



# Institutionalization of Nepal's Foreign Policy

(One Day National Level Seminar, 17 August 2012 in Kathmandu)



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## Foreword

The Institute of Foreign Affairs has felt a stronger need to strengthen institutionalization process of the foreign policy of Nepal. At the moment, Nepal has been making a prolonged journey of the political transition from the old order to the new one. Undoubtedly, foreign policy is one deserving element that can build up Nepal's fairer stance and better image both in the regional and global arena. The realization to institutionalize foreign policy direction reflects the country's desire to gain traction for its independent and sovereign behavior and attitude well suited to the globalized situation emerging in the world at large. However, the policy makers and executers equally must see for themselves various important factors that will and can influence the institutionalization trajectory.

It is with this view in mind, the institute has organized a one day seminar on "Institutionalization of Nepal's Foreign Policy" on 17 August 2012 in which two papers were presented; one on "Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the Foreign Policy Goals of Nepal" by Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada, former permanent representative to UN, Geneva and another on "Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Foreign Policy Goals" by Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, former permanent representative to UN, Geneva. This publication will cover the proceedings of the above seminar for the wider dissemination of the issues to the general public.

The institute is thankful to Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Prof. Dr. Shushil Raj Pandey, Prof. Dr. Gopal Prasad Pokharel, former Executive Director of IFA, Mr. Madhuraman Acharya, former Foreign Secretary and Permanent Representative to UN, New York and Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam, former assistant secretary general of UN (UNICEF) for providing valuable insights to the seminar.

IFA also wishes to thank Mr. Madhavji Shrestha, Mr. Khush Narayan Shrestha, Deputy Executive Director, IFA and Ms. Ayushma Basnyat for their support to bring the publication in the present form. The institute welcomes comments, suggestions and feedbacks so as to refine the future publications of IFA.

**Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari**  
**Executive Director**

## Concept of the seminar

### Goals

The lofty goal of foreign policy is to preserve and promote the core national interests i.e. Nepal's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity along with its uninterrupted socio-economic progress. Initiatives towards clear and purposeful objectives and strengthened organizational set up must come sooner than later for assisting Nepal's independent journey in the international arena.

Nepal's foreign policy is in a state of flux delaying the emergence of an appropriate guiding principles suitable to a 'federal democratic republic' that Nepal is today. Combined effects of high economic growth with integration in the international market through successful introduction of ICT pursuing sustainable development path contributes to image building of any country. Nepal, with poor infrastructure and unutilized resources, still remains a country with low-income and massive poverty. What role can foreign policy play in the present Nepalese context? There has to be a critical yet constructive examination of the anomalies and missing elements of Nepal's foreign policy, which sometimes creates a sense of vagueness and incoherence about her intentions and likely reactions to issues affecting her vital interests.

### Strengthening Foreign Policy

To institutionalize the conduct of foreign policy in its true sense, serious attention needs to be paid and effective actions taken up at the political as well as government levels without delay.

#### At Political Level

All political parties, including all major parties must agree to make a consensual approach to conduct foreign policy of Nepal for protecting and preserving Nepal's national interest. It must be agreed by all that no party in power will



either compromise or deviate from the stated fundamental interests and positions of foreign policy as agreed.

The department of international relations of each political party has to confirm to the principles of independent foreign policy and execute the same in an honest manner. Nepal's highly sensitive geographic location within Asia's geopolitical situation demands unity among all political parties and their governments.

The constitution of Nepal to be drafted needs to contain firm guiding principles and directives of Nepal's foreign policy to be conducted while upholding Nepal's independence and sovereignty. Constitutional provision should be clear, unambiguous and mandatory. Such an inclusion will exhibit to the world- at- large Nepali people's sovereign will and their stance vis-a-vis the world including our neighbors, regional groupings and global organizations.

Today, diplomacy is not only under the domain of the Foreign Ministry but also being practiced by all decision makers of the government dealing with international community. Similarly, the roles of the civil society, non-government organizations and private sector as well as individuals, professionals and intellectuals, should be geared to buttress our vision of foreign policy matters without making compromises on their independent views.

Today's governance has to embrace political, economic and social actions as an integrated one. So varied are the multi stakeholders in today's society that it is quite difficult to bring coherence in their immediate objectives and purposes to suit our foreign policy vision. Against this backdrop, we have to make best efforts to come up with one voice as Nepal has to maintain a delicate balance between two emerging giants which are vying for greater regional roles in the days ahead. By maintaining a delicate balance, Nepal should reach out the international community of nation states in developing its political and economic relations.

Historically, Nepal is a yam between two boulders i. e. China on the north and India on the south. That shows our vulnerability to the very existence of our nation state. In the twenty first century, Nepal should try to develop its relations with the neighbors not as a yam but as a bridge between them and move forward for the betterment of the nation and its people.

### **At Institutional Level**

All actors and sub- actors in the administrative and bureaucratic machineries of the government must have clarity of our foreign policy's goals and act in

accordance with the fundamental principles of the constitutional provisions. On the question of the conduct of foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to be designated as the coordinating authority of the country on all matters including economic, social and cultural areas, if foreign policy is to be conducted in a coherent and orderly manner. Such practice will put an end to the unwarranted confusing situation that neither helps Nepal nor its friends. All ministries doing business in their respective jurisdictions have to coordinate their activities of official nature through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whenever their activities relate to the core foundation pertaining to the institutionalization of foreign policy.

To systematize the institutionalization process, Nepal needs to enact a separate Foreign Service Act with a view to strengthen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Missions under it in their organizational capability. A clear provision needs to be made to constantly promote the professional skills and efficiency of diplomats and officials working in these organizations.

A closer vetting is also required to see if the structure and functioning of the ministry and missions need revamping to match the challenging works and activities to carry on as demanded by the institutionalizing process.

The recruiting process for the intake of new officials needs to be modernized and updated so as to meet requirements of the highly demanding global situation. In this regard, the Public Service Commission should be encouraged to do the needful in close consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all other concerned ministries and authorities including the Office of the Prime Minister.

A well-equipped and resourceful “Think Tank” is also a pressing need to give the Ministry of Foreign Affairs essential feedback on the current trend of the bilateral, regional and global relationships and affairs. Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) can fill this void if it were strengthened and developed from its present form to meet the emerging challenges.

IFA also needs to be strengthened to be an effective and well-organized training centre to infuse and equip both new and senior diplomats and officials with valued ideas and fresh thinking on matters of foreign policy and diplomacy which are highly useful and beneficial.

Welcome words by  
**Deputy Executive Director Mr. Khush Narayan Shrestha**

**Chairman,  
Chief Guest Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha,  
Former Foreign Minister Dr. Bekh Bahadur Thapa,  
Foreign Secretary Mr. Durga Bhattarai,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to extend my hearty welcome to you all to the inauguration ceremony of this very important seminar on “Institutionalization of Nepal’s Foreign Policy” that is being held here today.

Nepal is currently going through a historical political transition. Since this would have immense impact on the future image of the country, consolidation of fundamental positions of Nepal’s foreign policy into one unanimous voice is a must for our conduct with the international community.

Traditionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages the external relations of Nepal. In present day world, the domain of diplomacy is not merely confined to the Foreign Ministry rather it is exercised by all departments of the government as well as the leaders of political, economic and social spheres of the country. It is thus imperative to channelize the view through a systematic process leading to institutionalization of our policy. In this context, Nepal should have a united voice in foreign policy matters at all levels-political, administrative and diplomatic.

In today’s seminar, we have two sessions dealing with “Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the Foreign Policy Goals of Nepal” and “Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Foreign Policy Goals”.

The Institute of Foreign Affairs is embarking on a discussion on these subjects due to their important implications to the country. I am confident that the

conclusions and recommendations derived from the seminar will be useful to all actors engaged in the government as well as in politics.

On behalf of the Institute, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all distinguished participants for accepting our invitation and attending this seminar. Similarly, I thank all distinguished chairs, paper presenters, commentators and rapporteurs for their valuable contribution to make this seminar a success. Finally, I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to today's Chief Guest Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha for gracing the inauguration of this seminar.

**Thank You.**

Address by

**Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA**

**Chief Guest Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha**

**Former Foreign Minister Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa**

**Foreign Secretary Mr. Durga Bhattarai**

**Distinguished Participants**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Nepal has undergone a massive paradigm shift in her political, social and cultural life of the people, from Monarchy to Federal Democratic Republican set up. This has tremendously enhanced the expectations of the Nepalese people towards better socio-economy in their livelihoods and honorable and dignified life amongst the friendly countries. This is possible only by implementing a well thought-out foreign policy.

We all say foreign policy is the extension of domestic policy and it is mirror of the current domestic situation. For an effective foreign policy, enduring peace and political stability at home is a pre-requisite. A house in order ensures the accomplishment of foreign policy goals of a country. Foreign Policy of any country is focused on preserving and promoting the core national interests i.e. independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Regular monitoring and review of our policy is a must for effective implementation. A sound foreign policy enhances national dignity and honor before the international community and protects and promotes national interests on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect. Foreign policy is a national strategy to fulfill the aspirations of the people. It is a plan of action crafted by responsible people at the helm of power and their technocrats considered to be prescient and farsighted.

Currently, it has been observed that some hiccups do exist in the consistency in evolving a proactive foreign policy that would help the country effectively face the emerging challenges on its international relations.

Anomalies and missing elements of Nepal's foreign policy must be examined with a special focus on its uninterrupted socio-economic progress as Nepal is a country with low-income, poor infrastructure and mass poverty.

Many attempts have been made towards coming up with a coherent foreign policy and the latest is the document by Human Rights and Foreign Relations Committee of the erstwhile Constituent Assembly/parliament.

Nepal's responsible political stakeholders ought to envision that it should remain a country in which the two emerging powers of Asia would act as co-operative partners and not distrustful rivals.

All political parties, including all other major stakeholders must agree to make consensual approach to conduct foreign policy of Nepal. In view of Nepal's highly sensitive and delicate geographic location, no political party should take the view detrimental to Nepal's position and stance in the world.

Today, diplomacy is not only the domain of the Foreign Ministry, rather being practiced by all the decision makers of the government who deals with international community, including civil society and private sectors.

Historically, Nepal is a yam between two boulders i. e. China on the north and India on the south. In the twenty first century, Nepal should develop its relations not as yam but as a bridge between these two giants and move forward for the betterment of the nation and people.

On the question of the conduct of foreign policy, even about the matter of economic, social and cultural concerns, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a main window to external relations has to be ensconced as coordination authority of the country, if foreign policy is to be conducted in a truly institutionalized manner.

A well equipped and resourceful "Think Tank" is also a pressing need to give the Ministry of Foreign Affairs essential feedback on the current trend of the bilateral, regional and global relationships and affairs.

An effective and well organized training centre must be put in place to infuse and equip both new and senior diplomats and officials with valued ideas and fresh thinking on matters of foreign policy and diplomacy which are highly useful and beneficial. This requires to revamping, broadening and strengthening the existing Institute of Foreign Affairs.

**Thank You.**

Inaugural Address by  
**Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign  
Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha**

**Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and  
Chair of the Session**

**Distinguished Paper Presenters and Participants**

**Friends in the Media**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you this morning to share some of my thoughts on the theme 'Institutionalization of the Foreign Policy of Nepal'. The Institute of Foreign Affairs deserves our appreciation for thoughtfully selecting the topic, which is both timely and pertinent, and bringing together a cross-section of scholars, academicians and diplomats for deliberation. I hope the seminar will come out with pragmatic and insightful suggestions and recommendations.

Needless to say, the main objective of the foreign policy is to safeguard country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, which form the core of what is called the 'national interests'. Added to these are our vital developmental interests and our desire to enhance international image and identity. Diplomacy is an instrument to skillfully implement the foreign policy, interacting with the international community for the protection, promotion and consolidation of national interests. This we do in keeping with the people's aspirations as well as the changed international realities.

Foreign policy is an area that demands continuous research, discussion and analysis, as external environment continues to change and with it come both new challenges and opportunities. This is where we must visualize the role

and importance of a dedicated institution, like the IFA, in serving as a policy think-tank and providing a useful forum for discussion, research and policy dialogue on all persistent and evolving issues.

Foreign policy is a sensitive and complex domain. As such its objectives should be pursued in wise, coherent and consistent manner by all relevant national actors. Adjustment and readjustment in foreign policy priorities is a normal practice necessitated by both changing domestic circumstance and the external environment. The fundamental objectives and guiding principles of foreign policy, however, remain unalterable. As with other countries, these principles have found eloquent expressions in our Constitution. This ensures the permanency of fundamental tenets beyond the ambit of vested interests and whimsical behavior that may occasionally seek to alter the course. Constitutional embodiment of foreign policy goals and objectives is thus the first and foremost cornerstone of institutionalized foreign policy.

But, we must remember that merely enunciation of foreign policy principles and objectives in the country's supreme law of the land will not safeguard our national interest if we fail to uphold national consensus and unity, as essential components of our national strengths. History suggests that cost of absence of national unity could be colossal and beyond imagination. So, I must emphasize that our national behavior is no less critical in strengthening the institutionalized behaviour of foreign policy and effective conduct of diplomacy. In this context, the faithful observance of the diplomatic code of conduct by all is essential.

It goes without saying that the conduct of an independent foreign policy is the "sine qua none" of national sovereignty. This has been our aspiration as a sovereign nation with a longstanding commitment to non-alignment and merit-based decision-making on world events. For us, the Charter of the United Nations, NAM, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, principles and norms of international law and values of world peace constitute the essential framework for maintaining relations among sovereign nations irrespective of their strength, size and ideological orientation.

As with other countries, neighborhood has always been a priority in our foreign policy orientation. There is no need to elaborate it further. It is our sincere desire to further strengthen the multifaceted relations with our neighbours in a pragmatic manner and in accordance with the principles of non-interference, mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation as well as understanding of each other's sensitivities and aspirations. The emerging economic landscape in our neighbourhood offers us with unique opportunities to increase economic activities, trade, tourism and investment. We must be ready and capable to seize these opportunities rising above what we have



traditionally called the yam syndrome to an elevated notion of partnership for peace, progress and prosperity.

Maintaining good relationship we have to go further to develop problem free relationship with our immediate neighbours for which problem left by history should be resolved through mutual consultation to match it with the above mentioned universal principles and values and the changed context of the country and the world. There is nothing which cannot be solved through dialogue and discussion in political and diplomatic level. The government has already taken some pertinent initiative in this regards.

Thus we have to give a new look to our relationship from today's perspective. 'The vibrant bridge between the two fast developing big neighbours' is more relevant today than the traditional concept of "sandwich between the two giant neighbours". Strategic geopolitical situation of the country, if understood well and skillfully dealt, can be the better opportunity for overall development of our country.

Regional integration has become one of the defining features of contemporary international relations. Countries in different regions are increasingly forging collaborative partnership of varying kinds and intensity. These efforts are aimed at promoting economic complementarities and harmonizing policies and institutional capabilities so as to expand trade, attract investment, augment transport and transit connectivity. It has often been underlined, and rightly so, that SAARC needs to redouble its efforts to fully exploit vast potential for cooperation in our region. Nepal is firmly committed to making SAARC a dynamic regional organization that is capable of fully realizing the goals and objectives as enshrined in its Charter. It has been our consistent policy that regional economic integration should ensure equitable benefits to all the constituent members. We will continue to work together through regional organizations like SAARC and BIMSTEC with commitment towards this ends.

Nepal highly values its relationship with the countries and organizations that have been supporting our development efforts in different ways. We underline that development is, first and foremost, the responsibility of a country. As a least developed and land-locked country emerging from conflict, our development challenges are many but our capacity to overcome them is limited. Due to lack of adequate domestic resources, we have not been able to finance our development activities solely on our own. Moreover, global financial and economic crises, food and energy crises, and disproportionate impacts of climate change have added constrains in our development efforts. Under these circumstances, the external financing becomes an absolute necessity, not a choice. It is to be emphasized that for development

assistance to be effective, it should be fully aligned with national priorities and needs. Moreover, national ownership and leadership in the development process must be respected. Transparency, predictability and timely allocation and mobilization of resources through national budgetary channels would enhance the effectiveness of precious development assistance. We will continue working with our valued partners to ensure that our development needs get priority in their development cooperation framework.

Nepal remains fully committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. We will continue to contribute to world peace and security through our active and dedicated participation in the UN peacekeeping operations, which remain the most visible enterprise of the United Nations in maintaining peace around the world. Our engagement with the UN is borne out of our firm conviction in multilateralism and multilateral solutions to global problems. The UN General Assembly must assert its legitimacy as the most representative body and remain at the center of global diplomacy in mobilizing the international community to address a multitude of challenges the world faces. The UN must remain above the power politics that often hinders its functions. It must ensure that it works for the advancement of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries. Development pillars of the UN need to be further strengthened. Nepal will continue to play an active role in furthering the causes of the least developed and landlocked countries and will continue to advocate for a rightful place for these countries in the comity of nations.

We live in critical times when the international situations are getting increasingly complex, uncertain and volatile. While globalization has opened up avenues for free trade and free flow of goods and services, people and their ideas, its benefits have largely been unequal as countries like Nepal continue to face marginalization in the global economy. This is largely due to entrenched deficiencies and systemic inequalities in the existing global, economic, financial and trading regimes. As a result the gap between the rich and poor is widening. These deficiencies need to be overcome to ensure fair share of developmental opportunities at the global level.

With the emergence of new economic and political powers, the world is moving towards multi-polarity. This is likely to shape international relations in many ways. In an evolving world economic order, we must fully assess the potentials of South-South cooperation in expanding economic opportunities, growth, prosperity and development. This emerging trend, however, should not be perceived as replacing traditional North-South cooperation which is so vital for many developing countries including Nepal to pursue developmental objectives.

In keeping with emerging global economic trends, Nepal will strengthen its focus on economic diplomacy to help build a solid foundation of national economy and eventually acquire national self-sufficiency. Greater efforts will be made towards attracting foreign investment in productive sectors and infrastructure development such as electricity, road networks and connectivity that would help bring about much needed structural transformation in our economy in which trade in goods and services, including tourism, will have a dominant role to play. When the national economy generates sufficient employment, our workforce will have decent and productive work opportunities at home. As foreign employment remains an important source of earnings at present, we will continue to work for exploring decent employment opportunities for our workforce overseas.

It is important to understand that the foreign ministry and the diplomatic apparatus under it cannot alone fulfill the enormous and multifaceted responsibilities of economic diplomacy. Enhanced cooperation and coordination between and among key agencies of the Government of Nepal is essential from conceptual to the implementation phase of economic diplomacy. We also underline the important role that the private sector can play in this process. The existing coordination mechanism will have to be fully revitalized and attuned to changing needs and ever increasing scope of economic diplomacy. I have attached priority to this agenda.

In realizing these foreign policy goals and objectives, we need sound diplomatic strategies backed up by capable and dynamic diplomatic machinery. Formulation of effective and sound diplomatic strategies would require deeper understanding of our national interests, our strengths, opportunities and challenges in relation to the external environment. This calls for enriched capacity of country's diplomatic service that is capable of acquiring in-depth knowledge and consummate analytical skills for making informed policy choices. We must bear in mind that human resource is the most important of all resources as it manages everything else. Motivation to generate knowledge and refine skills in an enabling environment should thus become a priority in the process of institutionalization.

Recently, we have initiated a number of important reform measures in the Nepalese Foreign Service. These include training and grooming of diplomatic staff for better performance, delineation of division of duty and responsibility at headquarters and the missions and progressively higher percentage of appointment of the career diplomats as the head of mission. We are working to strengthen the legal regime governing the Service. The momentum has started and it will not stop without ensuring desired result.

We have also done preliminary exercises to expand our representations abroad by opening appropriate missions in those countries and cities where

there is a presence of larger number of Nepalese Diaspora or there is a good potential for surge in bilateral interactions and cooperative relations. We feel that the number of personnel manning our headquarters and missions is not enough so we have been engaged in increasing the number of staff positions. Stakeholders' consultation on a periodic basis has been a regular feature in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently. We are restructuring the Institute of Foreign Affairs to add strategic studies to it on one hand and revamping its research and training capacity in view of the increased needs of training for the staff.

The situation obtaining in the country has much bearing on the success of our international relations. At the national level, we need to be clear about the agenda we have put forward through the Constitution and the various agreements reached among the political parties. The agenda set in these documents are meant for peace, progress, stability and development of the nation. That is why these national agenda have been taken positively by the international community and all our partners in development. The issues of inclusive development; federal restructuring of the state for empowerment of the people, realizing the universal human rights for the marginalized and excluded communities including women and people living in backward areas; socio-economic transformation of the Nepalese society for an inclusive and just society, etc. are based on universal values which we want to apply in our national context. The prolonged transition due to delay in constitution writing within the extended timeframe and subsequent dissolution of the Constituent Assembly has, however, cast a shadow on our national capacity for timely delivery. We must work hard collectively internalizing that we the Nepali people ourselves must find the way out to end present stalemate to reassure the international community that we can finish the remaining task of the peace process and the constitution writing with national consensus.

Finally, we must make sincere efforts to institutionalize our foreign policy with the sole aim of safeguarding vital national interests. Economic development and prosperity enlarge the freedom of choice and scope of decision-making of any country. We must learn lessons from success stories from around the world including neighbours. To serve our national interests, we must start with a coherent and unanimous understanding of foreign policy principles and objectives and concomitant national behavior by all actors. It cannot also be overemphasized that in a highly competitive and interdependent world, we need strong, capable and professional diplomatic machinery that effectively pursues enlightened national interests on international fronts.

**Thank you!**

## Some Observation on the Seminar Process

Two presentations, first by Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada and second by Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, both experienced and respected senior diplomats are indeed, note-worthy and self-explanatory. Both pieces are elaborate and informative; all the audience, ourselves included, got well acquainted with and enlightened on the question of the institutionalization of foreign policy of Nepal.

In his interesting presentation, Dr. Simkhada initiated his talk with referral to emerging challenges faced by Nepal in the conduct of its foreign policy in the context of Nepal's geographic location and internal political change as well as the evolving global and regional scenario. He dwelt on various aspects of Nepal's relations with its immediate neighbors India and China. As regards with India, the lingering entrenched mindset of suspicion on both sides loomed large with trust and confidence deficit standing on the way to overcome the barriers to good relationship. On relations with China, he state her increased interest in Nepal with frequent visits paid by the Chinese authorities including its Prime Minister. Their sensitivity and perception on security especially related with Tibet was highlighted. He also raised issues on relations with other influential countries of the world highlighting their behavior vis-à-vis Nepal's internal political change.

Understandably conscious of the institutional process, Dr. Bhattarai traced Nepal's foreign policy and its organizational development in its historic perspective and managerial steps to institutionalize the handling of Nepal's foreign policy. He enumerated about three and half dozens of very pertinent points as suggestions, which are mostly concerned with administrative and managerial matters for effective management of the institutionalization process of foreign policy of Nepal.

On summing up of the first presentation Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa a highly experienced senior diplomat and politician and the second by Prof. Dr. Lok

Raj Baral, a well known political analyst and diplomat, pointed to the current state of foreign policy of Nepal and urged the concerned authorities to speed up the need for well-oiled and properly directed approach to conduct foreign policy at this stage of the prolonged political transition. They reminded Nepal needs to take special note of the developing scenario around our region and the world at large.

Today, the world is seamlessly connected under the evolving pressure of globalization process; and experts think and believe that most countries are now multi-aligned and the policy of non-alignment is fast becoming less pronounced and less discussed about. And especially in Nepal at the moment the status and prestige of both politicians and diplomats are looked upon with critical evaluation and reserved appreciation. Under such changing global and national situations, Nepal is passing through a protracted political transition with socio-economic environment distinctly appearing far from satisfaction.

Along with the crystallized opinion and idea of well known experts of global repute on foreign policy, we believe and express that institutionalization is both political and administrative process to properly place any policy or programme in its proper trajectory. We, therefore, think that the concerned authority need to pay concerted attention to the major elements stated below:

- Maintaining resolutely national and political values and norms of foreign policy for independent journey of Nepal in the international arena as a sovereign independent nation.
- Making modes of political behavior appropriately correct as dictated by the strong spirit of the independence and sovereignty of nation.
- Long standing national custom and universally accepted norm of independence of Nepal need to be firmly embedded in the political culture and action of political parties of Nepal.
- Unshakable commitment of all political parties and other stakeholders including civil society, professional organizations, academics and business community to the institutionalization of foreign policy. Under any pretext and circumstances, there should be no deviationist tendency on the part of all concerned political players and stakeholders.
- Strengthening institutions and actors, both government and non-government, dealing with foreign policy decisions and implementation.

## *Institutionalization of Nepal's Foreign Policy*

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The institutionalization process of foreign policy could take its firm roots in Nepal only when political stability reins supreme in the country.

It would be exclusively better if the constitution to be framed could unequivocally and specifically mention the principles and purposes of foreign policy of Nepal as its mandatory provision to exhibit to the world Nepali people's strong and unwavering determination as die-hard supporters of their national independence and sovereignty.

## Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the foreign policy Goals of Nepal

\*Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada

(In a multiparty democracy ideological differences and competition for power among the political parties and leaders is natural. But for democracy to sustain and prosperity to follow the competition for and handover of political power must be peaceful. This will happen when there is minimum value consensus in domestic politics and understanding on major issues of national interest, security and foreign policy amongst the major political actors and the elite. I have been speaking and writing on the need for a national consensus on the basic issues of our national interests and tenets of foreign policy and presenting the agenda for it since the political changes of 1990 starting from: **Need for a New Foreign Policy Agenda**” a policy paper presented to the Nepali Congress leadership which was later published as **Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy** in the Independent, 18 December 1991; **In Search of A New National Agenda** in the Spotlight 1994; **New Foreign Policy Agenda**, The Kathmandu Post July1, 2006; **Foreign Policy Exploring new dimensions**, The Himalayan Times, 12 July, 2006; **Vanity of victory: Debacle of defeat**, The Kathmandu Post November 18, 2006; **Complexities of Nepal's Foreign Policy**, paper presented at a seminar organized by the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu 23 December, 2008 subsequently published by the IFA; **Nepal's Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, paper presented at a workshop organized by Pragma Foundation, Kathmandu September 2009, **Nepal's National Interest and Foreign Policy** paper presented at a seminar Organized by Centre for South Asian Studies in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Kathmandu, October 21, 2009, subsequently published by the CSAS and launched by the Rt. Hon. President of the Republic; **Foreign Policy of Nepal, Issues, Options and Future Directions** discussion organized by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert



Stiftung (FES) Kathmandu, December 28, 2009; **The Foreign Policy of the Nepali Congress Party** policy paper presented to the International Relations Department of the NC in 2008 and later to the NC Central Committee prior to its 12 National Convention in 2010 and **Foreign Policy in the Changed Context of Nepal** paper submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for publication at its request in 2010 which remains unpublished so far. The present paper at the request of the IFA is the latest in this continuing endeavor.)

Historically, foreign policy has been a vital tool of Nepali statecraft and test of statesmanship. The nature of Nepal's politics which is witnessing profound changes in a crucial time (early 21<sup>st</sup> Century) and location (between resurgent *India* and *China*), makes foreign policy making and conduct of diplomacy particularly challenging now. Dealing with simultaneously cooperating and competing regional/global super-powers embroiled in their own internal upheavals in a rapidly changing global political and economic order and strategic equation demands access to right information and ability to interpret it with knowledge, understanding, wisdom and experience. Old intricacies and new complexities seen through the eyes of simple convictions, outdated dogmas or vested interests distort comprehension; policies based on them lead to unintended serious consequences.

Internally, Nepal has witnessed dramatic changes in its history and pressures on the reconfiguration of geopolitics are growing. If people in positions of power and authority fail to comprehend the magnitude of the *challenges of change* (internal and external) and act accordingly, the change in geopolitics could be much more traumatic than the change in history that we are trying to grapple with now. To introspect one does not need to go far beyond post-1990 Nepal which could neither forge consensus on national interest or international relations nor produce individuals of caliber in foreign policy with whom our international partners, particularly two immediate neighbors felt they could deal *in confidence*. Internal bickering and external interests confused policies and undermined and undercut rather than support and promote people with potential. In the collective march of folly, the post-1990 order crumbled and old Nepal collapsed. Republican Nepal faces the same challenges only worsened by internal conflict and external contest.

Today's international order is in a state of flux, the regional context is changing and Nepal's internal politics is marked by sharp divisions, making Nepal highly vulnerable to the negative pressures of globalization extending to the treacherous external involvement in internal affairs.<sup>1</sup> In such a situation

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1 Read Prime Minister Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai's open admission "the key is somewhere else"

the state, the central institution ultimately responsible for domestic politics, economic policy, national security and foreign relations, should be proactive and decisive. But today Nepal is like a stateless state.<sup>2</sup> In this situation, how do we go about enhancing clarity and consistency in understanding the foreign policy goals within the larger necessity of institutionalization of Nepalese foreign policy?

**Continuity and Change:** The question is of great relevance but immense complexity. Discussion on such a topic could best start with the recognition that in any state policy formulation there is an irreducible core, vital national interest, for any state at any time. Such vital interests include, for all states at all times, as a minimum, protection and preservation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Text books of International Relations say that if and when these vital interests are threatened, nations are prepared to go to war.<sup>3</sup> This constitutes the constant continuity of foreign policy. Such vital national interests remain outside the arena of domestic political changes.

National interests also cover categories of needs and demands that vary from time to time based on the social, cultural, religious backgrounds, political predispositions, economic outlook and worldviews of changing political leadership. To quote Henry Kissinger, "Personality and policy could never be fully divorced".<sup>4</sup> Interests, perceptions and worldviews of the changing political elite reflected in national policies constitute the dynamic dimensions of foreign policy.<sup>5</sup>

At a time when the external context is changing and internal politics is divided on almost every aspect of national importance and international affairs, to minimize risks, optimize opportunities clarity and consistency in understanding on major issues of national interest, security and prosperity is the most urgent need of Nepal's foreign policy making. Understanding on what I have described as the 3Is agenda (Issues - Interests), Institutions and Individuals) can be the basis of moving ahead. A vigorous national debate on

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2 *In a failing state the state exists in form but in substance it exists not for the happiness of the people, their safety, security and prosperity but only for the happiness of the people in positions of power; See Simkhada, Shambhu Ram, "Bringing Nepal's Politics back on track: Restarting the journey to Peace, Prosperity and Democracy", New Spotlight, July 27, 2012 p. 9*

3 *Hartman, Frederick H., The Relations of Nations: The Macmillan Company New York, 1957 p. 6*

4 *Walter Issacson, Kissinger: A Biography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), p. 344*

5 *See Simkhada, Shambhu Ram "Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy", The Independent, Kathmandu, Nepal 18 December, 1991*

identifying key issues of national interests and understanding among the main political actors that despite ideological differences or competition for power at home, they will not compromise on national interests or use foreign policy for domestic political ends or partisan political gains is the most important priority of this discourse; strengthening institutions related with foreign policy and choice of right individuals to implement policies and promote national interests are other aspects of the 3Is agenda. In brief, the key elements of the 3Is agenda are:

**i. Issues/Interests:**

- Relations of Trust and Confidence with India and China
- Strengthening relations with the US, further deepening traditional friendship with UK, European Union, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, Switzerland and the Nordic countries
- Effective promotion of economic (development) diplomacy
- A more proactive role in the UN, SAARC and other international fora
- Consolidation and expansion of relations with other partners in the developing world and like minded groups such as the LDCs
- National consensus among the major political actors on major issues of national interest, foreign and security policy

**ii. Institutions:**

- Strengthening the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Categorization of diplomatic missions
- Strengthening the Institute of Foreign Affairs
- Cooperation with independent Foreign Policy and Security related think tanks

**III. Individuals:**

- Leadership and advisory positions
- Appointment of Ambassadors
- Choice of diplomatic staff, economic counselors and labor attaches
- A culture of reward and punishment

In the current search for enhancing clarity and consistency in understanding foreign policy goals and institutionalization of our foreign policy understanding and agreement on the 3Is agenda is crucial. That is why even at the risk of being repetitive I have outlined them here briefly. But as they have been discussed

before including at the seminars of the IFA and published<sup>6</sup>, I would like to move on to the central challenge of Nepal's foreign policy, namely relations of trust and confidence with our two immediate and powerful neighbors, India and China.

**Nepal between India and China:** Just as Leo E. Rose published his seminal work on Nepal, 'A Strategy for Survival', a well known Nepali diplomat-scholar wrote "our foreign policy will breakdown at the point where either India or China loses faith in us and concludes that her vital national interests and sensitivities do not receive proper recognition in our conduct of relations".<sup>7</sup> Many actions of the post-1990 political leadership signaled a lack of understanding of the importance of foreign policy, centrality of relations with India and China and disregard for competent and credible professionals in managing these vital relations. Changing global-regional political-economic-security needs and threats posed by increased cross border flow of goods, services, people and with them crime and terror have made things much more complicated. What does the post-2006 leadership expect but debacle from internship in foreign policy in such critical times? In such a context how should Nepal's relations with *India* and *China* be understood and managed as a priority without making other major global actors, friends and well wishers feeling neglected?<sup>8</sup> How to benefit from the tremendous opportunities of globalization and positive developments taking place on both sides of the border without compromising our own vital national interests?<sup>9</sup>

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6 *The 3Is agenda has been articulated in many of my papers and articles including "Complexities of Nepal's Foreign Policy" in Foreign Policy of Nepal "Challenges and Opportunities", Institute of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu, 2009*

7 *Nepal's most respected diplomat-scholar Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal wrote these lines long ago*

8 *"The World is bigger than India and China", the title of the interview of Scott H. Delisi, US Ambassador to Nepal, the Kathmandu Post 2011-12-12 is enough to convey the message. Vitality of relations with India and China does not mean less priority to relations with our other partners in the international community such as the world's superpower, Nepal's traditional relations with the UK, other members of the P5 Russia and France, major donors such as Japan, Germany, Nordic countries, Switzerland and of course like minded groups of the Developing world, other neighbors in South Asia and a more proactive role in the UN, SAARC and so on.*

9 *While many airlines have made the tourist and labor traffic in and out of Kathmandu as the main source of their consolidation and profit, the pathetic state of Nepal's national airline is an example of both the opportunities and pitfalls of globalization. For an analysis of how Nepal's political class, unable to comprehend the opportunities and challenges of change, is leading Nepal to the brink of failure through change mismanagement, see Simkhada, Shambhu Ram Politics, Leadership and Statesmanship, LEAD Nepal, 2009*

**Nepal - India:** Nepal-India relations are so deep rooted and widespread that they cut across all aspects of state to state and people to people interactions. An important Indian diplomat genuinely interested in taking this relation to a new height, after building personal trust and confidence to the extent that they were reasonably certain of not misunderstanding each other for sharing ideas, asks a Nepali friend “why are Nepalis anti-Indian?” The Nepali is a bit taken aback first but appreciates the candor and understands the question. So, he responds by sharing two anecdotes.

- After a speech at a prestigious and powerful institution in the United States, during question-answer a gentleman stands up and asks the foreign speaker “Why does the world hate us so much?” The speaker replies “Sir, contrary to what you seem to feel, people of the world love America, American people, their faith in freedom, charity and confidence. But sometimes some American leaders and institutions defy the very values they purport to protect and promote. So, not just foes, friends of America and even Americans find impossible to support, necessary to oppose. Does that mean they hate America? Do not confuse criticisms of some policies, actions of some institutions or individuals as hating America/Americans”.
- Personally, a Nepali diplomat starts his day with Anup Jalaota's bhajans and enjoys Pankaj Udas gajals before retiring. Professionally he thinks relationship of trust and confidence with India is in Nepal's own interest and acts accordingly. This Nepali is a great friend of India but in inter-state dealings his loyalties are with Nepal first. What does that make him?

Anecdotes aside many Indian policy makers have the impression that Nepalis are anti-Indian. So, they want to *handle Nepal from New Delhi*.<sup>10</sup> Fearful of its size and trait of a great power, which India no doubt is, some Nepalis are suspicious of India and see *the India hand* in all of Nepal's ills. Perceptions are important, especially perceptions of people who shape policies. As Robert Jervis says, “*perceptions when they deteriorate into misperceptions can create havoc*”.<sup>11</sup> So, analysis of relations, if the aim is to improve them, must identify the sources of misperceptions and try to change them. This makes mindset the key starting point.

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<sup>10</sup> For example see Kanwal Sibal, *Tense Neighborhood – India has not managed to create friendly surroundings yet* The Telegraph, Calcutta, February 11, 2010

<sup>11</sup> Klaus Knorr, ed., *Power, Strategy and Security* (New Delhi: Asian, Books, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reprint, 1987), pp. 152-177

**Mindsets:** Mindsets are partly the products of history. Nepal remained outside even as most of India came under the Mougals. Had the brave Gorkha fighters of King Prithvi Narayan Shah not unified the many small principalities along the Himalayan foothills Nepal would have been part of the British colony. Birth place of the Buddha, valor of the Nepalis and recognition as the world's only sovereign Hindu state long before most of South Asia was decolonized instilled an independent Nepali psyche, perhaps also some arrogance among the elites. Use of Nepali soldiers to sometime suppress India's early independence protests must have left some lasting imprints of Nepal in the post-colonial Indian psyche. *Kowtowing* to the dominant power in the South, North or beyond is a tool of gaining and staying in power in Nepal. "*Nun ko sojo*" is a general Nepali character, making them effective fighters so useful to their employers. Nepali Gorkhas continue to work in the Indian and British Armies due to mutuality of benefits.

Post-1950 Nepali rulers saw rapid international exposure as strengthening Nepal's independent identity in the post-colonial world. There were ups and downs in relations with some of Nepal's actions disappointing those in India who expected *permanent tutelage*, to use the term of a former Indian Foreign Secretary, in return for the substantial and significant help India extended as Nepal entered the new world. But if the subject is good relations between two close, friendly but independent nation-states then, in his own words "*the fault lies.....in myopic misjudgments on both sides*".<sup>12</sup>

**Complexity and Sensitivity of Proximity:** Beyond the ups and downs of history, new generation of *mainstream* Nepalis value the *natural relations* and Indian support to their socio-economic-political transformation. This appreciation deepens as educational history and infrastructure before democracy and economic policy now make India *Shine*. Nepal too is changing creating new opportunities for relations to evolve to a new level. Unfortunately, too much politicization of relations with India poisons the environment from the Nepali side while *India Poised* may have reversed the *locale* of arrogance with the vital neighborhood policy in India being largely to the bureaucracy and intelligence. As the Indian elite identifies Nepalese with servants, security guards and the Maoists, Nepal rather than getting on the "*Shinning India bandwagon*" rails on stagnation, chaos and crime. But *hunger and anger* on one side can create problems for both.

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<sup>12</sup> Jagat S. Mehta, *India and Nepal Relations: A Victim of Politics in India Nepal Relations The Challenge Ahead*, Observer Research Foundation, Delhi 2004 p. 26

Proximity adds vitality but also complexity to inter-state relations demanding greater sensitivity-priority in dealing with it. Pro or anti neighbor slogans to consolidate power internally or posturing to bargain often partisan or personal goals are not unique to Nepali and Indian politicians. Even small events can be blown out of proportions to raise slogans of "*big brother India bullying small least developed and land-locked Nepal*" or *Nepal's insensitivity to vital Indian interests*. Slogans of "*Sikkimization*" for India-bashing, treatment and behavior of the 40th largest nation in the world with an independent history and strategic importance or reliance on *self serving channels* ignoring genuine friends only harm interests of both. The Bhutanese refugees issue is a classic case of how with deft diplomacy a small country can outmaneuver its bigger neighbor whereas failure of domestic politics can lead to failed foreign policy.

Mindsets are wasting so much potential, water, for instance, both Nepal and India could benefit by its proper utilization. Floods and security concerns of one, inundation as a result of road/dam construction and controversy over unequal treatment/encroachments/interference in the other are raising easily exploitable alarm-bells on both sides. But with creative thinking the rivers, roads, dams and the open border can be developed into mega-models of mutual cooperation/benefit with artificial lakes, canals and beaches for fishery, irrigation, agriculture, forestry, transport, trade, tourism, hydro power, environment and flood protection etc.<sup>13</sup>

**Security Concerns:** With over 1,800 km open border, the spread of Indo-Nepal security relations can be highlighted at many levels. Chief of the Army Staff of one gets the title of Hon. General in the other; security establishments enjoy close relations and cooperate in many ways. 35,000 Nepalese Gorkhas currently serving in the Indian Army and over 1, 20,000 pensioners reflect the strength of this relationship. But mindsets preventing India and Nepal

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<sup>13</sup> *Taking relations to this new realm requires understanding at the highest levels of leadership on both sides. But it has been a continuing perception in Nepal that India's Nepal policy is basically decided by the South Block and the intelligence/security agencies. This may have worsened with India's emergence as a global power with the political and foreign policy leadership preoccupied by other things. In many intellectual discussions from the Nepali side top political leaders are present whereas only bureaucrats and intelligence/security officials attend from the Indian side. This lacuna was somehow compensated by the personal contacts of some senior leaders of Nepal who had some direct personal access to the Indian political leadership due to their upbringing in India and history of political involvement starting from the Indian Freedom Movement. With their passing away in Nepal and the emergence of the Rahul Gandhi generation in India how will the traditional emotional bond of Nepal-India relations be affected? Will this be essentially professional-transactional? How will this in turn affect Indo-Nepal relations? This is a subject of great interest and significance.*

from entering into bold ventures of cooperation at the political-economic-diplomatic levels are worsened by threat perceptions and security concerns. Insecurity exacerbates the fear of Nepali rulers obsessed with *"the India hand"*.<sup>14</sup> Perception on the Nepali side is matched by Indian security thinking - *the Himalayas and the ocean as India's ultimate security perimeter*. The 1950 Treaty, which India considers the bedrock of the special relationship, provokes the *"unequal"* charge and calls for its amendment and abrogation in Nepal. India repeats *"we are prepared to do what Nepal wants"* but both sides do precious little to address the festering problem.

Weakness and suspicion forces some in Nepal to raise anti-India slogans or seek countervailing support from elsewhere (Post 1950 rapid expansion of international relations, the so-called China card during the Panchayat, UML's Kalapani/Tanakpur and Maoists' tunnel wars and national independence). Such tactics in turn lead the Indian side to conclude that Nepal is an unreliable neighbor and cannot be trusted at times of crisis. So it feels forced to enhance its deterrence capability south of the Himalayas but certainly not take any security risks south of the Mahabharat/Chure. It wants *"friendlier"* Nepal as a whole but will not tolerate anything else and will impose its version of *"Monroe doctrine"* in Nepal's Tarai-Madhesh which it considers its backyard, a soft-belly, if penetrated by hostile forces would expose the whole Indian heartland from Calcutta to Delhi.

Fear of a multi-pronged war, serious domestic pre-occupations and the new nature of threat posed by terrorism and crimes like smuggling of drugs, arms and fake currencies make the already complex problem even more serious. But response from both sides lacks imagination. As India tries to tighten its grip with some economic carrots and bigger political sticks, it not only invites other international actors to raise the level and scope of their involvement in Nepal but also risks driving friendlier Nepalis also to the side of those who have always been suspicious of the alleged *Indian game plan*.

**Trust and Confidence:** Besides close political, economic, security, socio-cultural and religious relation interactions at the multilateral forums to people's level exchanges on a daily basis affect India-Nepal relations. Taking relations between two neighbors so inextricably interlinked with each other to new height can only be done on the foundation of trust and confidence. For such a relation to develop, however, both sides must listen to the counsel

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<sup>14</sup> *Nepali establishment at different periods of history has always been challenged from the South - British and the Nepali Congress against the Shahs/Ranas/Panchayat, Maoists against "old Nepal" and armed groups creating havoc in Nepal's Tarai-Madhesh now.*



of a wise man to his ruler long ago “perfidy may bring gains to the individual prince or his dukes and barons but not welfare to the people or glory to the nation”. Open/honest dialogue on each other’s needs/interests is the basis of sound politics/diplomacy, credibility and reliability rather than plot/threat are traits of good politicians and diplomats.

Returning to the anecdotes, contrary to being anti-Indian Nepalis know India is the only foreign country where they can travel freely, get refuge when persecuted and jobs when unemployed at home. Indians too have tremendous goodwill for their Nepali brothers and sisters. But, Nepal-India relations today suffer from mindsets unable to comprehend the vitality but with it also the complexity and sensitivity of proximity. Transforming this relation is easy and difficult; the political and foreign policy elites on both sides need to be guided by popular goodwill and tremendous potential in harnessing the unalterable closeness of history and geography for the benefit of people on both sides. While some politicians were hurling shoes at the Indian Ambassador in Nepal, exchange of roses between concerned citizens of both countries not to allow politicians and diplomats harm relations are powerful beams of bright light amidst the patches of clouds sometime appearing over the horizon of Nepal-India relations.<sup>15</sup>

**Nepal - China:** Nepal-China friendship are age old. The legend says a saint named Manjushree came from the north and with his powers drained the water making Kathmandu a fertile valley suitable for human settlement. Nepali princess Bhrikuti, married to a Tibetan Emperor in 620 A. D., is believed to have brought Buddhism into Tibet and China.<sup>16</sup> Bhrikuti’s temple is a major tourist site in Lhasa and the White Pagoda constructed by Nepali sculptor Arniko stands prominently in the outskirts of Beijing. Chinese travelers visited Nepal as early as 4<sup>th</sup> century A. D. Besides the 1,400 km long border historic,

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*15 The India-Nepal relations section of this paper is based on a paper on Indo-Nepal relations the author presented at a seminar "Nepal: the Way Forward" organized by the Vivekananda International Foundation in New Delhi in 2010 in which many senior political leaders of Nepal including the current Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, NC Leaders Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat and Pradip Giri, UML Leader Pradip Gyanwali, present Finance Minister and Maoist leader Barshaman Pun, to mention a few, were present from Nepal's side whereas many senior former diplomats and officials were present from India. Besides presenting the paper on Indo-Nepal relations, this author was invited to chair the main session in which most of the senior leaders spoke. The author would like to express his appreciation to the organizers for the honor. It is my understanding that the proceedings are being published soon in the form of a book*

*16 See Manandhar, V. K., Cultural and Political Aspects of Nepal-China Relations, Adroit Publishers, Delhi 1999*

religious and cultural exchanges created enduring links between China and Nepal.

Historically, except for a short period when China was overtaken by the zeal of exporting revolutions, some sensitivity on border demarcation and the Khampa problem in the 1970s Nepal's relations with the People's Republic of China have been problem free. In modern times Nepal is a close witness to China's phenomenal rise. Asymmetric in size and power and with different political systems, Nepalis see China as a friendly neighbor ready to help whenever it can and a benign power taking "hands off" policy in its internal affairs.

The Himalayas act as natural barrier to direct interactions at the people to people level. So Sino-Nepal relations in the past have been mainly at the official levels. But with the two countries now connected by two cross-Himalayan highways and four direct flights Nepal-China relations are rapidly expanding and extending to other areas. Each year more than 130,000 people travel between the two countries and bilateral trade has reached US\$ 1.2 billion. More than 20 Chinese companies have now set up operations in Nepal and 3,000 Nepali students currently study in China.<sup>17</sup> As China's "Go West" policy accelerates and major infrastructure works in the bordering areas get completed China-Nepal economic relations, trade, tourism, investments and financial assistance could swell to a new level.

The number of official exchanges between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the political parties of Nepal, youth delegations and military exchanges are also growing at an accelerated pace. China sends teachers for Chinese language courses in several institutes in Nepal. The Kathmandu University has established the Confucius Institute to promote the study of Chinese language and culture. A number of Nepali publishers supply textbooks to China. A large number of official, business, media, political parties and civil society/academic delegations visit Nepal and are invited to China. Such exchanges are bound to create new momentum in bilateral relations beyond the official level.

China's heightened interest in Nepal's security sector is reflected by the growing frequency of high-profile Chinese military delegations, their meetings with senior army and other security officials as well as interest in the integration of the Maoist army combatants (MACs). Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, and Army Chief Gen. Chen Bingde have all visited Nepal, demonstrating the importance China attaches to relations

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<sup>17</sup> See Fu Ying, *A friendship unparalleled in height*, *The Kathmandu Post*, Sunday August 1, 2012

with Nepal. In the environment of growing flow of people and goods, China is particularly keen to see security along the Nepal-Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China border tightened.

Growing interest in the Himalayan eco-systems, research on melting glaciers and high altitude health conditions and medicines to Tibetan culture, society and tourism are bound to spill over on both sides of the Himalayas. Hollywood actors using local TV channel in Kathmandu to promote the Tibetan cause, reports of the Tibetan Youth Congress activities, pressure to reopen the Office of the Dalai Lama and demonstrations by Tibetans in front of the Chinese embassy or the UN office and China's reaction have started to preoccupy officials in Kathmandu. Even trekking and mountaineering can draw political attention as some trekkers tried to unfurl a Tibetan flag just before the Beijing Olympics. Media highlights on the visits of Kathmandu based ambassadors to Nepal's tourist destinations bordering the TAR of China show that tourism too has other dimensions.<sup>18</sup>

**Nepal, India and China:** With India's One China policy, recognition of the TAR as part of China and growing trade, China did not see the south of the Himalayas as of serious consequences to its vital national security in the past. So, it maintained a "hands off" policy in Nepal. In return Nepal extends unequivocal strong support to China in its "Five Nos", Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang, economic interests and human rights in which China rejects any outside pressure.<sup>19</sup> With the opening up of Tibet and heightened interest across the central Himalayas China has started seeing developments in Nepal affecting its own security particularly through their impact on Tibet, the central cord linking Nepal-China relations. China also sees the friendship with Nepal as its vital link with South Asia. These new developments will increase the spotlight on Nepal-India-China relations in the coming days.

Tibet always looms large in China-Nepal relations. The presence of large number of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal and some Tibetan fleeing Tibet and seeking refuge in Nepal or transiting to India cannot be wished away. The advocates of traditional Tibetan cause may see the present Dalai Lama as their last best hope whose departure from the scene would greatly weaken their cause. Thus Dalai Lama's age and health could exert pressure to intensify their campaign. Nepal could clamp down harder on the Tibetan refugees on its side but China must do its part to prevent unrest within or the outflow from Tibet. Given the centrality of Tibet in China-Nepal relations and the

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<sup>18</sup> *The Nepal-China relations section of the paper is based on the contribution of this author as Chapter 6, Nepal A Benign Neighborhood Power of the Book A resurgent China South Asian Perspectives Eds. S.D. Muni and Tan Tai Yong, Routledge India, 2012 pp 145-176*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

sensitivity involved, how they respond to the diverse demands of the various national and international actors, remaining steadfast to the One China Policy or how China reacts in case of intensified Tibet related activities in Nepal itself or coming from India or outside is going to seriously test the political and diplomatic skill of Nepal's republican rulers.

Nepal's reward or 'revenge of geography' means the Nepali landscape cannot be painted without fully knowing the brushes and colors of competing demands of major external actors.<sup>20</sup> India's ambivalence of Nepal-China friendship in the context of its own simultaneously cooperating and competing relations with China adds to the complexity. Growing strength and need to secure supply of raw materials and markets for both with China's strategic moves in and around South Asia and India's strategic alliance with the US add to these complexities. Tibet, global ideological contest and power-equation reflected in US-India-China-Pakistan relations are other factors affecting Nepal's relations with India and China. For a variety of reasons the heretofore smooth Nepal-China relations too show signs of the growing complexity and sensitivity of proximity. In such difficult times, politicians add fuel in the fire of the crisis of confidence by saying one thing here something else there, saying one thing but doing another or promising things that they cannot deliver<sup>21</sup> and Nepal's foreign policy establishment seems unable to help fill the trust deficits.

Located between two global economic and strategic powerhouses, Nepal can greatly benefit from developments taking place in India and China with unlimited potential not only for aid, trade, tourism, investment, technology and employment but also crucial political support when needed. But everything depends on our ability to put our own house in order, restore peace, stability and democracy, produce exportable goods and services. These potentials can only be realized by building a relationship of trust and confidence. In this age of unprecedented *remote viewing and distance listening* saying something here something else there or saying one thing but doing another only expose politics and diplomacy to *crisis of credibility and confidence* which unfortunately constitute the biggest problem of Nepal's national politics and international relations, particularly with the two neighbors. So, one of them feels the need to offer help to protect Nepal's national sovereignty and territorial integrity while the other feels so exposed that it feels compelled to impose its own "Monroe doctrine". In this environment, vain debates,

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20 *The threat posed by cross-border terrorism, violent conflicts and crime to nation-states, particularly democratic ones is indeed serious.*

21 *Some Nepali politicians and intellectuals are well known for their anti-India slogans in the street but privately kowtowing to the Indians for political power and personal favors.*

*name-calling and finger pointing* only increase the risks of more external involvement in internal power contests making domestic politics the biggest problem of Nepal's foreign policy. Referring to Nepal between India and China, Yadu Nath Khanal once wrote "We have reason to feel reassured the first level of strategic balance common to the three countries is Nepal's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity". But he goes on "Major Powers like India and China do not rely on one strategy. Suppose circumstances develop in which this strategy is overtaken by events...such graded core strategies could or could not be equally beneficial to Nepal's vital national interest".<sup>22</sup> That is what makes restoration of trust and confidence with all our international friends and partners, but most importantly India and China the top priority of Nepal's foreign policy.

**Conclusions:** The world is changing and Nepal has witnessed dramatic changes in its history. The Constituent Assembly (CA) elected to draft a new Constitution to project where Nepal wants to go from here and how to get there collectively as a society, country, nation-state has failed and there are deep divisions among the main political actors on the road ahead. Amidst internal squabbles on the restructuring of the Nepali State, recent controversy created by revelations and comments of some well known individuals from both sides of our immediate neighborhood highlight the pressure on geography with the risk of Nepal heading towards Balkanization, Lebanonization or even worse.

Extreme care in foreign policy is needed because historically Nepal is the meeting point of two great civilizations and today forces of globalization have brought new issues into play. Foreign policy has always been a vital tool of Nepali statecraft and test of leadership. India and China's rise amidst an impending global paradigm shift and Nepal's closeness with both creates great new opportunities but also serious challenges. If the opportunities lie in the tremendous potential to benefit from developments on both sides of the border and beyond, the risks lie in Nepal turning into a battlefield, a central front in the global war of ideas in the post Cold-war paradigm flux. Conventional wisdom sadly suggests that rise and the fall of great powers are often associated with wars and conflicts.<sup>23</sup> Substantiating the inherent opportunities and challenges in Asia, the current global super power has shifted its strategic focus from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Asia in particular.

Discussing Nepal's internal problems within the emerging regional and global realities, in a recent meeting with political party leaders Nepal's President is reported to have warned of the risk of Nepal becoming Afghanistan.

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22 Yadu Nath Khanal, *Nepal After Democratic Restoration*, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, 1996 p. 65

23 See Paul Kennedy *the Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* Fontana Press 1988

Considering the situations on the west (the Arab world, Syria and Iran) and the east (South China Sea) combined with the turmoil in South Asia and the traumatic experiences in Nepal as the world embarked into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it would be difficult to discard such a warning. That is why Nepal needs a balanced foreign policy and vigorous diplomacy of confidence building, drawing some red lines to prevent politicians being used as pawns in the chess board of global power contests and not allow our territory becoming a playground of others or being used for activities against the interest of any of our friends and neighbors.

Clarity and consistency in the understanding of foreign policy goals in the current profoundly difficult environment naturally demands a comprehensive view of both the continuity and changing dynamics of foreign policy. In doing so the first priority is to ascertain the permanent features to ensure that our sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence are preserved. But a fresh look may also be needed. In doing so, however, one has to be careful that our new thinking is clear to ourselves first and its articulation consistent in order to avoid accidents caused by misunderstanding, especially because the stakes are so high. For this, major political actors must identify and agree on what is in the best national interest and decide to sequence it above their own individual, partisan, communal and regional interests and pursue them united by wisdom and courage. The political leadership should then create a team of committed, capable and credible professionals to run important institutions and implement those policies aimed at the protection and promotion of Nepal's vital national interests.

Foreign Policy can not be discussed in isolation, as it is a reflection of domestic politics. In this sense, division and discord in domestic politics is today Nepal's most serious foreign policy problem. Restoration of peace, order and stability and democracy by returning to the politics of consensus is thus essential. Everyone harps on consensus, but one of the reasons division and discord persist is because no one has the answer to the question, consensus on what and how? In other words what is the consensus national agenda? The 3Is agenda and my current discourse answer those vital questions with regards to Nepal's foreign policy. It is up to the political leadership and the foreign policy establishment to take it up.

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## Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Foreign Policy Goals

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### Introduction

The world has witnessed profound shifts in almost every sector throwing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. With the growing interdependence and interconnectedness, political, social, economic, scientific and technological forces are interacting with each other on a continuous basis. There has been an explosion of information and its complete democratization, widening the participation of public in the policy making process. Today, no event can be viewed in isolation, and people in every station expect their role and contributions to be recognized in the process.

The centrality of instantaneous communication has emerged as a prime mover in modern life. Ideas and knowledge flow swiftly in an unhindered way without any central control. Research and Development (R&D) has strategically come to be an integral part of any organization. Interactions of government officials with business people, economists, social scientists, financial analysts and other relevant actors are emerging as a common feature. They together have come to form the 'central nervous system' in the conduct of present day foreign and domestic relations.

Ever since medieval Nepal entered into modernity following the success of the popular revolution in 1950 throwing away the 104 year old Rana autocracy, people have been off again and on again from being at the center of governance. Thirty years long partyless Panchayat system under the Royal dictatorship came to an end in 1990 following the peaceful People's Movement that led to the restoration of parliamentary democracy snatched away at gun points in 1960 by the King. The Movement of 1990 brought back the people at the center of governance, introducing much needed openness, policy dialogue, and greater citizenry partnership. Democracy and rule of law were recognized as important constituents of both domestic and foreign policy

agenda. This was further cemented by the successful People's Movement of 2006, which brought the underground armed Maoist rebels to the peaceful politics, ended the decade long armed conflict in the country, stripped the king of his privileges, and made the people the source of sovereign power.

It is said, 'The basic secret of a good foreign policy is a good domestic policy.' Napoleon reportedly once said that to know a nation's geography was to know its foreign policy. Foreign policy has also economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Based on ground realities, which remain permanent, it is equally important to bring the foreign policy to the tune of emerging political and socio-economic developments so as to maximize benefits from the conduct of foreign policy for the people and the country. The fundamental objectives of foreign policy are to protect national interests, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity, ensure peace, stability and prosperity for the people. Traditionally called as *a yam between two boulders*, Nepal's foreign policy is a policy of peaceful co-existence. Nepal maintains close and cooperative relations with its neighbors and other countries of the world. It is a responsible member of international community and has committed to abide by rules of law and codes of behavior. Nepal's contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security under the aegis of the United Nations have earned name and fame for the country.

Foreign policy is a subject that gets continuously evolved and constantly shaped. During the Cold War, foreign policy was a mix of diplomacy, defense and development. New issues keep emerging every day and creep into the conduct of the foreign policy. The changing context makes foreign policy to encompass complex issues of economics, trade, defense and security, fight against terrorism, technology, environment and climate change, several aspects of human rights, humanitarian and international law in addition to the analyzing of political developments with their national, regional and global implications. People handling these issues need to be well informed and have incisive and analytical minds. Understanding of these issues and their in-depth analyses in the context of their changing nature of task and in relation to daily developments around the globe are a must.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was once the exclusive prerogative of a few class and clan has changed with the democratic changes in the country. It can be hoped to be progressively becoming inclusive. Given the historic changes in the country and revolution of rising aspirations of the people, it is a compulsion to develop a well thought out, and clear policy guideline for the conduct of foreign policy. It should start from improving



the working of domestic policy to forge national unity and reconciliation and ending prolonged political transition with democracy, human rights and development at the center. Pervasive poverty, widespread deprivation and exclusionary politics stare at the nation and stand as the main challenges. A good politics at home will boost country's projection abroad to mobilize goodwill, support and cooperation from international community for the much needed socio-economic transformation of the country. This can only be possible with diplomatic efforts that are based on the foundation of well-trained, competent, and efficient diplomats who are capable of conveying the message of the people of Nepal to the outside world convincingly, firmly and effectively.

This article is an attempt to discuss the need for strengthening the capacity of foreign policy establishment towards realizing the foreign policy goals. It briefly provides a background to the functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Missions abroad, seeks to present an overview of the evolution of Foreign Service in Nepal and various attempts made to institutionalize the Foreign Service from 1950-2011 through the formation of Foreign Policy Task Forces and establishment of the Institute of Foreign Affairs. The concluding part makes some suggestions and recommendations for actions in the light of preceding discussions.

### **Expanding functions of Foreign Policy establishment**

Foreign policy is a complex and sensitive subject. The making of foreign policy is a state-driven process and differs in different political systems. While dictator has the sole prerogative of deciding foreign policy, in democratic system of governance, political executive decides the fundamentals of foreign policy with full accountability to the people. In democracy, there are active societal and political actors who need to be taken on board in formulating and implementing foreign policy decisions.

The elected Constituent Assembly of Nepal, on May 28, 2008 declared Nepal a Federal, Democratic and Republic State by formally abolishing the 240-year old institution of monarchy. The political system adopted obligates the political executive to consult parliament, state agencies, officials, civil society, human rights community, elites and people at large. These actors have grown in strength and gained powers and come into play in formulating Nepal's foreign policy and implementing it. Unlike domestic policy, foreign policy is to be implemented outside national borders and in far-flung areas. This is no easy task. It must be conducted in a serious and responsible manner with good and competent people at the helm of affairs.

The functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) though different in nature, cannot be separated from the tasks to be performed by line ministries at the national level. Officials working in the Foreign Ministry have to perform a range of specialized responsibilities connected with matters such as international relations, international commerce, international security, international law, conflict management, environmental concerns and intercultural awareness. Expanding frontiers of foreign policy include war against terrorism, disarmament, human rights and environment and climate change. MoFA officials need to possess professional qualities and need to have thorough knowledge of the domestic issues along with developments beyond frontiers at the regional and global levels. These professionals are expected to foster better understanding between the nations of the world in the context of globalization, complexity of international relationships, and growing interconnectedness and interdependence among nations of the world.

The MoFA is the custodian of the foreign policy and plays an indispensable role in making of foreign policy. The Ministry and the Missions are responsible for feeding with detailed and adequate information. This information has to come analyzed, and evaluated in the process of making foreign policy and its implementation actions.

### **Structure and Organization**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has come a long way from *Jaishi Kotha* and *Munshi Khana*.<sup>1</sup> This section attempts to present a brief overview of the functions carried out by the MoFA and Missions abroad. Organizational Charts of the MoFA and Missions given in the annex show the structure and organization of the MoFA and Missions and how they contribute to the making of foreign policy of the country and play vital role towards realizing the foreign policy goals.

The Ministry and Missions perform the following functions<sup>2</sup>:

- **Political diplomacy:** A rational policy making process requires the availability of detailed and accurate information on major developments in foreign countries. The information has to be accurate and timely. It has to come evaluated, analyzed with possible

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1 *These are the earlier incarnations of the present day Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

2 *For details please see, Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya, The Making of India's Foreign Policy: Determinants, Institutions, Processes and Personalities, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1980, pp.199-279.*

scenarios and consequences and recommended objectively. The Ministry analyzes the information and prepares its own assessments. Report submitted to the Ministry should contain not only information on developments in host country and global context; it should also include assessment along with recommendations for actions by the Ministry. The Foreign Ministry processes the report, shares the relevant portions with line ministries and advises them for actions and feedback on results.

- **Economic Diplomacy:** It has emerged as a major component of Nepalese foreign policy particularly after 1990. Initiatives taken by the Government to promote it include the High Level Task Force in 1996, that identified trade, investment, water resources, tourism, foreign employment, and management of remittances as the major elements of economic diplomacy. From Economic Relations and Cooperation Division (ERCD), it has now become Multilateral Economic Affairs Division (MEAD). Division appears to be more at the experimental stage.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Cultural exchange is one of the most potent means of promoting goodwill and understanding. Cultural diplomacy is so vital to national security. However its importance and role is little understood in Nepal and therefore appears to be the least priority area in the functions of the MoFA and Missions.
- **External Publicity:** it appears beyond the comprehension of the MoFA and can be said to have been left to the mercy of Internet!
- **Intelligence:** Nepal does not have any intelligence diplomacy. The country should have an elaborate and extensive analysis of political, military, economic and social developments in foreign states and international relations. To this day, Nepal does not seem to have the accurate statistics of Nepalese nationals working or staying in various countries for policy making purpose.
- **Research and Policy Planning:** Purposive planning based on full understanding of current events and future trends should be an indispensable factor in the conduct of foreign relations. MoFA does not have any such unit in its fold.
- **Military Diplomacy:** Nepal maintains Military attaches in six stations namely- New Delhi, Beijing, Dhaka, Islamabad, Washington and New York. As reports are related to various aspects of national security, they need to be shared with the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister through MoFA.

- **Personnel Planning:** Placement of the right kind of people at the right place for helping in the effective formulation and implementation of foreign policy is important. Generally wide gap is seen in selecting, training and utilizing the manpower available. Political interference has undermined the prerogative of Foreign Secretary in assigning the responsibilities at the Ministry and in Missions. Several initiatives and reform plans made within the Ministry remain in shelves.
- **Policy coordination: The lack of coordination is the biggest problem in Nepal.** In an age of increasing interdependence and interconnectedness, coordination in a timely manner is important more than ever before. Coordination within the Ministry among the various territorial and functional divisions as well as between the MoFA and other line ministries on various related matters is of utmost importance. Close coordination with missions abroad and even intermission coordination is equally important for effective delivery of inputs. All the functions stated above should be viewed as mutually complementary of an integrated whole.

The office of Foreign Secretary should be strengthened with the posting of at least an Under Secretary and assistant staff. At a time when there has been the rapid proliferation of the foreign policy functions, a suitable institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination should be given a serious thought. Other ministries connected with foreign policy, and stakeholders outside the ministry including former ministers, former professionals, experts, think tanks, pressure groups, and academics should be brought into the process of making a coordinated, planned, and rational foreign policy.

- **Dealing with foreign diplomats at home:** MoFA officials need to be given a rigorous training to scrupulously follow diplomatic norms and values and be courteous and respectful to diplomats stationed in Nepal while monitoring the close interests in the activities of diplomatic corps.
- **Interactions with political institutions needed for building support at home:** Role of public opinion, party institutions such as Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Unified Communist Party of Nepal-UCPN (Maoists), Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), Madhesi Morcha, and other political parties, their parliamentary committees and departmental cells, pressure groups, think tanks, trade unions, and also business houses. Meetings with

foreign nationals need to be regulated from national security point of view also. Generally, it is found that political *leaders are not used to keeping secrets*, but this problem can be overcome by engaging political parties, sharing the necessary information on various aspects of national policy before meeting, and regulating these meetings with foreign dignitaries, not in isolating them.

Nepal needs to have a transformational diplomacy rooted in partnership, not paternalism. It is time now that diplomacy be focused on people and geared towards their welfare. It is also about adjusting diplomatic work to developments in communication, growing interconnectedness of economic interests, diffusion of technical knowledge and influence of media. It must be understood that diplomacy is an instrument for building a better world and for furthering economic and technological cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

Human resource is the single most important element in any organization. This element gives life to any organization. The growth, effectiveness, and dynamism of any organization depend on the development of employees' efficiency, integrity and intelligence and their capabilities and competence. Enhancing employees' capabilities and potentials for effective performance is the need of the hour. How effectively the foreign policy of the country is conducted depends on the competence, skills, and abilities of a diplomat. Diplomats symbolize the nation beyond borders. They are the pillars of trust and confidence of nation. They are the first face of the country abroad. Though diplomats have to operate within the parameters of several constraining factors, they are considered to be an integral part of national strength, sovereignty, independence and self-respect abroad. It is in diplomacy that country's culture, geography, history, geopolitical realities etc. are reflected. Diplomacy, thus, becomes the first line of representation and defence for any country. A diplomat represents the country with dignity and courage, and thus, to borrow the words of Krishna Murty, 'has thus a paramount duty to impress and convince the public opinion of the world as to the justness of his approach.'<sup>4</sup>

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3 Please see for details: <http://www.state.gov>

4 Quoted in Foreword by Vice President of India V.V. Giri in G.V.G. Murty's 'Dynamics of Diplomacy', Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968.

## **Nepal: evolution of Foreign Service**

For a long time, the Diplomatic Service remained clubbed under the Nepal Administrative Service as a group. The first ever-elected government of Nepal in 1959 quickly realized the indispensability of a separate Foreign Service and had officials for the Foreign Ministry recruited the same year mandating specific qualifications for the service. Several efforts were made to make the Nepal Foreign Service a professional and qualitative one for the institutional growth of the Ministry. The then Government published a notice dated Jestha 10, 2018 (corresponding to May 24, 1961) constituting 'Nepal Foreign Service (composition and class division )- rules –2018' - *Nepal Baideshik Sewa (gathan and Shreni Bibhajan) Niyamharu-* for the conduct of Nepal Foreign Service. Prof. Yadunath Khanal, the then Foreign Secretary, made several attempts to retain and protect the service by advocating the recruitment of the best brains available in the country for the Foreign Ministry. However a great difficulty was experienced at its implementation.<sup>5</sup> Prof. Khanal records a tailpiece regarding the implementation of Foreign Service, thus, 'in 1973, when I was in Washington, our then foreign minister came on a visit. The first news he imparted to me with a smile was 'we have dismantled your creation, the Nepal Foreign Service.' The ever-modest Prof. Khanal termed 'your creation' as incorrect, saying that it was the Government's policy and decision to set up a separate foreign service. I only implemented that decision with some commitment.'<sup>6</sup>

Prof. Khanal listed some of the requisites of a good foreign service cadre in Nepal in the following ways:<sup>7</sup>

- Unquestioned loyalty to the country.
- The understanding of the country's history and culture and of its current economic and social needs and trends.
- A high degree of intellectual ability is essential because without this we can neither understand our own country nor the world around us.
- Emphasis should be laid on the knowledge of languages and we must ensure that by a certain date all our foreign service officers

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5 Please see for details: Jayaraj Acharya, *Yadunath Khanal: Jeevani ra Bichar (Yadunath Khanal: Life and Views)*, Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan, 2002.

6 Y.N. Khanal, *Nepal's Non-Isolationist Foreign Policy*, Kathmandu: Satyal Publications, 2000, p.697.

7 Please see for details: *Ibid*, pp.260-262.

know French in addition to English. Those who know Chinese and Russian could be usefully employed in the Foreign Ministry.

- Social accomplishments such as dancing, singing, and sports are important considerations though we shall be insisting on false values if we created the impression that social accomplishments are more important than either loyalty to the country or intellectual attainment.
- An officer in the service can give his best when he feels that he is getting clear instructions from his superior, and that his government and the nation are behind him in the pursuit of his objectives.

For any service to grow and address the changing needs and priorities of the time and seize opportunities for institutions and the country, it needs constant nurturing and protection that has to start from recruitment and last throughout the process to retirement.

Recruitment is the bedrock and cornerstone of a sound personnel system. It is necessary to ensure objectivity in selection. A weak, imbalanced and wrong recruitment policy imposes inbuilt lasting shortcomings and burdens on the personnel system of a country, and burdens it with inefficient and incompetent people. Recruitment process is, therefore, pivotal for any administrative system. It determines the tone and caliber of public service, and demonstrates the relevance and utility of government machinery to society. A badly designed recruitment policy imposes permanent shortcomings on administrative system and makes it a heaven for incompetent and inefficient people. No amount of training can make such people worth for organizations. Therefore, a good recruitment policy is the first step to have in place, as was emphasized by Gladden that 'it shall be impartially selected, administratively competent, politically neutral and imbued with the spirit of the service to the community.'

There is no regular intake in the Nepalese Foreign Ministry. In some of the countries, examination for Foreign Service officials has grown long and elaborate. The United States Department of State, in response to a query by Harold Nicholson in 1939, described the examination as comprising 'a wide variety of subjects, including the following: elements of international maritime and commercial law, arithmetic as used in common statistics tariff calculations, exchange, and simple accounting modern languages (French, German or Spanish is required, and in the subsequent oral test, a candidate may offer in addition to one of these, any language in which he may be familiar); elementary economics including the natural, industrial and

commercial geography, American history, government and institutions since 1776. Candidates will also be examined in political economy, and will be rated in English composition, grammar, punctuation, spelling and penmanship as shown by their examination papers. This written examination usually occupies four days...<sup>8</sup> Oral examination follows for candidates who are placed on an 'eligible list' in order of their examination marks. After they are through the oral assessment, they must apply for the security clearance required for an appointment to the Foreign Service. A comprehensive background investigation, conducted by the State Department in cooperation with other federal, state and local agencies, provides the information necessary to determine a candidate's suitability for appointment to the Foreign service and for a Top Secret security clearance.<sup>9</sup> In early days, the American Government wanted men who were hearty, shrewd, and businesslike observant and well informed with a good knowledge of human nature. America did not employ its first woman diplomat until 1922.<sup>10</sup>

## **Initiatives for capacity building of MoFA: establishment of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and formation of Foreign Policy Task Forces**

### **1. Establishment of the Institute of Foreign Affairs:**

The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) was founded on October 18, 1993 as an integral part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The IFA was to operate in close affiliation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Policy, Planning and Economic Relations Section under the United Nations Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was tasked to look after the works of the Institute for the time being in the beginning. The Institute was expected to engage the services of eminent scholars, foreign policy experts, diplomats, ambassadors and other experts on international relations in the formulations of long term foreign policy goals and objectives. It was to organize seminars on topical issues, conduct researchers and offer suggestions for policy options on issues of vital interest and impart training.<sup>11</sup>

Originally instituted to cater to professional training needs of the Nepalese Foreign Service officials and personnel by providing them background

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8 *Martin Mayer, The Diplomats, New York: Doubleday & Company, INC, 1983, p.148.2.*

9 *See for details: <http://careers.state.gov/officer/join/index.html>*

10 *Eric Clark, Diplomat: The World of International Diplomacy, New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1974, p. 65.*

11 *Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (1990-1993), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, December 1993, p. 165.*



knowledge, information and professional skills as well as to serve as a catalyst for generating national consensus on foreign policy issues through interactions, discussions and deliberations, the Institute has come to be conceived under the new set up as a think tank on foreign policy issues. It was reconstituted in 1998 as a semi-autonomous body by Nepal Government under the Development Committee Act of 2013 (1956). It has been tasked to preserving the documents of historic importance as well as dissemination of information on foreign policy related issues is another major responsibility of the Institute.<sup>12</sup>

The objectives of the IFA include:<sup>13</sup>

- Provide suggestions and recommendations to Nepal Government on short and long term policy formulation.
- Prepare concept papers including strategic analysis on foreign affairs and submit them to Nepal Government.
- Organize seminars, workshops, meetings and conferences to discuss and deliberate on foreign policy issues and come up with recommendations.
- Undertake study and research programs on more pressing foreign policy issues and objectives.
- Provide training to officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries on foreign policy issues and objectives.
- Update and systematically compile all historical documents and information on foreign policy issues and publish them as and when necessary.
- Establish linkage with foreign governments, INGOS, NGOs, and eminent personalities to achieve common objectives and programs.

The functions of the IFA include lectures, panel discussion, seminars/symposia and conferences, workshops, orientation and training programs, publication of research findings, seminar proceedings, news bulletin occasional papers, annual journals and actions programs. Its areas of study include foreign policy, planning and management, foreign relations, industrial relation and law, WTO, globalization, privatization, security related issues, conflict management and conflict resolution, and promotion of regional cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Brochure issued by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Kathmandu, Nepal. Please see for details: <http://www.ifa.org.np>

<sup>13</sup> Please see for details: *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Brochure of the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) as mentioned in note 2.

In past, the IFA invited eminent scholars from foreign countries as well as from the regional and international organizations to debate on contemporary issues, and has also brought several publications. However, even after two decades of its existence, the IFA is yet to acquire an institutional strength. It has no permanent staff, leave alone the professionalism. It is yet to focus on inter-institutional cooperation, foster linkages with organizations that have similar objectives. Attempts should be made to make the IFA as repository of information and knowledge on international relations.

A comprehensive yearlong program containing lectures, interactive seminars as well as attachments to various leading institutions is necessary. There is a need to design courses for emerging new areas of study including such as conflict related issues, climate change and information technology.

Training stands as a vital part of the personnel management. Ever expanding role of government requires competence and expertise, specialized knowledge and professional skills. However, the implementation of any training program is found to be the weakest in Nepal. The problems include the lack of proper identification of needs both organizational and individual, nomination for the training, training package, procedures, curriculum, absence of appropriate trainers and even permanent trainers. Training, therefore, should be properly designed to meet the requirements of public personnel, technical, executive and clerical staff.

There are no organized training courses at the moment in Nepal, not even a weeklong course for the Foreign Service officials. New recruits are assigned abroad without any training. It is a rare phenomenon in the world for any Ministry of Foreign to assign its staff abroad during the probation period itself and without a formal training.

## **2. Formation of Foreign Policy Task Forces**

For the first time in the history of Foreign Ministry, a **High Level Task Force** (HLTF) was commissioned under the convenorship of a sitting Member of Parliament in 1996 with objectives of strengthening the mechanism of the Foreign Ministry, building professionalism within the Foreign Ministry so as to create a positive image of the country in international negotiation and thereby obtain positive benefits from such encounters, and devising a mechanism for effectively executing Nepal's economic interest also through the diplomatic channel so that Nepal may benefit from the new opportunities offered by international environment, and not become marginalized in the process.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Instructions from the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to the Task Force, please see Annex 4 of the High Level Task Force 1996: Role to be performed in the conduct of diplomacy in the changed context by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,*

The terms of reference included to examine the organizational structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and necessary reforms to it, role to be played by the Ministry in the changed context, coordination, communication and contacts of the Foreign Ministry with other ministries, recommend necessary changes and reforms in the functioning styles of Nepali missions abroad, and any other issues that may be relevant.<sup>16</sup>

The HLTF was mainly devoted to make economic diplomacy functional within the MoFA's institutional framework, and strengthen Nepali missions for economic diplomacy. It suggested measures for both briefing and debriefing ambassadors and economic counselors and suggested the creation of country specific business plans to be formulated in consultation with the private sector. It identified human resource as the critical element and shortcomings in performance have been attributed to the lack of their job orientation.<sup>17</sup> The Task Force saw the Ministry just as a post office and attributed weaknesses in the Ministry and missions abroad to the shortage of human resources, training and proper orientation, lack of regular supervision, evaluation and assessment. It made clear that without proper training on various theoretical aspects of diplomacy, officials would not be able to conduct economic diplomacy with proper inter-ministerial coordination. Absence of separate Foreign Service was cited as an obstacle to the effectiveness of performance.<sup>18</sup>

The HLTF emphasized to have in place a unified national strategy. Its recommendations among others included new syllabus for recruitment program, career planning system, training for career development, system to ensure timely promotion of meritorious officials to promote professionalism, 50% appointments to ambassadorial positions from career officials, completely block appointments from outside, deputation of foreign ministry officials to other ministries to learn/familiarize policy, programs, rules, regulations and functioning styles. The Task Force envisaged an efficient and effective role to support the diplomatic machinery of the Ministry.<sup>19</sup>

The IFA created the **Policy Study Group (PSG) on Nepal Economic Diplomacy**, composed of eminent personalities in Nepal from various fields to recommend to the government what practical measures are needed to make economic diplomacy a reality. In 2002, the IFA was asked to look at Nepal's economic diplomacy as a follow up to the recommendations made

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16 *Annex 2 of the HLTF.*

17 *See for details the report of the High Level Task Force 1996: Ibid.*

18 *The report of the High Level Task Force 1996, Ibid; p. 21.*

19 *Please see for details: the report of the High Level Task Force 1996: Ibid.*

by the High Level Task Force (HLTF) and prescribe viable mechanisms that are needed to achieve the objectives of further promotion of Nepal's economic interests. It appears to have been guided more by the need to look into the implementation of the HLTF 1996 for promoting Nepal's economic interests abroad. It focused on how to evolve a mechanism for forging a workable and meaningful partnership with the private sector for the promotion of trade, tourism, employment generation, water resources, technical and economic cooperation and private sector investment in the country.

The PSG in its recommendations opined that attitudinal changes among Nepalese diplomats are essential if economic diplomacy is to succeed, and identified training as an integral and critical component of bringing about that attitudinal change. The group recommended that the IFA come forward and play this role at every point.

The PSG concluded that economic diplomacy cannot be conducted without properly qualified manpower to execute its objectives effectively. It recommended that officials dealing with economic diplomacy should attend 'Intensive Orientation' programme to be conducted by the Institute of Foreign Affairs as and when necessary. It also recommended the need of reorientation and reformulation of Nepal's foreign policy so as to make economic diplomacy effective and meaningful.

**The Foreign Policy Task Force** that was constituted following the successful peaceful People's Movement of April 2006 with a view to 'recast its foreign policy and make it consistent with the emerging political economic climate to achieve Nepal's foreign policy objectives' has identified training as a necessary component to improve the overall performance. The Task Force also said that the foreign policy establishment that worked as a tool to preserve the regime of the day and to service the strong and powerful has to be geared to create a positive image and promote national interests in a competitive realm of international relations. It has recommended a creation of a 'separate professional foreign service so that it could stipulate specific and relevant qualifications including language skills and competencies, that would help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of MOFA and the missions under it'. The Task Force recommended among others to:<sup>20</sup>

- strengthen staff training in language, information technology and substantive areas to improve the quality of staff;

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<sup>20</sup> Please see for details: *Renewing Nepal's Foreign Policy in the Changed context: Report of the High Level Foreign Policy Task Force, August 2006.*

- introduce improved information technology services to enhance staff efficiency as well as transit information between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions through electronic means;
- provide foreign service officials with at least 6-month entry level training through the Institute of Foreign Affairs on history, geography, politics economics, international relations and diplomacy, social issues, protocol and consular matters, and languages;
- introduce a system of giving sabbatical leave up to a year during the service period for improving qualification and competence;
- introduce a system of accepting a limited number of interns in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and missions every year on a competitive basis to attract them into the foreign service.

The total number of personnel working at the Ministry and Missions is 213 out of which 126 work in the Ministry and 87 are in Nepali missions abroad. Officials have not been given enough opportunities for training. Some are assigned to the missions during the probationary period and without any formal training. No special program exists both for career and non-career diplomats in Nepal. Some countries have a week long course for non-career diplomats covering familiarization that include introduction to procedures, management methods new technology and techniques at Foreign Ministry and Embassy.

Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Human Rights Committee of the Legislative-Parliament produced a report '**Nepal's foreign policy in the changed context**', in 2068. The part IV of the Report is on institutional reforms.

The Report makes recommendations on institutional reforms related to the MoFA, criteria for appointment of ambassadors, diplomatic code of conduct, consular services, passports, diplomatic missions abroad and functioning of the Institute of Foreign Affairs. It also recommends that the *Pararastra Mantralaya* be changed into *Bidesh Mantralaya*. It recommends:

- Training/orientation arrangements to enhance professionalism
- Inter-ministerial transfer and even change in service: inter-ministerial deputation for a short time is fine. Service change and transfer are not practical. This will dilute the content/objective of the Foreign Service as a whole.
- Proper documentation, protection and preservation of historic documents.

- Appointment of attaches for promotion of economic diplomacy, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring in fields of finance, labour and tourism.
- Update statistics on arrivals and stay of foreigner in the country.
- Introduce courses and researches on international relations and diplomacy at colleges and universities.
- Coordinate with ministries of Home, Defence, and Land Reforms to demarcate boundaries and prepare maps for border management.
- 50% ambassadorial appointments from career officials of the Foreign and other ministries, and 50% from political field.
- Compulsory return to home on completion of the assignment, put in place reward and punishment system.
- Set standards for appointing ambassadors; make it inclusive by 33% appointment of women.
- Implement Diplomatic Code of Conduct: Protocol of the MoFA to act as focal point.
- Diplomatic Missions should mobilize manpower, technical and financial resources for expanding economic diplomacy.
- Consulates to move beyond traditional functions and focus on promoting economic development.
- Strengthen IFA for training, research studies on foreign policy.
- Make IFA a Think Tank.
- Interministerial coordination: create an interministerial mechanism at the secretary level to be assisted by divisions and sections, and make this mechanism effective.

### **Training:**

Training is about the 'broadening mind' and bringing attitudinal changes. It should be made a part and parcel of the career development. Training should be mandatory to have training program at three different levels. The mid career training program of eight to ten weeks could be between the seventh and the ninth year of service, another eight weeks between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> year of service and a training of four weeks between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> year of service. Participation in these programs should be made a part of promotion and assignment abroad. Even non-career ambassadors should be made to attend training programs, familiarizing with basics of protocol, administration regulations and about the MoFA and functioning of Missions abroad.

## **Recruitment and Training in Nepal**

Char Pass (Fourth Grade) or Eghara Pass (Eleventh Grade) was the main test to be conducted for those willing to join the civil service during the Rana period (1846-1950). There was an exception to Rana family members and relatives, sometimes extending to courtiers' family also. After the advent of democracy, a need was felt to have trained manpower to conduct the business of the government. Buch Commission<sup>21</sup> recommended such training. Indian officials came to Nepal on deputation to impart training to Nepali officials. In most of the cases, Nepali officials were sent abroad for training under different bilateral cooperation schemes. With the passage of time, educational institutions were opened in Nepal and training courses were introduced. The Administrative Reorganization Planning Commission that was headed by Prime Minister Tanka Prasad Acharya recommended a training center. An Institute of Public Administration was established to take these tasks forward. The institute started organizing training programs for both higher and clerical level employees. The subjects included were typing, short hand, record keeping for non-gazetted and orientation training for gazetted officers. The United States, India and other countries extended their assistance for training and orientation. Trainers were also sent to donor countries for higher level training.

After Nepal started organized efforts for planned development, serious efforts were made to establish technical and training institutions. The institutes for training of Government employees have undergone a series of changes. Training courses have traveled from the Department of General Administration, (now the Ministry of General Administration), colleges affiliated to Tribhuvan University, Public Service Commission – a constitutional body that recruits employees for the government, Local Development Training Center under the Ministry of Local Development, Center for Administration and Economic Development (CEDA)- a research wing of the Tribhuvan University, Public Administrative Campus, to the establishment of the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) in September 1982.

NASC has now emerged as the leading institute of training for employees of the Government of Nepal and public corporations. In a sense, it integrates all the training programs upon itself. Its vision includes 'leading in the facilitation of continuous improvements in management capabilities to enhance the

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21 *M.N. Buch, an Indian Administrative expert, came to Nepal and headed the Commission that suggested far reaching recommendations in the just emerged democratic set up in the country following the historic revolution of 1950-51.*

quality services to the people'. The college mission was set as 'creating better opportunities for improvements in management capabilities at both individual and organizational level through education, research, consulting and information services.'<sup>22</sup> The objectives of the college are to:<sup>23</sup>

- Provide necessary training for the employees of the Government and public enterprises;
- Identify measures for enhancing the capability of administration of the Government and management of public enterprises to contribute towards development programs of the country; and
- Undertake problem oriented research, consulting and information service program for preparing training materials and making training more useful.

There have been several suggestions from the Administrative Reforms Commissions constituted after the advent of democracy in 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s for training of civil servants, but none of them came focusing trainings for Foreign Service officials. Training in Nepal gives more emphasis on theoretical aspects than on practical aspects. Training programmes in Nepal are conducted without identifying training needs and they often face budgetary constraints, lack of competent trainers, and other physical infrastructures. Civil Service National Training Policy 1990 was amended in 2001 to make the service more able, competent, result oriented, effective, efficient and productive to address the changing needs of time. However, there are no programs exclusively designed and separately conducted for the Foreign Ministry officials in the country.

### **Suggestions:**

In the light of the above presentation, the following suggestions are made to strengthen the capacity for realizing foreign policy goals:

1. Have a recruitment policy to address the issues of administrative efficiency, professional competence and integrity, social equity and distributive justice. The state should not only make recruitment policy and process an all-inclusive one but also work to make full use of the recruited officials.

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<sup>22</sup> *Nepal Administrative Staff College, Basic Administrative Training Programme for Newly Recruited Section Officers of the Government of Nepal, A publication of the NASC, 2005, Please see for details: [www.nasc.org.np](http://www.nasc.org.np) .*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



2. In past, the service at the Foreign Ministry had acquired a character of exclusiveness for a special class and clan. It is necessary for the MoFA to mirror Nepal's diversity of races, culture, and religion and synthesize Nepal's multifaceted personality from diversity. Widening recruitment system as wide as possible to nook and corner of the country *without compromising the merit* may be of big help to close this gap in this process. Recent initiatives to have the diversity in the country reflected in the service are a welcome beginning.
3. Make proper identification and assessment of training needs and their orientation to the actual administrative responsibilities, giving greater stress on significant national issues, their impact on national life, obligations arising from international commitments.
4. Regular training programs for Foreign Service officials are necessary. Officials working at the Foreign Ministry have to bridge between different worlds, and therefore training packages designed should include the issues of national and international nature. Areas of economics, international relations, international law and report writings should be included in training programmes. Issues like human rights, regional integration, refugees, environment and climate change and conflict resolution should also be included. Subjects like protocol, procedural, cultural and technical aspects, consular works and protection of citizens interests abroad should also constitute the part of training courses. Focus on the implementation of skills learned is important.
5. Training should be made a living system in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is an absolute and indispensable necessity and therefore must be made continuous process aimed at the renewal of the institutions. It is necessary to train officials, re-equip and re-orient again after timely intervals to get them abreast with the problems and issues of national and international significance. Training should be made compulsory to officials at all levels, even divisional heads in the Ministry. Giving reorientation to officials who have stayed away from the country for some time will go a long way to reconnect them to the ground realities, future responsibilities, and challenges at home and abroad.
6. A system of attaching new recruits to different ministries and even to Nepal's diplomatic missions abroad before foreign assignments should be started. Enough exposure to national issues and

development projects of national importance is very important. Domestic front provides a vital support to diplomacy abroad. Domestic constituency cannot be insulated from the conduct of foreign policy. Pre-posting tour of the country should be made a part of the foreign assignment. 'In' and 'Out' placements can be made a part of training programs for building 'interconnections' with various constituents at home, the absence of which is likely to make ambassador a stranger in his own country. Therefore country programs like *Desh Darshan* should be organized for officials and incoming ambassadors for both career and political by the Foreign Ministry. Basic rules of diplomacy are of Western origin. Mere readings of the books on diplomacy published in the West will be no substitute to interactions. Training and traveling should, be covered as a part of the training.

7. Development diplomacy popularly known as Economic diplomacy should be made a pivotal point of training program. Training programs should include teachings in macro-economic policies and practices, sciences, technological knowhow, agriculture, energy, food security, environment and so on and also how do they affect other countries. Nepal has no economic clout, neither it is a military power; persuasion has to be a great power in the hands of Nepali diplomats to secure international goodwill, support and cooperation.
8. Training/orientation is necessary for incoming ambassadors from both career and political appointees. There should be courses for ambassadors and senior officials to widen their horizons and build better relations between them. No one is too senior to learn new skills. Even training non-diplomatic staff is necessary.
9. Additional languages besides English come as an ornament in Foreign Service.
10. Foreign language competence should be encouraged by providing opportunities to acquire the knowledge of foreign languages. Training in foreign languages should be given to new recruits in the beginning according to the foreign policy priorities of the country. Foreign Ministry at present miserably lacks interpreter of its own. In the context of evolving scenario, the Ministry needs to concentrate on language training like Chinese, French, Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian and produce adequate number of officials. Diplomats

with knowledge of languages make significant difference in the conduct of negotiations and establishing rapport with each other.

11. Research and publication work appears to be the least priority area of the Ministry now. Even annual reports that would have been routine publications appear out of any sight. Regularize these publications.
12. The lack of any seriousness in research is amply reflected in the absence of even a Policy Planning Section in the Ministry that would have considered issues in overall context and implications of the national prospective. Establish Policy Planning Division in the MoFA without further delay.
13. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should start sending its officials on sabbatical, attach them to some reputed institutions of international relations and diplomacy and prestigious universities, get them exposed to interactive seminars, brain storming sessions, and even encourage publications on issues of national and international importance. Sabbatical researches can be made to defend before a panel of experts back home. Getting away from day to day routine work and engaged in reading, relaxing and recreation (3Rs) helps bring new perspectives, new insights and different interpretations of critical issues into the job and an opportunity to interact with intellectuals, and foreign dignitaries.
14. Cultural orientation is equally necessary, also the thorough knowledge of countries to be accredited. Nepal's national strength is unique unity in vast diversity. It should be projected abroad by giving cultural diplomacy its due place in the conduct of foreign policy.
15. Organize in-house interactive sessions, seminars, brainstorming on foreign policy and panel discussions on the various national and international issues. Emphasis should be given to build communication skills..
16. The Institute of Foreign Affairs should be made the lead agency for imparting training to Foreign Service officials. The Institute should be made more responsible for planning and organizing training programs. For doing so, it must be given all logistical supports and infrastructure facilities and adequate budget. Efforts must be made to erase the impression of the Institute being a recruiting center

for nears and dears one. It is essential to rise above party politics in tapping people with wealth of experience.

17. IFA should forge institutional linkages/engagements with diplomatic academics and institutions from other countries. In the absence of other national centers for training diplomat, IFA can be a pioneer in developing and imparting training to Foreign Service officials. Serious thought may be given to convert or expand the IFA to a full-fledged graduate school and research centers.
18. An effective foreign policy needs accurate and timely intelligence/information. Information Technology has emerged as a powerful source of information power with global reach. People have been relying on the use of Internet for information. Officials need to be trained about the importance of e-governance and information technology to expeditiously deliver the services to the people. E-learning/training is cost effective and result oriented also and should, therefore, be promoted and made a part of compulsory learning. Knowledge should also be imparted about passports and visas, diplomatic ID card digitization, and also update Ministry's website.
19. Public opinion shapes foreign policy in a democracy. Opinion polls cannot conduct foreign policy but ignoring public becomes a deception. Establish a mechanism to have them on board.
20. Public diplomacy has been central to modern day diplomacy. Close interconnections between home and international actors are necessary to project and build the image of the country, and make the world understand the national perspectives.
21. Annual conferences of ambassadors should be internalized. Governments may utilize the opportunities provided by visits of heads of state/governments or ministers to assemble ambassadors for briefings in receiving countries and also for giving instructions to them on evolving situation at home.
22. Perennial problems of proper documentation: Systematic filing of all the works done and records of meetings between Government ministers and foreign dignitaries to preserve institutional memory is essential. Creating a library and equipping it with latest publications is important. Officials have to go out and look for all the information that is needed in the discharge of their responsibilities. It is necessary

for missions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be fully equipped with resources and physical infrastructures to overcome the present shortcomings.

23. Seminars at home and abroad provide opportunities to contact, communicate and exchange ideas with their diplomatic counterparts and scholars. Attending seminars bring along with a privilege of living and working with a range of other nationalities in a challenging and exciting environment. It also gives the privilege of cultivating international friendship, which can be of great use for the rest of their professional assignments in different world capitals. This can also overcome cultural differences. It is necessary to have deliberations from seminars for feedback. Make it mandatory for officials to submit reports to the MoFA after participation.
24. IFA should enlist foreign diplomats, visiting guests, statesmen, economists, ministers, ambassadors, even nobel laureates to deliver lectures on topical issues as and when there are opportunities. Also organize programs of visits for MoFA officials to academic institutions of foreign affairs, international organizations, universities, studies centers, and institutions of diplomatic and strategic studies.
25. The number of Non-resident Nepalis and people of Nepali origin overseas is on the increase. It is necessary to sensitize officials who serve abroad about NRN's problems and their necessities and Government's positions and plans to address them. Use NRN's knowledge reservoir in projecting and promoting the country. Create a separate Division within the Ministry for NRN affairs.
26. Coordination is the biggest problem in Nepal. Ministry should ensure proper coordination, with an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.
27. Maintain consistency not rigidity in fundamentals of the foreign policy. Consistency clarifies policy and flexibility facilitates policy. Cross-purposes prove to be counterproductive. The right hand should always know what the left hand is doing.
28. Power of economic interests: Trade promotes peace and friendship. Economic enmeshment is the deepest engagement of all. Trading nations as is said, do not go to war. Hungry man is not a free man-said Adlai Stevenson.

29. Strengthen Missions with staff and resources. Develop a handbook for the work of Consul Generals.
30. Minister should provide the leadership. He/she should enjoy the full confidence of the Prime Minister. Leadership is impossible without followership. Leadership is a process and that should consult with experts in a timely manner. Foreign Minister should be the principal adviser to the PM and executive agent in foreign affairs.
31. Domestic and foreign policies are inseparable. Internal disunity spoils foreign policy. Partisanship and foreign policy do not mix. John F. Kennedy said in 1960, 'The United States cannot be strong in its foreign policy unless it is also strong domestically.'
32. Stop rewarding party supporters with responsibilities that are not in consistent with their capacities. Spoil system and diplomacy do not go together. Diplomacy is a special field and mixing it with contributions and loyalty brings burdens on future generation and does no good to the country and the people.
33. Short-circuiting the MoFA is dangerous. It has resulted in confusion, cross-purposes, missed communications and shattered morale of dedicated officials. Make it mandatory for everything *foreign* to go through the MoFA.
34. Bring ambassadors home periodically. If ambassadors live abroad for too long, they will lose contact with the shifting currents of opinion back home. Hold annual conferences of ambassadors. It is good for reorientation of foreign policy. If handled well, it becomes a learning and knowledge transmission. Ambassadors also receive high level directives. Regardless of ranks and profiles, diplomats should be brought home and given opportunity to familiarize with the new situation at home, and renew contacts with various branches of the government. Nepal seems not to have utilized these options, never in its history, even after the historic change of April 2006.
35. Leaving ambassadorial position vacant for long is risky. Vacancy is often interpreted as a mark of protest or low quality of relations. It is also equally important to ensure stability of tenure of diplomatic officials. The ambassador is like a tree and needs time to take roots. On again and off again assignments give impressions to host country that it is no use to cultivate ambassadors if they have no stability of tenure. Ambassadors must be kept in picture at all times and

- in all communications with foreign governments. Bypassing own's ambassadors sends a wrong signal in the host country and serves no national purposes.
36. Departure of an incumbent and new appointee should be planned well to minimize the vacancy.
  37. Concept of career ministers to ensure some predictability: close and co-operative coordination with foreign departments of political parties and their parliamentary wings should be given a consideration.
  38. Maintain state secrets. State secrets must be safeguarded for future references.
  39. Organize regular press conferences and take public into confidence, but safeguard state secrets
  40. Parliamentary hearing for returning ambassadors should be started to learn from their experiences.
  41. The most important of all to make changes possible, consolidate and institutionalize them will be the restructuring of the MoFA and Missions and enhancing their capacity to address the expanding works and respond to unfolding challenges. Only a stronger, resourceful MoFA and efficient Foreign Service in place will have in its fold necessary autonomy, adaptability, clarity, consistency and sophistication, - much required for institutionalizing the capacity towards realizing foreign policy goals.

The country is at the stage of great historic transformation. Historic changes have unleashed participatory zeal in politics, and in every sphere of national life. At a time when the country remains engaged in democratic transition, there have to be different contents and techniques of diplomacy with the state to carry forward the agenda of the socio-economic transformation within the democratic framework.

The advent of *Loktantra* (democracy) and *ganatantra* (republic) has brought a revolutionary change in the functions of civil service. Our goal has been to build a *new Nepal*- a Nepal that is peaceful, stable, democratic, and prosperous. It is a huge task and civil servants have a stupendous work of addressing the goal of socio-economic transformation. This requires rapid transformation of attitudes. As non-performance on part of the civil service becomes rather an indictment of the government of the day than of their

administrative instruments, therefore, there should be no compromise in the recruitment. This calls to move from rhetoric to results and from paternalism to partnership and meritocracy. Country like Nepal needs highly skilled diplomatic representations: to spread the message of change that the country has undergone. It is necessary to have a vision and having vision alone is not enough. Best, brightest, trained minds and hands are needed for effective execution of any vision.

For a country like Nepal that is currently in transition from over a decade long armed conflict, diplomacy alone remains the hope and opportunity for the country to project it proper perspectives. Nepal needs a high quality representation in foreign countries. At least 70% of the appointments should come from career service. We must make a break with the past and allow the functioning of the institution of the Nepal Foreign Service in real sense. Only by building a strong and effective foreign service based on merit through a rigorous recruitment test to get the best and brightest of young people, Nepal's cause would be best served at home and abroad.

### **Conclusion:**

Given the situation in the country, ***diplomacy is the first, last and best hope of the country***. This line needs to be stronger, broader and harder to breach. We live in a state of great anxiety, confusion and uncertainty. Six years on in the much-admired peace process, democracy has come to be on the defensive. The country at present has no representative institutions. It is time to be mature in actions and responsible in dealing with foreign policy. Democracy is a precondition to protect and project the nation and enhance its image and prestige. Though poorly resourced, Nepal's Foreign Service has shown its professionalism and competence at critical junctures and been able to manage historic transitions. It is time to considerably enhance investment in foreign policy establishment to make foreign policy elites capable of addressing their ever challenging tasks for the nation.

Let us remember: ***no one can undermine Nepal and the Nepalis if the Nepalis themselves do not undermine each other.***

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***\*Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai is a former ambassador of Nepal (2007-2012) to the United Nations, World Trade Organization and other International Organizations based in Geneva.***



## Floor Discussions

A seminar on the *Institutionalization of Nepal's Foreign Policy* was organized by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) with the aim to strengthen the institutionalization process of the foreign policy in Nepal. During the event, two papers were presented: a paper on *Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the Foreign Policy Goals of Nepal* was presented by Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada and a paper on *Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Foreign Policy Goals* was presented by Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai.

### **Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the Foreign Policy Goals of Nepal by Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada**

In his paper on *Enhancing Clarity and Consistency in Understanding the Foreign Policy Goals of Nepal*, Dr. Simkhada portrayed the interplay of geography, history as well as psychology in influencing and navigating a country's foreign policy path. His main point was that Nepal's foreign policy needs clarity and consistency when it comes to addressing the country's foreign policy goals. And in order to do so, he asserted the importance of India and China's continuous support for an effective foreign policy of Nepal.

The commentators for Dr. Simkhada's paper were Prof. Shushil Raj Pandey, from the Department of Political Science in Tribhuvan University (TU) and Prof. Dr. Gopal Prasad Pokharel, Former Executive Director of the IFA. However, before moving on to the comments, Dr. Bhek Bahadur Thapa, the Chair for the event highlighted a few key points. He mentioned that the past four, five years have been a very confusing period for Nepal and we are still struggling to redefine ourselves as a Nepali under the concept of the New Nepal. He also pointed out that there have been a lot of debates about the Nepali way of life from the past till the present, and the debates even continue to encompass the Nepali way of life in the future; we are basically at a crossroad now where we need to uncover our identity in the present world. Dr. Thapa mentioned that this requires a healthy discussion and a positive outlook and an attempt to find a

solution. Lastly, Dr. Thapa expressed that the issues of foreign policy have not been the subject of discussion among intellectuals in Nepal, and in order to progress we must have discussions on such topics.

After Dr. Simkhada's comprehensive presentation, Dr. Thapa invited Prof. Shushil Raj Pandey from TU for his comments on the paper. Prof. Pandey praising the paper writer expressed that Dr. Simkhada has captured well the issues we are facing today in his paper. Moving forward, Prof. Pandey admitted the difficulties of being a commentator and chose to highlight some points that he felt were not addressed in the paper, as well as those that are lingering as we transform politically.

Prof. Pandey mentioned the fact that much political transformation has occurred in Nepal recently, and that our domestic politics has not been the most stable. However, he asserted that foreign policy is not a reflection of our domestic politics, very much like it is widely believed. Prof. Pandey claimed that we have always said that foreign policy is a reflection of domestic politics; however there are other factors to consider while conducting a country's foreign policy.

Moreover, he also expressed that as a student, he was taught about institutionalization, its effectiveness, as well as its linkage with other bodies such as the civil society organs. However, today he sees the need to make the concept of institutionalization operative and know how to define it for institutionalization requires predictability. And furthermore, it is essential to transform principles into reality given the political situation.

He additionally questioned how we have managed to increase our bargaining position at the operational level? Addressing the various setbacks that we have had in our foreign policy goals, Prof. Pandey asserted that the "trust factor" is missing while we carry out our foreign policy. Therefore, our goal should be to increase the trust in the international community- both among the governments as well as among the people.

He further addressed the issue of India. Emphasizing that India is not a threat to Nepal, he expressed that India and Nepal are two different countries. He stressed that we cannot think haphazardly and conclude that India will infringe on our national sovereignty: we need to be less suspicious. Prof. Pandey asserted that Nepal has always worked to maintain a balance in relations. And in this context, our focus should be on how to re-strengthen this balance that should not be shaken for the sake of regional peace and stability.

Prof. Pandey also asked that we first of all understand whether or not we are capable of acting as a bridge between India and China to reap maximum gains. Before subscribing to such notion we first of all need to examine the factors underlying it. He further stressed that we need to capture our past glory and see the opportunities that lie ahead of us. Only then can we truly benefit from our strategic location and geography and reclaim our glory.

Another factor that makes dealing with nations so much more convenient is technology. Prof. Pandey highlighted that technology has revolutionized things. Today, travel and communication has become easily accessible and therefore it is so much easier to remove obstacles from our path now. He emphasized that we take advantage from globalization.

He further agreed that there is a lack of political consensus in Nepal, along with a lot of unanswered questions. He also mentioned that we lag behind when it comes to transforming principle into reality and monitoring results. Speaking of the need to have diplomatic etiquettes, Prof. Pandey claimed that in dealing with foreign policy, we need mutual respect for all actors involved otherwise we will lose their trust.

Lastly, Prof. Pandey suggested that the IFA act as a bridge between the academic institutions and the Foreign Ministry in order to increase efficiency. Moreover, he raised a very valid point in noting that our ministry lacks a Department of International Relations and Diplomacy. Without such a department, he mentioned that we might be losing out our sound human resources.

After Prof. Pandey made his comments, the session then heard comments from Dr. Gopal Pokharel. He expressed his gratitude to be able to be a part of the event and mentioned that it was an inspiring event for him to be able to share his thoughts on the paper.

Before expressing his comments, however, Dr. Pokharel too appreciated the comprehensiveness of Dr. Simkhada's paper. He claimed that the paper follows the requirements of strategic papers and therefore is comprehensive. Moreover, being extremely humble, he acknowledged the knowledge Dr. Simkhada had on the subject matter and said that more than comments, he would be happy to express some of his thoughts on the paper.

Dr. Pokharel began by summarizing the key points of Dr. Simkhada's paper. For example, at the political level the author urged the political parties to have a united stand in the foreign policy goals. He argued that a constitution is needed for foreign policy stability. Moreover, Dr. Pokharel noted that the

paper has addressed issues at the management level and also the need for institutional reform and the need for more think tanks like the IFA.

Along a similar note, Dr. Pokharel too expressed that foreign policy is an extension of domestic politics so it is imperative to take domestic politics as a mirror when it comes to foreign policy. The domestic turmoil that Nepal has been facing will soon put Nepal on the failed states lists, he cautioned. Therefore, it is vital that we understand what comprises a failed state and how to surge out of such a label. Nepal is ranked as a vulnerable country in the failed state index. The post-insurgency issues have also made Nepal more vulnerable and Nepal's status in the international arena is fast decreasing. Essentially, Nepal is losing its ability to interact with other countries as one unified country.

Dr. Pokharel pointed to a very grim yet realistic factor: he asserted that Nepal's status of a sovereign nation will soon be questioned until and unless we make the effort to stand as a united country. His main point, therefore, was that Nepal needs to regain and reclaim its status. Indeed, Nepal has had to struggle hard to improve its status and will need to toil harder to improve it to a larger extent. However, on the bilateral, regional as well as global front, Nepal is doing okay. At the Bilateral level, Nepal's most important allies are India and China. The Nepal-India bilateral tie is marked by cooperation versus contest whereas the Nepal-China relations are limited to a more formal level. However, more efforts are being made to expand the scope of the relations. On a regional level, Nepal is dictated by global ties as well as national needs. But at the forefront of the Nepali regional policy lies South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). At the global level, Nepal has been prominent in its Landlocked Developing Countries (**LLDC**) **as well as its** peace-building role, and in dealing with non-traditional security threats via various multi-lateral forums. Additionally, Dr. Pokharel highlighted the need for Nepal to learn from history and devise a foreign policy that is apt for the volatile times of today.

Finally, Dr. Pokharel asserted that as far as institutionalization goes, we need to have a clear understanding on how to transform goals into actions and we need more research that are well documented and should be distributed to the stakeholders as well. Moreover, there should be provisions of career enhancement in the governmental sector without nepotism. Only a career enhancement will lead to professionalism which will help bring about better leaders who can restructure the state apparatus for a better, smoother future.

After Dr. Pokharel made his final remarks, a lively questions and answers session ensued.

Mr. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha, Former Ambassador said that he has seen two aspects of the foreign policy of Nepal: One is the common and constitutional approach to the foreign policy process and the other is the balanced maintenance of relations with India and China. The major problem, however, arises in the implementation of foreign policy despite all our commitments. He emphasized that we should try to rebuild Nepal's image abroad because we know that is where the confusion lies. He further expressed, taking into account of Nepal's geopolitical position relations should be further strengthened in a cautious and careful manner.

Mr. Binod Bista, Former Advisor at IFA claimed that he has been hearing of economic diplomacy being taken up with interest time and again. But what concern do authorities have about the security aspects of our country?

Prof. Dr. Mohan Prasad Lohani, Former Ambassador went into history and reminded us of the time in 1992, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Institute of Foreign Affairs, and after the recommendation of the high level Task Force, it was reconstituted in 1998. He highlighted that institutionalizing foreign policy means that we must focus on the relations with our two big neighbors first. How can we cope with that? Foreign policy process needs intellectual contents. Referring to Dr. Baral, who studied in India and was the former Nepali Ambassador to India, and his assertion that he has not yet well understood India, he showed us the challenges of being able to truly understand a country. As the both Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister say, Nepal should be a vibrant bridge between the two big neighbors. However, his apprehension was that it is not clear how Nepal can become that vibrant bridge.

Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal, Eminent Economist asserted that for Institutionalization of foreign policy to materialize, we should have much more intensive and extensive discussions on foreign policy. Taking national interests of a sovereign country into consideration how to move forward in this respect should be clearly borne in mind.

Addressing all the questioned raised on the floor, Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada gave his final comments. Asserting that he has given references in his paper too, he expressed that there are more sources of information related to the relations with India and China. Everything including security concerns is presented in its objectivity, and basically, diplomats should be strict in saying no, if anything is likely to go against our national interests.

Dr. Simkhada talked of *Resurgence in China: South Asian Perspective* in which he has presented Nepal's perspective. He claimed that both the perception and the facts are presented there. Nepal is known in a fundamental transformation process where the political values matter. Absolutely, there should be an Ambassadors club, which is a good idea.

He remarked Dr. Lohani's suggestion to be useful and timely. The point raised about Nepal's foreign policy is the balanced approach to our relations with our neighbours. When internal competition becomes intense, the consensus approach is hard to come up. At the time of the political transformation, the state as the highest political institution should be able to put foreign policy process on a normal track. There must not be over politicalization in foreign policy. There must be political stability and order in Nepal. The triangular relations between Nepal, India and China are strategically vital for peace and stability.

After Dr. Simkhada's address, Chairman Dr. Bekh Bahadur Thapa gave his inputs. He asserted that missions abroad should be increased. He also called for the need for the institutionalization process to have linkages. We are a land-locked country and have to cope with our neighbours. He reiterated the need for trust and confidence in dealings with our neighbors, more so because we are a landlocked country.

Talking about the paper presentation, he claimed that it is very relevant. Trust among political parties is required for effective foreign policy of Nepal as well as for other developmental activities. Nepal has to take much more advantages from her own resources. No doubt, diplomacy is the important tool of Nepals' foreign policy.

Since the Rana period, making other country happy without duly considering the welfare of the common Nepali people has remained the trend of the Nepali political process, which is reigning until today. The extent of our interest must be focally examined. National interest should be articulated. The political behaviour shown is the dependence syndrome. Concluding his thoughts, Dr. Thapa claimed that foreign policy is the only component to secure the larger interest of national security under the democratic national apparatus.

### **Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Foreign Policy Goals by Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai**

Dr. Bhattarai elaborated the evolution of the foreign policy of Nepal since the unification of Nepal to the present day. He talked profusely about the

organizational and functional aspects of foreign policy in a comprehensive way and pertinently and persistently discussed the need for reform and the need to re-strengthen our institutional establishments like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Missions abroad. He forwarded his views on the executive and diplomatic side of foreign policy for its efficiency and effectiveness. Dr. Bhattarai claimed that Nepal's lack of resource and material power is inherent and as a consequence, Nepal must brace up to visibly enhance its own diplomatic and professional skills, which are within our reach to not only safeguard its core national interests but also to build a better image in both the regional and international arena.

Following Dr. Bhattarai's paper, it was Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam, Former Deputy Executive Director to UNICEF, who took the center stage to offer his comments on the paper. Mr. Gautam's overall impression, he claimed, is that Nepal foreign service is filled with competent people. However, where we lack is the delivery of our foreign policy where we are just average. Therefore, he portrayed the problem as such: a capable group of young diplomats are underperforming. While trying to understand why this is, Mr. Gautam asserted that his experience and conversations with these people have led him to conclude that it is because of two fundamental points: first, because of understaffed people in various ministries and second, because of a lack of timely guidance from the central authority, i.e., Kathmandu. However, Mr. Gautam maintained rather optimistically that not getting guidance from Kathmandu may have a plus side to it because it means there is less restriction on the other authorities allowing for more creativity in their work. Nonetheless, Mr. Gatuam called for the need for a system of reward and punishment to enhance effectiveness in the bureaucracies.

Addressing Dr. Bhattarai's paper, Mr. Gautam asserted that we have heard gems of wisdom from Dr. Bhattarai on the subject. He further expressed his agreement on the fact that Nepal has no real enemies and that all external threats are merely imagined. Mr. Gautam claimed that Nepal cannot be undermined except by the Nepalis ourselves. Speaking specifically of the paper, he chose to paint a distinction between the desirability and the do-ability of the recommendations made by Dr. Bhattarai in his paper. He claimed that most of Dr. Bhattarai's recommendations may not be feasible in the near future for Nepal is still struggling. In fact, Mr. Gautam went as far as to claim that the system we are in today is a worse system than the Panchayat system.

Talking of another dimension of the paper, Mr. Gautam stressed the lack of consistency in parties and their relation to India. He noted that when parties are in power or are in need of power, they are friendly with India; However,

the minute they are ousted from the power they criticize India and turn against them.

Mr. Gatam also compared Nepal to Ethiopia in his comments and recommended that we learn from Ethiopia's experiences as both the countries having undergone a similar fate. He saw Ethiopia as a successful example of a country that emerged despite all the turmoil it had to endure. For example, the Ethiopian Airlines and the foreign services of Ethiopia proved to be a saving grace for the country. He further hoped that Nepal too would be able to walk a similar fate. He sees this as a possibility more so because if there is any ministry in Nepal that can be improved, it is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Moving on to address Dr. Bhattarai's "desirable yet not do-able" recommendations, he singled out certain key points that were both desirable as well as achievable. Foremost among them is the reward and retribution system. Fully convinced of its effectiveness, he proposed that Non-Residential Nepalis be made a part of this scheme in order to successfully implement this system. Secondly, he proposed that the foreign services employees be given language trainings and also encouraged to take up various languages besides English and Hindi via a Language Bhatta (Allowance). Thirdly, Mr. Gautam stressed the need for good orators within the foreign services. Emphasizing the lack of public speaking skills among the majority, he asked that such skills be introduced. Moreover, he also recommended that interns be used in order to overcome the challenge of an understaffed ministry.

In his next point, he laid emphasis on the need for diplomats to be well-read. He urged the need to inculcate a reading habit among the diplomats and make sure they familiarize themselves with various national and civil society related reports. He highlighted the fact that most of the time, Nepali delegates are poorly prepared for various international conferences and this is something that must be addressed.

Furthermore, talking of the fact that the Foreign Ministry is mainly "Bahun Male" dominated, Gautam called for a reform in this sector as well. Along similar vein, he emphasized that bureaucracy should not be very centralized and decision-making authority must be granted at all levels.

Gautam also made a point about not allowing visitors to stay at the ambassador's residences, as it would reflect poorly on the Ambassadorship. And ending his comments on a note of positivism, he stressed that Nepal seems to be on an "auto-pilot" mode wherein it is progressing without any



guidance: We seem to be doing well in the Millennium Development Goals among others. Therefore, although Nepal's present may be murky, but the future is bright and Mr. Gatuam opines that we could continue to hold our heads high.

Following his comments was the Question and Answer session that yet again saw enthusiastic and eager hands from the floor.

A certain Representative of Civil Society noted that we have experiences that diplomacy conducted by civil society is globally utilized. We have institutions, and capabilities, so we need commitment to implement them. There are very sensitive and strategic issues. We are wasting millions of rupees not utilizing our resources. Hence, he called for the effective use of resources.

Prof. Dr. Novel Kishor Rai, Former Ambassador pointed that unlike Dr. Bhattarai's assertion that, 'right man in the right position,' he believes in 'right person in the right position'. There is a defective functioning system at home. Moreover, he expressed dissatisfaction with the poor communication skills of the government and suggested the urgent need to improve it for our betterment.

Mr. Deepak Gajurel, TU turned to the example given by his colleague which indicated that we have been led to work as usual to lack of proper foreign policy process. We need to study carefully. We have to go issue- wise. We have to prepare ourselves first before dealing with our neighbors and other countries as well. Hence, the need for preparation on part of the diplomats was emphasized.

Taking into account all the questions, Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai replied that we are in midst of two emerging global powers. How we have to maintain our relations depends upon us. We can teach lessons to other countries too. There are developments and implications that can be seen. What is needed for us is to study our foreign policy intensely. He concluded that for the sake of our national security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be reformed and strengthened.

After Dr. Bhattarai, Chair of the Session Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral made his remarks. He claimed that there is old working system at MoFA. Despite it being well staffed and well resourced, he claimed that we have not seen our resources managed properly. We have to be ready to bear responsibilities. Keeping in mind the responsible duty, one has to contribute for the nation. The code and norm of diplomacy with Foreign Service officers can be seen. We need to have systematic and scientific changes in the Ministry. We have

to sensitize it. There are differences in the vision of people. Experiences make a difference. Experiences help to implement the definition. We need more detailed discussions. As a student what I realize is the understanding of challenges. They come and we have to face them. We have to learn and to be proactive. Various aspects should be well studied. We have to develop our capabilities by ourselves. The politicians should learn about foreign policy and its related matters. Some of the representatives of the country don't even know about state and the power of state. Institutionalization needs the proper environment and good management to succeed.

Therefore, with these remarks, the session as well as the seminar came to a close. In all, it was brought to our attention that diplomacy is the only available tool of the foreign policy of Nepal. Hence the institutionalization of Nepal's foreign policy is direly needed in order to safeguard and advance its broader national interests and to accelerate the pace of its national development as well.

## Concluding Comment

Institutionalization envisages a well-conceived and appropriately organized functioning system of an institution supported by the laws as well as rules and regulations. It directs all concerned units of the institution to work in a consistent and coherent manner and prods them to properly let all their human resources engage in the institutional activities according to their ability and to fairly use material resources made available at their disposal. The institutionalized system also takes note of relevant customary practices along with the dynamics of change for its success. No doubt, the process of institutionalization encompasses both conceptual and organizational aspects of the working system as both these touch upon the inter-link between them. Stated succinctly, institutionalization is indeed a system- driven and rationale-directed course of action and behavior.

Diplomacy is the only available tool of the foreign policy of Nepal. Hence the institutionalization of the practicable aspect of the foreign policy of Nepal is direly needed to safeguard and advance its broader national interests and to accelerate the pace of its national development as well.

It is to be noted that the institutionalization of foreign policy needs to be carried on with the paramount importance attached to the noble efforts of the governmental institutions to preserve, protect and promote the core national interests of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Nepal. These national interests are sacrosanct and must be regarded as *raison d'être* of the fully sovereign and independent Nepal as a free and responsible player in the international affairs. Foreign policy is also held as an indispensable national instrument to build up the image of the country abroad.

The first presentation by Dr. Simkhada portrays the interplays of the geographic, historic and even mentality elements in the conduct of the foreign policy of Nepal. A closer look at and a deeper understanding of the strategic interests of the neighbouring giants, India and China are continually required to get success in our foreign policy ventures. No less important is the greater need of clarity and consistency in our handling of the relationships with our

two neighbours. Sensibility and sensitiveness assume paramount importance in our intercourses and interactions with them. He espouses practical and pragmatic approach to the foreign policy of Nepal.

With profound changes in the domestic politico-social landscape, Nepal should gear up its foreign policy concerns with meticulous care and caution in its relations with immediate neighbours as also with today's dominant and powerful political and economic players like the U.S., U.K., Japan, Germany, Russia etc. As a weaker member of the international community, Nepal must get ever ready to make its role- play in the international and regional organizations contributing through an institutionalized process of its foreign policy with appropriate approach and substantive contents.

The second presentation by Dr. Bhattarai elaborates the evolution of the foreign policy of Nepal since the unification of Nepal to the present days. He profusely deals with the organizational and functional aspects of foreign policy in a comprehensive way. He pertinently and persistently discusses all important need of reform and re-strengthening of our institutional establishments like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Missions abroad. He consistently forwards his views on the executive and diplomatic side of foreign policy for its efficiency and effectiveness. Nepal's lack of resource and material power is inherent. As a consequence, Nepal must brace up to visibly enhance its own diplomatic and professional skills, which are within our reach to not only safeguard its core national interests but even to build better image in both the regional and international arena.

He pleads for policy and personnel planning, good recruitment system, and training and orientation program. Communication and language skills along with the proficient English and other international languages need to be enhanced for better diplomatic performance and effective representation abroad as required to meet the evolving challenges of diplomatic practice of the modern day world. He expressed his views on the need of developing the Institute of Foreign Affairs as a genuine 'Think Tank' to support and supplement the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Missions abroad with productive ideas and feedback in view of the diplomatic subtleties and complexities sprouting in the globalized world.

All the ideas and views as presented in the two presentations will be of good values to properly serve and stimulate the institutionalization process to steer towards the proper track. Adoption of the productive suggestions and useful opinions deserves due consideration from the concerned decision makers and authorities at the helm.

# **Annexure**

- I) Organization Chart of MoFA
- II) Organization Chart of the Missions
- III) List of Participants in the Seminar





## **Anex: III**

### **List of Participants in the Seminar**

1. Hon'ble Narayan Kaji Shrestha  
Deputy Prime Minister and  
Minister of Foreign Affairs
2. Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai  
Foreign Secretary
3. Mr. Madhav Prasad Paudel  
Board Member, IFA
4. Mr. Om Charan Amatya  
Board Member, IFA
5. Ms. Pramila Rijal  
Board Member, IFA
6. Ms. Laxmi Sharma  
Board Member, IFA
7. Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa  
Former Foreign Minister
8. Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada  
Former Permanent Representative to UN, Geneva
9. Prof. Shusil Raj Pandey  
T.U.
10. Prof. Dr. Gopal Prasad Pokharel  
Former Executive Director, IFA
11. Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral  
Former Ambassdor
12. Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai  
Former Permanent Representative to UN, Geneva
13. Mr. Madhuraman Acharya  
Former Foreign Secretary & Former Permanent Representative to UN, New York
14. Mr. Kulchandra Gautam  
Former Asst. Secretary General, UN (UNICEF)



- 15 Mr. Madhavji Shrestha  
Former Joint Secretary, MoFA
- 16 Mr. Ram Babu Dhakal  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 17 Prof. Dr. Mohan P. Lohani  
Former Executive Director of IFA
- 18 Mr. Narayan Das Shrestha  
Former Officiating Executive Director of IFA
- 19 Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa  
Joint Secretary, MoFA and Former Ambassador
20. Mr. Deepak Dhital  
Joint Secretary, MoFA
21. Mrs. Ambika Devi Luitel  
Joint Secretary, MoFA
22. Mr. Niranjana Man Singh Basnet  
Chief of Protocol, MoFA
- 23 Mr. Narayan Dev Pant  
Joint Secretary , MoFA
- 24 Mr. Yadav Khanal  
Act. Director General  
Passport Department
- 25 Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli  
Director (Nepal)  
SAARC Secretariat
- 26 Mr. Yagya Bahadur Hamal  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 27 Mr. Kali Prasad Pokharel  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 28 Ms. Rita Dhital  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 29 Mr. Jhabindra Prasad Aryal  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 30 Mr. Suresh Adhikari  
Under Secretary, MoFA

- 31 Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal  
Deputy Chief of Protocol, MoFA
- 32 Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 33 Mr. Hem Lal Bhattarai  
Under Secretary, MoFA
- 34 Prof. Dr. Bishnu Hari Nepal  
Chairman, Dilli Raman Trust and Former Ambassador
- 35 Prof. Dr. Novel K. Rai  
Former Ambassador
- 36 Mr. Sundar Nath Bhattarai  
Former Ambassador
- 37 Mr. Keshav Raj Jha  
Former Ambassador
- 38 Mr. Indra Bahadur Singh  
Former Ambassador
- 39 Mr. Nabin Bahadur Shrestha  
Former Acting Foreign Secretary
- 40 Mr. Dev Raj Dahal  
Resident Director  
FES-Nepal
- 41 Dr. Arjun Karki  
LDC Watch, International Coordinator
- 42 Mr. Gopal Thapa  
Former Chief of Protocol
- 43 Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal  
Eminent Economist
- 44 Mr. Shyam Shrestha  
Civil Society
- 45 Mr. Kamal Raj Lamsal  
MWU
- 46 Mr. Deepak Gajurel  
T.U.

- 47 Prof. Rajeshwor Acharya  
Former Ambassdor
- 48 Prof. Dr. Gopal Siwakoti "Chintan"  
Nepal Law Campus
- 49 Prof. Laxman Kumar Upadhyaya  
Nepal Law Campus
- 50 Mr. Harhari Upadhyaya  
Kantipur TV
- 51 Mr. Prabin Banjaree  
Kantipur TV
- 52 Mr. Prasant Pradhan  
Sagarmatha TV
- 53 Mr. Bishnu Nepal  
Sagarmatha TV
- 54 Mr. Akkal Kunwar  
Sagarmatha TV
- 55 Ms. Laxmi Pun  
NTV
- 56 Mr. Rameshwor Sapkota  
Mountain TV
- 57 Mr. Kosh Raj Koirala  
The Republica
- 58 Mr. Lekh Nath Pandey  
The Himalayan Times
- 59 Mr. Saroj Dhakal  
Nepal Samacharpatra
- 60 Mr. Mod Nath Dhakal  
Aviyan Daily
- 61 Mr. Shyam Bandhu Subedi  
Foreign Policy Expert
- 62 Mr. Daya Raj Subedi
- 63 Ms. Cristina Gurung  
Intern at IFA

- 64 Mr. Atul Bhattarai
- 65 Ms. Anusha Dhungana
- 66 Mr. Umesh Thapa
- 67 Mr. Govinda Narayan
- 68 Mr. Yam P.Chaulagain  
IFA, Researcher
- 69 Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari  
Executive Director, IFA
- 70 Mr. Khush Narayan Shrestha  
Deputy Executive Director, IFA
- 71 Mr. Mahendra Prasad Joshi  
IFA
- 72 Mr. Subhash Lohani  
IFA
- 73 Ms. Binita Shrestha  
IFA
- 74 Mr. Sanu Raja Puri  
IFA

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