

# Nepalese Army On Buffer Zone

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## Definition

Recent years have seen various advancements in exploration and the progress of arm forces throughout the world. Nepal is in the buffer zone. The people of Nepal sometimes face unhealthy pressure from India and sometimes from China. Indeed, the founding father of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah's dictum, "Nepal as a yam between two boulders". The people of the Northern part of Nepal are somehow similar cultures with Tibet(China) and they need to adjust with the people of Tibet. Similarly, east, west, and south parts of Nepal has somehow similar culture with India and they need to adjust with the people of India. This article reviews top-cited recent literature and made a compact analytical review on the buffer zone which can be useful for new researchers.

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## 1. Introduction

It was noticed in the various literature that the state army was established before the unification of Nepal. King Prithvi Narayan (P.N.) Shah had played a significant role in the establishment of the military and modern Nepal and named the army as "Tilanga". It was changed to the "Gorkhali Army" after the Gorkha conquest of Nuwakot. Chandra Shumsher named it "Nepal Army" and the title "Royal Army" was given by King Mahendra, later on, King Birendra named it "Royal Nepal Army"<sup>[1]</sup>. It was renamed the "Nepal Army" after the proclamation of the House of Representatives(HoR), on 18 May 2006<sup>[2]</sup>.

A metaphor of "yam" in his maxim connotes Nepal's geo-strategic position which, like a soft edible starchy staple food in tropical and subtropical areas, has to maintain its balanced relations with two big powerful countries like boulders. In such a condition, Nepal has to protect its existence as a nation-state internally through integrative, participatory, and inclusive national development approach, and externally, by balancing relations with the two big neighbors to forestall their undue pressures.

The increased geostrategic interests and concerns of great powers have posed serious challenges to the national security of Nepal. Geopolitics is rather a crucial external factor than the other internal factors of insecurity. We notice that the regional and global geopolitical developments challenge Nepal's national security and geopolitical factors that can pose a threat and challenge to national security. Our neighbors are taking interest in Nepal mainly because of its connectivity potential, natural resources, and security concerns. By realizing our geostrategic importance, immediate neighbors and some established powers are trying to expand their influences in various forms over Nepal. In such a situation also, Nepal has successfully exercising military diplomacy in the course of History. For example, the Nepali Army's role in United Nations peacekeeping missions in different conflict-afflicted countries. Apart from serving in Britain, India, and in UN missions, the Gurkhas of Nepal to this day serve in the Singapore Police as the Gurkha Contingent and in Brunei as the Gurkha Reserve Unit. Today, Nepal's military diplomacy with China may strain Indo-Nepal relations. If China supports Nepal in increasing its presence in UN peacekeeping missions and continues to assist Nepal in upgrading its security forces while providing training to the military as well as police officials, this may indeed deepen the relationship between the two countries<sup>[3]</sup>. As of 13 January 2020, the Nepali Army has deployed across 12 missions around the world. As one of the imperative troop contributors, Nepal ranks fifth in the world. As one of the imperative troop contributors, Nepal ranks fifth in the world. Currently, the Nepali Army has around 5095 soldiers, including 170 female armed forces serving in 12 different missions around the globe. Nepal commits to provide up to 5000 peacekeepers should the UN so request<sup>[4]</sup>.

Nepal became a member of the United Nations in 1955 and since then, has been an active participant of most UN Peace operations. The participation of the Nepali Army in the UN peace support operations spans over a half-century covering some 43 UN missions, in which over 1, 29, 890 personnel have participated. The army's long association with UN peace support operations began with a modest deployment of five military observers in Lebanon(United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon) in 1958. The first Nepali contingent, Purano Gorakh Battalion was deployed in Egypt in 1974. The Nepali Army has contributed to senior appointments at UNDPKO and Force Headquarters while deploying

military contingents, military observers and staff officers. The Nepali Army has also rendered tremendous services to the provision of niche capabilities, such as engineers, medical teams, and Special Forces contingents. Their devotion to duty and excellent performance have been widely acclaimed. The Nepali Army has always accepted challenges and participated in most difficult operations. This has had a heavy toll on its personnel, and to date, 65 personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice at the altar of world peace and another 66 have been disabled<sup>[4]</sup>. Diplomacy is all about managing relations among states. It is the communication systems of the international society, as an attempt to promote international negotiations, whether concerning inter- or intra-state conflicts <sup>[5]</sup>.

## 2. Military diplomacy of Nepal

The Rana regime, which lasted in Nepal from 1846-1951, had strong bonds with the British. Nepal's Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana himself commanded a contingent of Nepali soldiers to assist the British, eventually commencing a tradition of Nepali military assistance to the British Empire <sup>[6]</sup>.

Nepal also assisted the British government during the World Wars. This long history established military diplomacy as a major technique for Nepal's diplomatic relations. Also, Nepalis have a long history of engaging in foreign battles. In particular, the Nepali Army is renowned for their martial culture around the world<sup>[3]</sup>. More than 200,000 Nepali men participated in the Second World War for total independence in the subcontinent had reached far and wide<sup>[7]</sup>.

In 1989, when India had imposed a blockade on Nepal, the real reason was that the government of Nepal had purchased weapons from China. Nepal continues to conduct joint military drills with India as for example Surya Kiran XIII, which was held in June 2018. However, Nepal has also started military drills with China and the USA which gives an entirely new image to Nepal's military diplomacy<sup>[3]</sup>.

## 3. Triangular geostrategic rivalry diplomacy

Given Nepal's geopolitical sensitivity and geostrategic importance, the super power-the US/ *as well as from the Western Countries like European countries* - and emerging global power and immediate neighbors-India and China-have been giving a high priority to Nepal for a couple of decades to extend their political, diplomatic, strategic, security, economic and cultural influence in Nepal as per their national interests. They have not only given a high priority, but also have increased their financial assistance, and development and military budget to Nepal. They, therefore, have been promulgating some policies and strategies focusing on Nepal and Asia, and have declared some financial support and development projects for Nepal for obvious reasons.

## 4. Buffer zone

The ongoing confrontation between India and China has taken a dangerous turn. Nepalese Army needs to play a very important role to establish the peace into the entire South Asian Countries. Indeed, when we see the history regarding the refugee problem of Burma, even the separation time of Bangladesh from Pakistan, the huge number of people brought by the King of Nepal and kept in the border to maintain national security. There is still the existence of Barmelitol (community of Nepalese from Bruma) in Kakarbhitta, Nepal that is the eastern border of West Bengal, India, and Barmelitol in Bhairahawa, Nepal that is the western border of Uttar Pradesh, India.

But for the case of Bhutan is different that is The refugees, most of the Nepalese origin fled Bhutan in 1990 and, after traveling through India, reached Nepal. They have been maintained in seven camps run by the UNHCR ever since <sup>[8]</sup> and several Bhutanese refugees have been re-established in different parts of the United States and European countries.

Now, the situation is different for Nepal because no more Kingship system of Nepal and several young people are migrating to a foreign land for the sake of jobs. Especially in the border area of Nepal, there are fewer young men people in comparison to women, children, and old people. There are still problems for land security in the eastern, western, and southern parts of Nepal because sometimes, the people of India come and fight to the Nepalese people, and sometimes, the border security force of India used unnecessary power to the people of Nepal. From Kakarbhitta, the eastern border of Nepal, there is less distance for India, Tibet (China), Bhutan, Bangladesh, Burma, and itself a buffer zone. Similarly, there is the buffer zone in Far-Western Nepal that is the Limpiyadhura-Kalapani-Lipulekh area. The area in question, a 370-square-kilometer strip located at the north-western corner Nepal, has been under Indian

administration for a long time. But Nepal argues that, under the terms of the 1815 Sugauli Treaty, it is her land and should be returned. The territorial boundary of modern Nepal was defined by the Sugauli Treaty signed with the British East India Company in 1815. It said that the course of the Kali River, called the Mahakali downstream, marked Nepal's western boundary which is the subject of the current row. But there was no map attached to it; and if there was one, it has not been found. The Mahakali has two tributaries—one starting at Lipukekh and the other at Limpiyadhura. The treaty did not specify which of these two tributaries would be considered the Kali to delineate the boundary. India says the Kali starts at Lipulekh, and Nepal says Limpiyadhura is the river's source. Nepal's presence in those areas has been isolated. That is the reason, India has established a military camp in Kalapani. Settling the location of the new tri-junction will require the agreement of all three countries—Nepal, India, and China. The long Indian presence in the area, the national security importance India attaches to the area, and the neglect by Nepali rulers for nearly 200 years to claim what rightfully belonged to Nepal has added to the complexity of the problem.

Now, the only option Nepal has is to try and resolve the issue through quiet diplomacy, through dialogue and forming Indian public opinion in our favor. This requires leadership with a very high moral standing; sensitivity, international respect, statesmanship, and an ability to communicate complex issues openly, politely, respectfully, and with firmness [9].

Indeed, the open border between Nepal and India has advantages and disadvantages, too. But we need to use it in the right way. Regarding the northern part of Nepal, there are huge Himalayan ranges and there is less problem of land with China(Tibet). Right now, the role of the Nepali Army is vital to establish peace in the buffer zone, especially among three countries that are China, India, and Nepal.

## 5. Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the above discussion. Military diplomacy is a very important concept for the Nepalese Army in the Buffer zone of Nepal. When it comes to Nepal's military diplomacy towards the neighborhood and beyond, it's better to acknowledge the fact that Nepali Army has been conducting joint military drills with different countries, most importantly with the USA, India, and China for many years. Essentially, Nepal's vibrant role in exercising military diplomacy with the great and emerging powers is immensely triggered by neutrality and non-alignment, which are also the foreign policy objectives of Nepal. Unforgettably, having almost six decades of experience in peacekeeping operations around the world, the Nepali Army has effectively enhanced the image of Nepal through the UN peacekeepers.

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## Keywords

advancements;buffer zone;yam;boulders

