



The Nepali Army in Public Diplomacy

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Abstract

While describing the approach of 21st-century Public Diplomacy (PD), scholars, theorists, and practitioners have highlighted that dialogue-based or two-way communication is the most effective way of informing, engaging, and influencing a foreign audience in favor of a country's foreign policy. State and non-state actors are considered effective vehicles for conducting two-way communication. However, theorists, scholars, and practitioners have neglected the role of military power (hard power resource with soft power behavior as appropriate), which could be an effective tool of PD. In conformity with Nepal's peace-loving and cooperative identity projected into the international system, the Nepali Army (NA), essentially a hard power instrument, has demonstrated the ability to behave as a soft power apparatus which can be tailored to a coherent public diplomacy strategy in favor of the foreign policy of Nepal. Most importantly, because of global outreach and people-centric activities, the NA is capable and suitable tool for effectively handling PD activities to enhance the dignity and image of Nepal on the world stage. To explain the proposition qualitatively, this article undertakes an empirical investigation of the secondary data on the NA's global outreach and its people-centric activities. The findings of this article could be useful in broadening the "Public Diplomacy" theory, and subsequently as policy guidelines for the Government of Nepal.

Keywords: public diplomacy, foreign policy, national image, outreach, Nepali Army

Introduction

Public diplomacy (PD), a tool of foreign policy, primarily focuses on "winning the hearts and minds of foreign people" in favor of achieving the foreign policy objectives of the sponsoring state. Traditionally, countries have used PD to influence the behaviors of foreign people, sometimes in a coercive way also. But after the rich practical experience of the Americans and the coining of the concept of "soft power" in 1990 by Joseph Nye (Snow, 2009), the activities of PD are considered the realm of the state's soft power relationship. The term further gained increasing importance after 9/11 and can be considered a "renaissance of public diplomacy"

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in international relations. In recent times, most scholars are advocating the importance of establishing direct contact to foster two-way or dialogue-based interactions to promote long-term and selfless cooperation with the foreign public. Such an approach helps effectively understand, inform, and influence dimensions of PD to achieve foreign policy objectives.

The importance of PD in the contemporary world has also been underlined in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 (Ministry of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs [MLJPA], 2015) and the “Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2077). The “Foreign Policy 2077” of Nepal describes one of the most important PD Policies, as “to garner support, cooperation and goodwill of the international community by promoting the image and unique identity of the country as soft power through public diplomacy” (MOFA, 2077, p.29). The foreign policy of Nepal further highlights 28 strategies and action plans to achieve the PD policy objectives.

Nepal has created an image of a peace-loving and liberal democratic country, which defines Nepal’s identity in the anarchical international system. As per the constructivist perspective, the identity of Nepal navigates towards a cooperative environment in the international system. The image of a “peace-loving and democratic” country is the outcome of Nepal’s diplomatic activities, including the contribution of the NA to the maintenance of international peace and security displayed and performed in the global forum. If so, the guiding research questions shall be, can NA, the hard power of Nepal, be used in a soft power role? How can NA best perform public diplomacy roles?

In search of answers to these research questions, this article has been divided into four different sections. At first glance, this article delves into the concept that explains PD and provides foundational background for further investigation into the subject under study. Thereafter, this article brings into discussion the views of scholars and practitioners about the use of hard power instruments in soft power roles, and practices of other militaries in the field of PD. The third part examines the constructivist view on power. The fourth and last section examines the global outreach of the NA and different activities it has been conducting in foreign lands in favor of Nepal’s foreign policy objectives from a PD perspective. Finally, the article concludes with the assertion that the activities conducted by the NA beyond the border are consistent with the essence of PD, and should be termed “Nepal Army Public Diplomacy”.

A qualitative research method has been used to prove the possibility of utilization of the NA as a hard power instrument utilizing soft power and to establish a relationship between NA outreach activities beyond the national border and approaches of PD. To conduct a scientific inquiry on the utilization of hard power resources in soft power roles, this article has mostly depended on secondary data collected through books, journals, and articles. For the empirical investigation to establish the relationship between NA outreach activities (NA global outreach and people-centric activities) and dialogue-based two-way communication (PD Approach) with the foreign public, this article has relied on relevant reports, special reports on Nepal’s contribution to peacekeeping, conferences on UN peacekeeping, the NA reports, and policies in addition to books, journals, and articles. Most importantly, the unstructured and unrecorded conversations with senior officers of the NA, and the personal experience of the writer in this field acquired through participation in UN peacekeeping missions and the opportunity to serve

as the military advisor to the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations (UN) from 2017 to 2020 in New York added value to it.

Understanding the Concept of Public Diplomacy

Even though the term “Public Diplomacy (PD)” was coined in the sixties, its usage can be traced back to the invention of traditional diplomacy itself. For example, “in ancient times, prestige-conscious princes and their representatives never completely ignored the potential and pitfalls of public opinion in foreign lands” (Melissen, 2005, p.3). This can be traced back to the *Mahabharata* also where Pandavas were seen as very sensitive in their deeds and what they speak. Yudhishtira, in the middle of the war, proclaimed “Aswathama” was killed, but it was not clear whether he was referring to an animal or a human being when Dronacharya asked him about the death of his son Aswathama.

The use of activities that come within the realm of public diplomacy like propaganda, psychological operations, and public affairs could be observed in activities of traditional diplomacy in ancient, and modern times also. PD became more popular in the field of diplomacy after the term was coined by Edmund Gullion in 1965, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a distinguished retired Foreign Service officer (Cull, 2009). The Americans further developed and used the term PD immediately after it was coined. The Ronald Regan years saw both an increased expenditure on public diplomacy and a widening use of the term in congressional hearings, scholarship, journalism, and among practitioners (Cull, 2009). Scholars have used different terminologies in the domain of PD. Some are using psychological operations, others as propaganda, and others as a public information campaigns. The term was popularized further in America, Europe, and all around the world after 1990, more particularly after the 9/11 event. The invention of the term ‘soft power’ by Joseph Nye in the 1990s further helped to align PD activities with the soft-power realm. It assisted in delineating the boundaries of hard power, soft power, and smart power of a nation-state. In this delineation, PD was considered the activity of the soft power realm of the states.

In the quest of using and defining PD, different scholars and practitioners have defined it differently, and it has remained a contested concept. Consequently, it lacks a consensual definition. According to the University of Southern California’s Center on Public Diplomacy, it refers to “government-sponsored cultural, educational and informational programs, citizen exchanges and broadcasts used to promote the national interest of a country through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences” (Kilbane, 2009). Similarly, Sharp defines PD as “the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented” (Melissen, 2005, p.11). Even though scholars defined PD differently, most scholars have agreed that the public diplomacy of the 21st century is different from traditional diplomacy in the sense that it is conducted beyond the boundaries and venues of traditional foreign ministries and halls of power and requires interacting directly with foreign citizens (Duggan, 2012). In a similar vein, some argue that PD stands on two pillars; informing and creating an understanding of policies and ideologies. The first pillar is not new, but the second pillar demands a two-way process where a state tries to understand the policies of other states and at the same time tries to enhance comprehension of the policies of its own state. The policies range from “common academic

programs and exchanges, cultural cooperation, outreach programs, and tourism promotion, to the establishment of language institutes and the organization of cooperative scientific and artistic projects” (Swistek, 2012, p.80). Furthermore, emphasizing the effectiveness of PD, in “networked communication,” Joseph Nye argued in a recent piece entitled “The New Public Diplomacy” (Duggan, 2012, p.55) that one “can take advantage of two-way communications and peer-to-peer relations to overcome cultural differences” (Duggan, 2012, p.55). The focus of the contemporary PD rests on two-way communication where state actors and non-state actors can perform equally and effectively.

In Nepal’s context, it is difficult to trace the PD history because of the lack of written Foreign Policy documents. The first written Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077, encompasses PD policies and strategies and working policies. These policies and strategies provide a navigational vision for achieving Nepal’s Foreign Policy objectives through PD activities. Even though the Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077 introduces PD policies, it lacks a coherent and comprehensive strategy. The strategy must assess the capabilities of state actors and non-state actors, their tasking, and proper employment in PD policies. To conduct two-way communication with the foreign public, the NA could be an ideal instrument because of its outreach and persuasive and attractive activities in the global forum.

Can the Nepali Army be used in the Soft-Power Role?

Although the global outreach of the NA is quite extensive compared to other state and non-state institutions of Nepal and the people-centric activities are common across NA’s roles, the question here is whether NA, the hard power instrument of Nepal can be utilized in the soft power domain like PD? The question gains further significance because most practitioners, scholars, and politicians assume that the PD falls within the soft power domain in the power matrix. The soft power of a state primarily emanates from the culture of a country, values upheld, and ideology sustained whereas hard power is a sign of material and coercive power like military might.

Historically, the military power of a state had always been employed for waging a war, which in fact is a part of diplomacy. In this regard, Carl von Clausewitz a military theorist wrote, “war is the continuation of politics by other means” (Clausewitz, 1989), the military was always linked to the diplomatic realm but was never part of it (Swistek, 2012). States exercised military diplomacy through military attaches with a very narrow scope of collecting information related to defense, force structure, force employment techniques, understanding intentions, and coordinating training and exercise exchange programs. Moreover, thinkers, scholars, theorists, and practitioners have been thinking differently about the proper utilization of military power in the changing dynamics of international relations. The end of the Cold War, the event of 9/11, the Iraq war, the Afghanistan war, the revolution in Information and Communication Technology, and globalization have tremendously changed the edifice of the international system of the 21st century. Even though “foreign perceptions of the military’s soft power role evolved over the course of the Cold War, its relevance had been perceived in the years following the September 11 attacks” (Wallin, 2015, p.3).

The concept of National Security, which is at the heart of interactions among the states in the international system, has expanded and is now seen to include almost all aspects related to

human security and well-being. The ideas of “comprehensive security” or “national securities” have surfaced in international relations. In addition to traditional aspects of national security, aspects like human security, social security, environmental security, and cyber security all form elements of the contemporary national security system. Additionally, globalization has formed a web where states, groups, societies, and even individuals are interconnected and complexly interdependent. In such an environment, it is near impossible to delineate which tasks to be performed by whom, therefore interconnectedness and cooperation between military and civilian means and approaches are required (Swistek, 2012) to tackle the issues of national interest.

In addition to cooperation between civil and military to face challenges rising against national interests, hard power resources can be used with soft power behaviors at times. Differentiating between power resources and power behaviors, Nye, Jr. (2011) writes:

the resources often associated with hard power behavior can also produce soft power behavior depending on the context and how they are used. Command power can create resources that in turn can create soft power at a later phase. Similarly, co-optive behavior can be used to generate hard power resources in the form of military alliance or economic aid. A tangible hard power resource such as a military unit can produce both command behavior (by winning a battle) and co-optive behavior (by attracting) depending ... (p.21)

The participation of the NA in UN peacekeeping missions is a perfect example of this analogy. NA is a hard power resource for Nepal, organizing and operating with the militaries of other states under the UN flag is a kind of alliance (hard power creating soft power behavior). This alliance is determined to establish peace in the conflict-ridden zones around the world, protect internally displaced people, refugees, and threatened communities, and supply and protect humanitarian aid (a soft power creating hard power behavior). At the same time, the NA is ready to act as a humanitarian intervention force, and a fighting force (a hard power behavior) to thwart threats arising against the mandate entrusted by the UN Security Council. Similarly, successful economic performance such as that of China can produce both the hard power of sanctions and restricted market access and the soft power of attraction and emulation of success (Nye, 2011).

Similar illustrations, as Joseph Nye claimed can be observed in the employment of the US and German Armed Forces. The US Armed Forces, in addition to the use of military prowess also conducted PD activities after the launch of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” in Iraq on 19 March 2003. Department of Defense (DOD) with thousands of troops communicating and engaging with civilians of Iraq in villages, cities, and metropolitans took the responsibility of PD in Iraq. That is why, Matt Armstrong, the leading blogger on public diplomacy issues, observed in mounting an alarm: “American public diplomacy wears combat boots” (Cull, 2013). Considering the war in Iraq, Wallin (2015, p.3) claimed that the US military was positioned in such a de facto position that it had to carry out actual public diplomacy activities or activities that had PD implications because a large number of US troops made person-to-person contact with the Iraqi population and outreach of Department of State (DOS) succumbed. In a similar vein, American practitioners claim US military role in influencing the foreign public in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Furthermore, the German Forces (Bundeswehr) also conduct PD activities (Glatz, Hansen, Kaim, and Vorrath, 2018). Germany's concept for the creation and deployment of the German Armed Forces "emerges from its foreign and security policy vision and tradition of cultural programs, development aid, cooperation, and diplomacy for conducting Germany's international relations" (Swistek, 2012, p.84). Germany places importance on utilizing the military in public diplomacy-type activities on the war fronts also. Alongside their military tasks, the German Armed Forces deployed in Afghanistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Kosovo province, deliver political education programs which address local civilians—activities that go beyond military operations as such (Zollner, 2009). The German Armed Forces normally conduct PD activities during deployment in UN peacekeeping missions as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces deployment. In sum, it can be deduced that hard power resources (military power) can also be utilized in soft power behaviors, the only thing is how the national leaders visualize the prevailing environment and wish to use military power in it.

Use of Military in Soft Power Role: A Constructivist Perspective

Originating from the critique of the Realist notion of international relations, constructivist scholars argue that the international system is comprised of a society of states and the social world is a world of human consciousness, and therefore, the international system is constituted of ideational factors rather than material forces. The social relations between states depend on intersubjective structure (shared ideas and beliefs), and identities and interests (Theys, 2017). Constructivists argue that a state can have multiple identities which constitute the interests and actions of that state (Theys, 2017). If a state prefers to have enmity with another state the relationship becomes conflictual, and if a state chooses to have friendly relations the relationship becomes cooperative. Therefore, Wendt postulates (1992, p.395) that "Anarchy is what states make of it".

In Nepal's context, one can say that Nepal has developed an identity as a peace-loving, liberal democratic country blessed with incredible natural beauty. This identity of Nepal drives its interests as "amity with all and enmity with none." Because of this image Nepal deploys its security forces in the corners of the world where there is no peace to keep, with an aim of creating a stable and peaceful environment. Its identity as a peace-loving country has developed through two important activities; first, Nepal's contribution to maintaining international peace and security, and second, the resolution of Nepal's internal conflict through the home-grown peace process. Furthermore, Nepal has always been vehemently raising voices in the international arena for non-interference, sovereignty, and peaceful resolution of disputes. Therefore, Nepal stood firmly against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Constructivist scholars assume multiple identities of a state, which can surface during intersubjective interactions in the international system, and Nepal also cannot be different. But, for many decades, Nepal has been projecting peace-loving and liberal democratic behavior in the world. The proposal of a "Zone of Peace", being a birthplace of Gautam Buddha: the light of Asia, contribution to the world peace endeavors, and ingraining democratic norms and values illustrate that Nepal's projection as a peace-loving country while interacting with other states. Such interactions lead to cooperative relations.

The cooperative relations approach adopted by Nepal in the international system means all the elements of national power must mobilize towards achieving national interests with the optimum employment of soft power behavior. Therefore, the NA (hard power resource), an instrument of Nepal's national power needs to be employed in soft power behavior. But, can NA (hard power resource) be employed in soft power behavior? The theories developed by the political scientist Joseph Nye, Jr., and views expressed by scholars and practitioners all see the possibility of using hard power resources in soft power behaviors, which indicates NA can also be effectively employed in soft power behaviors. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the NA to support national endeavors in achieving foreign policy objectives. The cooperative behavior projected in the international system by Nepal must be supported by all elements of national power, among which NA is one. Therefore, from a constructivist perspective, NA (hard power resource of Nepal) can also be employed in soft power behaviors, depending on the context and how Nepal uses it.

The Nepali Army in International Relations

After the establishment of the NA by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the 18th century, it was employed in a hard power role in international relations for the promotion and protection of foreign policies of Nepal. Nepal-Anglo war of 1814, the Nepal-Tibet War, Nepal-China/Tibet war, and participation in World War I and II are some historical examples of the Nepal Army's involvement in international relations. The advent of the United Nations (UN) and the emergence of the Cold War changed the international security environment and international order where NA performed its traditional peacekeeping roles. Furthermore, the demise of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the event of 9/11 have tremendously reshaped international security and world order where NA had performed and has been performing humanitarian and humanitarian interventionist force roles. Primarily, since the 90s-decade interstate wars are in decline whereas intrastate wars are on the rise. This environment has also transformed the UN's role in maintaining international peace and security from traditional peacekeeping to multidimensional integrated robust peace enforcement missions. The NA, the "peace champion" (Thapa, 2021, p.16), started its contribution to maintaining international peace and security immediately after Nepal's membership in the UN in 1955 (Sharma, 2021, p.10) and has been transforming itself to meet the challenges posed by evolving international security environment with the aim to serve the people of war-ravaged areas in corners of the globe.

Nepal's peacekeeping journey started in 1958 with the deployment of five military observers in the UNOGIL (United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon) (Bhattarai, 2022, p.20), a traditional peacekeeping mission in Lebanon. Almost 1,40,355 Nepali peacekeepers have already served in 45 different missions in many countries of the world since 1958 (NA Directorate of Peacekeeping Operations [DPKO] Report, 2022). In addition to military observers and infantry troops, the NA has been providing niche enabling capabilities like engineers, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units, medical units, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) (Sharma, 2021) in some of the most dangerous missions of the UN. Currently, 5335 NA personnel have been participating in 11 missions in different countries of the World (NA Director of Peacekeeping Operations [DPKO] Report, 2022). According to the NA DPKO

report (2022), these missions comprise UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon), UNDOF (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force), MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo), MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), MINUSCA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic), UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan), UNISFA (United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei), UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Libya), UNMHA (United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement), UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization), MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara), and UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq). The NA has been deploying mission heads, observers, troops, and staff officers in the field and at UN HQ. The deployment ranges from lower rank personnel to higher rank officers. The troops deployed on the ground (including the staff officers, observers, and Heads of Mission) have ample opportunities to interact with the public, local leaders, and national leaders.

The peacekeepers deployed in different peacekeeping missions in different corners of the world have been protecting vulnerable communities and the general public from physical threats, providing humanitarian aid, and securing basic essentials for the needy. They also assist in maintaining law and order, capacity building of host country law enforcement agencies, and creating a secure and stable environment for election. Moreover, the NA has also been conducting CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation), negotiations, community-centered activities, QIPs (Quick Impact Projects), female engagement team activities, and cultural programs in different conflict-ridden areas. The peacekeepers also provide security for the refugees, and internally displaced people during movement, and at campsites.

Furthermore, the NA has been sending military attachés to 7 neighboring and friendly countries; Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, South Korea, the United Kingdom (UK) and the USA, with one military advisor to the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations in New York (Director General of Military Intelligence [DGMI], 2022). These military attachés are providing a commendable platform for sharing and collecting information related to defense, the revolution in military affairs, technological development, the use of cutting-edge technologies in military hardware—a focal point for training and exercise exchange programs, and a link for procurement of military hardware. NA officers and other ranks, a total of about 268 personnel, visit neighboring and friendly countries for training activities, annually (Director General of Military Training and Doctrine ([DGMT&D] Report, 2022). These countries are: Bangladesh, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Korea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the UK, and the USA. Similarly, NA receives foreign officers and other ranks for Staff College, Mountain Warfare, Jungle warfare, Officers Cadet training, and Para- Basic training from Bangladesh, China, India, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the UK, the USA, and (Director General of Military Training and Doctrine (Director General of Military Training and Doctrine [DGMT&D] Report, 2022). The military exercise exchange program between Nepal and India, Nepal and China, Nepal and the USA, and Nepal and the UK are other significant events in the calendar (Director General of Military Training and Doctrine ([DGMT&D] Report, 2022). The NA also conducts multinational peacekeeping exercise activities in Birendra Peace Operations Training Centre (BPOTC).

The military attachés and military advisers who perform the primary task of military diplomacy can organize outreach programs beyond the capital cities to rural and other urban areas exploiting the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT makes it easier for them to plan, conduct, and monitor the impact of programs on the targeted population of the host country. They can influence military leaders with diplomatic tactfulness in protecting and promoting their own foreign policy objectives. “Our ambassadors in uniform working in friendly countries regularly meet defense officials, attend seminars and defense expos, lobby for military grants and assistance, and also facilitate the acquisition of new capabilities” (Poudyal, 2021). In a similar vein, army personnel visiting friendly foreign countries on training and exercise exchange programs can involve themselves in establishing good relations with counterparts. The military personnel of friendly foreign countries who visit Nepal at the invitation of the Nepali Government for training and exercise exchange activities could also be adequately informed on Nepali culture, Nepali ethos, values and norms, history, natural beauty, and “Nepaliness.” Such activities not only create a conducive environment in pursuing foreign policy objectives but also help to build confidence between armies and develop interoperability, a key for 21st-century security operations. The strategic security environment in the international system has been demanding cooperation in managing 21st-century security problems like international terrorism, cyber security, environmental security, and human security.

The NA is a source of producing world-class sportspersons for the country. These sportspersons have been demonstrating their competence in the Olympics, Asian, and South Asian sports competitions. Some of the athletes bagged medals with a remarkable performance. The first two Nepalese Olympians, Ganga Bahadur Thapa and Bhupendra Silwal, who participated in the 18th Olympic games held in Japan in 1964, were both from the Nepali Army. (Nepali Army and Sports, n.d.). Furthermore, the NA became a member of the International Military Sports Council (CISM) (Director General of Military Training and Doctrine ([DGMT&D] Report, 2022), and is planning to participate in various sports events in the future. Sports can provide a forum where the athletes can build their circle of friendship with other friendly countries.

In a spirit of advancing military diplomacy, high-ranking and other officers of the NA have been visiting friendly foreign countries and also hosting many high-level military dignitaries from neighboring and friendly foreign countries annually. Such visits have proven important in implementing foreign policy goals. One of the good examples is the Indian economic embargo on Nepal and NA’s efforts. According to Bhattarai (2021), the then Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Rajendra Chhetri played a significant role in supporting the government to help lift the economic embargo imposed on Nepal by India. Similarly, the official and unofficial visits of senior-level Army officers in conflict areas have also been yielding great dividends in the Nepali diplomatic realm. Such above-mentioned military diplomatic activities conducted in the international relations domain by the NA can be capitalized in pursuing PD policy objectives.

Analysis

Public Diplomacy, a tool of foreign policy, has long been in use under different concepts like public affairs, psychological operations, cultural diplomacy, and propaganda. But it came into

the public sphere after American scientist Nye Jr. coined the term “soft power”, in 1990. Soft power, the means for creating positive attraction and persuasion, has been considered the major driving force for conducting PD activities. Scholars and practitioners have been emphasizing on two-way person-to-person communication for successful long-term relations between people and states in recent times. Person-to-person two-way communication can only be established when state or non-state actors can reach the people of friendly countries. Therefore, for the successful conduct of 21st-century public diplomacy, reaching the people, groups, community, and local and state governments of the target country is the first and foremost prerequisite.

The current deployment and employment of NA in the international arena proves the global outreach and “Hearts and Minds winning” activities of the NA. The deployment of NA in UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions in more than 11 countries (NA DPKO, 2022), military attachés and military advisers in 7 different countries (NA DGMI, 2022), and employment of NA in training and military exercise exchange activities with more than 15 countries, participation in the Olympics, Asian, South-Asian, and CISM sporting activities (NA DGMI, 2022), and exchange of high-level defense official visits in friendly foreign countries are noteworthy examples. Furthermore, NA deployed in UN peacekeeping missions has been conducting heart and mind-winning activities like Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Protection of Civilians (POC), negotiation, community outreach programs, female engagement activities, and Quick Impact Projects (QIP) (NA DPKO, 2022) in friendly foreign countries.

The possibility of utilization of NA (hard power) in soft power roles has been found harmonious with the philosophical, theoretical, and empirical positions. The philosophical perspective of constructivism specifies Nepal as a “peace-loving democratic country” that projects a cooperative identity in the international system. The co-optive identity of Nepal guides her instruments, including the NA, to maximize soft power behavior. Furthermore, political scientists have advocated the possibility of using hard power resources in soft power roles, theoretically. Empirically, countries like the USA and Germany have already tested and proven the efficacy of using the Armed Forces in PD roles. Additionally, the global outreach of the NA has been observed through its deployment and employment in the international arena. These perspectives and pieces of evidence supplement NA’s position to conduct PD activities.

The Foreign Policy of Nepal 2077 underlines image enhancement and projection of Nepal’s unique identity in the international system as the main objective of PD. In achieving the main objective of Nepal’s PD, the NA has been playing a remarkable role since 1958 through participation in UN peacekeeping missions. The remarkable role can be observed through commendations made by the international community, and important responsibilities entrusted to Nepal. In this regard, Khand (2009) writes Nepal’s election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council twice, in 1969-70 and 1988-89 is also believed to have been reinforced by its peacekeeping contributions. In a similar vein, the UN entrusting Nepal with the responsibility of leading the Commission of Investigation into the Conditions and Circumstances resulting in the tragic death of the then Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, who was killed in a plane crash at Ndola in Lusaka in 1961, (Bhusal & Parajuli, 2017) is also a great achievement in the diplomatic history of Nepal. Not only scholars but also practitioners like Thapa (1995) also highlighted that Nepal Army’s participation in UN missions proved as

an effective instrument to elevate Nepal's global profile, and as a mechanism to boost Nepal's internationalist approach. On a different note, in connection to Nepal's national security, Maskey (1996) underscores Nepal's contribution to peacekeeping, which has always been found helpful in protecting and strengthening its sovereignty and independence. The NA earned the distinction of "Peace Champion" (Thapa, 2021) which is why then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan chose a Nepali peacekeeper to accompany him to receive the "The Nobel Peace Prize 2001" when the UN and its Secretary-General were awarded it. Such achievements, Nepal's no-caveat policy, neutrality, impartiality and professionalism of NA peacekeepers, and dedication have directly impacted Nepal's image and dignity.

In addition to the routine job of the military attachés and military advisers, they can play a significant role in Nepal's PD sphere by capitalizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and their frequent visits to the countries assigned them. Similarly, Nepal Army athletes can be another source of enhancing the dignity and image of the country through sports activities.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

Even though the roots of public diplomacy can be traced back to First World War, its renaissance in the 21st century can be considered post-9/11 after the declaration of the global war on terrorism (GwOT). The 21st century "New Public Diplomacy" primarily focuses on two important aspects; first, the minimization of roles of traditional foreign ministries and devising a coherent strategy for the effective employment of state and non-state actors as PD tools, and second, emphasis on dialogue-based two-way communication approach with the foreign public against the old idea of one-way storytelling of the representing state to foreign publics.

Many political scientists like Joseph Nye Jr, scholars and practitioners have been advocating since 1990 for the proper utilization of soft power resources in the promotion and protection of national interests by persuasion and attraction. Most interestingly, they also have advocated for the use of hard power resources in soft power behaviors, conceptualizing the use of military power in soft power roles in addition to its conventional roles. The usefulness of this concept has already been tested and practiced by the Armed Forces of the USA and Germany in conflict-ridden countries. This is one of the reasons that reinforced the image of the USA and Germany for standing in the first five rankings in global soft power superpower standings. Additionally, the constructivist perspective analyzes that Nepal has been adopting cooperative and peace-loving interests for a long in the international system and directing her instruments of national power including the NA, to achieve national interests and foreign policy objectives. Empirically, Nepal Army has been performing a variety of roles in the international arena as entrusted by the Constitution of Nepal 2015 and conducting tasks that align with the essence of public diplomacy. Therefore, theoretical and conceptual analysis of hard power and soft power in the international system opens the door for utilizing NA (use in soft power behavior) as one of the actors in Nepal's public diplomacy sphere, and the analysis proves the global outreach and NA's ability to conduct public diplomacy effectively.

Moreover, because of the lack of necessary political structures, and bureaucratic institutions in MOFA to guide, direct, and devise coherent strategies and action plans for the

conduct of PD Nepal has been facing considerable challenges in streamlining the laudable PD-related performances demonstrated by the NA in the international arena. Presently, the diplomatic missions of Nepal deployed in various parts of the world are the only actors operating in the PD regime of Nepal in a very limited scope. A coherent strategy incorporating state actors, and non-state actors with a robust mechanism to handle PD at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is the need of the day.

Hence, based on the above-mentioned analysis, logic, and evidence, the author claim in this research relative to other institutions of the Government of Nepal, the NA has conducted itself in congruence with the Nepal's Public Diplomacy Policy "to garner support, cooperation, and goodwill of the international community by promoting the image and unique identity of the country as soft power" (MOFA, 2077, p.29) and as such, should be entrusted the PD role, defining it "Nepali Army Public Diplomacy".

The findings of this research can be summarized as follows.

1. The public diplomacy tool of the foreign policy of Nepal has been found in a neglected state and confined within the venues and boundaries of the MOFA. A coherent strategy anchoring all possible state and non-state actors for the planning and conduct of PD has been seriously lacking. This research could serve as a precursor for the government of Nepal to devise a coherent PD strategy.
2. The NA enjoys extended global outreach compared to any other institutions of the Government of Nepal because of the NA's engagement in UN Peacekeeping, training and other world affairs. And such activities conducted in foreign lands are harmonious with PD activities.
3. The evidence, data, and events collected will be of help to other interested scholars to incorporate the military aspect in the realm of PD and will help in broadening the theory of "Public Diplomacy".
4. The relationship established between Public Diplomacy and the use of military means in the soft power realm will be a precursor to establishing the relationship between PD and the military means in the soft power role.

Recommendation

To broaden the scope and effectively implement PD to achieve the foreign policy objectives of Nepal, following are some recommendations:

1. Considering the changing global order and Nepal's relative power in the international system, Nepal must focus on soft power projection to interact within the international system. PD is the best tool for soft power projection and propagation. Therefore, scholars and practitioners must galvanize scholarship to bring PD into the public sphere to create common understanding among the populace and positively pressurize the Government.
2. The Government of Nepal must come out from the closed boundary of traditional diplomacy, and MOFA must formulate a coherent PD strategy to include the state

actors (NA, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force Nepal, and others), non-state actors (business community, academia, civil society, etc), and individuals (Experts, Scholars, and more) to achieve foreign policy objectives.

3. The NA must persuade the Government of Nepal to devise a coherent strategy and action plans for conducting PD on which NA personnel deployed and employed in foreign lands can align activities to effectively implement PD strategies and action plans.

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