

# The Himalayas : The Net Security Provider



नीति अनुसन्धान  
प्रतिष्ठान, नेपाल



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## कृतज्ञता

संवाद कार्यक्रमको अडियो सुनेर लिपिबद्ध गर्ने निकाश खतिवडा धन्यवादका पात्र हुनुहुन्छ । भाषा सम्पादन र शुद्धाशुद्धि हेर्ने तथा सम्पादन एवं अनुवादमा सहयोग गर्न हुने डा. टीकाराम पौडेल, श्री महेश पौड्याल तथा डा. प्रेमराज न्यौपाने विशेष धन्यवादका पात्र हुनुहुन्छ । यसका साथै प्रतिष्ठानका सम्पूर्ण प्रकाशनहरूको शृंखला र यस प्रकाशनको पनि मुख्य भूमिकामा रहेर प्रतिष्ठानका कार्यालय सचिव Chief Administration Officer श्री सन्तोष आचार्यको योगदानलाई उच्च सम्मान प्रकट गर्दछ । उहाँको कार्यप्रतिको समर्पण भावले गर्दा नै आज प्रतिष्ठानका धेरै साहित्यहरू प्रकाशन गर्नमा हामी सफल भएका छौं । यसका साथै यो प्रकाशन सम्बन्धि गर्नेपर्ने सम्पूर्ण प्राविधिक कार्यहरू जस्तै: ले-आउट, डिजाइन एवं फोटो सेटिंग आदि महत्वपूर्ण प्राविधिक कुराहरूको समयमा नै संकलन तथा संयोजन गरी प्रकाशनको यस घडीसम्म ल्याउनमा उहाँको अत्यन्तै महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको छ । साथै प्रतिष्ठानका कार्यालय सहयोगी श्रीमती चन्द्रा तामांग लगायत अन्य सबै कार्यकर्ताहरू पनि उक्त कार्यक्रम र प्रकाशनका निमित्त विशेष साधुवादका पात्र हुनुहुन्छ । उहाँहरूको सहयोग बिना यी सबै प्रकाशनहरू सम्भव थिएनन् ।

अन्तमा उक्त कार्यक्रममा नेपालका तर्फबाट सुरक्षा विश्लेषक एवं स्तम्भकार चिरन जंग थापाज्यूको उपस्थिति रहेको थियो । कार्यक्रममा उहाँले आफ्ना अमूल्य विचारहरू राख्नुभएको थियो । भारतका तर्फबाट अखिल भारतीय विद्यार्थी परिषद (ABVP) का तत्कालिन राष्ट्रिय संगठन मंत्री एवं वर्तमानमा राष्ट्रिय स्वयंसेवक संघका राष्ट्रिय सह-प्रचार प्रमुख श्री सुनील आम्बेकरज्यू एवं जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय, स्कूल अफ इन्टरनेशनल स्टडीज, इनर एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्रका अध्यक्ष प्रा.डा. संगीता थपलियालज्यूको गरिमामय उपस्थिति रहेको थियो । दुबै देशका

पत्रकार, रिसर्च स्कलर, युवा विद्यार्थी तथा विज्ञहरूको समुपस्थिति रहेको उक्त कार्यक्रममा आफ्नो अमूल्य समय दिएर आउनुभएका सम्मानित वक्ता एवं अभ्यागतवृन्दहरूलाई हामी कृतज्ञता ज्ञापन गर्दछौं । नेपाली राजदूतावास नयाँ दिल्ली, Constitution Club of India, New Delhi तथा दिल्ली प्रशासन एवं सरकारका सबै प्रतिनिधिहरूको महत्वपूर्ण उपस्थितिलाई समेत हामी विशेष धन्यवाद व्यक्त गर्दछौं । समाजका विविध क्षेत्रहरूबाट प्राप्त सल्लाह र सुभावहरूलाई आत्मसात् गर्दै पुनः पुनः यस्ता प्रकाशनलाई निरन्तरता दिने वृढ विश्वास पनि व्यक्त गर्दछु । अन्तमा पुनः एक पटक सबैमा साधुवाद ।

दीपक कुमार अधिकारी  
निर्देशक  
नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान, नेपाल

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In the event, the Security Analyst and Columnist of Nepal Shri Chiranjung Thapa had his glorious presence from Nepal contributing his ideas on the subject. Presently Rashtriya Saha-Prachar Pramukh of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) than all India National Organising Secretary of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) Shri Sunil Ambekar and the Chairperson of the Centre for Inner Asian Studies in the School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi Professor Dr. Sangeeta Thapliyal attended the event from India. A large number of journalists, research scholars, youths, students and experts from both countries contributed

to the event. We are grateful to all of them for making the event a success for sparing their valuable time. Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi, Constitution Club of India, New Delhi, New Delhi administration and all the delegates from Nepali and Indian governments deserve special thanks for their valuable presence here.

Deepak Kumar Adhikari  
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## प्राक्कथन

नेपाल-भारत सम्बन्ध प्राचीन कालदेखि नै स्थापित भएको सम्बन्ध हो । जुन विश्वमा एउटा अद्वितीय वा अनौठो रहेको यथार्थ हामी सबैलाई विदितै छ । दुवै देशको सांस्कृतिक, धार्मिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, तथा आर्थिक सम्बन्धको सन्दर्भमा नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान, नेपाल (नेनाप) का पूर्व प्रकाशनहरूमा विस्तृतरूपमा छापिएको सहर्ष जानकारी गराउन पाउँदा हामी अत्यन्त हर्षित पनि छौं । नेपाल र भारतको सम्बन्धमा अझ समझदारी वृद्धि गर्न तथा जागरूकताको लागि प्रतिष्ठानले इस्वी सम्वत् २०१२ देखि नै संगोष्ठी, संवाद, वार्ता तथा अनौपचारिक भ्रमणका माध्यमद्वारा ध्येयका साथ कटिबद्ध भई निरन्तर कार्यक्रमहरू सञ्चालन गर्दै आएको कुराका बारेमा पनि यहाँहरू विदित नै हुनुहुन्छ । कार्यक्रमहरूको शृंखलामा कुनै आवासीय, कुनै लामो समयावधिका भईरहेका छन् भने यो कार्यक्रमको शृंखला छोटो समयावधिको र एउटा छुटै प्रकृतिको भएको हुँदा त्यसको पनि प्रकाशन गर्न पाउँदा यस प्रतिष्ठानका तर्फबाट खुशी व्यक्त गर्दछौं ।

नेपाल-भारत सम्बन्धमा धेरै वर्णन गर्न आवश्यक छैन नै । सरकारी स्तरमा हुने वार्ता, संवाद, भ्रमण तथा अन्य कार्यक्रमहरू निरन्तर हुनुपर्दछ र भई नै रहेका छन् । यसका साथै समाजमा अन्य सामाजिक, शैक्षिक तथा धार्मिक-सांस्कृतिक, व्यवसायिक संगठनहरूद्वारा पनि समय समयमा वाञ्छित कार्यक्रमहरू भईरहेका छन् र तिनीहरूका सकारात्मक परिणामहरू पनि आइरहेका छन् । यसलाई हामी अत्यन्त सकारात्मक र उत्साहका रूपमा लिन्छौं । तर हामीले गर्ने हाम्रा यी स-साना प्रयासहरूलाई उपर्युक्त संघ-संस्थाद्वारा सञ्चालित गतिविधिहरूमा होस्टेमा-हैंसे होस् भन्ने उद्देश्य पूर्तिका लागि एउटा आर्थिक/पूरक प्रयासका रूपमा मात्र हामी बुझदछौं । समाजमा यस्ता धेरै संगठनहरू छन् जसले सकारात्मक प्रयास गरिरहेका

छन् र हुनुपर्दछ भन्ने हाम्रो दृढ मान्यता रहेको छ । राष्ट्र पुनर्निर्माणको महत्तम कार्यमा सबैको योगदान अपरिहार्य हुन्छ र त्यो महायज्ञ हो । त्यसै यज्ञलाई पूर्णाङ्ग बनाउँने दिशातर्फ भएको यो शृंखला हाम्रो विशेष एवं सकारात्मक प्रयासको एउटा समिधाका रूपमा लघुतम विन्दु ठान्दछौं ।

सरकारका औपचारिक तथा राजनैयिक कार्यक्रमका अतिरिक्त दुबै देशद्वारा दुबै देशमा राजनीतिक लगानी हुनुपर्दछ भन्ने हाम्रो ठोस/दृढ मान्यता रहेको छ । सरकारी कार्यक्रमहरू एउटा निश्चित मर्यादा र सीमाभित्र रहेर सम्पादन हुनु अस्वाभाविक होइन किनकि उनीहरू एउटा सीमित मर्यादा भित्र बाँधिएका हुन्छन् । त्यसैले सरकारी प्रयासलाई मात्रै हामी जस्ता लोकतन्त्रमा विश्वास गर्ने लोकतान्त्रिक देशका नागरिकहरूले पर्याप्त ठान्नु हुँदैन । तसर्थ गैर-सरकारी संस्थाका तर्फबाट पनि विभिन्न प्रकृतिका रचनात्मक एवं सकारात्मक प्रयास निरन्तर भइरहनु पर्दछ भन्ने हाम्रो मान्यता हो । हामीले बारम्बार भन्दै आएका छौं कि सन् १९५० आसपासको नेपाल र १९८० तिरको भारत अब रहेन । दुबै देशमा एउटा ठूलो संरचनागत प्रतिस्थापन (paradigm shift) आएको छ । तर यो भएको paradigm shift लाई हामीले थाहा नपाएका पो हौं कि ? अथवा यो भईरहेको परिवर्तनलाई अनुमान, अनुभूति एवं आत्मसाथ नै पो नगरेका हौं कि ? तसर्थ संवादहीनता (communication gap) आएको हो कि ? अथवा आएको छ भन्ने हाम्रो बुझाइ हो । आजको नयाँ युवा विद्यार्थी पुस्तामा जागृत भएको विकासको लहर, विकास प्रेम, चाहना एवं आकांक्षालाई बुझेर त्यसै अनुसारको योजना तर्जुमा गर्नु पर्दछ । यस्ता आकांक्षाहरू देश विकासमा टेवा पुर्याउने आधारभूत विषय हुन् भनी हामीले बुझ्न जरूरी छ, यी लक्षणहरू अत्यन्तै सकारात्मक हुन् त्यसैले उनीहरूको आकांक्षालाई बुझेर सोही अनुसारको सम्बोधन हुनुपर्दछ भन्ने पनि हाम्रो मान्यता हो । त्यसै अनुसार दुबै देशका युवा विद्यार्थी तथा विभिन्न छात्र संगठनहरूको बीचमा सघन संवाद हुनु अपरिहार्य भएको

छ । तब मात्र वास्तविक स्थितिमा नेपालमा रहेर सही अर्थमा भारतलाई बुझ्ने र भारतमा रहेर सही अर्थमा नेपाललाई बुझ्ने एउटा शसक्त समूह निर्माण हुनेछ, तथा हुनु पर्दछ । यही हाम्रो बुझाइ पनि हो । अतः त्यही अनुरूपको यो संकल्पित एवं अविरल प्रयास पनि हो ।

गहन मन्थन र विश्लेषणका लागि लामो समयावधिको र ठूलो संख्या रहेको कार्यक्रम त हुनु पर्दछ नै तर त्यतिलाई मात्र पर्याप्त नठानेर हामीले ई.स. २०१८ जुलाईदेखि छोटो अन्तरालको र थोरै संख्यामा संवाद र संगोष्ठीको थालनी गरेका हौं । यस्ता कार्यक्रमहरूको शृङ्खला नेपालमा भन्दा बढी भारतमा र त्यसमा पनि दिल्लीमा नै बढी गर्ने जमर्को पनि गरेका हौं । कुनै तत्कालीन तथा दीर्घकालीन विषयहरूलाई लिएर प्रत्येक दुई/तीन महिनाको अन्तरालमा नेपाल-भारतबाट एक-एक वक्ताहरूले विषय राखेर उपस्थित सम्बन्धित विषयका प्राज्ञहरूसँग संवाद थालनी गरेका हौं । यी कार्यक्रमहरूको शृङ्खलामा नेपाल र भारतका दुवै देशबाट बराबरीको संख्यामा सहभागी गराउने नमूनालाई अपनाएका छौं । उक्त कार्यक्रमका सिरिजहरूमा २९ जुलाई २०१८ मा हरियाणा भवन, नयाँ दिल्लीमा “भारत-नेपाल रिलेसन्स इन द कन्टेक्स्ट अफ रिसेन्ट पोलिटिकल डेभलपमेन्ट इन नेपाल”, १० फ्रेबुअरी २०१९ मा कन्स्टट्युसन क्लब, नयाँ दिल्लीमा “इन्डिया, नेपाल एण्ड जीएसटी: इम्प्लिकेसन फर बायलेटराल ट्रेड” को आयोजना गरिएको थियो । सोही शृङ्खला अन्तर्गत ५ सेप्टेम्बर २०१९ मा कन्स्टट्युसन क्लब, नयाँ दिल्लीमा “ईन्डियाज नेवरहूड फस्ट पोलिसी, भारत-नेपाल को-अपरेसन अन गुड गभरनेन्स”, १० फ्रेबुअरी २०१९ मा कन्स्टट्युसन क्लब, नयाँ दिल्ली, इन्डियामा “द हिमालयाज : द नेट सेक्युरिटी प्रोभाईडर” विषयमा संवादको आयोजना गरिएको थियो । अघिल्ला दुई कार्यक्रमहरूको प्रकाशन गरिसकिएको र सोही शृङ्खला अन्तर्गतको थप यो प्रकाशन गर्न पाउँदा हामी अत्यन्त गैरवान्वित भएका छौं । साथै नेपालमा भएका यस्तै कार्यक्रमहरूको संगालो पनि प्रकाशोनमुख छ ।



## Introduction

We all know that the Nepal-Bharat relation has remained unprecedented and unique in the world since ancient times. We are highly delighted to know that various publications of Neeti Anusandhan Pratishthan Nepal (NeNAP), which appeared in the past, discussed the cultural, religious, social, political, diplomatic and economic relations of the two countries in detail. In order to enhance understanding between the two countries, the Pratishthan has been organizing seminars, symposiums, dialogues, and informal tours since 2012 continuously. Among the programmes, some have been short and others of longer durations. The Pratishthan is happy for being able to archive the proceedings of these programmes and in the series the Pratishthan expresses pleasure in bringing in the form of this book, though it is a short one.

The Pratishthan considers the dialogues, communications, tours and other programmes undertaken by the governments are necessary, and they have been taking place from time to time. Together with them, programmes deemed necessary by other social, religious, educational or entrepreneurial organizations are also taking place, and they have been leading to positive outcomes. We take them as extremely positive and encouraging steps. We understand our little efforts as steps undertaken to contribute to such ongoing activities taken up by such organizations. Our society abounds in social organizations that leave a positive impact, and we believe that they should continue to be positive. In the colossal task of national reconstruction, the contribution of everyone becomes crucial, for it is a grand ritual. We consider the series of our programmes, though small in their scale, but positive initiatives contributing to this grand ritual a completion.

Besides the formal and diplomatic programmes run by the governments, we believe that the two countries come up with intellectual and political investment to make the life of the people better in both the countries. Naturally, the initiatives of the governments are bound by set decorum and limits. Therefore, citizens like us, who believe in democracy, take that the government initiatives alone are not enough. We firmly believe that creative and positive initiatives constantly come forward from the side of non-government organizations as well. We also understand that Nepal today is not like it in the 1950's and India in the 1980's as a lot of changes have taken place in our socio-cultural and economic conditions. A huge paradigm shift has taken place in both nations in terms of culture, politics, economics and public awareness. However, we feel, in course of time, there seems to have communication gaps. If there have been communication gaps, we need to have continuous dialogues through open discussions among experts and intellectuals. The wave of development that has affected the youths of today, their love for development and their aspirations for freedom need to be understood and addressed accordingly.

In the same way, a serious dialogue has become necessary among students and youths in individual as well as in organizational levels of both the countries. Such a dialogue will create a group of scholars both in Nepal and India that understands the Nepal-India relation in its true sense. The Pratishthan believes that such initiatives will develop transformative leadership with a positive mindset that understands the true meaning of age-old Nepal-India relations leading both nations to prosperity.

Long-term programmes are necessary, no doubt, but instead of considering that sufficient, we have started many short-term dialogues and seminars since July 2018. We have been organizing these programmes both in Nepal and India. In the

interval of two to three months, we take up an issue of short or long-term relevance and invite speakers to speak and address the present scholars belonging to the concerned fields. For such events, we have the policy of inviting equal participants from India and Nepal. In the same vein, a seminar on the Nepal-Bharat Relations in the context of recent political development in Nepal, first in its series, was organized at Haryana Bhawan, New Delhi, on 29 July 2018 and then India, Nepal and GST: Implications for Bilateral Trade held in Constitution Club of India, New Delhi on Sunday, the 10th February 2019. And then another series was held in Constitution Club, New Delhi on the 5th September 2019 on India's neighbourhood first policy, Bharat-Nepal Cooperation on Good Governance. We have already published some series and this is the third one. The Himalayas: The Net Security Provider held in Constitution Club of India, New Delhi on Sunday, 10th February 2019. We feel pleasure to bring out the report of this talk Programme to our esteemed readers.

These types of programmes provided us an avenue for multilateral interactions on academic experiences with professors, university teachers, scholars, researchers, students and journalists, who have their stake in political and academic issues.

Such programmes, dialogues and visits have always provided a forum to scholars for exploring and understanding the changing socio-political scenario of Nepal and India. Neeti Anusandhan Pratishtan, Nepal, coordinates these programmes providing an appropriate platform for scholars to share their research and academic experiences.



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## Introduction of Speakers

### Chiran Jung Thapa

Shri Chiran Jung Thapa, is a senior security specialist who has worked for multiple International Organizations. He specializes on National Security, Intelligence, Counter-Terrorism and Civil Military Relations. He has been a guest lecturer at Nepal Army command and Staff College and Armed Police Force Staff College. Thapa has also served as a consultant for Nepal's National Security Council and has been engaged in matters related to Nepal's National security since 2005. He has authored several book chapters and numerous articles on security related topics and remains a regional counter-terrorism resource person. He holds a MA in International Affairs with a concentration in International Security Policy from Columbia University and a BA in International Relations from State University of New York, College at Geneseo. He has also completed "Leadership in Homeland Security" course from the Kennedy School at Harvard University and an executive course on Advanced Security Cooperation from the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii.

Prof. Dr. Sangeeta Thapliyal Professor Dr. Thapliyal is the Chairperson of the Centre for Inner Asian Studies in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her area of specialisation is India's strategic interest in South Asia with a special emphasis on the Himalayas and Trans-Himalayas, Nepal, Bhutan, Regional Cooperation in South Asia and issues related to Water Security. She is the Vice President of the Association of Asian Scholars and Convener, South Asia Chapter. In her administrative capacity, she has undertaken outreach programmes to various universities and think-tanks by organizing seminars, talks and projects. Professor Thapliyal has wide-ranging administrative and academic experience.

**Sunil Ambekar**

Shri Sunil Ambekar is an Indian educationist and veteran student activist. He is the Deputy media in-charge of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, Bhagyanagar (Haidarawad) Shri Sunil Ambekar. In the past, He was the National Organizing Secretary of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). He hails from Nagpur of Maharashtra's Vidarbha region. He has done M.Sc. in Zoology with specialization in Cytology. Ambekar is associated with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad from his college

days at the Institute of Science, Nagpur. Ambekar led the organization as organizing secretary during the agitation against Bangladeshi infiltration, and most recently against corruption being the organizing secretary of ABVP and advisory member to Youth against Corruption. Ambekar also played an instrumental role in inspiring Think India, the forum for national institutes' students. Shri Ambekar is one of the founder members of the World Organisation of Students and Youth (WOSY) and presently he is the advisory board member of WOSY.





Chiran Jung Thapa

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of this event. I am truly honored and humbled by this opportunity. Let me first begin with a disclaimer. Today, I speak here as an individual based on my education, employment and experience and I do not represent any organization or group.

Let me begin my presentation with an acronym. VUCA. Has anybody come across VUCA before? VUCA means Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. It characterizes the world we currently live in Donald Rums field is famous for his quote – “There are known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns.” The Fukushima disaster was the prime example of the unknown.

I believe that three Megatrends are shaping the world we live in today:

- i) Globalization ii) Global warming and iii) Global war on terror

Human beings innately have different identities. Each individual has multiple identities. It could be religious, ethnic, national, gender, economic, social, political, etc. Security needs arise in line with those identities. Security in essence is purely about the protection and preservation of life. One can argue that there is a higher ideal than life for some but in general the highest form of security entails the protection and preservation of life. Speaking of sustenance of life, three key elements are indispensable. First, it is air. Without oxygen, human beings cannot survive for more than two minutes. The second is Water. Water is essential to sustain life. Human beings cannot live without water for more than a week. Finally, humans need food to sustain life. It is generally believed that most human beings can go without food for 3 weeks. Therefore, security can directly be pegged to three vital essentials of life.

State centric security concept emanates from the idea – avoidance of war. Humans inherently by nature strive to avoid war. War is considered undesirable and we humans in general circumstances do not want war because it is violent and very costly in various aspects. War is fought in several domains. It first began with Land, then moved to sea, air, space, and arrived in cyberspace. Now, however, I believe we have entered into the sixth domain of warfare. The sixth domain where war is being fought is what we can label as the mental space. This new form of war I believe is about controlling people's minds. By controlling the mind with carefully tailored information, the aim is to get the adversary or a targeted group to think or do what is most desired to attain a strategic objective.

I would like to present before you certain alarming facts about India that warrant your attention. 13 most polluted cities (in the top 20) are in India. 70% of the water across the globe is contaminated and glaciers melting at an alarming rate.

Taking the above-mentioned facts, what could be considered the biggest National/global threat?? The calibration of the threat I believe is all based on perception. It is based on who is asked the question and who is in the dominant position to decide the threat perception level. At the national level, issues like nuclear arms, terrorism, resource depletion or War will be labeled as the greatest threats. At the local level, however, for common people these things are incomprehensible and their security needs are different. Therefore, there is a huge dissonance.

Let me list out some of the perennial threats to India. First, the nuclear neighbors (China and Pakistan) can be reckoned as a major threat. A large coastline that is extremely difficult to monitor and regulate is also a threat. All sorts of unsavory and nefarious people and things can enter India via this large coastline. There are multiple internal violent conflicts across India. Indian government at the point labeled the Naxalite rebellion as the biggest national security threat. Likewise, the threat of terrorism is high. India has consistently for the last 20 years or so remained as one of the top countries impacted by terrorism. Finally, global warming and environmental depredation are major threats to India. The fact that air in Delhi is so polluted and that people living in this city are suffering from chronic pulmonary diseases is a testament to how critical a threat environment is.

Similarly, Nepal remains in a formidable geopolitical region. Its vulnerability stems from its geopolitical position of being squeezed between India and China. The asymmetry in size and capacity of its neighbors demonstrate Nepal's vulnerabilities. India and China have two of the largest standing militaries in the world, both possess nuclear weapons, both are the largest carbon-emitting countries, making the environment one of the most polluted in the world, and have two of the largest

populations in the world. Both countries have a revving economy and have an insatiable appetite for resources. The colliding interests of both countries in Nepal pose a significant threat to it. The fact that these two neighbors have gone to war in the past and still have outstanding border disputes, which intermittently stoke tensions along their borders, also adds to Nepal's vulnerability. China's so-called liberation of Tibet through a takeover and India's annexation of Sikkim on 26 April 1975 serves as a sobering reminder to Nepal of the challenges to its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

How is Nepal a net contributor to global, regional and national security?

Nepal contributes both Men and Money to the security architecture of India. At the global level, we are amongst the top UN peacekeepers contributing countries. Nepal is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the world and contributes about 5500 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions around the world. Likewise, Nepal contributes close to 50,000 men to the armed forces of India. This is the only example in the world where a smaller neighboring country contributes such a large number of men to a neighboring country's armed forces. This is the only example in the world where a nuclear-armed country receives soldiers from another country for its military. From an economic point of view, Nepal ranks as the 7<sup>th</sup> country from which India receives remittance and amounts to 5 billion dollars annually. However, given the open border between the two countries, most of the amounts are not transferred or channeled through recordable formal avenues. Most of it gets carried in the pockets of the workers thereby skipping the official tabulations. Therefore, the numbers are most certainly much higher rendering Nepal in the top three if actual numbers were computed.

"India did not win any of those wars, in which the Nepalese did not spill their blood; the Nepalese did not attain martyrdom. The brave sons of Nepal never lagged, when it came to dying for safeguarding the honor of India."

These are lines of Prime Minister Modi. This is the contribution of Nepal to the Indian Polity.

Nepal India relationship is unique, unparalleled and umbilical. We have bread, brides and Bahadur relationships. The former Nepali Army Chief's example is telling. General Gaurab Rana's mother is Indian, his wife is Indian, his daughter is married to an Indian man and he was schooled in India. Similarly, General Pyar Jung Thapa's daughter is married to an Indian man, now General Garud's grandson is marrying an Indian girl this week.

Besides the above, there are multiple affinities between our two countries. Nepal and India are the only two countries in the world with Hindu majorities. These two countries share an open border where nationals of each country can travel to another with very little or no restriction. Nepali currency is pegged to Indian currency. We have the history of conferring the title of honorary general to each other's Army chiefs, we have trade dependency.

Despite such affinities, the relationship is bedeviled by multiple contradictions as well. Nepal's threat perception always considers India as a primordial threat to its sovereign existence and tends to blame India for all its political and economic misfortunes and sees India paw prints on every unsavory circumstance. Nepal has numerous border disputes with India. India has imposed three crippling blockades on Nepal. While Nepalese relish Bollywood movies, Banarsi sarees, Bengali sweets and Bangalore Universities and workplaces, they equally love to bash the babudom of Bharat. The official government

policies and the Indian government's hegemonic attitude and behavior, in particular, are something the Nepalese abhor. During our time of crisis – the post earthquake of 2015, the Indian Army first on the scene, assisted Nepal the most and was last out of the scene. But, it was criticized the most in Nepal. India is labeled closest friend yet the ambassador position in Delhi has remained vacant for more than a year – that shows the priority accorded to the relationship. Even during the blockade, while the political realm of both countries collided, it was the militaries of both countries that served as bridges and played a pivotal role in uplifting the blockade.

The relationship between our two countries is high, deep and wide. The bedrock of any genuine friendship rests on righteousness and goodwill rather than on strategies or abilities. Its roots lie in the convictions of the hearts rather than the dexterity of hands or acumen of the head. Thus, this unique bond needs to be maintained and further strengthened. We must all work unceasingly if we want to make this relationship impervious to all such whims and weather.



Prof. Dr. Sangeeta Thapliyal

## Changing Strategic Discourse on the Himalayas

The identification of the Himalayas as a frontier is ingrained in the mindset of the Indians. The might of the mountains gives a sense of territoriality, identity and security. In geographic and strategic terms, they separate South Asia from Central Asia and China. With the advent of British control in India, the Himalayas were considered as a buffer between the Indian subcontinent and China or Russia.

To safeguard its strategic interests and not to have any political disturbance in the northern border, the British signed certain treaties and agreements with Nepal with the understanding that Nepal could have internal autonomy but not on its external relations. As per the Anglo-Nepal treaty signed in 1815, Nepal was not allowed to develop relations with any other country or employ any European in the palace without British acceptance. A resident was stationed in Kathmandu who attended meetings in the palace. Subsequently, through the Treaty of Peace and

Friendship signed in 1923, the strategic interests of the country were made complimentary with British India such as both the signatories agreed to inform each other in case of friction with the northern neighbor. As the relations developed, Nepal became a willing partner in developing a close relationship with India. The interests of the Rana Prime Ministers were met by developing close links with the British. Thus, the evolution of the idea of buffer was influenced by geo-strategy, geo-politics and the elite's interests.

This narrative continued even after India became independent and Nepal became democratic. Even though India never mentioned Nepal as its buffer but its perception towards Nepal was guided by strategic interests. The entry of communist China's forces in Tibet was a defining point in the relations as it consolidated the geostrategic variable in the relations rather than socio-cultural or ecological. The fear of China was palpable in both India and Nepal and it was reflected in the subsequent treaties and agreements such as the Gorkha recruitment in the Indian army (1949), the treaty of peace and friendship (1950), Indian military missions to reorganize and modernize Nepal army or the arms assistance agreement (1965). These treaties and agreements emphasized the socio-cultural, economic, military relations within the background of geostrategic interests. During the cold war between the two ideologically polarized groups of the US-led allies and the USSR led satellites, India and Nepal preferred to be non-aligned. China's preference for communism in 1949 brought cold war politics much closer home. It was a common adage that poverty or unstable politics was a perfect breeding ground for communism. Thus, Nepal's economic development or political stability was essential for

India's security interests too. Nepal was equally perturbed by the presence of China near its northern borders and was a willing partner in developing a special relationship with India.

Breach in the Himalayas as a frontier had appeared with the emergence of air power and missiles, which could cross the mountains without armies coming face to face. Secondly, strains in the common strategic perceptions appeared when the governments and leaders in Nepal did not look at relations with India from the prism of a special relationship. Strains in relations appeared after King Mahendra took over direct power a year ahead of Sino-India armed conflict. India's overzealous policy to support democracies did not favor the developments in Nepali politics. The insecure regime made efforts to balance the perceived internal and external threats by bringing in China as a balancer. He emphasized the policy of non-alignment and friendship with all. He signed with China an agreement on the construction of a road linking Kathmandu with Kodari, which was a substantial deviation from respecting India's strategic sensibilities. Later King Birendra followed a policy of non-alignment and equidistance with neighbors and proposed Nepal be declared as a zone of peace.

India was uncomfortable with the option of an equal relationship in Nepal's foreign policy. The dominant discourse was that how would Nepal follow the policy of equal relationship when it had an open border with India, its citizens were given similar treatment as is given to an Indian in India, along with the free movement of population across the borders. This kind of relationship based on geographical reality does not exist between Nepal and China.

Despite having close socio-cultural, economic relations with India, Nepal has consistently tried to be a close ally of China. The seeds of the policy of equidistance between its neighbors were sown by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the first Shah ruler of unified Nepal, in his Divine Counsel. He had suggested friendship with both the Chinese emperor and the British. Nepalese are proud of never been subjugated by the Mughals and the British and thereby assert their sovereignty and independence from India. This feeling has been magnified by the domestic politics of the country. It has been observed that when the government in power perceives India to be not so favorably disposed towards them, a dramatic shift towards China takes place.

In recent times, there is a shift in Nepal's policy. It wants to act as a bridge or link between India and China. In June 2018, during his visit to China Prime Minister KP Oli said that, "we believe that Nepal can serve as a bridge between our two neighbors. In fact, we want to move from the state of a land-locked to a land-linked country through the development of adequate cross-border connectivity. Our friendship with both our neighbors places us in an advantageous position to realize this goal."<sup>1</sup> This is a new thrust in Nepal's foreign policy.

Nepal formally agreed to be a part of China's Belt and Road initiative in 2017. There is an emphasis to develop infrastructural linkages with China in order to avoid total dependence on India. This idea became more prominent after the Madhesi had blockaded Nepal's border with India in 2015. Agreements were signed with China on rail and road connectivity, trade and transit, energy cooperation, etc. Nepal is looking for alternative

routes to land and seaports from China. In March 2016, Transit and Transport agreement was signed which allows Nepal to use four Chinese seaports in Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang and Zhanjiang and three land ports in Lanzhou, Lhasa and Shigatse. There is a direct air link between Kathmandu to Lhasa, Guangzhou and Shanghai. It has opened up Nepal to China, which is trying to reach India's border through infrastructure buildup projects in Lumbini. The economic viability of the projects would be visible in years to come but the geostrategic and political significance of the rail and road projects is obvious.

Interestingly, China has become proactive in its engagements with Nepal and shown interest in its new foreign policy thrust. In 2016, President Xi Jinping had suggested that Nepal could act as a link between India and China. China has asked India to join in the development projects in Nepal. The China-led narrative on economic development by asking India to come on board is an attempt to replace the Indian presence in Nepal.

Connectivity is a new mantra for economic development. There is a growing understanding that infrastructure development is a key to economic development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also echoed this during his visit to Nepal in 2014, when he emphasized Highway, Information and Technological linkages with Nepal. India and Nepal have signed road and rail agreements. Jayanagar-Janakpur medium gauge train has started. Direct bus services have begun from Kathmandu to Delhi and Benaras.

The writing on the wall is clear that the countries want economic development and recognize infrastructure development as the mainstay. However, India has apprehensions on the Belt and Road Initiatives especially on the China –Pakistan Economic Corridor. It perceives the Belt and Road Initiatives from the

strategic framework. China's increasing presence in Nepal perturbs India, which has an open border with the country.

India still looks at the Himalayas from a geostrategic perspective but it does not have Nepal as a willing partner. Nepal does not perceive China with the same prism, as is India. During his visit to India, Kamal Thapa, former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal had said, "Nepal's relation with India is incomparable. If we try to expand our relations with China, that should not be seen at the cost of India. 50 years back the Himalaya was seen as a barrier, now it is no more a barrier."<sup>2</sup> In fact, Nepal does not perceive China with the same prism as it saw it in 1949. It no longer perceives the presence of northern neighbor discomforting but wants to develop relations and take advantage of its economic development. It does provide landlocked Nepal breathing space from overdependence on its southern neighbor.

Nepal has been making attempts to convince India that its trans-Himalayan linkages would not weaken its relations with India. Nilambar Acharya, Nepal's newly appointed Ambassador to India said that "Nepal and China may be getting closer for mutual economic and trade gains but their emerging relationship is not at all at the cost of India".<sup>3</sup> The statement was made in the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, his first ever-public statement in New Delhi. Acharya's statement surmises Nepal's foreign policy in a nutshell and relations with its neighbors. It emphasizes Nepal's policy to develop a relationship with both its neighbors but with stress that it would not come on the way of relations with India. This is a new geopolitical reality that India has to deal with.

The narrative on the geostrategic Himalayas has changed. It is no more about creating buffers or marching armies but about creating linkages through connectivity, trade and transit corridors. Connectivity is, however, operating within the prism of geostrategic and geopolitics. The Himalayas were important for India's strategic interests and would continue to remain so but the rules of the game have changed.



**Sunil Ambekar**

I talked with one person. There is no location where I did not talk with people, especially the youths. Even in India, there is no section with which I did not talk. I even talked with the people of Lakshadeep in Kochi. I haven't been to Lakshadeep to date. In all other locations, I have held conversations with people. With all the people I have talked to in India, I have heard nothing but positive comments about Nepal. The same is true for the Nepalese people; they always think positive about India. This is an extremely optimistic thing. It means we all should be more sensible when it comes to relations between India and Nepal. A big chunk of the population in Nepal, in the past 50 to 60 years, has been educated in India. The same is true for India where groups of people in the diplomatic circle had certain orientations about Nepal. Yet, there is still a big chunk away from education. We have been feeling that certain problems have featured in the diplomatic circles working in the two countries. I think realistic research in this direction will be able to address such problems objectively.

I firmly believe many of such anomalies can be solved. When we exist as neighbors, we also face problems. Misunderstandings occur among close ones. Therefore, my expectation with my friends in Nepal is that you cannot rate two of your neighbors on the same footing. As Chiran ji explained, we two counties are quite close to each other. If for some reason, the Himalayas get seized, that would not be good for any of us. The Himalayas extend from west to east, and in every location, we do not share the border. Yet, it is to our advantage to keep the Himalayas secured in all the locations.

Many roads are getting constructed in Nepal. Roads leading to Muktinath are coming up, along with people for a holy beholding. I have also visited Muktinath for quite a time.

Look at the water for example. Water moves and joins the Ganga. It also joins Gandaki, Karnali or Koshi for that matter. Rivers also branch out to various other locations. Many things are common between us. So if any tampering is taking place in the Himalayas, it is our common concern. If anyone is planning any sort of blockage across the Himalayas, it is not an individual concern; it is our common concern. If that is resulting in any sort of environmental disturbance, that too is our common concern. It can be agreed that India will have comparatively more concern in that, but it is our common concern. There are many other issues, whose commonality needs to be identified, and efforts should be collectedly made to resolve them. Let's look at the Himalayas again. Many of our rivers originate there. Much of the wind that reaches us comes from there. The heat, cold wave, and the fluctuation in seasonal temperature are caused by such winds.

In the case of Nepal, if cold winds from the Himalayas flow down to the Terai, hot winds from the Terai move uphill, towards the

mountains. The same is the case in India. Hot winds from the plains move up to the mountains, while cold Himalayas wind fan the plains.

There are other special cases we need to be aware of. India shares borders with many countries. The border we share between India and Nepal is one and is extremely significant. But if we make this an issue of contention and flare it up, making it an issue like the one in the Himalayas, we bring harm to both. Our border issues can be peacefully handled and resolved. We must try for that.

There have also been some dealerships about railways. We will common concerns in that too. If we flare the problems up, it will bring trouble to our people. I see things in terms of commonality. If we start seeing these as our common problems, solving them will be easier. Look! We have an open border between India and Nepal. This means we have a long and deep history of the relationship. We share a common culture that inspires all of us. The culture we inherit and the values we own have their deep roots in the Himalayas. Our sages and recluses, for years, have meditated in the Himalayas. Such inspirations and such mountain winds have been granting life to all of us. Many of our pilgrimage centers are common, and the way we visit those for blessings are also common. So when a problem comes in the common pilgrimage site of one community, our entire civilization suffers.

The Indian people often face great problems visiting the Manasarovar. Problems are fallen our routes of faith. People from Humla and Jumla in Nepal also visit the Manasarovar quite often. Of late, they are forced to produce visas and passports for the thoroughfare. A new problem has come about. There also are similar problems for people here, when they want to visit

Tibet. Kyirong falls in the district of Rasua, at the point where Nepal shares its border with China. People living here are also unhappy with the people across the border here, their behavior and the rules there. My opinion is that such problems should be shared. Roads should be cleared for people to visit this place, the way they visit Muktinath today.

Mustang has the abode of Lord Muktinath. I think this fact can further embolden our relationship. Muktinath, with the temple of Lord Shiva and the statue of Shiva's bull, is a holy place. Further beyond, Damodar Kunda is even more holy. All these are parts of our Jambodeep, and are indivisible. I think, identifying such unifying factors can bring us closer and make us stronger. For these reasons, I believe, we must think about how we, on both sides of our borders, will be prepared for this. Educationists, with such realizations, should develop in both countries. Such media persons should develop in both locations. They will conduct researches on such issues, make reports, and influence policies on such issues of commonality. Unless and until our political and diplomatic relations have a sound cultural base, they will continue to remain merely political and diplomatic. We must bring fundamental changes in our relationships, but we are aware, problems often loom along our roads. Many times, I have held a conversation with youths, who come to India to study, and build up a relationship with their counterparts there. Expressions on both sides are similar. Youngsters, on both sides of the border, think that we should work together for development and entrepreneurship. Similar ideas were expressed by students of IITs and IIMs, premier institutions of higher education in India, when India's education minister CP Narayan visited them.

There is one more thing I would love to tell you. There are many occasions and festivals associated with various deities, and

celebrated in various locations, like in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and others. Similar festivals are celebrated in Nepal too, and Dussehra is one of them. In a way, this entire belt is a belt of the deities. These days, people from all over the world visit places like Lumbini and Kushinagar. Even from India and Nepal, the Buddhists, and even the non-Buddhists, having reverence for the Buddha, visit these places. There is no much difference among these people. Such commonalities have given rise to great relations among us. A circuit, connecting Lumbini, Kushinagar, Gaya or Sarnath near Varanasi is coming up. Without visiting Gaya and Kushinagar, the tour of this circuit remains incomplete. No individual can think his or her tour complete without visiting these holy places. There also is an alternative narrative. Even if you visit 12 jyotirlingas, your visit will remain incomplete, unless you visit the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu. This means, India cannot complete its pilgrimage without visiting Nepal, nor can Nepali do the same without visiting India. It is impossible. Though these are trivial things on the surface, they are extremely important things.

Chiranjeevi made a mention of export. But I think, contributions in life cannot always be gauged in terms of import and export. In the case of India and Nepal, the relations are those of the heart, and much beyond trade and tariffs. As just mentioned above, the chief of each other's armies in India and Nepal, are also honorary army chief of the other army. We share risks; we handle them together. There is no difference. India's chief of army staff invites his Nepalese counterpart to India. In the same way, the Nepalese chief of the army invites his Indian counterpart. Such relations are, in fact, very old. Look at our relationship during the days of Chanakya! Nepal and India existed together. The same was true in the year 1857. We agree that political Nepal, as we have today, is a distinct country. It

has a history of about 257 years after it was integrated by King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Such are our relations. If our borders are facing certain issues, we must sit together in peace and find a solution.

People from the two countries should pressure their respective governments for such initiatives. Nepal, like India, has become a republic now. I congratulate the people of Nepal on this new achievement. People here have endured great struggle. Many have sacrificed their lives. That finally establish democracy in Nepal. Evidently, the success of Nepal as a republic is not only in Nepal's interest; it is in the best interest of the entire world. Moreover, this is an extremely important event in the history of democracy. I believe the reinstatement of democracy in Nepal will further strengthen our mutual relationship. If we stop being unilateral and start holding talks on diplomatic and political fronts, I believe, good outcomes will come about. Representatives from both our embassies are present in this talk programme. Both the embassies have crucial roles to play in this regard. In the days to come too, scholars will continue to work to foster these relations. Embassies have protocols to maintain. I often discuss with friends in Indian Embassy in Nepal. I say it does not suffice for us to establish the embassy and stay here. We have to build up closer relations. I would like to assure you that we will always stand together with people committed to consolidating such relations.

This way, we are certain to move ahead. In our relationship, if there are occasional jerks, we all can come up in a huge number, and democratically solve them. But if we leave them in the hands of diplomacy and politics, they get protracted. Such problems need active public participation and a lot of discussions. If untoward incidents take place in certain countries, it becomes a responsibility on the part of the common people to question

their governments. For example, if there is an economic blockade for the side of India, the people of India need to question their government why such blockage was forced. They must ask why the government is unable to address the problem in time. In a democracy, it becomes a culture for the people to question the government, if the latter is unable to solve problems in time. They must ask why the government is unable to solve things within its capacity. This, I think, should apply to both democracies: India and Nepal. If some jerks develop between India and Pakistan, people should ask not only Pakistan but also the government of India. This applies to all of us.

Some people profess terrorism and want to use our territories to make their ends. Terrorists, who want to harm India, might have their eyes on the land of Nepal to push their design. If intruders come to India and enact their ploys, they may also enter Nepal and enact their gameplans. This is a public threat. If there are pressures, traditions and illusions, and want to push their agendas, like a religious conversion, India is not their lone target. They have their eyes in Nepal too. At present, such missionaries are active in different districts of Nepal and have established a lot of churches. We have no objection to Jesus and Bible, but we the Hindus believe that our path of liberation should be a path of our faith. But this should not be a result of greed, avarice or any sort of allurement.

I think the crisis India and Nepal are facing today are common. Nepal is facing a serious crisis. We should also hold discussions on such common threats. Politics is a current that continues all the time. Different political parties function in the world. India also has many parties. Look at communist parties in India; they are not one but four. Nepal also has three or four of such parties. Two of such parties are in parties. That is not a matter of concern. That is not a matter of concern. But the extremism they often undertake is dangerous.

Nepal has earned her democracy after a lot of struggle. India is facing extremism from certain Maoist groups these days. While considering our relationship, we should see things, taking into consideration the web or our connections from Pashupatinath to Tirupatinath. We have always raised the slogan, 'From Pashupati to Tirupati.' We should therefore understand these common connections and should face the common threats together.

Problems have come from time to time. India faced intrusion into Kargil. Sometimes, the Himalayas have been attacked. In order to combat terrorism, countries should make brilliant policies. Within the limit of democracy, we should exercise our rights and privileges. In connection with Nepal and India, we must strengthen those common denominators that define our relations.

## Question, Answer and Comments

Rajiv Nayan

The Himalayas mountain range is a net security provider of traditional and non-traditional security of the countries through which it passes. The Himalayas are the largest and tallest mountain range in the world, which passes through 8 countries. These countries are: Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. It performs the role of a tall natural barricade for any aggressor, even if the air power and long-range missiles guided by space assets may appear altering the security environment.

About 1.5 billion people are dependent on their water, food and energy needs in the Himalayas. Nine major perennial rivers-- Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Tarim, Yangtse and Yellow River originate in the Himalayas. Besides, there are smaller water streams, which are used by the people in the region. More significantly, rivers—perennial, seasonal, or smaller are very much dependent on springs located in the Himalayas. The parching up of springs may adversely influence the flow of these rivers. Studies indicate that the springs and streams supply up to 90

percent of water to the Ganga. A NITI Aayog report has alarmed that more than a million villages are confronting acute scarcity of water for drinking and other domestic chores. This resulted in 2014. The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-System recommendation for rejuvenation of Himalayan springs and protection of high-altitude lakes. It also recommended constructing an inventory of active and dormant mountain springs. Extensive work on geological mapping to identify the spring recharge zone is being created. India and Nepal can work together with the help of Neeti Anusandhan Pratishtan, Nepal on ensuring water security in the Himalayas.

A question is raised that Nepal should make nuclear weapons. As a sovereign country, Nepal may go for nuclear weapons but it needs to calculate the financial and political cost of developing nuclear weapons. The great powers backing the enforcement of the global non-proliferation regime may retaliate. Nepal is a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It shall have to withdraw from it. This may have its consequences.

India and China both have policies of no use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons countries. So,

there is no threat to Nepal from either of the countries. Besides, the Boiling Water Reactor that faced the meltdown in Fukushima has been improvised in India. The Indian government had held conferences and explained the design changes and other safety measures that had been taken by the successive Indian governments. India has adopted the best nuclear safety practices in the world and is continuously improving the practices. It is not complacent about the safety and security need.

There are other security challenges such as smuggling and drug trafficking which both countries need to handle jointly.

Nihar R. Nayak

Thank you, Chair. Good morning to all of you. I would like to thank the organizer for this opportunity to put forward my opinion in such an august gathering.

In the previous session, we identified many challenges. So my paper is basically on how to mitigate those challenges and how to make more robust to our bilateral and institutional arrangement to mitigate those challenges. That's why my topic is basically "Is Nepal-India military cooperation prepared to mitigate the demographic changes?"

In that context, if we see the India-Nepal relation, the modern India-

Nepal relation, broadly, if I categorize it, stands on five pillars. The first one is the geography, common history and culture, people-to-people contract, formal diplomatic relations and the most important is the military cooperation, which is not discussed in detail in this programme. Among the five pillars, it is observed that military cooperation has been the most stable, matured and less averse to diplomatic skirmishes in the last 70 years of our diplomatic relation.

In this regard, I would like to focus a little bit on security providers. I mean there is a narrative in the Indian subcontinent that India is a net security provider in the sub-continent. But I will just reverse that argument of how Nepal has emerged as the net security provider to India. It is a small country. But if we look at Nepal's security in comparison to that of India, it is enormous. How? Bilaterally, Nepal has committed not to allow its soil to be misused by external elements.

There is a robust security mechanism starting from the foreign ministers level to the border police level. Another part is that there are 32 to 40 thousand Gurkha personnel who have been serving in the Indian Army. They all are committed to sacrifice their life for India and they have been doing for the last centuries.

They are ready to sacrifice at any time for India. Another part of this arrangement is 90 thousand retired Gurkha personnel. Another 50 thousand are serving in the paramilitary forces. They are the greatest assets of India and also to the India-Nepal relations. They have been continuing their sympathy towards India. If any external forces try to do anything against India they keep on sharing the information.

Another part which has been often neglected, basically the contribution of civilian Nepalese, those who are coming as a part-time laborer to India. They have immensely contributed to the economy and development of India. Though which is not mentioned anywhere in India-Nepal relation.

The last point I will mention is that Nepal is committed to fighting against global terrorism which India has been facing for a long time. So these are the major contributions of Nepal in terms of net security provider to India.

Earlier in this programme, Shri Sunil Ambekar and other scholars mentioned that there should be cooperation to mitigate those challenges including terrorism. There is also a need for a combined operation against terrorism, particularly at the regional and global levels.

Here the question arises that are the security agencies in Nepal prepared for such kinds of operations? We have to analyze their level of preparedness of the Nepali Army, Nepal Armed Police Force and Nepal Police as well as Nepal's intelligence. Basically, my paper focuses on the Nepali Army (NA). In 2004, the then chief of Army Staff of the NA, General Rana, brought out a doctrine. In that doctrine, the NA identified around 5/6 major challenges before Nepal. Basically transnational terrorism, ethnic conflict, separatist movement, natural calamity, environmental degradation and building infrastructure in Nepal particularly in case of disaster which the Nepal army has been doing. If we see all these 5/6 challenges, we would find that India also faces similar challenges and that has serious implications to India's national security.

However, interestingly, if you see our present arrangement with Nepal that might not be sufficient to withstand these challenges. The Nepali Army has been facing a couple of challenges. First, it does not have sufficient arms and ammunition for training and combat purposes. India has been the major supplier of arms and ammunition to Nepal. Interestingly, India has stopped supplying those weapons

since 2005. During the conflict period; the NA got some amount of weapons from European countries to fight against Maoist insurgents. Although India has resumed supplying weapons to the NA since 2013, that supply is very little and non-lethal. According to the present Army Chief's statement, 40% of the arms are not updated. Along with it, there is no budget for skill development. That's why there is a strong view emerging inside the NA that it should take support from China. This kind of view is strongly coming up and India should seriously take notice of that. What I am trying to point out here is that when the Chinese defense minister visited recently, he increased the 10% of total defense support to Nepal. In 2009 it was only 3 million US dollars.

At the same time, China is trying to basically build constituencies in the Nepali Army by having joint training and exercises with the NA which is first going to happen in Nepal. In joint training camp, the ratio is 4:1 for the Nepalese army and Chinese army respectively. The China defense minister has assured to extend all possible support to improve Army to Army relations. In this regard, has assured to extend both technical and financial support to build the military

hospital. At the same time, China has also assured the Nepal Police Armed to build a training center. Why is it happening? Why does China focus on Nepal Army?

First, there is a trend that is developed from 2006 onwards especially in the post-monarchy period. China has been frequently sending high-level delegations to Nepal. In absence of monarchy, it was looking for a trusted political partner. It also wanted Nepal to continue its 'one-China policy'. In post monarchy period, China was also worried about political instability and its impact on the Tibetan region. In that situation, China focused on diversifying its relations with Nepal from state-to-state level to institutional level and further to the people-to-people level. These are the Chinese engagements going on at this moment. Therefore, we must seriously think about improving our trust level with the NA and resume all those supplies as soon as possible. If that is neglected, India might lose its strategic space in the Himalayan region. If possible, India might undertake some large scale projects or joint ventures with the Nepali Army. India might also consider increasing more seats for the NA personnel, particularly for the training purposes in IMA and other institutions. India could also organize

meetings annually between retired Army chiefs and other senior army officials of both countries.

The military is not supposed to have a direct relationship. The military can be used when all the rest of the agencies get failed. But Nepal is a small country in terms of agencies and its capabilities; The Nepal army is hugely deployed in infrastructure buildings. India, in the same way, has disaster management and rapid action forces. Nepal army should be prepared for any kind of eventualities in the future. The Nepali army is not like the Indian and Chinese army. It is already engaged in many civilian activities like preservation of the forest, environment protection and so on. Therefore, NA's infrastructure and structure are different from what we see in India and China.

#### (Endnotes)

- 1 “*KP Oli says that Nepal can be a bridge between India and China*,” *Hindustan Times*, 23 June 2018.
- 2 “*Nepal's relations with China not at India's cost: Kamal Thapa*,” *Economic Times*, 10 June 2016.
- 3 “*Nepal's closeness with China not at India's expense: Ambassador*,” *Business Standard*, 26 March 2019.