

**Journal of International Affairs**

**Vol. 3, 52-67, 2020**

**Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/joia.v3i1.29082>**

**Department of International Relations and Diplomacy**

**Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal**

## **Small State Constraint: International System or Domestic Politics? A Case of Nepal and Fiji**

Gaurav Bhattarai  
Vasiti N.B. Cirikiyasawa

### ***Abstract***

*Available literature on the role of small states in international relations has focused on the international system's impact on the maneuverability of small states. The influence of domestic politics in determining the foreign policy goals of small states seems to have lacked enough deliberations. Identifying this research gap, this article aims to analyze the foreign policy behavior of small states, including Fiji and Nepal. More precisely, this write-up argues that the small states' behavior cannot be adequately comprehended if it is only assessed from the system level of analysis, as their behavior is not only influenced by external factors or the international system. This research sheds light on how domestic factors play an important role in shaping the foreign policy of small states. In this regard, the prime objective of the paper is to examine how the domestic events of 2006 in Fiji and Nepal influenced their post-2006 foreign policy agendas. The 2006 Military Coup in Fiji and the Second People's Movement of 2006 in Nepal are examined here to appraise how foreign policy was devised and formulated to address the issues that arose out of these events, thus allowing the two countries to remain functional in the international society of states.*

*Keywords: Small States, Fiji, Nepal, Foreign Policy*

**Introduction:**

As the classification of sovereign and autonomous states, operating in the global politics as "small states," "big states," "weak states," and "powerful states," is a colonial construct, there is a lack of universally agreed definition of a small state. In 1971, United Nations Institute for Training and Research defined small states as exceptionally small in terms of area, population, human resources and economy. But, the quantitative dimension of national power (i.e. population, size, GNP etc.) alone is probably not a sufficient indicator to adequately define a small state. Area can differ extremely, and the size of population is a function of historical time. Also, a state is identified as small, based on its weak international position and also because of having less influence on the international system (Kosary 1987: 2). The list of small states' economic disadvantages includes a narrower range of resources and a limited market, which make their production less diversified. Usually, small states are more dependent on foreign trade, and are more exposed to international economic fluctuations. Fiji's limitation in terms of the availability of natural resources is attributed to its smallness in geographical size and this constraint poses a challenge to the diversification of its export commodities. Similarly, Nepal's geographical location as a landlocked state makes its economy heavily dependent on India.

In mainstream theories of International Relations, the foreign policy of smaller states finds only a little attention, especially in the Realist reading of state maneuvering. Since smaller states are positioned very low in the structural ordering of the international system, their influence in international relations is relatively minor. Consequently, the foreign policy of small states embraces the primary objective of ensuring their survival in the international environment. Their economic structure, military capability, diplomatic instruments and geographic location often endure challenges. Still, there is a failure to reach an understanding about what best explains small state foreign policy and it stems from two fundamental problems. One problem points to some scholars' efforts to challenge the conventional wisdom (commonly agreed international determinants of small state foreign policy) (Hey 2003: 7). In this regard, it has been argued that we should look to domestic institutional choices, rather than international determinants to explain small state foreign policy (Elman 1995:187). Domestic institutions are important because they define the paths of the available options open to a government in foreign policy making. A second problem in the current small state literature is its outdated focus on state security. One can understand the emphasis on security immediately after Second World War, when realism reigned as the dominant theory in foreign policy analysis, but it does not reflect small states' priorities today. Realism holds that security is the

top priority for all states, and that it would be all the more crucial for small states lacking in resources (Hey 2003: 8). However, the foreign policy analysis of small states has evolved significantly at present. It reveals that other factors, including the role of individuals, the bureaucracy and state politics, have at least as much influence on foreign policy behavior, as do international security concerns.

Most importantly, the foreign policy behavior of states may be of four kinds: (a) acquiescent, i.e. in response to international changes and demands; (b) intransigent, i.e. in response to domestic changes and demands; (c) promotive, i.e. aiming at a new equilibrium between domestic and international demands; and (d) preservative — classical status quo policies, where the given external balance is maintained by aiming at no international and domestic change. With regard to small states, the proposition is that in small, less modern states, leaders will have a passive-withdrawal approach toward foreign affairs, and they will most likely follow either promotive or acquiescent foreign policies (Mcgowan1975: 470). The foreign policies of Nepal and Fiji have been both intransigent and promotive. Fiji and Nepal's common qualitative attributes can be taken, including their military status, economic status and diplomatic capacity, to deem them small states. However, in terms of their quantitative attributes, Nepal is much larger in geographical size with a land area of 147,181 square kilometers than Fiji's with about 18,275 square kilometers. Likewise, Nepal's latest population count stands at 29.3 million, with Fiji's at only 905,502. Nepal is a landlocked state most of its territory located on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, while Fiji is an island state composed of an archipelago of 330 islands situated near the center of Southwest Pacific (Hunt 1987: 299).

### **Foreign Policy Priorities of Fiji and Nepal**

Foreign policy is the prime state instrument to promote its national interests at the regional and global levels. It is the policy pursued by a state, when dealing with the international community. It is the guideline on the basis of which a state conducts its foreign relations and behaves accordingly on the international stage. The most fundamental foreign policy objectives of Fiji are to safeguard the sovereignty and integrity of the nation and to protect the rights and lives of Fijian citizens. Building upon these fundamentals, Fiji's foreign policy is driven by the goals outlined in the country's official foreign policy document. In terms of its foreign policy guiding principles, Fiji aims at maintaining a stable and sustainable system of international relations based on international law and the principles of equality among states, respect for national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and respect for international treaties, as embodied in Charter of the United Nations (*The Foreign Policy Statement of Fiji* 2016: 1-2).

Internal factors such as geography, history, economy and political and socio-cultural traditions are the major determinants of Nepal's foreign policy. The other dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy are security, stability and status (Muni 1973:34). The notion of security implies autonomy in decision-making and the assurance of territorial integrity against external aggression. Moreover, Nepal's foreign policy principles are guided by its adherence to *Panchasheel* and to non-alignment and faith in United Nations Charter.

### **Political Instability in Small States**

For small developing countries, managing democratic change has not been easy. Lack of effective democratic institutions, experience, training, political skills and resources are some of the problems, which prove to be impediments in building an effective cultural and civic infrastructure needed for a democracy. A number of new democracies are struggling to establish a framework of viable legal and economic systems in the midst of growing economic hardships and rising expectations of their populations (Khadka 1993: 45). Fiji and Nepal, as small developing states, are no exception. Similarly, when leaders and rulers fail in their role, people lose faith in the institutions; symbols become meaningless; nationalism and patriotism no longer inspire loyalty. Alienation leads to internal conflict. Exacerbated by wrongful internal responses and external demands, state failure and collapse begins (Simkhada 2018: 63). Amongst developing small states, political instability has also resulted in intra-state conflicts. In view of the narrative on intra-state conflicts or civil wars, they are usually precipitated by a lot of division among people or citizens of a country and involve religious, political and social divides.

### **Fiji's 2006 Military Coup and Post 2006 Foreign Policy**

Fiji, as a small state, is not a weak or failed state. Most children go to school; at least half the population is urban; the literacy rate is high; the health system is passable; and government administration is efficient by Pacific island standards. Fiji has a diversified export sector based on sugar, garments, gold, and niche products such as Fiji Water. Tourism and remittances supplement foreign exchange earnings and keep the current account roughly in balance. UN Human Development Index ranks Fiji with countries like Iran, Tunisia and Paraguay, not with its poor Pacific neighbors such as Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Fiji is, however, notorious for its political instability. Regular overthrows of government have earned the country the journalistic epithet of 'coup-coup land'. The 2006 military coup confirmed its reputation as a country with endlessly unfulfilled promise. As the 'coup to end all coups', this was an event that rested on a paradoxical justification, namely, that the military – by

temporarily abolishing democracy – would restore it later in a form that would solve Fiji's political problems once and for all. On December 5, 2006, the Head of Republic of Fiji Military Forces, staged Fiji's fourth coup since its first one in May of 1987. The coup was conducted after a long drawn out confrontation between the military and a predominantly indigenous Fijian-led government. The military accused the government of breach of faith and of giving favors to politicians, who had been variously implicated in the previous coup of 2000, rewarding them with ministerial portfolios. The introduction of controversial Bills, promising amnesty to coup convicts and the government's curious unwillingness to take the military's threats seriously, compounded the situation. The coup deposed a democratically elected government, but in the process it also dealt a severe blow to the influence of some of the most important institutions of Fijian society. Following the coup, a military-appointed interim administration was formed with the Commander of Fiji Military Forces serving as Prime Minister (Lal 2007: 21). In light of the developments arising from the coup, the post-2006 interim government put in place a framework of policy initiatives called *Strategic Roadmap for Change and Prosperity for Fiji*, which was officially announced by the interim prime minister in July of 2007. This framework was Fiji's guide to political, social and economic reform following the events of 2006. It incorporated eleven pillars of which three guided the work of the foreign ministry to execute the nation's foreign policy (Mataitoga 2013: 9-11).

### **Nepal's Second People's Movement and Post 2006 Foreign Policy**

Nepal's Second People's Movement, referred to as Jana Andolan- II, was a democratic movement against the direct and undemocratic rule of King Gyanendra, the last monarch of Nepal. The movement consisting of an alliance of seven political parties within Parliament, or SPA, and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), who were then conducting an armed struggle against the state, signed a twelve point agreement to voice their views on the struggle between absolute monarchy and democracy. The parties to the agreement fully concurred that autocratic monarchy was the main hurdle in achieving democracy, peace, prosperity, social advancement, independence and sovereignty for Nepal. They further reiterated that peace, progress and prosperity in the country were not possible until "full democracy" was established by bringing the absolute monarchy to an end. The victory of Second People's Movement in putting the Royal regime to an end was welcomed by the international community and viewed as the beginning of the restoration of democracy and lasting peace. The Nepalese government understood the importance of restoring peace and stability as it provided a heightened interest of the international community to support Nepal. IR literature too indicates that post-conflict situations provide opportunities for garnering international aid and support.

On this premise, a High Level Foreign Policy Task Force was formed in 2006 and its findings placed emphasis on economic relations as one of the major pillars of Nepal's foreign policy. Diplomacy for development was stressed as a new dimension of foreign policy after the restoration of peace, democracy and stability. This has led to the gradual development of economic diplomacy as an integral part of overall Nepalese foreign policy. Efforts towards mainstreaming and institutionalization of economic diplomacy from different sectors for the socio-economic development of the country are emphasized upon.

### **Post 2006 Fiji Foreign Policy Approaches**

The period following Fiji's 2006 military coup, until before the country's 2014 general elections, was a period which demanded that Fiji's foreign policy agenda and its diplomatic practice be at its best. During this period, Fiji faced regional and international sanctions imposed by many of its traditional allies, who were determined to impose their version of democratic governance and rule of law on the country. In 2007, President's Mandate was formulated and under the wide scope of this mandate, National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) was formed, whose members were appointed by the president. The Fiji government, led by NCBBF undertook wide consultations with its people on the best way forward. From the outcomes of those consultations, People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP) was formulated, which outlined the eleven pillars of Fiji's political, social and economic reform. Three of these pillars are directly linked to the function of Fiji's foreign ministry. Guided by these pillars, a new and progressive foreign policy agenda was forged to project Fiji forward in its global engagement and to form the basis of its international relations. To implement the new foreign policy agenda, new diplomatic methods and new strategies for engaging in international fora were forged to bypass the sanctions imposed on the country and to open up for new partners for Fiji in non-traditional areas. Similarly, the need for diplomats to be up-skilled and updated on the latest methods and critical aspects of statecraft needed to be instilled in Fiji's diplomatic corp.

From 2006 to 2014, Fiji's foreign policy agenda was guided by *Strategic Roadmap for Change and Prosperity for Fiji*. The roadmap sets out a framework to achieve sustainable democracy, good and just governance, socio-economic development and national unity. PCCPP, which as previously mentioned, is the key foundation of the roadmap compiled through an unprecedented nationwide consultation process, involving a wide range of stakeholders. The roadmap is logically aligned to the mandate handed down by the president in 2007. In order to ensure an inclusive approach, ownership and successful implementation, the roadmap was compiled in consultation with the private sector, civil society and government to take on board

the post-2006 political, social and economic situation, both on the international and domestic fronts.

Under this roadmap, the Fiji government pursued a framework of policy initiatives for the fulfillment of its foreign policy priorities and interests. In addition, it provides the basis and the *sine qua non* for the work of Fiji diplomats in the period under discussion. These policy initiatives were formulated on the basis of the following challenges: restoring the country's credibility; deepening multilateral and bilateral relations; developing an aid-for-trade framework; labor mobility (labor export to countries with shortages); developing trade infrastructure for effective trade and economic engagement; and border security for Fiji (Mataitoga 2013: 12). After its suspension from Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 2009, Fiji capitalized on the subsequent detachment from its traditional allies to explore new territory through a 'look and engage north' policy. It strengthened ties with Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); and approached with new accreditations to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and other international networks, which do not impose political conditionality, but believe in the sovereign equality of states, and mutual respect for domestic jurisdiction within such states (Mawi 2015:102).

### **New Pacific Diplomacy**

Following its suspension from PIF, and the Commonwealth in 2009, Fiji recognized the importance of regional mechanisms in global geopolitics. In response, Fiji established Engaging with the Pacific (EWTP) Forum to restore its credibility and legitimacy in the Pacific region. This was also initiated to reassure its Pacific island neighbors that Fiji was working towards restoring democracy in the country. First, it strove to maintain its presence and leadership in the Pacific region, despite its removal from PIF. To achieve this, it needed to enlist support from within the sub-regional group, Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), for political reforms put in place by the interim government to return the country to democratic rule. MSG consists of the Melanesian countries of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. MSG's endorsement was pivotal to reclaim some regional legitimacy for the country within the Pacific and proving to the world that Fiji was not a pariah state (Komai 2015:112). It was also important that this initiative be undertaken to show the world that as a major political, economic and social hub of the region, Fiji owed a duty to explain what it was doing and to allay the fears that existed.

The success of EWTP Forum, since its inception in 2010, was clearly depicted when Fiji hosted its third meeting in 2012. Thus, it had grown in influence and effectively made the efforts of Australia and New Zealand to keep Fiji isolated a failure. Moreover, the forum had

opened up Fiji's envisioned opportunity to explain its roadmap to Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and increase its influence in the region. It was during the third EWTP meeting that the Pacific leaders in attendance made a decision to establish Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF). According to the statement made by the interim prime minister at the opening of the inaugural PIDF summit in 2013, the forum's objective is to engage leaders from key sectors in implementing green economic policies in Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS).

### **South-South and Look North**

Fiji's initiative on South-South Cooperation (SSC) was achieved through the first EWTP meeting in 2010, when it established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with seven Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS): Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Vanuatu. These MOUs highlighted the replicability of development experiences amongst PSIDS countries, and the need to move away from the archaic notion of aid, to one of partnership and collective self-reliance. Fiji and PSIDS south-south partnerships fall neatly within the global framework for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) - specific cooperation under Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) (Mawi 2015:104).

'Look North' policy was a new foreign policy strategy with the objective of finding new partners or allies for Fiji beyond its traditional partners i.e. Australia and New Zealand. Despite the country's political situation, these traditional partners began respecting Fiji as equal and understood the policies put in place by the interim government to take the country back to democratic rule. Since 2009 Fiji had taken a 'different path' and forged new relationships with countries that understood and did not judge the political reforms the country was going through. For Fiji, enhancing bilateral relations with China was pivotal in the 'Look North' policy strategy. According to officials of Fiji's foreign ministry, the political and economic support from China has enabled Fiji's economy to stabilize and allowed the country to make political progress with its roadmap to democratic reform and elections. Fiji's foreign policy is in line with China's position, which respects sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the affairs of other states, and peaceful coexistence (Komai 2015:113). The 'Look North' policy also includes deepening Fiji's ties with Indonesia and South Korea, which led to the setting up of diplomatic missions in these two countries in April 2011 and July 2012, respectively.

### **'Friends to All'**

Fiji's policy of 'Friends to All' dictated that the country expand its relations with as many

countries as possible by establishing diplomatic ties with them. These were countries that understood Fiji's political situation and did not interfere with its domestic affairs. As of 2009, Fiji had established diplomatic relations with 70 countries. The new strategy required beefing up Fiji's friends globally. Hence, from 2009 to 2013, Fiji added 63 more nations to its list of countries with diplomatic relations. Considering Fiji's limited human resource capacity to set up diplomatic missions in all the capitals of countries with diplomatic relations, it was more feasible to set up diplomatic missions in all key regions of United Nations (UN) — South Africa (Africa), Brazil (Latin America and the Caribbean), United Arab Emirates (Middle East), and Indonesia as a key and influential nation in Southeast Asia and founding member of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Southeast Asia). Fiji even ventured as far as to court controversial friends such as Iran, North Korea and Egypt (Komai 2015:114).

### **Engagement at the Multilateral Level**

At the multilateral level, Fiji actively participated in regional and international organizations, including UN. In 2011, Fiji chaired Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Governing Council, Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), and MSG. These were two key positions that lifted Fiji out of the political and diplomatic quandary. At UN in New York, Fiji continued to work within the 193-member group, securing new allies. This new strategy gives leeway for Fiji's foreign ministry to explore the benefits from being a member of an international organization.

As an international actor, Fiji has actively remained engaged in the area of peacekeeping since it joined the international society of states. Peacekeeping is a key pillar in Fiji's foreign policy. Fiji has derived considerable foreign currency through remittances from soldiers on peacekeeping duties, which has provided employment to thousands of Fijian men and women. Fiji's strategic interest in global politics is a key aspect of its peacekeeping commitment. Owing to its commitments in Sinai, Iraq and Golan Heights, Fiji is well regarded by the international community. Peacekeeping is a source of great pride for Fiji, as it allows the country to make a meaningful contribution to global peace (Komai 2015: 115).

### **Changing Context of Nepal's Post 2006 Foreign Policy**

Nepal's foreign policy has remained largely defensive with the term 'equidistance' circumspectly inscribed in the constitution as a directive principle on foreign policy. The predominant determinant of Nepal's foreign policy is its geostrategic position between China to its north and India to its south and the need to constantly readjust its security strategies. The changing political climate, the urgency to enhance its economic strength and its non-alignment

policy, among others, also contribute to determining the country's foreign policy direction.

Nepal's post-2006 foreign policy agenda can be understood from the rationale of how those policies were linked to parallel the domestic policy priorities of its government. Because Nepal was in a transitional stage, in the midst of carving out its new political, constitutional and federal structures, these will have immense bearing on the future of Nepalese foreign policy (Vyas, Sangroula 2014:247). Hence, the success or failure of this political process was considered to have a direct impact on the country's future external relations. In spite of the political instability resulting from the frequent changes in government, the democratic state of affairs managed to boost Nepal's international image. The international community supported and welcomed the 2006 Second People's Movement and the subsequent peace process and expressed hope that elections to the constituent assembly would usher in a new era of peace and stability with a positive impact on the country's foreign policy. In viewing Nepal's foreign policy, there are two separate but inter-related challenges to consider. First, the difficulty of formulating and implementing a coherent foreign policy in a democratically fragmented and unstable political setting that is marked by poverty in strategic thinking. The second challenge is dealing with a fluid and rapidly evolving regional context with shrinking space for an autonomous approach. Given these challenges, democratization of Nepal would require the country to reassess its conventional foreign policies. As such, the prerogative is on the leaders of Nepal to readjust the country's standing on both the regional and global fronts. This requires the leaders to acknowledge that foreign policy is in fact imbedded in the national policies, which cannot be given a different treatment than other policies of paramount importance.

Nepal's post-2006 foreign policy agenda is an extension of its previous foreign policy approaches with revisions to ongoing existing initiatives, like economic diplomacy, and the inclusion of policy reforms to complement the foreign policy agenda. Nepal as a small state is constrained in making adequate choices in its foreign policy apparatus. It has continuously struggled for its survival in the anarchic international system where there is no governing authority over states to maintain the global order and enforce rule (Dahal 2011: 31). Hence, Nepal has been forced to make various, albeit inadequate, choices in foreign policy matters to survive in several challenging modes of history.

Nepalese foreign policy choices have been changing even after the advent of "full democracy". This tendency to change foreign policy with every change in government has proven difficult for Nepal to maintain internal cohesion and external adaptation (Dahal 2011: 1). The specific policies pursued by the various governments may have varied from time to time in accordance with changing circumstances, but certain basic considerations have delimited both the style and the content of their responses to external influence and challenge. For the post-

2006 period, the continuity aspect of Nepal's foreign policy has remained the touchstone of the nation's foreign relations. The changing aspect of Nepal's foreign policy has reflected the changing dynamics of the country's domestic political environment. Still, the policy of special relation, the policy of equidistance, the policy of nonalignment and the policy of equi-proximity have remained the major foreign policy choices for Nepal, historically.

### **Economic Diplomacy**

Despite the political instability resulting from frequent changes in government, the democratic process embraced by the country has considerably boosted Nepal's international image during the post-2006 period. The country's prestige suffered a setback in the community of nations after the royal takeover in February 2005. However, the international community welcomed the political change brought by the first April movement back in 1991 and the ongoing peace process after the second historic people's movement of April 2006. It was envisioned that the CA elections would usher in a new era of peace and stability with a positive impact on the foreign policy apparatus of the country.

With the restructuring of the state after the CA polls, the foreign policy agenda has been molded in response to people's interests, aspirations and expectations as they are at the center of politics. Their interests should invariably be reflected in the foreign policy decisions and measures that the government of the day takes from time to time, taking into consideration the changing international situation. As the country is confronted with a number of problems ranging from a growing trade deficit, declining tourism, investment and remittances and the bulging government budget deficit, there is a need to formulate appropriate policy responses to these emerging challenges and opportunities. This has prompted the government to take some development-oriented initiatives in such areas as economic diplomacy (Shrestha 2005:i).

Economic diplomacy has become a buzzword in Nepal largely after the restoration of democracy in early 1990. It aims to promote the country's economic interests through its foreign policy. The structural changes in the global trading system after the establishment of World Trade Organization (WTO) demanded a new policy orientation in maintaining international relations to promote economic activities (Pyakuryal 2012: 56). In view of this, two studies on economic diplomacy were commissioned in 1995 and 2002, respectively, and their recommendations focused on the restructuring of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Nepal and its embassies and missions abroad.

In addition, the studies concluded that the underlying approach to Nepal's economic diplomacy should be guided in future by several considerations based on past experiences. These include the problem of mainstreaming economic diplomacy in the entire foreign policy

goal of the country; the problem of de-compartmentalization of economic diplomacy within Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) so as to generate a sense of ownership and participation by the entire ministry; the problem of forging a workable mechanism between MOFA and the sectoral ministries responsible for economic affairs for the necessary communications, coordination and cooperation; the problem of restructuring/reorganization of MOFA that can be smoothly assimilated into the existing system without much additional manpower and resources; the problem of the feedback system within MOFA along with rationalization of embassies and missions so that they can play their overdue role in economic diplomacy; and the problem of forging output-oriented partnership with the private sector, which has to play the major role in economic diplomacy for further promotion of trade, investment and employment (Shrestha, 2005: i). Based on these considerations, it was asserted that the promotion and safeguarding of Nepal's national economic interests should always be the overriding objective of economic diplomacy. Therefore, foreign policy should be the outcome of economic policy. The key priority, then, for Nepal is to initiate partnership in development with both big and small powers that will enable it to push its development process forward.

### **Approaching Donors and World Community**

China and India are Nepal's foremost development partners that have provided substantial economic and technical assistance in strategic projects. To maintain a balanced, sustainable and long term relationship with these two countries, Nepal needs to effectively manage its domestic affairs, as well as capitalize on these strategic partnerships to further its economic diplomacy approach. As a developing country itself, China has additional advantages to understand the failures of Washington Consensus and to develop a separate model for development based on the country's political system and its eagerness to become a helping hand in trade negotiations. It is notable that after the signing of the peace accord of the seven party alliance with the Maoists in 2006, China's interest in post-conflict recovery generated an increased frequency of visits by that country's diplomats and leaders during the post-2006 period. This exemplifies how domestic political changes modify foreign relations.

Another avenue for Nepal in approaching new donors is through the work of Nepal's diplomatic missions abroad in facilitating cooperation with international economic organizations, increased frequency of public-private interactions, continuous business related conferences, seminars and forums that can provide access to foreign capitals, technology and markets (Pyakuryal 2012: 64). In recent years development projects have become increasingly donor-driven, so the adoption of a coherent foreign policy should persuade and direct the donor community to relate their development assistance to the country's developmental needs and

priorities. This would prevent donors from imposing their own priorities or aid conditionality. Hence, diplomatic missions should make a strong case for increased development assistance or foreign aid to Nepal for the country's post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and development (Dahal et al.2008:6).

Nepal became a temporary member of UN Security Council (UNSC) twice (1969-1970 and 1988- 1989). At present, Nepal is a member of Human Rights Council (HRC) for the 2018-2020 term. Nepal is one of the founding members of NAM, which was formally established in1961. Likewise, Nepal's contribution in the establishment of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 and establishment of SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu has enhanced its regional prestige. Nepal's involvement in Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic cooperation (BIMSTEC) in 2004 and its position as chair of BIMSTEC for the 2014 to 2018 period has contributed to enhancing its image in the international community (Baral 2018: 42).

As one of the major troop contributors to the UN Peacekeeping operations and missions, Nepal has long been committed to the cause of peace and disarmament. This has contributed to improving and enhancing Nepal's image in the international arena. The country should not only continue, but work towards expanding its peacekeeping activities through greater participation in future peacekeeping missions. A larger and more active participation in the UN peacekeeping operations should be one of the major foreign policy agendas of the country (Shrestha 2012: 48).

## **Conclusion**

The foreign policy strategies initiated and implemented by Fiji and Nepal during the post-2006 period reflect the demands of the domestic policy priorities of both the countries. Fiji's post-2006foreign policy frameworks were formulated with the objective of forming new bilateral relations and new allies. Given that Fiji's traditional partners in trade and other areas of development cooperation had imposed sanctions and travel bans on the country, Fiji needed to formulate a new foreign policy agenda that brought in new development partners. As a small developing state faced with economic vulnerabilities and challenges, especially after the international community's backlash and negative response to the coup, the new foreign policy agenda was aimed at addressing the country's socio-economic development. Similarly, as Nepal was in a transitional stage, revamping its political, constitutional and federal structures, its post-2006 foreign policy agenda have reflected the need to demonstrate to the international community that it was working progressively towards building a peaceful, stable and democratic state. In terms of their model of foreign policy behavior, it can be surmised that Fiji

and Nepal's post-2006 foreign policy behaviors reflect the intransigent model, which asserts that a state's foreign policy is formulated in response to the demands and changes of its domestic environment. Although it is believed that small states are prone to formulate their foreign policy agenda based on external exigencies, or according to the demands and changes within the international system, Fiji and Nepal's post-2006 foreign policy choice indicate that even domestic political events in small states do possess the dynamic to influence their foreign policy behaviors.

**Gaurav Bhattarai**, ([gauravpraysforall@gmail.com](mailto:gauravpraysforall@gmail.com)) Faculty at Department of International Relations and Diplomacy (DIRD), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. He teaches *Small States in International Relations*; and *International and Regional Organizations*, to the Master's Level students at Tribhuvan University.

**Vasiti N. B. Cirikiyasawa**, Foreign Service officer at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Fiji. She completed her MA in *International Relations and Diplomacy* from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

## References

- Baral, B. N. 2018. 'Changing Dynamics of Nepalese Foreign Policy: Patterns and Trends', *Journal of Political Science*: 25-45.
- Dahal, D. R. 2011. 'The Art of Survival: Policy Choices for Nepal', *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*: 31-48.
- Elman, M. F. 1995. 'The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in its Own Backyard', *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(2): 171-217.
- Hey, J. A. 2003. *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior*, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Hunt, T. L. 1987. 'Patterns of Human Interaction and Evolutionary Divergence in the Fiji Islands', *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 96(3): 299-334.
- Khadka, N. 1993. 'Democracy and Development in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges', *Pacific Affairs*: 44-71.
- Komai, M. 2015. 'Fiji's Foreign Policy and the New Pacific Diplomacy', *DIPLOMACY*: 111.
- Kosary, D. 1987. 'Small States in the Modern World', *ActaHistoricaAcademiaeScientiarum*

*Hungaricae*, 33(1): 77-80.

Lal, B. V. 2007. 'Anxiety, Uncertainty, and Fear in Our Land: Fiji's Road to Military Coup, 2006', *The Round Table*, 96(389): 135-153.

Lal, B. V. 2012. 'Fiji: Fishing in Troubled Waters', *Security Challenges*, 8(4): 85-92.

Mataitoga, I. U. 2013. *An Introduction to Fijian Foreign Policy Management and Diplomatic Practices*, Fiji Institute of Applied Studies.

Mawi, L. 2015. 'Fiji's Emerging Brand of Pacific Diplomacy: A Fiji Government Perspective'. *DIPLOMACY*: 101.

McGowan, P. J., & Gottwald, K. P. 1975. 'Small State Foreign Policies: A Comparative Study of Participation, Conflict, and Political and Economic Dependence in Black Africa', *International Studies Quarterly*, 19(4): 469-500.

Muni, S. D. 1973. *Foreign Policy of Nepal*, New Delhi: National Publishing House.

Modelski, George. 1962. *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, London: Pall Mall Press

Pyakuryal, B. 2012. *Challenges of Nepal's Foreign Policy Relating to Economic Diplomacy*, Kathmandu: Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA).

Shrestha, B. P. 2005. 'Enhancing Economic Diplomacy'. *Economic Policy Network*, Kathmandu: Ministry of Finance.

Shrestha, K. B. 2012. *Nepal's Foreign Policy: Some Reflections*, Kathmandu: Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA).

Simkhada, S. R. 2018. *Nepal India China Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Kathmandu: Bindu Simkhada

Firth, Stewart, Fraenkel, J., & Brij, V. L. 2013. *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU Press: 472

*The Foreign Policy Statement of Fiji*. 2016. Government of the Republic of Fiji, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Vyas, R. P., & Sangroula, Y. 2014. 'Rooftop of the World, Sandwiched between Two Rising

Powers: A Critical Study on Nepal's Foreign Policies', *Journal of Comparative Asian*

*Development*, 13(2): 242-263.