Prime Minister’s Office. With a two-thirds majority, the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is virtually opposition less (Editorial, 2018)

Development and diplomacy should have moved toward a “paradigm shift” in Nepal with the new constitution and a stable national government with an overwhelming majority in power for almost a year. Given the democratic change, decentralized power and rising expectation of people to gain concrete delivery from the three levels of government, interest to support Nepal and invest in our people-friendly development plan has risen in international community. But it requires sound diplomacy and enhanced engagement with multilateral and bilateral partners for better implementation of programs and projects (Pudasaini, 2019).

Nepal has been conducting foreign policy at three levels. At the bilateral level, maintaining and transforming historic friendly relation with its immediate neighbors, China and India, to a new level of trust and confidence in context of security resolution, social, economic and political co-operation are major factors. The most important thing that Nepal has to think while defining foreign policy objectives, is the strength and size of its economy and military power to that of its giant immediate neighbors, China and India (Pant & Mainali, 2017).

The KP Oli’s government has made ‘diversification’ a central plank of its foreign policy. But what does it mean? Talking to APEX, former foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey said there is no such thing as diversification in foreign policy. As far as sovereign countries are concerned, they only have national interests. Pandey does not get how enhancing relations with marginal countries like Costa Rica, Cambodia and Vietnam will protect Nepal’s interests. The government does not see it that way (B. Baral, 2019).

Pradeep Gyawali took the reins of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after Nepal concluded its historical elections under the new constitution in November-December 2017. With a stable government, which recently completed its one year, after more than two and a half decades of political instability, Nepal is trying to redefine and consolidate its foreign policy vis-à-vis its immediate neighbors well as the world, as it strives to achieve economic development (Giri & Satginya, 2019).

The political instability resulting from fractured inter/intra-party domestic politics has always been a barrier to the economic prosperity of Nepali people. The new government should now focus on achieving unwavering political stability. This is a great opportunity for Prime Minister Oli and the alliance to turn their commitment in manifesto to reality, more precisely fulfilling a long-awaited dream of the Nepali voters - economic prosperity (KC, 2018).

Addressing the event, Oli said that national interest is at the center of foreign policy of Nepal. "We want to have friendly ties with all countries around the world including our immediate neighbors on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual benefit, mutual trust and goodwill," he said (Xinhua, 2019).

The report has also advised that political parties should not use foreign policy as a tool for political gains, such as exhibiting ‘tilt’ towards certain foreign power for electoral gains, because such activities would result in polarization and would be against the national interest. The report also includes measures to tackle security issues, both at internal and external levels (Nepal, 2018).

The trend of diplomatic visit in Nepal is also rising. These two way visit by diplomats also proved the significant of Nepal's geo-politics. Nepal's involvement in mega project like Belt and Road Initiative, Millennium Multi Corporation, is a part of economic diplomacy and engaged in joint military exercise in the name of 'Suriya Kiran', 'Sagarmatha Friendship', 'Shanti Prayash' is another phenomenon of Nepalese foreign policy that add bricks through military cooperation.

After the 1990, there is a stable government with two third majorities and of course people have dreams of Prosperous Nepal and happy Nepali. People understand that this government will bring change in every sector because of the longevity of government. People were fed up with the short term government where they could do nothing. This is one reason that people are watching government's each and every activity very closely.

As Nepal has adopted a federal system of government, the country needs to redefine its foreign policy according to the changing scenario. Nepal has to determine its foreign policy considering geneses like history, geography, culture, economy, politics, demography, language, religion and military capability. Ever since Nepal has adopted the strategy of "yam between the two boulders", this unique geo-strategic location has shaped and guided the country's foreign policy (Pant & Mainali, 2017).

So, the questions arise that Where Nepal is emphasizing in its foreign relations? What is the Nepal government's interpretation with new changes? This study examines these questions to identify and access Nepal's contemporary foreign policy. It, moreover, examines whether we can interpret these change based on (neo) realist perspective - a predominant worldview in interpreting Nepal's role and position in international relations. This study examines these questions to identify and access Nepal's contemporary foreign policy.

Major Events of Foreign Policy in Federal Republic Era

The contemporary Nepalese foreign policy has been analyzed here on the basis of fast changing national, regional and global milieu. With the beginning of the 21st century, a number of important and unprecedented changes have occurred in Nepalese politics. The post April 2006, in particular, witnessed many revolutionary changes. Nepal has promulgated the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 through the 2nd Constituent Assembly (Dahal, 2018).

Due to globalization, privatization and liberalization the global is become a global village and the world is changing rapidly. However these changes are seen in national as well as international politics and Nepal is not far behind from these changes. If we talk about the foreign policy of recent era, yes Nepal has its direct and indirect impact in contemporary foreign policy. Especially after becoming a federal republic, Nepal is presenting its active participation in world order.

EPG: Active Meeting, Inactive Implementation

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG), consisting of relevant experts from India and Nepal, was formed in early 2016 to review all the bilateral treaties and agreements between the two countries including the controversial 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. This is one of the best plate form where both

countries can review and resolving various bilateral issues through dialogue. This EPG is led by parliamentarian Bhagat Singh Koshyari, a senior leader of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, from India and the by Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, a former foreign affairs and finance minister from Nepal.

The group was entrusted with putting together a mutually agreed document within two years, suggesting ways to strengthen bilateral ties in view of evolving regional dynamics and the world order. The EPG has the mandate to look into five broad areas of bilateral relations—politics, government-to-government ties, development cooperation, economic deals, and cultural relations. The formation of the EPG was first agreed to during the Nepal visit of PM Modi in August 2014 (The Kathmandu Post, 2018).

After nine rounds of meetings and more than two years of deliberations, the EPG finalized a joint report at the end of June 2018 and that was to be submitted to the prime ministers of India and Nepal. The meeting was ended with important recommendations including the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty, new regulations for Indo-Nepal border crossing and measures to control trafficking and terrorism, among others. However the report has been prepared and shared with both government heads, the Indian side is not pleased with the recommendations of the report (Nepali Sansar, 2019).

The formulation of EPG itself a good start to review our foreign policy. However there is still doubt to implementation of its recommendation but formulation of EPG and its continuous meeting is a milestone in Nepalese foreign policy.

Revival of BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising of seven member states in South Asia and Southeast Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. It comprises of seven member countries: five deriving from South Asia -- including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka -- and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand (India Today, 2018).

BIMSTEC Summit is the highest policymaking body in BIMSTEC process and is comprised of heads of state/government of Member States. The Sixth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held in Thailand in 2004 decided to hold the Summit every two years as far as possible. So far, four Summits have been held in 2004, 2008, 2014 and 2018 respectively. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit was held in Kathmandu on 30-31 August 2018. The Summit was chaired by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K. P. Sharma Oli. The Summit was attended by the Heads of State (Myanmar and Sri Lanka) and the Heads of Government (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Thailand) of the BIMSTEC member states. The Summit deliberated on the existing status of cooperation under BIMSTEC and took number of decisions to gear up the regional process. The Summit was held under the theme “Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region”. With the conclusion of the Summit, the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC was handed over to Sri Lanka (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

SAF Games and Soft Power

The South Asian Games formerly known as South Asian Federation Games are a biennial multi-sport event held among the players and athletes from South Asia. The governing body of these games is South Asia Olympic Council (SAOC), was formed in 1983. In 2004 SAG are joined by eight members namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Srilanka, Afghanistan and India. Later Afghanistan left the organization in 2016.

The 2019 South Asian Games, officially the XIII South Asian Games, is a major multi-sport event which was originally slated to be held from 9 to 18 March 2019 in Kathmandu and Pokhara, Nepal. However, the dates were postponed and the event was held from 1–10 December 2019. The 13th edition of the SA Games ended on a high for the hosts as Nepal bagged record 51 gold medals apart from 59 silver and 94 bronze medals — 204 in total, crossing the three-figure mark for the first time. Nepal finished second behind all-time champions India, who bagged 174 golds, along with 93 silver and 45 bronze medals (Acharaya, 2019). To held successful SAF games is another phenomenon of soft power.

Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

In this republic era, Nepal has steeped in bilateral and multilateral relation with in the many nations. Nepal's involvement in those relations is the sign of activeness its role in global arena. These roles are not only in economic cooperation but also engaged in strategic partnership. Here is some significant cooperation with its global partner.

Belt and Road Initiative and Nepal

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 involving infrastructure development and investments in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas and up to now, 80 plus countries and international organizations have signed a hundred cooperative memoranda with China under this framework.

During the tenure of Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, Nepal became a founder member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; during the tenure of Prime Minister K.P. Oli, Nepal signed the transit treaty; during the tenure of Prime Minister of Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", Nepal joined the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative; and during the tenure of PM Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepal allocated budget for the Detailed Project Report for the railway line from China (Singh, 2019).

Fourth International Conference titled Belt and Road for Development and Prosperity of South Asia in the Kathmandu Foreign Minister Gyawali said Nepal intends to utilize the opportunities offered by BRI in the field of connectivity and development of mega infrastructures. He emphasized the Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network and Nepal-China cross-border Railway has been included in the joint communiqué issued after the Second Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing (Koirala, 2019).

Recent Mil Exercise (Joint Mil Exercise/ Disaster Exercise)

Even before recent concerns that Myanmar may be seeking to develop nuclear weapons South Asia in general and Nepal in particular has been the most nuclear-locked region and nation in the world. South Asia has been described as the most dangerous place on earth. Some thinkers have since long talked and written about the possibility of Nepal becoming one of the central fronts in the global war of ideas.

Joint military exercise is conducted between security forces of Nepal and security forces of other nation such as India, China & US in different level to sharpen the professionalism and harness relation and culture. Joint military exercise is not only conducted in military purpose but it has also conducted with multilateral force in the field of disaster (Simkhada, 2019).

Surya Kiran Joint Military Exercise

Surya Kiran' is the joint military exercise conducted between Indian & Nepalese Army. The first 'Surya Kiran' exercise was conducted on 2011 at Vairengate, India. This exercise is conducted alternatively in India and Nepal. "This is the 14th edition of the joint military exercise 'Surya Kiran' is conducted alternatively in India and Nepal. The purpose of this bilateral exercise is to conduct a battalion-level combined training between the Indian and Nepalese Army to improve interoperability at a military level in jungle warfare, counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations (*The Economic Times*, 2019)

A joint military drill of the special forces of Nepal Army and Chinese People's Liberation Army kicked off here in Kathmandu on Sunday. Focusing on tactics of counter insurgency and counter terrorism, the 10-day military drill, named Sagarmatha Friendship 2017, is first of its kind between the armies of Nepal and China ("Nepal-China joint military drill kicks off," 2017).

The Nepali Army has said the joint military exercise with China is a step towards preparations against the possible threat from terrorism. It maintains that the drill is a part of its regular bilateral and multilateral military exercises aimed at sharing experiences, skills and professional knowledge which it has been doing regularly with the nations that Nepal shares diplomatic ties (*The Economic Times*, 2019)

Exercise Shanti Prayash

With military personnel from 28 countries Exercise Shanti Prayas III, a multinational military exercise hosted by Nepal Army and United States Pacific Command, kicked off at the Nepal Army's Birendra Peace Operations Training Centre (BPOTC) in Panchkhal on Monday. Shanti Prayas III, a multinational peacekeeping exercise, kicked off yesterday with an opening ceremony at the Birendra Peace Operations Training Center here. ("Exercise Shanti Prayash III Kicks off," 2017).

The main purpose of that exercise was to strengthen the professionalism of troops especially for UN peace keepers, where those troops have to work with multination force in adverse situation and environment.

Foreign Visit of Diplomats

Prime Minister K. P Sharma Oli and his ministries have done historical & remarkable foreign visit after he took his office. Given below is the list of foreign visit, where Oli government had signed with various agreements to enhance the economic development of Nepal. The given table 1 showed delegates visited to Nepal and vice versa.

Table: 1
Foreign country Visited by Prime Minister

S.N	Dignitary	Date	Country
1.	Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi	11-12 May 2018	India
2.	Prime Minister Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi	5-6 March 2018	Pakistan
3.	Vice Premier Mr. Wang Yang	14-17 August 2017	China
4.	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Ivica Dacic	4-6 May 2018	Serbia
5.	External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj.	1-2 February 2018	India
6.	Minister for International Development Mr. Nikolai Astrup	6-7 March 2018	Norway
7.	Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mr. Mark Lancaster	9-13 February 2018	United Kingdom
8.	Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign Commonwealth Office Mr. Mark Field	6-7 May 2018	United Kingdom
9.	Queen Mother of Bhutan Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck	8-25 March 2018	Bhutan
10.	Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn	20 October 2017	Thailand
11.	Princess Professor Dr. Chulabhorn Mahidol	30 April to 3 May 2018	Thailand

Source: - Report on Nepal's Foreign Policy 2017-2018

<https://mofa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Annual-Report-2017-18.pdf>

Table: 2
Outgoing Visits from Nepali Delegates

S.N.	Dignitary	Date	Country	Type of visit
1.	President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari	13-16 November 2017	United Arab Emirates	Official
2.	Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli	6-8 April 2018	India	State
3.	Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli	19-24 June 2018	China	Official

4.	Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba	23-27 August 2017	India	State
5.	Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba	19-24 September 2017	United States	Official (to participate in 72nd UNGA)
6.	Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba	25-28 September	Oman	Official
7.	Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	16-21 April	China	Official
8.	Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	11-12 June	Mongolia	Official (to participate in the conference of ITT LLDCs)
9.	Foreign Minister Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara	6-7 September 2017	China	Official

Source: - Report on Nepal's Foreign Policy 2017-2018

<https://mofa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Annual-Report-2017-18.pdf>

Diversification of countries and agenda

Since Nepal's diplomatic journey began in 1816 with the establishment of relations with Great Britain, it has made significant progress in developing, expanding and diversifying its international relations. As of now, it has tied diplomatic relations with 139 countries and maintains 36 diplomatic missions in different parts of the world. Nepal is an active member of the UN and specialized agencies, such as NAM, SAARC, BIMSTEC, WTO, IMF, World Bank and other international institutions. However, its diversified and expanded international relations have not been able to contribute notably in its socio-economic spheres for lack of specific foreign policy guidelines and clear national priorities (K.C, n.d.).

Data from the past two decades clearly show that Nepal's high-level engagements have been confined to its two immediate neighbors, and that they have mostly been one way. In this period, there have been frequent high-level visits from Nepal to India and China, but fewer reciprocal visits to Nepal. High-level visits from India to Nepal have increased in the past couple of years, but such visits to Nepal from China have become rarer (Bhattarai, 2019)

PM Oli's Address in World Economic Forum (WEF)

Prime Minister Right Honorable Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the session on 'Strategic Outlook on South Asia' at the 49th Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Switzerland, on January 23, 2019. Speaking at the Session, he highlighted the major political achievements of Nepal and stated that the political stability of the country had ensured an enabling environment for socio-economic development. The Prime Minister said that South Asia is rich in demographic dividend and has tremendous potentials for economic growth through regional cooperation. He underscored the

need for deeper cooperation especially in the areas of trade, investment, and connectivity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019)

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has claimed that Nepal has recently achieved political stability, appealing to the international community to get ready for 'deeper cooperation' in trade, investment and connectivity. Addressing a session titled 'Strategic Outlook on South Asia' during the annual meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos of Switzerland on Tuesday, the Prime Minister said the political stability of the country had ensured an enabling environment for socio-economic development (onlinekhabar, 2019).

Conclusion and Discussion

It is very hard to claim that Nepal has entered to neo-realist foreign policy. The realist theory basically explains the behavior of great and middle powers based on military power. States secure their survival through internal or external balancing – expansion of military power or alliance respectively. It is often claimed that Nepal is in the way of external balancing. This study concludes that neo-realist interpretation of Nepal's contemporary foreign policy is incomplete.

First, it is hard to claim that the direction of contemporary foreign policy has a unidirectional approach in identification of national enemy. Often the realist – mostly in case of external balancing – observation starts from a state's identification of an enemy. Nepal does not belong to this case. Second, unlike realist claim, national security is not in central issue of Nepal's contemporary foreign policy. In fact, economy (as in liberalism) and peace (as in idea in constructivism) are major principles of contemporary foreign policy.

This study has identified three major findings. First, Nepal has become active in foreign relations. Stability of the government and foreign minister explains this activism. On the other hand, they are related with Nepal's priority in economic development. As seen above, Nepal is not only active in strategic program of super powers for economic development but also have continuously focusing on soft power such as South Asian game, visit Nepal year 2020 and so forth. Second, diversification is key to understand Nepal's foreign policy in federal. It can be interpreted as newness of Oli's government's foreign policy. It has expanded relations with different actors in new different issues also. Third and finally it is hard to observe weight shift in foreign policy: in both actor and agendas. It is hard to see that it has shifted its priority in any specific actors or security issues as realist has claimed.

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