

Nepal's Foreign Policy from a People's Multiparty Democracy Perspective

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ABSTRACT

People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD), conceived and implemented after the Popular Movement of 1990—a watershed in Nepal's political history—is a continuation of and elevation of Nepal's multifaceted relations with its immediate neighbours and other countries. Given the emergent regional and global power dynamics, the perspective needs revision. PMPD mirrors public aspirations and aims at safeguarding national interests and addressing the changing domestic and global political order. This article assesses the significance of PMPD, introduced 33 years ago, vis-à-vis the present political scenario within and outside the country. This paper examines the challenges of implementing the tenets of the foreign policy of PMPD in light of the changing domestic political milieu. This article employs an interpretive method and draws on information and knowledge from primary and secondary sources, using the realist theory of international relations, with a focus on the Sino-Indian relationship. The findings of the article show that Nepal's political leadership has often faltered in sustaining bilateral and multilateral relationships. The political alignment of PMPD with the CPN (UML) occasions revision to render it significant in the changed context. This article contributes to understanding how the foreign policy vision of PMPD has shaped Nepal's foreign policy as a distinct foreign policy doctrine and how it can be elevated for better foreign policy outcomes.

Introduction

Nepal has experimented with various systems of governance since the unification of modern Nepal in 1769. From an autocratic monarchy, it underwent a Rana oligarchy, the party-less Panchayat system, a constitutional monarchy with multiparty democracy, and a federal republican polity. This political trajectory of approximately 257 years mirrors Nepal's quest for a stable and truly inclusive political system. The Popular Movement of 1990 is a watershed in Nepal's political history. As a corollary of the movement, the ban on political

parties was lifted. This provided a level playing field for multiple political parties and their leaders. The movement transformed the political milieu of Nepal, establishing a representative democratic political system.

This open political system gave rise to numerous political ideologies, political parties, and visionary leaders such as Madan Kumar Bhandari. He belonged to the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist). Aware of the changing global political order and the geopolitical vulnerabilities of Nepal, Bhandari propounded People's Multiparty

Democracy (PMPD), merging socialist orientation with democratic pluralism.

A hybrid system of governance, PMPD has become the political doctrine of the CPN (UML) and has sparked political discourse in Nepal. PMPD provides socioeconomic and political direction to the CPN (UML) and guides Nepal's foreign policy. Predicated on socialist ideals and democratic experience, PMPD forges Nepal's basic tenets of international relations. The growing competition between India and China and the rising influence of global power have rendered Nepal vulnerable. This tests the practicality, consistency, and significance of the foreign policy perspective of PMPD. A gap in academic discourse and broader political understanding stems from the scarcity of analysis of the relationship between PMPD and Nepal's foreign policy.

Although much discussed and debated within the CPN (UML), scholarly discourse on the foreign policy perspective of PMPD is limited. The ongoing discussion on the significance of PMPD is central to its internal political framework, and existing literature gravitates toward the political dimension of PMPD. Hence, due attention to the implications of PMPD for maintaining and elevating Nepal's international relations remains insufficient. Amid evolving dynamics in Nepal's relationship with India and China, this article attempts to address the specific question of how far PMPD has been instrumental in shaping Nepal's foreign policy and how relevant the tenets of PMPD are in the changing regional context.

Nepal's foreign policy, according to scholars, has been shaped by two enduring realities: the country's status as a small state and its geopolitical location between two rising powers of Asia—India and China. The available literature on Nepal's foreign policy encompasses diverse areas. Realists focus on survival, autonomy, and strategic balancing amid asymmetrical power relations, while constructivists emphasise national identity, normative commitments, and historical narratives.

Ever since Nepal became a modern nation-state, its sovereignty and survival have been at stake. The British had colonised a vast geography and had already captured India, and they targeted Nepal for annexation into the British East India Company. Nepal was trapped between Tibet and the British East India Company, as it also fought wars with Tibet at that time, and it had to protect itself from either side. Therefore, Nepal's foreign policy has been guided by a survival instinct. States want to avoid invasion, extinction, and economic collapse, but for most states most of the time, these negative interests do not narrow the set of possible wants very much. State interests are defined in the context of internationally held norms and understandings about what is good and appropriate. That normative context influences the behaviour of decision-makers and of mass publics who may choose and constrain those decision-makers. The normative context also changes over time, and as internationally held norms and values change, they create coordinated shifts in state interests and behaviour across the system (Finnemore, 1996). This is precisely what occurred in the context of Nepal.

Prithvi Narayan Shah once aptly described his newly conquered kingdom in the central Himalayas as “a *tarul* [yam] between two stones.” Even in his day—the mid-18th century—Nepal's most formidable problem of foreign policy was the preservation of the country's independence in the face of the concurrent but separate threats posed by the newly emerging dominant power in northern India, the British East India Company, and a slowly but steadily expanding Chinese presence in Tibet (Rose, 1971).

Today, Nepal does not fear losing its territory but rather its sovereignty, national interest, and independence. Maintaining a balance between India and China is an overarching priority of Nepal's foreign policy. The foreign policy of a nation is conditioned by its domestic and external factors. Nepal's foreign policy has been shaped by its constant variables—geolocation—and its

mutating factor—the evolving political dynamics of its neighbouring countries.

During the expansion of colonisation by Britain and independent India after 1947, Nepal remained vulnerable to attack from the south, having just completed its unification in 1769 and still consolidating its political, military, and economic power. China was a strong nation, and Tibet, which bordered Nepal in the north, was a suzerainty of China. Hence, Nepal was sandwiched between an expansionist force in the south and a strong country in the north.

As a small state, Nepal has had to and even today embraces a survival strategy. Therefore, Nepal has historically maintained its foreign relations between India and China through bandwagoning, hedging, neutrality, non-alignment, equidistance, and balancing. Consequently, Nepal's foreign policy is often construed as an effort to safeguard its sovereignty and national interest.

While China's and the United States' involvement in Nepal has to date been limited, India's shadow has loomed large. New Delhi wields unparalleled influence over the political process in Nepal, which has given rise to resentment in Nepal and a tendency to see the hegemon's hand in all local developments. To a degree, Nepal's sovereignty concerns are understandable. In 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru mused publicly about incorporating Nepal into India, only then to settle on the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, under which Nepal ceded considerable sovereignty, particularly over defence and security issues (von Einsiedel et al., 2012).

India's annexation of Sikkim in 1975 and the Indian trade embargo in 1989 reinforced the widely held Nepali view of India as an overbearing neighbour. Nepalis, a proud people who often point out that they were never colonised by outsiders, tend to be deeply aggravated by what they consider to be excessive meddling by New Delhi (von Einsiedel et al., 2012).

National interest is a temporal phenomenon. Nepal's national interest has shifted according

to the politico-historical juncture. The priority given to safeguarding national interest has also changed over time. During unification, Nepal's core national interest was the expansion of state territory, the defence of acquired territory, and achieving prosperity through a closed economy. The Rana regime shifted its focus from the security of the state to the security of the regime. National interest and regime interest were blurred during the Rana regime (Silwal, 2021).

Nepal's position as a small state between India and China renders Nepal acutely conscious of its sovereignty and national interest, and it has been manoeuvring to safeguard them without fear of a military threat to its independence. Nepal did not envisage a military threat to its independence from the major powers. The threat was considered to be more political in nature, one of "direct and subtle interference" of the big powers in the affairs of small countries (Muni, 2016).

It has been evident that India, after its independence in 1947, aspired to be the paramount force in South Asia and wanted to keep an independent Nepal under its security umbrella while opposing Nepal's diplomatic relationship with other countries, especially the United States. Nepal had extended its relationship with the United States, but India did not want an American presence in Nepal (Onta et al., 2024).

Once they received official American recognition of Nepal's independence in a proclamation from U.S. President Harry Truman in March 1947, the Rana rulers of Nepal were ready to sign an Agreement of Commerce and Friendship on April 25, 1947, making the United States the second nation (after Britain) to establish full diplomatic relations with Nepal. Against India's wishes, in 1949, the United States officially supported Nepal's unsuccessful bid to be admitted into the United Nations. Already concerned over the United States' aggressive courting of Nepal before 1947, independent India saw American interest in Nepal as a threat to Indian authority (Onta et al., 2024).

Therefore, Nepal has faced the formidable challenge of being a small state in conducting its diplomatic relations ever since. The conditioning factors of foreign policy are broadly categorised. The first category consists of constants—factors having a permanent and stable structure. The second category consists of variables that are comparatively recent in origin and continuously changing. Examples of such variables are the phenomenon of nationalism and the political system of the moment. By virtue of their rigidity, factors of the first category remain constant in their influence on foreign policy. Policymakers must accept them as given, whatever course of action they pursue. Factors of the second category are, however, susceptible to manipulation by policymakers, and so their influence on foreign policy will vary in character and content (Muni, 2016).

Place matters in politics (Sedhai, 2026). Nepal's geolocation epitomises this. The domestic politics and the foreign policy of Nepal have been conditioned by its location. Geopolitically sensitive countries like Nepal prioritise survival. Nepal's vulnerability lies in political interference and economic dependency, mostly on India. At a time when border disputes with India are escalating, the priority is to safeguard its sovereignty, as India and China—without the knowledge and consent of Nepal—resumed the pilgrimage route to Kailash-Mansarovar via Lipulek, a Nepali territory.

Nepal's foreign policy and the dynamics of its relationship with neighbouring states have been conditioned by a complex of factors, of which the political component is only one of the more important. In the formation of foreign policy, Nepal has been influenced as profoundly as any area of India by the dicta on interstate relations generally attributed to the Indian statesman Kautilya (Rose, 1971).

The foreign policy of a sovereign country is not determined solely by material interests. At the heart of the policy lie historical memory, identity,

ideology, political ideas, norms, and discourse. It is often said that Nepal has never been colonised. However, the truth is that the British, as they did with various states of India, colonised Nepal forcefully in various forms. This process continued even after the British left India. From politics to economics, Nepal was compelled to follow paths made by others (Pathak, 2025).

Bhandari was a realist. Realism is an influential theoretical perspective in International Relations (IR) that emphasises power, national interests, and the competitive international system. International politics is governed by objective laws rooted in human nature, where the pursuit of power defines state behaviour (Morgenthau, 1948). From this perspective, states, the primary actors, operate in an anarchic system that compels them to prioritise survival and security. Hence, foreign policy is formulated and implemented through rational choice to maximise national interests, which are often defined in terms of power. State survival and strategic advantage take precedence over moral considerations that influence decisions.

Constructivism provides an alternative approach that emphasises the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping international relations. The international system is not solely defined by material forces but is socially constructed through interactions among states (Wendt, 1992). This perspective challenges the assumption that anarchy necessarily leads to conflict, arguing instead that its meaning depends on how states perceive and respond to one another. State interests and identities are not fixed but evolve through social processes, shared understandings, and historical experiences. Norms such as cooperation, sovereignty, and non-interference play a critical role in influencing foreign policy behaviour. Constructivism thus highlights that international outcomes are shaped not only by power but also by collective meanings and intersubjective beliefs, making it particularly relevant for analysing how states like Nepal frame their external engagement.

Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative research method to analyse the foreign policy perspectives in PMPD and applies international relations theories—such as realism and constructivism—to critically examine PMPD and draw conclusions. This analysis reviews the core elements of the foreign policy in PMPD, making references to theories of small-state behaviour, foreign policy, and international relations. The study further undertakes a normative analysis to assess whether and how Bhandari's vision offers a viable long-term foreign policy outlook for a small state like Nepal amid shifting power dynamics.

At a time when the country has passed through political upheaval and an emerging political party has been ruling Nepal following elections to the House of Representatives in the aftermath of the September 8–9, 2025 Gen Z Movement, the government has made a diplomatic departure in its management of foreign policy and domestic arrangements. This paper does not provide exhaustive detail on the moves of the present government but links them with the fundamentals of Nepal's foreign policy—equality, non-alignment, cooperation, and the principles of Panchasheel.

Realist scholars argue that small states prioritise survival and sovereignty within asymmetric geopolitical structures (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). Nepal's foreign policy behaviour has similarly been shaped by concerns related to strategic vulnerability and geopolitical balance between India and China. In this context, PMPD may be interpreted as an attempt to combine ideological commitments with pragmatic survival-oriented diplomacy.

Primary and secondary documents, including books, articles, and state policies, have been carefully selected. This paper provides perspectives from relevant scholars. The primary source of the study is PMPD, and the secondary sources include research publications, books, the Constitution of Nepal 2015, and Nepal's Foreign Policy 2020. The

democratisation of political parties has become an important phenomenon in Nepal, particularly over the past two decades. This paper critiques how Madan Bhandari's vision has shaped the democratisation of the communist parties of Nepal and how the democratisation of the CPN (UML) has redefined national politics and Nepal's foreign policy.

PMPD can be interpreted as a Nepal-specific reinterpretation of Marxism and Leninism that departs from orthodox Marxist-Leninist political theory. The acceptance of political pluralism through competitive multiparty periodic elections, recognition of opposition parties, and ascendance to power through the ballot are bold and prudent decisions. In other words, PMPD represents a denial of one-party socialist rule. The old school of Leninist thought considers liberal democracy to be a bourgeois institution, and to embrace a multiparty democratic system of polity is a daring step in the political history of Nepal.

PMPD incorporates many foundational elements of liberal democracy, including liberal constitutionalism, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights, an independent judiciary, and press freedom. PMPD can also be termed a “reformist rather than revolutionary transformation” of the state, as it emphasises peaceful political competition, electoral participation, incremental reform, and an elected parliamentary system. Scholars with a deep understanding of Nepal and the changing global political order, including that of China, describe PMPD as innovative, while another school of thought views it as a significant departure from Marxist-Leninist political ideology.

Results and Discussion

New era in Nepali politics

The end of the 30-year party-less Panchayat regime in 1990 ushered in a new political era in Nepal. In the open political environment, a charismatic

but lesser-known leader, Bhandari, emerged. He propounded PMPD, which was endorsed by the Fifth National Congress of the CPN (UML) held in 1993. The tenet has since become the guiding ideological principle of the party.

Bhandari, a visionary leader who could discern the changing global political order, introduced the innovative political idea that mirrors the socio-political realities of Nepal. Although Bhandari died in a mysterious road traffic crash on May 16, 1993, his political theory lives on. Grounded in the realities of a landlocked small state that had tested many systems of governance—all of which failed to fulfil public aspirations—Bhandari quickly drew lessons from the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in China and introduced PMPD.

PMPD emphasises the principles of Panchasheel—mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and cooperation for mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence—which are quintessential for the foreign policy of a small state like Nepal. PMPD is also aware of the importance of regional cooperation, and it has explicitly stated that Nepal would work to strengthen friendship among SAARC countries and develop SAARC as a genuine regional cooperative organisation by adopting effective policies (Bhandari, 1993).

Bhandari (1993) states that Nepal would support the United Nations (UN) and work to make it independent, impartial, strengthened, and effective. It has aimed to enhance support for non-aligned movements, socialism, proletarian revolutions, national and social liberation movements, anti-colonial struggles, anti-war initiatives, regional peace movements, and global human rights and environmental movements, providing active cooperation wherever possible. Another important and relevant aspect of the foreign policy is contributing to rendering the UN independent, impartial, strengthened, and effective. Given the importance attached to relations with other

countries, PMPD has defined how Nepal should navigate foreign affairs.

The change in the international political order and the revolution in information and communication technologies have necessitated a revision of PMPD to render it contextual. The rapidly changing world political order, shaped mainly by exponential growth in technology, has put the present and future of the Communist movement—in the true sense of the term as understood some 35 years ago—at stake. The number of countries with communist regimes has been dwindling, and the overall development of a nation rests upon advancement in technology irrespective of the mode of governance. Indeed, liberal economic policy can catalyse economic growth.

PMPD emphasises maintaining balanced relations with neighbouring countries. This reflects a deep understanding of Nepal's geopolitics and interdependence with its neighbours. The ground reality is that Nepal is connected with India primarily in terms of language, culture, religion, employability, and trade. Such an understanding strongly supports the shaping of Nepal's foreign policy. Notwithstanding the repeated commitment to balancing relations between adjacent neighbours, Nepal's foreign policy has faltered over the years, owing mainly to the unbecoming behaviour of Nepali political leaders. The tendency of senior leaders of major left-leaning political parties to change their stance regarding the relationship with India, particularly in terms of foreign policy, has remained ambiguous. They tend to fan anti-Indian sentiment, which has created problems in the past and is likely to do so again.

PMPD emphasises that international support and cooperation, essential for development, should be accepted only on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and national interest. However, the CPN (UML) has remained silent on the Mahakali Treaty signed between Nepal and India. The treaty is skewed in favour of India, and Nepal has not benefited at all from it as agreed. This

represents an aberration in the implementation of agreements by the leaders. Economic diplomacy is one of the weaker aspects of Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal maintains residential diplomatic missions in roughly 30 to 40 countries, including embassies, permanent missions to international organisations, and consulates general. Despite having such presence, Nepal has not been able to mobilise its institutions abroad to strengthen trade, attract investment, and promote technological cooperation.

PMPD, under the Trade Section, emphasises adopting policies to diversify trade in accordance with national interests through an independent foreign trade policy and ensuring markets for national industries. It also aims to eliminate the monopoly and dominance of comprador bourgeoisie elements in trade and the national market, make the distribution and supply system reliable and accessible, and protect the interests of small traders. PMPD also envisions the abolition of unequal treaties and agreements in the fields of trade and transit and the adoption of policies that protect Nepal's trade interests on the basis of mutual benefit.

As Nepal has been wedged between the two Asian economic giants—India and China—there lies a significant possibility of capitalising on the economic growth of neighbouring countries. However, there are also considerable challenges to maintaining friendly relations while simultaneously safeguarding the economic interests of the country.

PMPD's perspective on foreign policy

The foreign policy agenda of PMPD has been reflected in the Constitution of Nepal 2015. National interest has been constitutionally defined as a guiding principle of state policy (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). The constitution also defines the nature of the Nepali state as an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented, federal democratic republican state. The constitutional provisions that safeguard the freedom, sovereignty, territorial

integrity, nationality, independence, and dignity of Nepal; the rights of the Nepali people; border security; and economic well-being and prosperity shall be the basic elements of the national interest of Nepal. These constitutional provisions serve as the normative basis for Nepal's foreign policy, anchoring it in the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

The Foreign Policy of Nepal 2020 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020) notes that foreign policy contains both permanent and changing dimensions. While core issues related to national interest are of a permanent nature, political changes within the country can influence the determination of national priorities. Similarly, shifts in the international, regional, and geopolitical environment, along with emerging changes in the global balance of power, can also shape and affect foreign policy.

Panchasheel is one of the guiding principles of Nepal's foreign policy, which respects the Charter of the UN and recognises international laws and global peace. At the core of the policy lie the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international cooperation. The policy also emphasises peaceful settlement of disputes, mutual trust, cooperation, and collaboration, and calls for united efforts to preserve the environment, protect humanity, and safeguard the Earth.

Some analysts of international relations ascribe a general, predefined goal to foreign policy. This goal is then considered timeless, universal, and valid for every country under all circumstances. Depending on their theoretical preferences, analysts consider that foreign policy aims at the stability of the international system, the accumulation of wealth, the increase in relative power, the maintenance of leaders in power, or the reproduction of national identity (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

Gap in the foreign policy perspectives of PMPD

The gaps include the discontinuation of the CPN (UML) in government; frequent changes in either

CPN (UML)-led or coalition partner governments; the disinterest of senior party leaders in advancing the agenda; multiple splits in the party; a scarcity of wholehearted ownership of PMPD; and the inability of the party to push for the foreign policy agenda in PMPD, among others. The gap stems from the absence of clear ownership due to the brief government tenure of the party and the presence of a sizeable group of other communist parties. Therefore, being a party ideology, the foreign policy agenda in PMPD could not become a national agenda.

As the CPN (UML) has remained a significant political force since 1990 and was a major stakeholder in the constitutions promulgated thereafter, the party has been able to incorporate the foreign policy agenda of PMPD into those constitutions, and the perspective is sufficiently visible. The constitutions of 1990, 2007, and 2015 mirror the elements of the foreign policy in PMPD, and policy discourse occurs around them.

There are many areas in which PMPD needs to focus and adapt to contemporary geopolitical realities. The document states that friendship with the member countries of SAARC will be further strengthened and that effective policies will be adopted to develop and consolidate SAARC as a genuine organisation for regional cooperation, and that South–South cooperation will be expanded (CPN-UML, 1993). The reality is that the CPN (UML) has either led or been part of the government for most of the time since 1990, but SAARC has further lost its credibility. Another highly contested issue—transit facilities to which a landlocked country is entitled under international law—remains stagnant. PMPD has called for the disclosure of all secret treaties and agreements concluded with any foreign country or international organisation, but these remain secret. No steps have been taken to revise all unequal treaties and agreements on the basis of Panchasheel.

PMPD could not envisage the use of soft power or the need to counter unilateral and multilateral

intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. It could also not envision leveraging digital technology to advance Nepal's relations with foreign countries. Likewise, as CPN (UML) governments were unable to set high standards for the appointment of ambassadors and compromised on the basic qualities of candidates given the opportunity, this became a precedent that ultimately weakened Nepal's foreign policy.

Despite the rhetoric, Nepal's foreign policy has faltered time and again, mainly due to political instability—30 governments in 36 years after the restoration of democracy in 1990—and the excessive politicisation of the bureaucracy. Every time a government changes, ambassadors are recalled, some within less than a year. How can envoys who are always under fear of not completing their tenure earn credibility abroad and negotiate with their counterparts in the national interest? This lies at the crux of the problem. If provisions were made ensuring that no ambassador is removed before completing a four-year tenure, such appointments would become more credible. At the same time, a question arises: how can a new government proceed with a new approach to international relations—as exemplified by the present Balendra Shah-led government, which has departed from the customary practice of relying on diplomats appointed by a previous government?

Conclusion

Nepal's foreign policy is shaped mainly by its geopolitical situation. With the passage of time, the changing world political order, and Nepal's political trajectory, the form of its foreign policy has evolved, but the nuance of century-old fear and caution has remained dormant. Nepal has made tremendous strides in transforming its political journey: passing through an autocratic monarchy, the Rana regime, the party-less Panchayat system, and a monarchy with multiparty democracy. Despite having numerous political systems and leaders over a short span of 75 years of

international relations, the core of Nepal's foreign policy remains unchanged.

Demonstrating political acumen, Bhandari propounded PMPD, envisioning a republican and secular political system far ahead of the Maoists' demand for such transformation. Nepal shall be declared an independent, sovereign, secular, and democratic republic of the people (CPN-UML, 1993). PMPD emphasises maintaining a balanced relationship with India and China. As Nepal shares a 1,415 km border with China, mostly through indomitable high hills and difficult terrain, it shares a 1,751 km open and porous border with India, mostly across flat lands (Upadhyaya, 2012). Geographical accessibility, similarity in religion and culture, familiarity with language, and long-standing cross-border trade bring Nepalis closer to India than to China.

These factors bring Nepal closer to India, and often the governments and political parties of Nepal are blamed for their tilt toward India, as in some cases they do indeed favour the southern neighbour. China, compared to India, does not meddle in the internal affairs of Nepal; yet, in recent times, the Indian media have portrayed China as drawing closer to Nepal. Such a recurring phenomenon renders Nepal more vigilant in its relationship with both India and China. Another important aspect of Nepal's foreign relations concerning India and China is their rivalry. When they are at loggerheads and when they improve their relations, Nepal seems to be left alone and ignored. Therefore, in light of the unsteady relationship between the two Asian giants, Nepal needs to navigate its external affairs with great care.

The recent border dispute between Nepal and India over Lipulek and Limpiyadhura has strained relations between the two countries. Nepal faltered in claiming the disputed land without proper preparation, and India showed its "big brother attitude" on the issue, which soured relations between Kathmandu and New Delhi. The issue has been further inflamed by the August 2025

decision of India and China to conduct bilateral trade through the disputed Lipulek Pass. Hence, Nepal and India should seek solutions to border disputes through diplomacy. Here, the significance of the vision articulated in PMPD for maintaining bilateral relations with India is apparent. Relations with both neighbouring countries will be established and developed on the basis of Panchasheel principles. Efforts will be made to strengthen genuine, cooperative, and neighbourly relations with these two countries (Bhandari, 1993). Therefore, Nepal needs to embrace a foreign policy that takes into account the geopolitics and the sensitivity of the relationship with India and China, while safeguarding its sovereignty, national interests, and economic independence.

Sovereignty, non-alignment, national independence, economic freedom, peaceful coexistence, non-aggression, friendly relations with neighbouring countries, equidistance from India and China, and balanced regional cooperation are the bedrocks of PMPD. The principle of non-alignment is crucial in terms of Nepal's relationship with India and China. In the fast-changing global political order, where democratic polity has increasingly been adopted and adapted by many countries, PMPD envisions a pragmatic foreign policy.

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