

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ncwaj.v56i1.76195>

# Significance of Nepal's Foreign Policy in the Present Strife-torn World

Prabhu Ray Yadav\*

## Abstract

This paper portrays international conflicts and their impact on Nepal, highlighting how Nepal's foreign policy reflects the exercise of power in such battles. It also analyzes the implications on Nepal's interests in the present strife-torn world. Nepal has been a permanent supporter of international organizations. The research depicts Nepal's role in global and domestic disputes. International conflicts, disputes and disparities remain a significant challenge to Nepal's geopolitical stability. Efforts to maintain peace and stability focus on addressing the root causes and consequences of these conflicts within Nepal's geopolitical landscape. This study analyzes Nepal's non-aligned diplomacy considering its location between powerful neighboring countries. It also underscores the importance of peacekeeping missions to promote global peace and harmony. In essence, this paper studies the widespread economic, political, humanitarian and environmental challenges caused by international conflicts, while also investigating how Nepal's diplomacy tackles the influence of global powers and modern technological advancements in a conflictual national and international political environment.

*Keywords:* Nepal's foreign policy, non-alignment, international conflicts, diplomacy

## Introduction

International conflicts refer to differences, disagreements and disputes between countries or groups driven by varying political, territorial, economic, or ideological interests. International conflicts study differences, disputes and disparities amongst nations, regions with global groups, governments, international companies and certain territorial objections (Lake, 2009). Historically, such differences have led to large-scale conflicts, including World Wars I and II, as well as ideological confrontations like the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Cold War, whether at a regional or global level, does not look well for the future of humankind. Our faith is that all war-involved nations decide to embrace a point of thoughtful resolution for their unsettled disputes and differences on a rational basis without endangering world peace (Gautam, 2018). These conflicts also encompass global and regional disputes, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Korean and

\* Dr. Yadav is an Assistant Professor of English at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu and is also a former Treasurer of Nepal Council of World Affairs.

Vietnam Wars, and the Gulf Wars.

In recent times, conflicts have expanded to include issues like terrorism, cyber warfare, and asymmetrical confrontations, as seen in the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, the Russia-Ukraine war, and regional disputes in the South China Sea. Many of these struggles are fueled by competition over resources, religious or ethnic divisions, and geopolitical rivalries among global powers, often involving attempts to influence or intervene. Organizations like the United Nations aim to mediate and resolve such disputes, though their success varies. Hemanta Kharel (2024), the President of Nepal Council of World Affairs, highlights that worldwide organizations like the United Nations and the World Trade Organizations are the major role players in solving regional, international and global disputes and challenges. Meanwhile, advancements in technology, such as drones, artificial intelligence, and cyber capabilities, have significantly transformed the nature of conflict, presenting new and complex challenges for global stability and peacekeeping efforts. For instance, the decision-making process of the UN Security Council can be postponed and delayed by the veto power of its permanent members, leading to debate on the organization's value and highlighting the necessity for improvements and reforms (Beasley, 2021).

### **Method of Study**

This research paper emphasizes a qualitative analysis of Nepal's nonaligned diplomacy as a key strategy for reducing international conflicts and wars. The study relies on data gathered from concerned regional and international personnel and media reporters. For instance, Chandra Prasad Bhattarai (2024), the Executive Chairman of the Centre for Research in Tourism, states that Nepal is recognized as one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Its pleasing and charming climate, exceptional and excellent natural beauty, diversities of heights, promotions and altitudes within a moderately and temperately fine strip of land, several rare species of flora and fauna, long history, rich national beauties like its beliefs, faiths, culture, people and its sociable societies make it an extraordinary mixture to lure and attract to all walks of people of diverse years, ages and interests from all around the world. Nepal, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, advocates a distinct philosophy of Lord Buddha and the dignity of the tallest peak Mt. Everest in world history (Yadav, 2017).

### **Analysis of Issues**

Nepal, a small landlocked nation nestled between the two great powers of China

and India, has historically maintained non-alignment in global conflicts. F. R. Allchin (1964) says that something about the systems of conversion is used, for these present special problems which are internal tensions. Despite indirect tensions arising from regional and international disputes, Nepal has skillfully navigated its diplomacy, notably during the Cold War, by maintaining amicable ties with both capitalist and communist blocs. Geographically, Nepal occupies a strategic position, relying heavily on trade and transit with its neighboring countries, China and India, despite their ongoing rivalries and the broader US-China tensions. Similarly, many Nepali workers take up jobs in conflict-prone regions like the Middle East, driven by economic necessity, even at the cost of personal security, to sustain remittance inflows that are vital to Nepal's economy.

However, a strife-torn world often disrupts Nepal's import-based economy, especially during international sanctions or supply chain disruptions. Refugee issues further complicate the situation, with challenges arising from Tibetan refugees fleeing China and Bhutanese immigrants impacting Nepal's economic resources and social harmony. Nepal strives to preserve its sovereignty and uphold its legacy of non-alignment amid geopolitical complexities. Every nation, in the world, has its method to deal with its local, regional, international and global affairs as vagaries in world affairs are dynamic with time. Nepal is one of the unique nations in the world where no other nation's flag has ever flown (Karki, 2024). Nonetheless, the evolving impacts of modern technology pose new challenges to international diplomacy. To ensure its solidarity and development, Nepal must emphasize self-reliance and adapt its diplomatic strategies to navigate the effects of both regional and global conflicts.

### **Geopolitical Location**

In today's interconnected world, international conflicts increasingly have far-reaching effects that surpass both regional and global boundaries. For Nepal, a landlocked nation with strategic geopolitical importance, its location between two global powers - China to the north and India to the south - holds both opportunities and challenges. This challenging reality was expressed in the fifth century BC by Athenian scholar Thucydides who remarked that "the strong do what they have power to do, and the weak agree what they have to agree (Clive, 2016)." These neighboring nations serve as vital links in global resource networks and play key roles in fostering international diplomacy. Nepal must navigate these dynamics carefully to protect itself from vulnerabilities arising from international conflicts. Such challenges are closely tied to global instability, which impacts a nation's economic, political, and social systems. Nepal's ability to adapt and respond to

these pressures is critical to maintaining stability and resilience in a volatile global environment.

### **Economic Implications**

International conflicts disrupt regional and global stability, directly and indirectly impacting trade, economic conditions, and political systems. These fights and conflicts affect both domestic and international affairs, with severe implications for countries like Nepal. As a landlocked and import-dependent nation situated between two giant powers, China and India, Nepal's economy is particularly vulnerable. Global, international or regional instability, such as authorizations or sanctions, worsens transit and trade costs, strains fiscal resources, and weakens the economy. International or regional travel, transit, and transportation increase the expenses associated with importing goods and their delivery in Nepal. The sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Russia and the disputes between Russia and Ukraine have interrupted global and regional transit systems, impacting energy and grain supplies. Both Russia and Ukraine are stirring overseas armed forces to strengthen their militaries (Falk, 2022). For example, it is not amazing that hundreds of Nepali citizens are fighting in this war. The Government of Nepal estimated that thirteen Nepali nationals have lost their lives fighting for Russia so far with hundreds missing (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). This has led to rising fuel prices and food shortages in Nepal, worsening its economic vulnerabilities.

Nepal's heavy reliance on remittances from citizens working abroad, often in conflict-prone regions like the Gulf states, adds to its financial challenges. Additionally, strife-torn world and international conflicts discourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as investors become cautious about risks, hindering industrial and tourism development and freezing capital flows. Nepal's geographic location, bordered by India and China, further complicates its economic resilience. Cross-border trade routes often face disruptions, and regional tensions, such as Sino-Indian disputes or broader South Asian instability, amplify Nepal's economic risks. The ongoing conflicts, like those between Russia and Ukraine or Hamas and Israel, highlight how global instability can cascade into regional vulnerabilities, directly influencing Nepal's economic growth and South Asia's overall stability.

### **Regional Context**

Nepal's geopolitical positioning shapes its political and diplomatic strategies, particularly in relation to its immediate neighbors, China and India. Situated between these two regional powers, Nepal plays a pivotal role in maintaining balance in its foreign policy. However, international conflicts, driven by power politics, pose significant challenges to Nepal geopolitically. For example, tensions between India

and China along their border compel Nepal to carefully navigate its diplomacy, as aligning with one side risks straining relations with the other. Such one-sided alignments could lead to economic and political repercussions, especially in terms of trade relations with both neighbors.

International conflicts often evolve into multilateral dynamics, creating both challenges and opportunities. These rivalries, driven by the pursuit of trade and political dominance, primarily benefit the major powers involved. Nepal, however, lacks the capacity to influence or adapt to the outcomes of such rivalries. Therefore, Nepal's foreign policy has tracked the codes of the UN Charter, *Panchasheel*, principles of International Law and norms of the Non-Aligned Movement (Lohani, 2016). While these global powers engage in strategic competition, Nepal should focus on safeguarding its sovereignty and maintaining a non-aligned stance.

Unlike the power-driven nature of international conflicts, Nepal's priorities lie in addressing critical issues such as climate change and sustainable development. These challenges require international support rather than an entanglement in geopolitical rivalries. Nepal relies heavily on international donors and organizations to advance these goals. By emphasizing non-alignment and fostering congenial diplomacy, Nepal seeks to maintain stability while leveraging global partnerships for its development needs.

### **Humanitarian Impacts**

International conflicts often lead to large-scale displacement and migration, significantly impacting Nepal. The country has long served as a refuge for migrants, including Tibetan and Bhutanese refugees. However, new waves of refugees or migrants - whether due to political instability in neighboring countries or distant conflicts - can strain Nepal's limited resources and infrastructure.

Nepali workers abroad, particularly in conflict-prone regions, face considerable risks, including threats to their lives, job insecurity, and emotional struggles like loneliness. These issues create tensions in Nepal's national affairs, forcing the government to grapple with difficult decisions, such as whether to recall citizens from dangerous regions or manage the consequences of such exoduses. These challenges highlight the complex interplay between international conflicts and Nepal's socioeconomic stability.

### **Environmental Concern**

International conflicts also extend their impact on ecological and environmental networks, often leading to severe destruction of natural resources. While Nepal has

not directly contributed to such ecosystem destruction, it faces the consequences of climate change driven by industrial emissions linked to global conflicts. Prolonged regional and international disputes exacerbate climate change, affecting environmental health worldwide. As UNICEF's Executive Director Catharine Russell reports, global normal temperature was usually high in 2024, and over the past few years momentarily exceeded a dangerous 1.5 degrees Celsius warning border for the first time (The Himalayan Times, January 25, 2025). It results in unpredictable weather patterns, evident in signs like accelerated snow melting and water shortages, which are critical challenges for Nepal and the broader global ecosystem.

### Way Forward

To mitigate the challenges posed by international conflicts, Nepal should adopt a proactive approach by maintaining a non-aligned stance with both global and regional powers. Nepal's unique geopolitical position plays a significant role in its diplomatic endeavors at international forums, promoting win-win advocacy to foster peace and encourage coexistence. The country should advocate for the significance of peace during global disputes. Economically, Nepal must focus on boosting key sectors such as energy and agriculture to strengthen its trade partnerships and adapt to evolving circumstances. On a social level, it is essential to maintain a stable economic framework that limits migration and over-reliance on remittance. By following the philosophy of "live and let live", Nepal has also stated the need to support the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement to fight abject poverty, violation of human rights, cultural violence and impunity, unnecessary militarization and humiliation of the environment (Yadav, 2020). The government's commitment to *Panchasheel* and non-alignment should also create effective systems to address the outflow of young people exposed to radical ideologies abroad.

Nepal should emphasize the critical environmental challenges, as they are deeply intertwined with the political outcomes of conflicts. Issues like climate change and resource scarcity require urgent attention. Historically, Nepali soldiers have bravely played the most important role in safeguarding national sovereignty and independence (Thapa, 2024). The country must strengthen its disaster management system and ecological strategies to mitigate the unintended impacts of international or global conflicts. For example, Nepal is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and resource limitations. Therefore, a key responsibility of Nepal's international alliances is to prioritize sustainable development, enhancing the nation's ability to address global challenges effectively.

## Conclusion

As Nepal is a small state between the two giant neighbors, the outbreaks of global conflicts like climate change and resource crises cannot be overlooked. Far-reaching balanced approaches and vision can help Nepal strengthen its regional and international stability. To fulfill this objective Nepal would have to highlight diplomacy of sustainable development, peace and cooperation in the growing international conflicts and global instability. Nepal plays a significant role in both regional and global situations, primarily through its involvement in conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts. Its historical and cultural background, strategic regional position, and policy of non-alignment have contributed to fostering global peace and harmony. Nepal's sovereignty is regionally rooted in a policy of non-interference, designed to safeguard its national capability to circumvent global instability. Nepal's foreign policy emphasizes peaceful coexistence and avoidance of international conflicts, serving as a stabilizing factor between the rising powers of India and China.

Nepal's geopolitical strategy aligns closely with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, promoting balance and neutrality in South Asia. Nepal prioritizes peaceful coexistence and non-interference as key policies to prevent international conflicts, maintaining its foreign policy integrity among South Asia's major powers. As an independent state, Nepal adheres to the values of the NAM, navigating regional geopolitics with a focus on balance and peace. Additionally, Nepali soldiers actively participate in UN peacekeeping missions, contributing to global efforts in conflict zones across Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Nepal advocates for equitable international policies by promoting peacebuilding, supporting displaced populations, and encouraging peaceful dialogue to address both internal and international conflicts.

## References

- Allchin, R. F. (1964). *TULSI DAS KAVITAVALI*. London: Ruskin House Museum Street.
- Beasley, A. H. (2021, March. 08). Constructing Time in Foreign Policy-Making: Brexit's Timing Entrepreneurs, Malcontemps and Apparatchiks. *International Affairs*, 97(2), 267-285. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaa162>
- Bhattarai. P. R. (2024). Mobilising Nepalese Missions for Tourism Promotion, *NCWA, Annual Journal, Vol.55 (1)*. pp. 108-118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ncwaj.v55i01.63062>
- Clive Archer, A. B. (Ed.). (2016). *Small States and International Security*. Routledge Advances

in International Relations and Global Politics.

- Falk, T. O. (2022, March 23). Ukraine War: Why is Russia Encouraging Foreign Fighters to Join?
- Karki, B. N. Need for Revitalization in Nepal's Role at the United Nations and Non-Aligned Movement, *NCWA, Annual Journal*, Vol. 55 (1), pp. 67-72.  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3126/ncwaj.v55i01.62985>
- Kharel, H. (2024). Dynamics in International Relations and its Implications for Nepal. *NCWA, Annual Journal*, Vol. 55 (1), pp. 1-11.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ncwaj.v55i01.62958>
- Lake, D. A. (2009). The State and International Relations. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199219322.003.0002>
- Lohani, M.P. (2016). Reorienting Nepal-India Relations in the Changing Context. Ed. Madhavji Shrestha & Anjan Shakya, Kathmandu: ICC.
- Thapa, R. R. (2024). Historical Analysis of Nepal's International Relations from a Defence Perspective, *NCWA, Annual Journal*, Vol.-55 (1), pp. 60-66.  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3126/ncwaj.v55i01.62983>
- The Himalayan Times. (2025, January 25). 242 million children's schooling disrupted by climate shocks in 2024, says UNICEF. Kathmandu.
- The Kathmandu Post. (2023, December 20). Foreign Ministry Confirms Death of One More Nepali in Russia-Ukraine War. Kathmandu.
- Yadav, R. P. (2020). Nepal, NAM and Russia. *NCWA Annual Journal*. pp.87-90.
- ... (2017). Nepal-India Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century . *NCWA Annual Journal*. pp. 32-35.