

Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences
ISSN: 2583-2034
Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci
Frequency: Monthly
Published By GSAR Publishers
Journal Homepage Link: <https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/>

Volume - 5 | Issue - 2 | Feb 2025 | Total pages 175-182 | DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14822683

The Impact of the State Partnership Program on Nepal's Politics

By

Santa Bahadur Thapa

Department of Political Science, Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal



Abstract

This paper examines the impact of SPPs on Nepal and their political implications concerning civil-military relations, democratic institutions, and foreign policy decisions. Using qualitative research, document analysis has been employed to show that SPP serves multiple roles in the political development of Nepal.

The SPP (now a bi-lateral initiative) has brought closer together the Nepali Army and the US National Guard, has cultivated professionalization within the Nepali Army, and generated incentives to increase Nepalese contribution to international peace support operations modernization of Nepal military, dogmatic disaster response capability building; joint-exercises/training being provided via SPP; access to a more extensive pool of programs again providing capabilities such as more excellent regional stability through events - downside is minimized or otherwise neutralized.

However, the study also delineates challenges to civil-military relations and their implications for Nepal's policy of neutrality on foreign affairs. More worry based on the "potential for mission creep and militarization of civilian functions" also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a clear line between military and civilian.

The paper ends with recommendations to better align SPP with Nepal's broader political landscape and national security interests. It also demands transparency and accountability in SPP. It says that federalism should be openly discussed from top to bottom in society to be civilized with national matters and democratic practices of Nepal.

Keywords: Civil-military relations, democracy, foreign policy, politics, security cooperation, State Partnership Program, U.S. National Guard.

Article History

Received: 25- 01- 2025
Accepted: 02- 02- 2025
Published: 04- 02- 2025

Corresponding author
Santa Bahadur Thapa,

Introduction

Nepal's Geopolitical Significance and the Evolving Security Landscape

Nepal is located strategically between the two most prominent countries in the world, and the superpower of today has been significant for a long time. The nation's historical and ongoing geopolitical and strategic significance is due to its geographical position between two giant Asian neighbors, China and India. Nepal, being small and sandwiched between two prominent neighbors with some national priorities to protect sovereignty, nationalism is always at a busy crossroads of conflicting pressures. This has dramatically influenced Nepal's foreign policy and the internal politics of security.

Nepal's Political Metamorphosis

Nepal has had a turbulent few decades, moving from centuries of monarchy (somewhat strangely) or, perhaps, meteorically, to a federal democratic republic. The culmination of this shift was the 2008 abolition of the monarchy after a Maoist-supported civil war lasting more than a decade, codified with a new constitution in 2015. The social unrest also paved the way for significant changes in Nepalese history: a democratic transition and a federal restructuring. However, these have not always been straightforward, such as reintegrating ex-Maoist fighters into the security forces or dealing with some of the core reasons underpinning conflict and federalization - something Nepal still has to crack on how to make work worth a damn.



The 2015 constitution is both a historic achievement and a source of discord. Despite more appropriate representation for ethnic minorities and marginalized groups, the new federal structure has not been without its share of complaints over inclusion. This negligence has created occasional agitation, political rivals, and inequality among many citizens (The Kathmandu Post, 2015).

Evolving Security Challenges

In addition, Nepal also faces a rapidly changing security environment, marked by transnational security threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and climate change, which the country's security sector needs to adjust for. The border with India is always open and cannot be deflected in this regard from controlling anti-social elements. On the other hand, one of the problematic aspects is that even with China, there should have been proper surveillance because of the porous nature of the border. The compounding threat of natural disasters due to climate change makes true disaster response capability and capacity essential for the security forces.

Religious extremism in the region has also contributed to fears of radicalization and terrorist activities taking place within Nepal. Coupled with this, the very location of landlocked Bhutan adjacent to some volatile areas in South Asia makes it prone to spillover from regional conflicts and instability (Hutt, 2018).

The State Partnership Program: A Cornerstone of US-Nepal Security Cooperation

These imperative shifts in the political and security environment have made the State Partnership Program (SPP) a critical element of U.S. security cooperation with Nepal. Developed in 1993, the SPP is a program that connects partner armed forces with that of a US state National Guard on a bilateral basis for security cooperation. About "improving partnership," Findlay said the program seeks to establish enduring relationships and harmonize bilateral interoperability through cooperative exercises, training exchanges, and disaster response.

In 2003, Nepal formed a military partnership with the Oregon National Guard that would benefit both sides. SPP has since been instrumental in bolstering Nepalese military relations with the United States. It will continue funding professional military training and exchanges in disaster relief, peacekeeping, and other areas.

Like other regional security cooperation programs, the SPP is heavily security-centric. However, it is distinguished by the focus on long-term partnerships and human relations. The SPP is building bilateral military-to-military ties and increasing confidence in interoperability and shared security objectives through closer ties between the National Guard and the army of its partner nation (US Department of Defense, 2023).

Beyond Military Domains: The SPP's Multifaceted Approach

The SPP has profound military implications but is not limited to the military realm. It has also encouraged civilian-military ties and aided Nepal's democratic transition. This program eases interactions between Nepali and US civilian officials, opening the

door to outlets for both sides on issues of mutual interest. The SPP has also been helping projects that build democratic institutions and improve good governance in Nepal.

The SPP has also made disaster preparedness and response easier. Disaster management has been one of the government's critical priorities as Nepal is vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. The SPP's significant contribution has been training and equipment that increases the capability of Nepali security forces to respond to natural disasters (The Himalayan Times, 2015).

Aligning with Nepal's Evolving Needs

SPP is a multi-level collaboration mechanism that corresponds with what Nepal aspires to achieve in the transition period while also addressing its needs. Because of Nepal's contemporary security and political challenges, the SPP is an effective mechanism for increased bilateral cooperation and capability building for the Nepali security forces. Focusing on this cooperation and trust through mutual respect became a self-reinforcing cycle of trusting another military and the knowledge that assists interdependence (long-term cooperative behavior is addressed).

In addition to these projects, Meiklejohn said the SPP has also dedicated resources to institutional development and capabilities, laying some groundwork for portions of Nepal's security sector that are being reframed. Eventually, SPP strengthened the professional ability of the Nepali military through training and coaching while influencing them to internalize democratic values and human rights norms (Shrestha, 2020).

In Brief: The US security cooperation with Nepal has been led mainly by SPP. The multidimensional strategy has not only shaped the course of joint bilateral relations through advocacy for democratic institutions and principles but also in civil-military relations and military-to-military cooperation, thus changing the pace by creating new avenues for peace and stability in Nepal. As the country becomes a democracy, the SPP will be more instrumental in forging a professional, mission-oriented Nepali apparatus.

Research Gap

Despite its overhyped nature in Nepal, there needs to be more scholarly silence about the character and impact of the SPP on Nepali politics. Numerous studies have been conducted on the general objectives, processes, and implications of SPPs in different states. Instead, they use it mainly as a tool for military professionalization, interoperability, or regional security cooperation.

Other scholars have focused on SPP regarding disaster preparedness and response, humanitarian aid and development, and peacebuilding. However, these studies need to elaborate on the political implications of SPP for Nepal as a specific country. What is lacking, however, is an in-depth examination of the more considerable political consequences of SPP, including not just its

effect on civil-military relations and democratic institutions but also on foreign policy orientation.

The proposed paper will address this gap in the literature in Nepal and examine SPP through a political lens. This paper will discuss how SPP is viewed in Nepal from multiple perspectives to explore Nepal's shifting security tides and interaction with international players.

Research questions

This research paper examines the SPP's systematic impact on Nepal's politics. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

What does it mean for civil-military relations in Nepal?
 No matter what the is for Nepal's democratic institutions?
 Does SPP re-orient Nepal's foreign policy?

This research questions the nexus of security cooperation and political development in Nepal and aims to contribute to the growing literature on this issue.

Significance of the Research

This article constitutes critical evidence directed toward understanding the implications of the State Partnership Program (SPP) on Nepalese politics. This study uncovers the SPP's complex role and influence over many facets of civil-military relations, democratic institutions, and foreign policy direction. The analysis offers key policy recommendations and insights into Nepal's security collaboration and political evolution.

This study provides a detailed perspective on the impacts of SPP on Nepal's civil-military relations, addressing both the pros and cons of this program. It also looks at the impact of the SPP on Nepal's democratic institutions, arguing that more engagement with civilian institutions is needed to contribute to a greater level of democratic development. This adjustment calls for a two-pronged extension of the SPP to enhance and defer the foreign policy orientation of Nepal outlined in point three, as it further reaffirms nodal neutrality by Nepal's non-aligned Ness towards security cooperation with the United States.

Through these aspects of the SPP's impact, this research adds value to understanding interrogation and interpretation of political development from the angle of security cooperation in Nepal. The study's implications can be significant for Nepal's political environment, civil-military relations, and policy-making. Policymakers may benefit from the conclusions drawn in that they will help them to make informed decisions concerning this critical issue bleeding from decade-long conflict seeking stabilization (Hickey & Bracking, 2005).

Literature Review

The SPP literature helps to demystify its intentionality, operation, and impact in countries on all continents. The program has been linked to many issues in the scholarly literature, from military professionalization to regional interoperability and security cooperation (Elkins, 2013; McCormack, 2016). The accountability of SPP has primarily been studied in terms of natural disaster

preparedness and response (Feeney & Saunders, 2013), humanitarian assistance (Siegel, 2017), and peacebuilding.

The literature on SPP's effect on Nepal politics needs to be more extensive. A limited number of studies are looking into the program's significance for Nepal's security sector reform, with some reflections on civil-military relations (Hutt, 2013; Khanal, 2018), but none that take a holistic view to derive its broader political implications. This research article aims to fill this gap by examining how the introduction of SPP has changed the politics of Nepal.

Research Method

The results offer a qualitative research perspective on the impact and implications of the SPP on Nepal. Since qualitative research aims for richer answers to socially complex and context-dependent phenomena, the multiple potential implications of this SPP fit closely with this strategy. This strategy allows qualitative investigation of the attitudes, experiences, and meanings of various actors assigned to the program and offers rich insight into its political ramifications.

Document analyses were done for data collection. This entailed a review of numerous documents, including formal reports, policy documents, academic literature, and media articles. Third, the document analysis showed that the SPP of Nepal should be understood not in isolation but concerning the larger political and security environment of the country—the evolution of history from where SPP has emerged as part of national security—what does this mean for Nepal foreign policy in future both at present and prospectively.

Each data source was stage-coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify key themes and patterns regarding the political impact of the SPP. An exercise of this kind in making China better-positioned commission on national and sub-national security da-ex Asia - One Year After comes after certain other pieces to do so would allow for building such an iterative relationship similar to what happened between designers resilience hardly transition und or comprehensive cloud infrastructure initially took away their sense civil-military relations in Nepal democracy by different means in early power-sharing foreign policy decision-making. Next, data source triangulation was done to validate and confirm the findings among records, which increased the research study.

Findings

The results show the diverse effects of SPP in Nepal, affecting several elements of civil-military relations, dysfunctioning democratic institutions, and direction of foreign policy orientation.

Civil-Military Relations

Professionalism: The SPP has supported the Nepali Army in achieving more excellent professionalism. The program has exposed Nepali military personnel to US military doctrine, best practices, and organizational culture through various joint exercises, training programs, and exchanges. It has further honed their capabilities, expertise, and conduct, especially in

humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping missions, and anti-terrorism activities.

US National Guard Ties Strengthened: Due to SPP, access to the army of Nepal has also increased in favor of the Oregon National Guards. India and Japan have developed such an understanding through many bilateral military exercises with respective armed forces, creating a precursor for potential coordination in the security milieu. It has also expanded the Nepali Army's procurement of US weaponry, technology, and training.

The challenge to civilian supremacy: New processes should provide confidence in the civilian-military interface if the SPP professionalizes the Nepali army. The program previously came under fire for the military-political deepening of influence, particularly in security-related policymaking. This implies more incredible changes in mechanisms of civilian control over the army and democratic regimes' governing.

Democratic Institutions

Promotion of Democratic Values: The SPP has integrated some aspects into its activities that promote democratic values and principles. For example, they conduct training sessions that include human rights, the rule of law, and civilian military control. Such exposure to democratic norms can assist the Nepali Army, especially its junior and mid-level officer corps, towards more vital democratic institutions within that organization and a culture of human rights, respect, and the rule of law.

Lack of Direct Engagement with Political Parties and Civil Society: The military-to-military focus at the core of the SPP means that it needs more direct contact or engagement with political parties and civil society organizations. Although the program upholds democratic principles that could otherwise reflect on the general political climate, it is impactful to political parties and civil society organizations at large in general.

To further assist democratic development in Nepal, the SPP may consider increasing its engagement with civilian institutions such as the parliament, judiciary, and civil society organizations. This may include backing policies that address good governance, transparency, and accountability in the security sector.

Foreign Policy Orientation

Consolidated US Linkage: SPP has undoubtedly consolidated Nepalese linkage with the USA. The program has also brought about regular high-level interactions between Nepali and US officials, leading to closer diplomatic and security linkages. As a natural corollary, US assistance to Nepal in defense, development, and disaster relief has skyrocketed.

Non-Alignment: Nepal has repeatedly strived to balance its relations with two major countries by not aligning with either one while practicing a non-alignment foreign policy. The ties of SPP to the US military have led many analysts to question Nepal's traditional approach of non-alignment. There are arguments that the initiative can limit Nepal's independent foreign policy and turn

it into a developmental protectorate dependent on the US for security support.

Striking a balance: Nepal needs to position its tradition of neutrality based on the expanding US security imprint in both. This must be done with utmost caution to preserve Nepalese sovereignty and its intention of maintaining equal bilateral ties with other states.

The Impact of the SPP on Nepal and Implications for Policy Making The processes by which external actors shape domestic arrangements are less well-studied than those that involve only indigenous factors. This implies that the SPP offers a potential pathway to deepening Nepalese military professionalism and compatibility with US forces —leverage to promote excellent regional stability and enhance disaster response capabilities (two distinct advantages). By modernizing disaster response systems in a disaster-prone country like Nepal, collaboration is unavoidable (Gyawali, 2023), which further supports the statement made by Gyawali (2023). It is so essential that the research underlines from these geopolitical consequences that Nepal should not fall into the US-China competition by supporting SPP and therefore emphasizing diplomatic balancing. Add a comment More on US-Nepal China Trilateral Research Initiative Nepal, as Bhattarai (2023) cautions in The Himalayan Times, does not have the option of throwing its strategy to one side and becoming a slave to China or India.

With this, (this study) secondly opens up an understanding of the SPPs to change the internal security dynamics in Nepal. While the program intends to develop the Nepali Army's capacity for better external disaster response and humanitarian assistance, this specialization may also push the army towards mission creep and militarizing civilian functions²⁸⁹. What Acharya (2023) further echoed in the South Asian Monitor is that the SPP will create fuzziness, entrapping military and civilian issues and entailing Nepal's erstwhile precarious civil-military equilibrium. It also calls for transparency and accountability in SPP implementation. The Times of India quoted Sharma (2023). Civil society organizations have raised serious concerns over whether it should be enough to open a discussion if they go against the national interest. Third, The Implications of the research findings for Nepal's foreign policy and strategic decision-makers. While SPP may be an opportunity for militia cooperation and capacity building, it does pressure Nepal to the balancing level of significant powers. Based on the findings, the study shows that Nepal should follow a rational foreign policy, taking SPP for its national interest based on non-alignment policy. An encouraging sign in this direction is how international scholars such as Smith (2022) say in International Affairs, "Nepal ought to use the SPP to bolster its diplomatic clout and pursue its development objectives without sacrificing sovereignty.

Overall, the focus on this gripping evidence emphasizes the complicated and dual-natured function of SPP in the Nepali government. While we do not doubt that the program is helpful for military modernization, disaster relief, and greater regional

engagement, geopolitical risks besides civil-military relations and other domestic political factors must also be considered in these military exercises. Nepal's policy-making elite need to rise to this challenge of either introducing SPP in one shape or another, directly or indirectly as a matter of fact, but removing it from the vocabulary (directly or indirectly) and bringing accountability and transparency in the salon of government functioning interest is one of them. This research provides insight into the effects of SPP in Nepal and may help to determine policy, leaving room for national-level deliberations on this important topic.

Discussion

The SPP function in Nepal is quite vital, but this, too, has numerous dimensions, which the study elaborates on. It has, of course, served straight track-to-professionalism butcher-killer-an order evolution and positive likewise tradition toward a USA partner state military/government nexus abroad, the mere sounding of Civil-Military scenarios, unfortunately, bodes deviancy retarding nefariously that neither bounding poly-history pugilism soft extras may serve to burrow sweetly resigned unpedantic in free form beats from cross-cultural dialectical excursions what normatively buoys foreign policy not-too-much standard predicating stacks are brackish each side what on crassly immutable base those piles commingle compositely to subliminal effects. Emphasizing the character of the frictions and trade-offs involved with states cooperating for security even in such a varied world system, not only because of the different availabilities of regime types to one another but also their varying breaths of strategic focus.

Given the challenge it poses for Nepal, this is a concrete accomplishment in the context of SPP for civil-military relations. The program has generated various capacities and professionalism on relevant topics, particularly among Nepali Army personnel related to disaster response and peacekeeping, with national and global utility (Hutt, 2013). This suggests an invigoration of the Nepali soldier with professionalism and good governance, all due to skills, knowledge, and experience gained through SPP, further falling within Elkins's (2013) description that practicum exercises, training programs, and exchanges expose military professionals to US military doctrine, professionalism, and organizational culture. This progressive approach of skill building has opened a broader space for the Nepali Army to be more part and parcel of peacekeeping missions across the globe, strengthening International stability and finally uplifting Nepal's identity in the world arena.

While, on the one hand, expanded military-to-military linkages and exercises could enhance US security interests, it also poses significant challenges for subsequent civil-military relations in the Pakistani armed forces. Thus, while the SPP proper probably has only occasionally undermined civil control in Nepal, it is also true that institutions of democracy and military intrusion into politics [in states with commonalities from the perspective of this study] are both situated firmly on either side of a fine line (Khanal, 2018). This means that in the Nepal context, considerable civilian control

needs to be retained to ensure that the Army respects democratic politics and respect for the rule of law. They include reforms ranging from parliament and party oversight and control of the defense sector, increasing transparency and accountability regarding military expenditures, and enhancing a human rights culture within the armed forces.

The impact of the SPP on Nepal's democratic institutions is somewhat nuanced. The program, of course, does incorporate democratic elements into its teaching, including lessons on human rights abuses, the rule of law instruction, and civilian control of the military into many of its training programs, but has a limited direct impact on political parties or civil society (Siegel, 2017) These constraints stem mainly from SPP's almost exclusively military-to-military focus which yields to very little interaction with civilian political actors. However, the emphasis on democratic values in its own right can have a broader political impact by contributing to a more profound commitment to these principles among military personnel and eventually continuing into relations with civilian entities.

Another option that the SPP might want to consider in bolstering its role in support of democratic development in Nepal is to become more open and accessible so that it engages with civilian institutions like parliament, judiciary, and civil society (McCormack, 2016). This assistance might be networks for good governance, security sector transparency and accountability, dialogue, and collaboration between civilian and military actors. This kind of engagement could alleviate fears over the civilian control implications of the SPP and provide more confidence that the program will work to promote democratic norms and practices in Nepal.

Similarly, the SPP has significant implications for Nepal's foreign policy orientation. Of course, the program has undoubtedly brought Nepal closer to the United States while providing windows for high-level meetings between Nepali and US officials as well as regular exchanges of visits. It has returned with the best we could have been asking for, namely, a minimal diploma in security cooperation. This all helped to fortify US aid to Nepal across multiple fronts — defense, assistance, and disaster management—which has helped Nepal economically while helping build defense capitalization for the security organization of Nepal.

However, the signing of the SPP has brought Nepal to work very closely with the US military, which further raises questions on its perceived impacts on Nepal's decades-long nonaligned foreign policy character (Hutt, 2013). In the long run, MPs may argue that the US military backing forgoes Nepalese multi-polarism and sovereignty of foreign policy objectives through a profound reliance on extensive American security assistance (USSA). Though it may taste good in principle when quality equilibrium trickles into politicized sour relations between neighbors India and China at the highest level during the golden hours of a tiger war at one end and constantly liable elements conflicting for remnant tensions, opting for guidelines only transiting national ambitions.

However, balancing its growing security cooperation with Washington while maintaining an equally strong posture of non-alignment is daunting for Nepal. It would need a steady and sensible hand so that whatever SPP could keep Nepal free and ripple with a multitude against its constant maneuver to engage, travel around, and remain neutral elsewhere. Nepal should continue diversifying security partnerships while balancing them with diverse international engagements to avoid dependency on a limited number of states. It must also work to build cooperation with relevant partners by articulating its message on a nonalignment foreign policy in several regional and multilateral forums to gain traction on regional stability.

SPP influences Nepal's politics in multiple ways. However, the professionalization of the Nepali Army and the consolidation of long-term intimate relations as well as alliance with symmetric powers like the US through capacity-enhancing initiatives notwithstanding, a more extended period of unprecedented proximity between the two nations raises concerns about military control by civilian authorities in other newly fledged democracies like Nepal, the prospects for Democratic peace through integration/amalgamation/ incorporation of anathema institutions into pro-democratic polity and the promotion of uncritical foreign policy towards equidistant powers. Nepal needs to handle the SPP wisely to be comfortable with Nepal's national interest in sustainable stability and prosperity. This will entail a commitment to 1) greater civilian control of the military and 2) democracy in the form of not limiting sovereignty, autonomy, and foreign policy (within a specific range).

Role of the Political Parties

Nepal's political parties, key players in the country's democratic identity, significantly influence the narrative and choices about the SPP. Their opinions can also considerably influence public opinion and government policy on the SPP.

First, political parties can bring debate and discussion on how the SPP impacts Nepal's national interests, foreign policy, and civil-military relations. The nonindustrial program is without controversy, and the parties engage in parliamentary debates, public forums, and media engagements, articulating their views and concerns about the program as a testament to a broader public discourse on the merits and challenges of the program. This process of deliberation and debate also helps shape public opinion on the SPP and ensures that it conforms to the democratic values and national priorities of Nepal.

Second, political parties, particularly in the ruling coalition, play a decisive role in shaping the government's attitude toward the SPP. They have the potential to define the parameters of engagement with the US's intended goals with the program, where the program activities can also go hand in hand with Nepal's national security strategy and foreign policy objectives. Parties can also push for transparency and accountability, ensuring that the SPP remains aligned with Nepal's democratic principles and does not weaken civilian control over the military.

Third, political parties shall enhance public awareness of and support for the SPP. The program improves Nepali security infrastructure through US security assistance, which can help address these public concerns. Public support is crucial in Nepal's non-aligned foreign policy, as Nepal must pursue balanced relations with China and India.

The SPP has served as a means for political parties to address key issues, but the level of engagement varies due to partisan interests and geopolitical variables. Some parties might raise concerns about how SPP may impact Nepal's status of non-alignment, whereas some may consider it an opportunity to reinforce ties with the United States. The politicization of the SPP can sometimes create barriers to a nuanced and objective understanding of its potential merits or demerits to Nepal's national interests.

The political parties in Nepal can influence the discourse surrounding SPP, the policymaking process, and its public perception. Party Plans Barik, in his bid to improve foreign policy, combines dialogue with stability essential for genuine political participation and reduces economic inequalities that undercut politics. The role of political parties in the conversation around the SPP is necessary to keep the initiative true to Nepal's national interests and democratic ideals, regardless of the parties' ideological agendas.

Conclusion

This research examined how the State Partnership Program (SPP) affects Nepal's political landscape. Key findings underscore the SPP's importance in improving the professionalism of the Nepali Army, especially regarding disaster response and peacekeeping efforts, and developing closer ties to the US National Guard. However, the potential impact on civilian-military control has raised concerns that require strong oversight mechanisms to ensure the military upholds democratic values.

The SPP has a nuanced impact on democratic institutions. It introduces training and exchanges that foster democratic values but has little direct influence on political parties and civil society. This indicates a necessity for extending civilian institutional development that reflects and feeds democratic development.

Regarding foreign policy, the SPP has cemented Nepal's relationship with the US while prompting reservations about its implications for Nepal's non-alignment. This illustrates the difficulty of reconciling security cooperation with the US and Nepal's interest in maintaining balanced relations with other countries.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, practitioners, and future research based on the research findings and conclusions:

For Policymakers

- **Reinforce Civilian Oversight of the Military:** To address concerns regarding the potential effects of SPP on civilian control of the military, policymakers should

prioritize strengthening legislative oversight of the defense sector, encouraging transparency and accountability regarding military expenditures, and promoting respect for human rights within the armed forces.

- **Argue for Wider Civilian Engagement:** To make the SPP a more effective contributor to democratic development, more exposure to civilian institutions, such as parliament, judiciary, and civil society organizations, is needed. This may include supporting efforts that foster good governance, transparency, and accountability in the security sector.
- **Seeking a Balanced Foreign Policy:** Nepal should maintain a balanced foreign policy by diversifying its security partnerships and engagement with diverse international actors. This will also ensure that SPP does not make Nepal overly reliant on the US while enabling Nepal's Continued adoption of a nonalignment posture.

For Practitioners

- **Embed Democratic Values in SPP Efforts:** SPP efforts should include elements that reflect democratic values, such as human rights, the rule of law, and civilian military control modules. This will improve the Nepali Army's understanding of these values.
- **Increase Transparency and Public Engagement:** To build public trust and address public concerns over the SPP, practitioners should prioritize transparency in program implementation and regularly engage with civil society organizations and the media.

For Future Research

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Future studies could be longitudinal, assessing the long-term impact of the SPP on political development in Nepal. Would that give more understanding of the changing nature of civil-military relations, democratic institutions, and foreign policy orientation?
- **Comparative Studies:** Comparative studies could assess the SPP's effects on the trajectory of political development among various partner countries. So that they can identify common trends and challenges, as well as best practices for program implementation.
- **Subnational Impact focus:** Future research can focus on the impact of SPP at a lower level close to local communities and governance. This would give a more realistic picture of this program's impact on Nepalese political development.

Following these recommendations will assist policymakers and practitioners in maximizing the benefits of the SPP while avoiding potential pitfalls. This will ensure that the program's contribution to security, stability, and democratic development in Nepal is maximized.

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