

## Soft Power in the Contemporary World: Recommendations To the Small States' Security

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### Abstract

*Since the emergence of the New World Order in the international relations, the pursuit of national interests through traditional hard power has come under intense criticism. Employment of military instrument in foreign soil in particular, has been questioned. Examples of Afghanistan, Korean Peninsula, Iraq, and Middle-East demonstrate that hard power approach alone, has been barely successful to handle multi-dimensional security challenges in the contemporary world. Although the hard power remains as important instruments of national power, its employment is becoming less significant due to its legitimacy and effectiveness in the changing global environment. Hence, the concept of soft power has been advanced as an alternative approach because of its potential of securing national interest without using force or coercion. Though the smart power, as an appropriate combination of hard and smart powers, has its implications in the international politics; soft power constitutes a very real power. This article argues on why soft power has been a more relevant instrument for the states being blessed or lacking the military might. Finally, the article presents its analysis with implications and recommends on ways in which small states like Nepal need to resort to soft power*

*to ensure their foreign policy objectives and security in the changing international order.*

**Keywords:** attraction, coercive, culture, diplomacy, epicenter, policies, security

### Introduction

The concept of soft power was introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr. in 1990s. In the international politics, soft power is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce. A defining feature of soft power is that it is non-coercive; its currency includes culture, political values, and foreign policies (Nye, 2012, p. ). He placed soft power in the broader context of multilateralism. Nye provided in-depth concept as the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment. And attractiveness arises from the country's culture, political ideas and foreign policies. Soft power is much more than image, public relation and temporary popularity. It constitutes very real power, an ability to gain political objectives (Nye, 1990, pp. 5-7).

Nye's works on soft power have achieved greater authoritative stature with visible impacts on American foreign policy as well as of other nations. According to Nye, there are two salient points: soft power falls within the usual conception of power and culture is a new source of power. He divides the power in

three categories to achieve a desired end state such as ‘coercive with threats’, inducing with ‘payments’, or ‘co-optive’. The information age has greatly expanded the effectiveness of third category. Nye’s core argument is that soft power resources are increasingly important in the modern information age and it is extremely foolish to ignore or neglectfully squander them (Nye, 2004, p. 9).

On the other hand, hard power is opposite to soft power. It is a coercive power wielded through inducements or threats (Nye, 2009, p. 63). It is based on military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions (Wilson, 2008, p. 114) and relies on tangible power resources such as armed forces or economic means (Gallarotti, 2011, p. 29).

In international relations, a smart power strategy combines hard and soft power resources. Smart power is “an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand one’s influence and establish legitimacy of one’s action” (CSIS, 2012, p. 11). Smart power scholars are debating that national interests in the international system would be best achieved by the integrated application soft and hard powers.

### Conceptual Foundation

Scholars have realized that the world is in the need of a shift from old assumptions and identify rigid distinctions between ‘hard’, ‘soft’, and ‘smart’ power since the economic and political challenges can no longer be simply resolved by military means (Bound, 2007, p. 13). Under-mentioned illustrations present the conceptual foundation on adopting soft power by nations in the advent of growing multi-dimensional challenges.

### Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is a comprehensive plan for conducting the business of government with rest of the world. It is aimed at promoting and protecting the interests of the nations in the international arena (Gibson, 1944). State’s interests are derived from geography, history, economics, and the distribution of international power. Foreign policy translates broadly conceived goals of the state into specific courses of action to achieve objectives and preserve its interests (Padelford & Lincoln, 1977).

In foreign policy, there are no permanent friends or enemies; there are only permanent interests. As Chanakya quotes “there is some self-interest behind every friendship. There is no friendship without self-interests. This is a bitter Truth” (Chanakya, n.d.). A good foreign policy would obviously lead a state in fulfilling its national interests and acquiring rightful place among comity of nations (Bojang, 2018, p. 1).

Foreign policy consists of three parts: the ‘end’, the ‘ways’, and the ‘means’. The end consists of a vision of a desired outcome or set of interests in interacting with another state; the ways, consists of the strategies to pursue these interests; and the means, consists of the available resources at a state’s disposal. Thus, a foreign policy is a vision of a desired outcome or set of interests in interacting with another state/actor, the strategies used in achieving these goals, and the available resources at a state’s disposal, in guiding her interaction with other states.

### Diplomacy

Diplomacy is often confused with foreign policy, but the terms are not synonymous. It is the chief, but not the only, instrument

of foreign policy. Diplomacy endeavors to maximize a group's advantages without the risk and expense of using force and, preferably, without causing resentment. It is the means by which governments seek to achieve their objectives and the principles they seek to advance in international affairs (Simpson, 1980, pp. 03 – 11). Melissen observes “diplomacy as the mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business” (Melissen, 2005, pp. 17 - 25).

Diplomacy is the main vehicle by which small states are able to ensure that their goals are addressed in the global arena by peaceful means (Morgenthau, 1954, p. 25). It serves as the vanguard particularly to the security of the small states like Nepal.

### **Hard Power**

Hard power works in the form of coercion: using force, the threat of force, economic sanctions, or inducements of payment to make others to change their positions. Understood as testing on inducement or threats, hard power is not always a necessary or desirable strategy. Sometime a power can achieve its goal without military and economic threats by influencing events through persuasion and attraction.

An important application of hard power is coercive diplomacy or forceful persuasion to change the objectionable behaviors of a target state or group through the credible threat of economic sanction or use of military force (George, 1991, p. 4). However, the effectiveness of coercive diplomacy is controversial. Studies of use of coercive diplomacy by the United States in the post-cold war period have shown limited success

(Haiti 1994, Bosnia 1995 and Libya 2003), outright failure (Iraq 1991, Kosovo 1999, Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003) and unclear outcomes (China-Taiwan crisis 1996, Somalia 1992-93, North Korea 1994 and Iran 2006 - present). Therefore, the legitimacy and the effectiveness of the use of hard power have contributed to the concept of soft power in the contemporary world (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2013, pp. 155 - 57).

### **Soft Power**

Soft power also called as hearts and minds diplomacy, is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. Soft power in international politics arises from dominant values, internal practices and policies; and the manner of conducting international relations. The states more likely to be attractive and gain soft power in the information age are those with multiple channels of communications that help frame issues; those whose dominant culture and ideas are closer to prevailing global norms; and those whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic and international values and policies (Nye, 2004, p. 31). Soft power resources often work indirectly by shaping the policy environment and, sometimes, take years to produce desired outcomes.

The attractiveness of a country's culture and how that culture is perceived abroad are among the key foundations of soft power. Culture is never permanent but constantly evolving and, it is universal rather than narrowly parochial. American popular culture is central to Nye's thinking and has influenced worldwide on wider scale. On the other hand, the United States as the primary driving force of modernity and globalization attaches an unavoidable resentment that threatens

traditional cultures and established norms such as to the Islamic society (McKercher, 2012, pp. 442 - 43).

The substance and style of foreign policy is also a powerful factor. Policies based on broadly shared values are more likely to attract cooperation. Shared values in the 21<sup>st</sup> century include international order, human rights, control of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), inhibiting terrorism and illicit drugs, promoting trade, economic growth, and environmental causes.

### Smart Power

Another potential source of diplomatic influence is smart power which brings together hard and soft power via ‘the strategic and simultaneous use of coercion and co-option’ (Cross, 2011, p. 698). The reasoning behind smart power is that, by combining hard and soft power, the limitations of each could be offset by the strength of the other. It will be achieved by making sure the elements of hard power (military intervention, legal sanctions, economic conditionality, etc.) and soft power (aids, public diplomacy, educational and cultural exchanges, etc. of the diplomatic strategy reinforce rather than undermine each other.

Nye suggests that the most effective strategies in foreign policy today require a mix of hard and soft power resources. Employing only hard power or only soft power in a given situation will usually prove inadequate (Gavel, 2012). Nye utilizes the example of terrorism, arguing that combating terrorism demands smart power strategy. He advises that simply utilizing soft power resources to change the hearts and minds of the ‘Taliban’ would be ineffective and requires a hard power component. In developing relationships

with the Muslim world, however, soft power resources are necessary and the use of hard power would have damaging effects.

Smart power involves ‘the strategic use of diplomacy, persuasion, capacity building, and the projection of power; in ways that are cost-effective; and have political and social legitimacy – essentially the engagement of both military force and all forms of diplomacy’ (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2007, p. 13). The United States’ Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton quotes “we must use what has been called smart power---the full range of tools at our disposal---diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural---picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation. With smart power, diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy” (CSIS, 2012). It very well justifies the significance of smart power in the international politics.

### Case Study: Soft Powers Practices

Let us start with the example of China. China prefers to rise quietly pursuing foreign policy aims through soft power. China’s grand strategy is currently discussed with reference to a ‘peaceful rise’, ‘peaceful development’ or the building of a ‘harmonious world’ (Bijian, 2005, pp. 18 – 24). Three stages have been identified: first by 2010 - establish a leading position in East Asia by opening the ‘China – ASEAN free trade zone’ (Wiki, Dec 2020); second by 2020 - play a leading role as a ‘quasi-world power’ in the larger Asia-Pacific region; and third by 2050 - develop into a ‘world level power’. China, through its soft power, aims to achieve these goals, understand the international community, and enhance support for China’s peaceful rise to a global power status.

Well before Washington, Beijing embraced soft power as a prominent part of its comprehensive national power (Vuving, 2009, p. 2). Chinese elites have concluded that the development of soft power is critical element of achieving long term strategic objectives (Wuthnow, 2008, p. 5). Chinese grand strategy to establish a leadership position in the developing world through BRI as a soft power tool, has emphasized to create a trans-continental geo-economic and geo-strategic space, both on land and sea, through infrastructure investment and connectivity with the principle of non-interference (Swain, 2015, p. 3).

China stresses to communicate its national identity and influence through the power of its culture both within the region and wider world. China's larger goal is to develop greater cooperation with all of its neighboring regions - Asia Pacific, East Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, Central Asia and South Asia. What is interesting is that the Chinese are pursuing these goals in a friendly manner, avoiding any kind of hegemonic and aggressive behavior. This kind of Chinese charm is growing fast in the region (D'Hooghe, 2007, p. 95).

The EU remains one of the most widest-ranging global political actors. The EU has engaged in a continual process of institutional growth in a wider political domain, produced some notable policy outputs, and positively influenced to various global issues. It has been described as a civilian power, a soft power and, more recently a normative power with economic, social, diplomatic, and cultural instruments as opposed to military means. EU enlargement shows a commitment to peace, freedom, and prosperity (Tocci, 2007, pp. 2-4).

Europe is the closest competitor to the United States in terms of soft power. European art, literature, music, fashion, and food have long served as global cultural magnets. EU soft power comes from its common values of democracy, social justice, human rights, and commitment to a market economy, plus social solidarity, sustainable development, and the fight against discrimination. Europe has quietly been rebranding itself to make political capital out of global anti-Americanism (Harkin, 2006). Showing a strong commitment in multilateralism, the EU possesses a strong power of attraction and attempts to lead by example rather than force (Ginsberg & Smith, 2007, p. 4).

The EU will continue to operate as a civilian power with a clear voice, more self-confidence and effective instruments at its disposal' (Tsoukalis, 2005, p. 5). It reflects the EU's essence as a civilian power, extending the area of peace, prosperity, liberty, and democracy; and achieving more through its gravitational pull than it could ever have done with a stick or sword (Rehn, 2007).

India seems to qualify as a soft power by default with her democratic tradition; one of the founders of the NAM and the Gandhian values of non-violence; cultural diversity and religious pluralism; tourism and economic growth; education and technology; media reaches; and Bollywood as a quasi-global dream fabric (Wagner, 2010). However, its inconsistent foreign policy, weak internal security and law enforcement system, terrorism, chronic territorial dispute with neighbors, and most notably the hegemonic attitude towards smaller neighbors have ruined India's image regionally as well as globally (Kumar, 2020).

Small states have their soft power based on their institutional capacities and diplomacy. Singapore (721.5 sq km, just greater than our five districts) is as an example. The nation has been able to attract a sizable amount of FDI by its structural strength and cultural components like political values, high standard of education, cultural diversity and vibrant Malacca strait transit and trade (Hong, 2015). Singapore is an example of how a small state has developed its attraction by virtue of robust economic and socio-cultural policies.

Middle Eastern small states like Qatar (11,571 sq km) and UAE (83,600 sq km) have served as examples of the effective utilization of soft power in key areas of international concerns. Qatar has demonstrated dominant presence between regional rivals, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Its state media Al Jazeera is one of the major soft power tool (Fadli, 2018) with global influence by broadcasting in multiple languages in 100 countries (Shiwakoti & Upreti, 2020). We can very well claim that its soft power also contributed to hold '2022 FIFA World Cup' in Qatar.

UAE, acknowledging the potential of soft power diplomacy, published a Soft Power Strategy in 2017 by highlighting the significance of tourism, economy, culture and academics as apparatuses of building a positive image of the country.

China, India and the United States being fully aware of the strategic importance of Nepal, have accordingly extended their diplomatic and economic engagement in various forms, at different times. The United States adopted a policy towards Asia Pacific nations, including Nepal, to prevent them from falling into China's dominance. Soft power in the form of MCC grants is a clear expression

to strengthen its relations with Nepal and counter the China's BRI to prevent it from inclining towards China excessively (Khadka & Poudyal, 2020). Hence, Nepal has been transformed from a backwater to 'Strategic epicenter' for major powers.

The use of soft power in the academic discourse of Nepal has been recent in current debates. The Institute of Foreign Affairs (2012) has included the concept of soft power as a vital element where hard power would not necessarily be enough to ensure the state's interest abroad.

As an active members of the United Nations (UN), Nepal has been able to uphold a positive image by means of a grand legacy of its participation in the UN Peacekeeping operations worldwide (Jaiswal, 2018). Its commitment for peace, development and security in the region through SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN is commendable. Nepal has organized several economic centric initiatives to attract investors and aids for large-scale cooperation. These activities amply justify that Nepal is doing best to promote its soft power. And also, with glorious history, rich cultural diversity and religious harmony, tourism and hydroelectric potential, Nepal possesses promising soft power potential to achieve her interests abroad.

### **Powers in International Relations: A Critical Analysis with Implications**

International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power and whatever the ultimate aim of international politics, power is always the immediate aim (Morgenthau, 1954, p. 31). Power is a central element in the contemporary world politics (Carr, 1964, p. 102). Hence, attempt has been made to

present the critical analysis on the interaction of these powers in international relations.

Hard power is of little use with a range of today's security challenges such as in nuclear proliferation, global warming, terrorism, Jihadism, failed states, refugees, etc. (Ifantis, 2012, pp. 441 - 45). These challenges might be better met by using soft power. Washington's effort to contain Iran's nuclear weapon program and its desire for regime change in Cuba are presented as examples. In the case of Iran, neither economic bans nor political attacks have achieved American's aims. The embargoes have helped Iran become self-reliant. In fact, Iran's economy is healthier than in the early 1990's with high surpluses, record currency reserves, and making foreign debt payments on time (Bohorquez, 2012).

Respecting Cuba, the international community has been critical of the United States' 1996 Helms-Burton Act (United States federal law), which tightened American sanctions against the island. Canada, Mexico, France, and Britain are major investors in Cuba and are particularly critical of this legislation. These key American allies see this Act as an extraterritorial attempt to bully sovereign nations (Mckercher, 2012, p. 444). Although, the United States has unprecedented military strength and economy is widely shared with Europe and East Asia, transnational relations much lie outside Washington's control. When the United States pursues heavy-handed unilateral foreign policy with hard power, it weakens its political preponderance and ability to shape the global politics.

The challenges posed by China's peaceful rise have led America to construct so called a rules-based order in the Pacific to the Indian Ocean broadly known as, the Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS). Trump's approach to the Indo-

Pacific became clearer when the White House released its National Security Strategy (NSS) in Dec 2017. NSS (2017) describes:

China's infrastructure investments as a means of achieving geo-political ambitions, referring to the BRI, and then claims Chinese dominance risks diminishing the sovereignty of many states in the Indo-Pacific. States throughout the region are calling for the sustained U.S. leadership in a collective response that upholds a regional order respectful of sovereignty and independence". Cooperation with key allies' remains the foundation upon which the United States seeks to constrain China's growing influence and power. ( )

In Beijing, Indo-Pacific is primarily understood as a United States - led containment strategy, directed against China and safeguard its leadership in the region (Heiduk & Wacker, 2020). However, member countries may not be fully willing to follow the alliance faithfully as the strategy is solely initiated by America to serve its strategic interests.

At the heart of the Indo-Pacific concept is the 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Quad' comprising the United States, India, Japan and Australia. The Quad appears to be a hard power geo-political tool for balancing against China, as the BRI expands China's sphere of influence beyond its immediate periphery (Grossman, 2020). On the other hand, having complex relationship with China, each of the Quad members is reluctant to overtly trying to contain China. Quad partners might be thinking why to risk their economies and security over a perceived threat, or cave under the United States' pressure? This is a clear indication that the future of the United

States' hard power employment in the region seems to be less predictable.

The United States response to an increasingly assertive China with the emergence of the Quad is a divergence from the Obama Administration's "Rebalance to Asia". Obama's Indo-Pacific aimed to manage China's rise by strengthening the regional order with the expectation that a robust mechanism based on soft power with economic and diplomatic incentives would induce and integrate China to play by rules. The Trump Administration's approach to the Indo-Pacific, in contrast, is a hard power containment strategy, trying to limit the expansion of Chinese influence rather than managing its integration into the liberal order. Despite deep economic interdependence in the America - China relationship, the Trump vision of the Indo-Pacific was overtly aggressive and redolent of a Cold War bipolar order (Swain, 2015).

The United States and China signed the Phase I deal in Jan 2020 to deescalate trade tensions. However, the trade war would not go away soon (Bown, 2020). As of Jul 2020, the United States' debt to China was \$1.07 trillion. It would not be a disaster for China, mainly because the United States needs China more than vice versa. China's foreign currency reserves now stand at more than \$3 trillion in contrast to the United States' \$120 billion. Further, Beijing's conclusion towards Washington's support for Tsai's regime (ROC), moral support for Hong Kong's protesters, and accusations of human rights violations on its Muslim Uighur minority is a clear expression of interference in its domestic affairs as well as hegemony in the region. Washington's such activities have damaged its image among the Americans itself and Asia Pacific nations. There will

be no surprise if the United States during Biden's Administration would resort to soft power by reviewing American policy and behavior towards China.

Soft versus hard power is a poorly defined dichotomy. In one estimation, neither the advocates of soft power nor the proponents of hard power have adequately integrated their positions into a single framework to advance the national interests (Wilson, 2008, p. 110). What soft power can accomplish is significant, and even surprising particularly to respond with non-state actors like terrorist organizations. Soft power can be even more instrumental in preventing such groups from recruiting supporters, and for dealing with transnational issues (such as terrorism, climate change, etc.) That requires multilateral cooperation.

On the other hand, supporters of coercive diplomacy points to its success in avoiding a nuclear war between the United States and Soviet Union during 1962, Cuban missile crises or Libya's decision to abandon the WMD development program in 2003. According to this reasoning, coercive diplomacy can work even against the hardest authoritarian regime. It could also be an effective alternative to costly and risky strategies of regime change in countries where government consistently act in defiance of international law such as Iraq (Saddam Hussein), Sudan (Omar al-Bashir) and Libya (Gaddafi) (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005, p. 52).

Foreign perception of the United States has declined considerably in the past few years as a result of various uni-polar international actions. From refusing to comply with a variety of international treaties to the conflict in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Libya, the Americans have pursued their interests despite



widespread objections. These include Bush Jr's denial of the Kyoto protocol, American failure to participate in the International Court of Justice, Trump's refusal to support WHO during the COVID-19 pandemic and unilateral withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal are further abstention from multilateral cooperation. This substantial loss of soft power has high costs economically, militarily and diplomatically.

Let us take an example of Vietnam War (1965 – 75). Americans were politically defeated despite of military superiority. President Richard Nixon, to settle Vietnam War on respectable manner, laid out the American terms on 8 May 1972 to internationally supervise cease fire; the return and accounting of prisoners; continuation of economic and military aid to Saigon; and leaving the political future of South Vietnam to be settled by the Vietnamese parties on the basis of free election. Similarly, Le Duc Tho (North Vietnamese politician, who negotiated the cease-fire agreement with American official Henry Kissinger) accepted Nixon's key proposals (Kissinger, 1994, pp. 689 – 91). This example clearly justifies the strength of soft power diplomacy in the settlement of protracted Vietnam War.

Concerns over legitimacy and effectiveness of hard power have resulted the concept of soft power as an alternative instrument in diplomatic engagement. Legitimacy comes from sustaining the international order. If the United States is seen by others as the guarantor of the international system and security and if its actions are seen as contributing to sustaining order, they will be accepted as legitimate. Success is also a great legitimizer. Another important source of legitimacy is a respectful participation in international system. The UN remains the

most respectful international forum because every state has its voice (Cooper, Higgot, & Nossal, 1993, p. 175).

All power has limits, and soft power is no exception. Cultural features may be attractive in Asia but repulsive in Middle East. Sovereign nations act in harmony with their own interests. No matter how attractive a given country, others will not accept its attractiveness if it obstructs their freedom of action or adversely affects their national interests (Ogoura, 2006). When policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, a country's soft power is enhanced. Attractiveness as a function of soft power depends upon policy objectives, aims, context and the methods employed (Watanabe, 2006).

Supporting democracy and human rights, for example, can help make policies attractive to others when these values appear genuine and are promoted in a fair-minded way. While emphasizing the importance of spreading democracy in the Middle East, the United States abjured being held back by institutional constraints (Aysha, 2005, pp. 193-210). It advocated the soft power of democracy, but focused more on substance than process. It squandered American soft power by failing to appreciate all dimensions. (Nye, 2006, p. 30).

It is also possible, to see soft power as no more than a means of rationalizing the exercise of hard power. Describing the use of military force in 'war on terror' could be regarded as a smart use of soft power. Use of force to the ideology of a righteous struggle against terrorism is a means of legitimizing military action undertaken without the consent of international community. Soft power can be a clever way of rationalizing military action that lacks international legitimacy.

Many people are attracted by American prosperity, but fear the lack of security and the dislike the income inequality of the relatively free market system. Moreover, the substance and style of domestic policies have an impact on foreign perceptions. Policies on gun control and capital punishment, stricter visa procedures and suspicions of Muslims after 9/11, have hurt the American image (Bohas, 2006, p. 399).

Coercive diplomacy is too blunt instrument for promoting international cooperation, while soft power diplomacy also can be easily abused for propaganda purposes. Diplomacy based on smart power holds appropriate to avoid such pitfalls. Smart power knows due strengths and limitations of each hard and soft instruments, the circumstance in which it is to be used, and how to combine the elements of coercion with the power to persuade and inspire emulation. It must begin with the assumption that hard power is essential and the national interest is best advanced by the skillful combination of both hard and soft power (Wilson, 2008, p. 115).

Another reason to search for smart power is that target population has become 'smarter'. With the steady spread of education and the availability of more media outlets, Asian, African, and Latin American population have grown affluent, more sophisticated, and less easily influenced by the exercise of soft or hard power. Spreading democratic practices have meant that foreign leaders also are less inclined to act as surrogates and recipients of American influence.

Public diplomacy, as an effective means of soft power, is gaining more attraction in the international relations. It aims to achieve soft power by extending the values of those being represented by direct relation with another

country's public (Sharp, 2005, p. 106). Truth is considered as essential, much more than a persuasion tactics (Snow, 2009, p. 9). Both small and large countries have in recent years displayed a great interest in public diplomacy (Melissen, 2005, p. 23).

Public opinion in the age of mass communication plays an effective role in the political affairs of the states. Dag Hammarskjold, Former UN Secretary General stressed that public opinion is a living force in international affairs and characterized it as perhaps the most important new factor in diplomacy (Robert & Feilleux, 2010, p. 191). Public diplomacy endeavors to establish a climate of mutual understanding of the political objectives and fostering support for policies of the source state in destination state.

Track II diplomacy (also called as citizen Diplomacy) as a part of public diplomacy, has direct bearing in the promotion of soft power. The growth of transnational relations and the emergence of a global civil society may generate a greater amount of Track II diplomacy. It is essentially the intervention of private individuals in the international political process – informally, unofficially, speaking for themselves rather than for a political authority (Diamond & McDonald, 1996).

Revolution in technology has greater impact on diplomacy and soft power. Nations and people are more interconnected than ever before, which has expanded the diplomatic maneuverability. International players particularly non-state actors camouflaged under cultural similarities and technological revolution have added vulnerability to the well-being of the nations (Robert & Feilleux, 2010, pp. 85 - 122). On the other hand,

rapid communication technology offers the possibility of better early warning for crisis management and preventive diplomacy (Ramcharan, 1991, pp. 379 - 402).

### **Recommendations to the Small States' Security**

Nepal as a small state possesses tremendous soft power possibilities, which can be utilized to defy its hard power and territorial limitations. Subsequent illustrations highlight about how best our soft power resources could be employed to enhance our global image and contribute in the development and security of the country.

There is a dire need to reorient our foreign policy with the changing world order, keeping all aspects—political, diplomatic, and economic, security and information—into consideration. Nepal cannot be stable, prosperous and attractive without political stability, far-sighted foreign policy, comprehensive development and security framework (Aacharya, 2001).

Nepal should project its soft power with strategic policy and strong conceptual clarity. All this, however, depends on Nepal's ability to carry out necessary reforms at home to make Nepal's development attractive and persuasive to others. Nepal needs to formulate strong and clear soft power policy, underpinned by a solid theoretical and practical understanding of what soft power is and what it can and cannot do.

Peace has been our core value. Principles of the UN Charter, Panchasheel, non-alignment, international law and norms of world peace have remained guiding principles for our foreign relations. We consider the UN as the centre of multilateralism to deliberate on global issues of common concerns such

as disarmament especially of all WMD, condemnation of terrorism, support to peaceful settlement of disputes, and reliance on diplomacy. Nepal remains steadfast in its call for the effective implementation of all relevant regional and international agreements. Nepali peacekeepers, with six decades of exemplary participation in the UN peace operations have proven their competence as highly professional and dedicated savior of peace and humanitarian protection. Our enduring commitment to the world peace has to be communicated to global audience to promote our attraction and foreign policy.

Nepal's unique socio-cultural diversity, vibrant tourist destinations and geography are already acknowledged by the world. Besides being the land of Mt Everest, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the holy land of Hindu shrines and eight of the highest peaks in the world, Nepal has been largely incapable of projecting a distinct identity to international audiences. Nepal urgently needs to convey its national identity to the global community by means of diplomacy and multiple languages and channels of communication.

As Nepal is rich in culture and natural beauty, soft power can be a foreign policy tool to boost its economy and international image. Soft power can be important for Nepal due to its unique geo-strategic location and geo-economic potential. Nepal's location is a 'strategic asset rather than a liability'. We must reformulate our geo-strategic and geo-economic priorities and re-orient 'National Security Strategy' to fit into the changing global order. We must transform our 'land-lockedness constraint to land-linked potential' by fully exploiting benefits from the economic prosperity made by our neighbors. It can serve as the complementary asset to hard power limitations.

Stronger states ‘fight to win’ and weaker states ‘fight for their survival’. In Nepal’s case, considering her constraints and resource potentials - tourism, energy and religious diplomacy – as the “niche diplomacy” would be the valuable means to pursue national interest globally (Chaulagain, 2014). For example, implementation of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrimage circuits (as the religious diplomacy) can be an effective soft power tool. Surprisingly, Nepal has failed to make good use of these assets.

Small states need to create more room for maneuver in international relations and achieve goals by promoting a positive reputation and image abroad (Curmi, 2009, p. 60). Soft power offers the possibility of virtual enlargement of foreign policy reach and presence, and can mitigate resource constraints (Chong, 2007). By analyzing the external environment, we should make effective use of soft power in a way that it would best benefit our domestic and foreign policy goals.

Soft power cannot be understood in isolation and needs to be understood in association with hard power (Bohas, 2006, p. 410). By complementing in military and economic might with greater soft power investments such as in partnership and commitment to regional / international instruments; economic integration; public diplomacy; and technology and innovation, many possibilities are there to demonstrate our image globally (CSIS, 2012).

Nepal enjoys excellent historical, political and socio-cultural bonds with India. At the same time, China’s economic might presents an opportunity for Nepal to pursue rapid economic growth. Their prime concern—security—overlaps in Nepal. By maintaining

equi-proximity relation, the best Nepal can do is to address their security concerns, assuring that Nepal would not be used against them and asking to refrain from interfering in internal affairs. Nepal should reaffirm that a stable Nepal is also in their interest, as only a stable neighbor can properly address their concerns. Therefore, our foreign policy needs to elevate to bridge the contending concerns of our neighbors.

Nepal should implement the BRI by avoiding the possibility of being a debt trap victim. We should assure India that Nepal’s engagement with China is purely for its economic interest and is not party to China’s plan of ‘encircling India’, unlike what India perceives (Jaiswal, 2018). Similarly, MCC Compact as a soft power tool of the United States’ IPS should not be blindly accepted to please America if it threatens our sovereignty. Matured handling of such sensitive issues will not only justify the world that Nepal can handle complicated political problem with maturity and confidence, but it also enhances our soft power.

There is a general agreement that climate change is impacting Nepal disproportionately compared to its size and its negligible contribution of the greenhouse gases. Our mountains are becoming more vulnerable due to increased carbon emission. Nepal’s central location in the Himalayas with altitude variation from 52 – 8848 meter within the average width of 193 Km between two industrial giants could be an ideal location for global climate change experiments. This reality has to be propagated to persuade the global audience.

Most of the large rivers in the SAARC / BBIN / BIMSTEC region originate in the Himalayas and mountains. Mountains are

the important sources of hydroelectricity and vital ecosystem and play significant roles in economic development, environmental protection, ecological sustainability and human wellbeing. Like “blue economy” for maritime nations, mountains of Nepal possess tremendous potential for “mountain economy” and benefit lowland nations in the region. Mountain economy could be another tool to promote our soft power.

Nepal needs to create symbols and branding of Nepali culture and heritage; natural beauty; and rare wild animals and herbs in mesmerizing the global audience. Hosting cultural festivals, sports, language, art, and movies; Visit Nepal Campaigns; and establishing quality educational and medical institutions in association with multiple languages and channels of communication and media can create brand image and shape the global public opinion (Bhushal, 2019). Diplomats, scholars and Business magnates can also play influential roles in symbolizing, branding and enhancing public diplomacy and business links.

### Conclusion

Small states are particularly affected by developments which are determined beyond their borders. The current trends of global challenges need to win hearts and minds, and the overreliance on hard power alone, is not the path to success. Therefore, the countries around the world, whether larger or smaller in terms of territory or capability, have given emphasis on soft power (also on smart power) to persuade their goals and enhance their global image. Nepal is no exception.

Nepal is strategically important to its immediate neighbors and global powers as a result of its unique geo-strategic, geo-economic and geo-cultural strength. Our

commitment to the UN Charter and principles, economic prosperity, call for the effective implementation of regional and international agreements, reliance on diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes can greatly contribute to enhance Nepal’s attractiveness in the world.

By visualizing the developments in the regional and global system, the government of Nepal needs to make every effort to exploit its sources of attractiveness. Soft power potential becomes priority instrument of our diplomacy and foreign policy over limited hard power resources. Only the coherent and clear strategy by strengthening Nepal’s soft power with far-sighted foreign policy can adapt us in the changing international order. We must utilize our soft power potential so that Nepal becomes attractive to global audience and contributes to peace, development and enduring security of the country.

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