

## Foreign Policy Analysis

### The Role of Small Countries Diplomacy in National, Regional and Global Security Environment

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**Abstract:** Changes in the global security environment have inevitably led to changes at the regional and national level. In the past, the impact of small countries on global security has been much inferior while today's influence is ever greater. While small countries do not have the capability to cope with new and ongoing threats, soft means and, in particular, diplomacy remain the main tool of these countries to avoid and reduce the risk of conflict. For Western Balkan countries, Euro-Atlantic integration is the only solution to avoid the uncertainty and potential conflicts in the region. Integration into international organizations of small and medium-sized countries besides that increases the security level for small also makes it possible to reduce the costs of defence and consequently has less impact on economy and finances. This analysis tends to examine and clarify the role of small countries in the national, regional and global security environment. Moreover, this analysis describes the cases of some small countries that have survived the challenges of history and have prospered alongside the large countries, precisely as a result of engaging the right means in the right time and in accordance with their internal capabilities. Building regional capacities and integrating them into global ones remains the best way for small countries to increase security and at the same time to increase their influence in global decision-making. While the diplomacy as an art of amicability is the safest mean for a small country to confront the external threats. As long as a small country is not able to stand against a conflict with its own forces, the only way to avoid or mitigate the risk of conflict is the diplomatic war.

**Keywords:** Security; Security Concept; Small Countries; Diplomacy; Alliances.

#### 1. Introduction

The constant changes in the global security environment and the evolution of threats have inevitably led to the involvement of small countries in global security developments. While in the past, were mainly the large countries that had a key

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role within this aspect, nowadays almost no country is immune and cannot remain neutral towards global security developments. Global security continues to remain actual and subject of wide study and discussion for researchers and analysts of this domain. Nowadays, the global security environment has a great impact on the national security of all countries, and this impact is particularly apparent in small countries.

The national security is related with development of one nations citizens trust, that their territorial integrity, sovereignty, national fundamental values and interests shall be not be jeopardized. This is important when we have in consideration that sovereignty and security are considered to be first priority for a stable country. Its concept has expanded and day by day became more multi-dimensional than was in the past. Nowadays, security it is connected to talks for many other fields such as; for economy, identity, ecology, food, etc. Although, the differences between the external and internal security in a manner are reduced, whereas the security geography has been regionalized and differentiated as per various countries and geopolitical regions. This entire development makes it difficult to retain the indivisibility, by connecting the small countries with the regional and global ones, which became necessary due to development of globalization and interdependence.

Security is variable, because the scale of risks and threats may change, as well as the ratio of protected values. Therefore, it does not deal only with values presumed earlier, but with results of expected values as well. Country's security is the national axis, while it is comprised by human security (individual + community). According to Vaclav Havel (Havel, 1994), the community's, region's, country's sovereignty, has a meaning only if it derives from the sole real sovereignty, meaning from "the human sovereignty". In the trajectory of movements, changes, conflicts and implications that occur nowadays in various global points, among all, security is what is mostly impacted. It is known that the general security situation during the last decade has dramatically changed. (Viano, 1999) Conventional threats faded away, whereas their place was taken by new and much more dangerous challenges, of some organized crime segments such as: terrorism, illegal trafficking, human beings exertion, senior official's corruption etc. These hybrid threats have brought serious consequences not only for human lives, but also for the economic and political instability and security of countries with fragile democracy. Therefore, the disturbed security is a product of a disturbed world.

Except the changes on progress in some South Eastern and Eastern Europe countries after the changes occurred in the '90 there were difficult throwback and challenges such as: social tumult, anarchy, violence, constitutional violations and up to the endangerment of the country's and region's security and integrity. Based on the analysis performed on these developments we can ascertain that: security does change as a reflection of a changing world.

## **2. Small Countries Security Challenges**

Security issues became long ago the center of gravity for most important government institutions, as well as their experts. The world in any case in history was not safe for small or medium countries. Rivalry between super-powers always had impact on stability of the small countries. This impact was mostly highlighted during the Cold War, through the super-powers rivalry, ideology conflicts, as well as confrontations between them for geo-political and geo-strategic interests. History has proven that great powers have used their supremacy and dominance to manipulate small and weak countries as from the economic but also military aspect. Small and medium countries chronicle and historical events unfortunately have been swallowed by great power states as in the period during Prussian dominance as well as in modern times. Despite the dominance and influence of great powers, not always small countries have disappeared or assimilated; even there are small or medium countries that not only survived as independent and sovereign states but they also prospered side in side with powerful states. A clear and meaningful example in this case is Switzerland and other small and medium states such are; Costa Rica, Israel, Singapore and other small states from the Pacific and the Caribbean.

After the '90, a main strategic problem for post-communist countries was the realignment with the new context, in an essential not just formal meaning, as candidates for membership into the European Union and NATO. Their dilemma objectively was less complicated in the first years of transition, due to reasons that at that time the cultural separation was still served, for more the political aspect of "West" and "East". Meanwhile, the concept of "West" incurred serious changes in its essence as a result of presenting new separation lines between Europe and America. In the first years of the new millennium such tendencies became clear that the political discourse which for many years in a row was presented by small countries "to return where they belong" became almost irrelevant after the 9/11

terrorist attack. Some researchers even mocked and ascertained that the new real order minimizes the dangers on small countries security, but the bipolar world, however, offered many more available options. Truth to be told, nowadays, for small countries, especially from those of Eastern Europe, there is only one strategic solution, which is, Euro-Atlantic integration. In general, the joint security and defence project was the idea of large European countries, but the purpose to be positioned in the international system was the main motive that obliged almost all small countries to join in (Molis, 2006). Except for Cyprus, Malta, Ireland and Denmark, all of the European Union small member countries expressed their interest to support the security plan and joint defence activities.

The sovereignty and independence concept in small countries for few decades in a row went through different periods of progress and incurred changes with years passing, especially during the last decades. Weak and powerless countries before the WWI often became a prey for great powers. China, this large state, under the Manchu's administration was a victim of Western colonial powers. The WWI and President Wilson made a difference in its traditional bearing toward small countries, which is "freedom for all". The President's Wilson theory stressed the substantial or inward right of the entire population for independence. This new concept provided support for small or medium countries, a concept which seemed impossible in the rough climate that was dominating the world. There is no doubt that after this policy was announced few small changes were also done in the difficult economic situation of small and medium countries.

The dream of every small nation and country is to exploit the right to live independently, the right which these countries have given them by the great powers. Freedom is and will remain the right of every great, medium or small country. The freedom is not a privilege anymore that should be guaranteed by great powers to small or medium countries, but their substantial and undeniable right. The world was struck with trauma and world war terror before this idea was even put in play, meaning that a world war was needed to serve as a drum for the ears of small and medium countries, for them request with persistence like all other states to have peace for all. The United Nations have guaranteed the integrity for small countries under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter but only after the approval of the Decision No 1514/XV on 1960, there was no doubt that small countries would become United Nations members.

The end of colonization era along with the United Nations foundation after the WWII created the opportunity for small countries to also benefit from the supported idea of freedom and independence for all the states. Many from former colonized countries gained their independence and the United Nations Organization became a witness to requests from small countries such as Ghana, Côte-d'Ivoire, Cambodia, Guinea and Singapore. The independence "issue" did not close after the WWII ended, although countries are technically independent and became members of UN, unfortunately to be said that many of them are immersed in the swamp of internal rebellions and external interventions. Many countries lost their independence, which they dreamed about for many centuries in a row. Some other countries came to be disappointed from the independence which for them was not anything else just a hopeless utopia. Self-determination for various countries is still the new propensity of history and political stages, that makes an effort between the old stories and new tendency for self-determination in different countries, where only few countries make an effort nowadays to keep the independence safe, economic growth and increase of security, because integration is the time trend.

The difference between countries which managed to survive and those that are lost lies in the fact that few small countries survived thanks to their widespread commitment, which led them toward the wanted objective, military defence. *One who wants peace should prepare for war.* Development of a credible defence force remains one of the key means with which security can be guaranteed from the conventional and unconventional threats. Preventive military means of aggression amount the most difficult problem for security issues, for small and medium countries independence such as Israel, Switzerland, Singapore, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, etc., while the decision to use the force if necessary, is that much responsible and important as much as the aggressors evasion. The use of this force by defence forces, when necessary is the factor that ensures peace. The quantity and quality of defence forces is determined essentially from the financial means amount invested as well as the external politics followed in international relations in cooperation with other countries which keep the control in a certain country. Consequently, defence is a factor with much more value for the state security. Ensuring a credible defence force also provides the possibility for small and medium countries to benefit from competitive interests and super-forces maneuvers.

Small countries need to be concentrated also in developing a professional operational trained force, which can be easily mobilized in case of a crisis, as well

as will be affordable in the financial aspect. The best modern examples are Israel, Switzerland, Taiwan and Singapore which possess professional armed forces, financially supported, forces which are considered to be crucial for preventing a danger and discouraging an enemy. The quality compensates quantity, where by quality the understanding is about mobility, moral, best exercise and equipment. Modernization is also having good equipment and weapon system which is continuously followed and it is a necessity for small countries. Ensuring sophisticated modern weaponry is realized by military industry of small countries which can modify their weapons in case supply with weapons and fighting equipment cannot be secured from import. Taiwan and Israel which have limited relations with other states mainly depend from internal resources to equip their soldiers with fighting means. Switzerland modified the Oerlikon weaponry. Sweden produced the “Saab” and “Bofors”, meanwhile Israel created the Israeli airplanes production industry.

Local population encouragement in small countries to support their defence forces with the purpose for them to become more respectable is another objective that needs to be considered. Moral support for defence forces in a country is very important and it reduces their distance from legislative and executive organs that administer the state.

### **3. The Role and Impact of Small Countries Diplomacy in National Security**

In order to protect and to promote in best rational way their national vital interests and objectives, the essential issue for small countries is what strategy needs to be enforced and to support the external politics plan. Practically, there is no dilemma to assert that the neutralism concept in international relations has changed distinctly and that according to analysis, its future in the globalized world is very insecure. Due to this, even the most typical examples of neutral states (Austria and Switzerland) indicate that in the last decade they manifest attitudes which are not aligned with the traditional definition of this term. The engagement of these countries alongside with NATO in Peace Support Operations in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, West Sahara etc. is the best indicator of what was said above. The conclusion that isolation or neutralism in the world is logical, especially after

1989, they are not resistible options anymore, in particular for large countries, capacities and impact forces that South-East European countries possess. But as it is known, diplomacy is the art of unity, a safe mean for small countries to confront the external threats. Therefore, while a small country is not able to stand against a conflict with its own forces, the only option is the diplomatic war to avoid or to mitigate the danger of conflict.

The neutralism diplomacy has been followed by other small countries almost in the same amount such as Finland, Singapore and many other micro-states in the Pacific and Caribbean. It has its flaws, because the wish for common understanding and good neighbouring from different countries is considered as a weakness. This principle has values as for small countries as well as for large countries. But, only the countries with powerful defence forces can confront the world politics challenges, although regardless the defence potential Taiwan relies on United States of America to protect its national security. The greatest preoccupation to ensure neutrality in some countries led to increase of their respect from powerful states. Their politics has evaded every attack toward their country by guaranteeing the national security. The neutralism policy should not degenerate in pacifist theories. Diplomacy should be supported by a credible defence force. This embodies the Roosevelts theory on using diplomacy in grave situations. Combining the diplomacy with defence capabilities is more than a reason for small countries to ensure peace with other countries. The only way to avoid insecurity, which for small countries in international relations is much important than for large countries, is their alignment to international political and security organizations. In this way they “exercise” two functions: first, “they deter” the rigid attitude from large countries through joint rules and valuable principles for all, while this decreases the risk of misunderstanding between the countries and the chance to transform them into an armed confrontation, as well as it effects directly in the small countries security. Secondly, these institutions provide a chance for small countries to express their opinion even in the last instance, to use their veto for important issues which are in national interest such is case with NATO members. Even there where the votes weight is asymmetrical (such as for example in UN) where only the permanent members of the Security Council have the right to use the veto, small countries can still exercise their greatest impact even if these institutions would not exist at all. (Wivel, 2005)

That is to say, that it is possible to ascertain that the small countries attitude in international relations is expressed through the tendency for collective

confrontation with problems, in particular for their internationalization. (Talavs, 1994-1996) For small countries that are expanded in Europe, the European Union during the last ten years constituted the extreme most important context to develop the external politics. The attraction of this integrative model, especially for small countries, after the end of WWII, remained in the fact that the European Union (then as European Union for Coal and Steel) was the only organization that dealt with all the necessary aspects to strengthen their political and economic stability. The non-military character of this union distinctly decentralized, that “soft” force, and created possibilities for small countries to avoid marginalization in international relations and in the same time protect their national identity.

Membership in regional organizations institutionalizes relations between small countries with the regional ones in the field of economy and security as well as it sets the conducts framework with which the weak is protected from the eventual misuse of the strong one. Through joint policies, European Union instates a political platform, which assists the small member countries to exercise their influence as in the inside as well as outside of their region, well much easier than in case they would act individually. (Wivel, 2005) Therefore, the European Union is the most important “organizational context” for small countries external activities, which are enabled to uniquely enter into the international stage. According to Wivel (Wivel, 2005), the small countries traditionally have a privileged position in European Union. He explains this with the fact that, due to institutional arrangements in European Union’s key organs (the Council, the Commission and the Parliament), the small countries exercise their influence which is proportionally opposite to their potentials. Otherwise, Magnette and Calypso think that from all the possible rafts in European Union, setting up a border between small and large countries, although potentially serious, however it is one of the less anticipated and elaborated divisions. (Magnetre & Nicholadis, 2003)

#### **4. Small Countries Engagement in Regional and Global Security Environment**

Small countries in order to ensure peace also must use another way which is their commitment in the global security issues. Unlike the cold war, smaller countries may now choose to involve themselves on an à la carte basis in a wide range of



security commitments with an emphasis upon their own security requirements and those in the immediate vicinity. (Duke, 2001) In principle they react always as a group of countries that try to undertake the initiative for differentiated integration. But, attentive analysis on the methodology for policy creation in three European Union's pillars indicates that however, in such situations, there are possibilities that more dangers appear for small countries. The power balancing strategy is essential and requires that all the large countries from the east and west to influence economically in the existence of small and medium countries. Potentially more dangerous for a small country is the situation created with such integrations within the second pillar of the European Union, which regulates the joint external politics and security. The question here is about the existence of the so called enforced cooperation the fact indicates that it is sufficient for the interested parties to only notify the competent European institutions and then act without having their permission.

The method of guaranteeing the national security, in the last century was used by the South-Eastern Asian countries to be freed from the colonization. Singapore by this method ensured the support from the east and from the west, to become an independent state in order for east and west to be able to protect their interests in this state. One of the basic doctrines of Singapore's surviving policies is to balance the state power structures which continuously influence the state security. Such a thing depends in the conformity that needs to be created by super-powers that Singapore can be protected without the needs of one of the super-powers dominate this country. Every force's interest can be retained by especially preventing the domination from any super-power in Singapore. Singapore worked also in becoming one of the neutral trade centres, financial communications, capable to absorb assistance from powerful states in this country. Singapore encourages the competition from all the states without providing the dominant role to any of them. This made available for Singapore's external politics to protect the national security and the country from South-Eastern Asian countries, by avoiding their economic dominance in this state.

Without having to consider the objections from small countries, in the current European Union history, however, the presence of non-formal groups from large states is noticed. The contact group for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then later for Kosovo, is the public example of such action, but great influence grouping, according to some assessments, even so is the half-transparent alignment called the Quint, consisted by France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany and a country which is

not a member of European Union, the United States of America. (Gegout, 2002) In order to treat this in a more balanced way and to get a clear view of this functional form of action of the European Union, it is necessary to highlight a series of examples when small countries are also grouped on similar basis. For example, the South-East European countries created Adriatic Charter (A5) to enhance the security, prosperity, and stability of the region, Nordic states undertook the initiative for the so called European Union Northern Dimension (Northern Dimension Initiative)<sup>1</sup>, Baltic region countries, as a group, are active in the domain of peaceful operations, states of the so called Visegrad Four (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) had determined institutional forms of cooperation in economy and trade and finally, the Benelux states with their customs union from 1944, de facto were the predecessors of the European Economic Union. In special terms, alliance of countries into small groups can be a precession, not a handicap for the European Union, because these groups are more dynamic and operational in the external politics domain and security. But, for small groups not to be accused for breaking the internal EU cohesion, in principle they are not established as per free choice by states, but their members must need to also be the emissaries of the High Representative for External Politics and Security, of the European Commission, next chairmanship, as well as states that have historical relations or joint borders.

## **5. Conclusions**

National security as a concept is very complex, while in general terms it can be determined as “identity protection”, whereas in special terms, security is seen as a multi-dimensional structure. In the new global security environment the traditional concepts cannot recommend solutions to present problems. Security contemporary studies have advanced its concept, by discovering and determining the entire dimension that is involved in the national security. It is an absolute value, where all other resources are subject to as well as it goes parallel with one country’s progress.

After the '90 in the trajectory of movements, changes, conflicts and implications

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<sup>1</sup> NDI is defined as a cross border politics of European Union and Russia and the arctic region which was raised by the initiative of Scandinavian states, EU members.

that occur today in different places of the globe, what is mostly affected from all is security. It is known the overall security situation during the last decade has changed dramatically. (Viano, 1999) While conventional threats have faded away, their place was taken by hybrid threats. Some organized crime segments, such as: terrorism, smuggling, human beings trafficking, high senior's corruption, etc., have brought grave consequences not only in human lives, but as well in the economic and political instability and security of countries with fragile democracy. Apart the progresses in the Western Balkans there were regressions and difficult challenges such as: social shock, anarchy, violence, constitutional violations and up to the country's and region's security and integrity endangerment. Therefore, the troubled security is a product of a troubled world.

The small countries in order to ensure peace they must use strategies for power balancing, which is essential and requires for all the large countries from the east and the west to economically influence on the small and medium countries. While the diplomacy as an art of amicability is the safest mean for a small country to confront the external threats. As long as a small country is not able to stand against a conflict with its own forces, the only way to avoid or mitigate the risk of conflict is the diplomatic war.

Small countries, by using "soft means" will avoid direct conflict and at the same time will reduce internal financial and economic impact.

The only way to avoid the insecurity which for small countries in international relations is much greater than for large countries is their integration into international organizations, because by this action they "exercise" two functions: first, to "control" the rigid stand of large countries through joint rules and valuable principles for all. The second, these institutions provide a chance for small countries to express their opinion in the last instance also, to use the veto for important issues which are of national interest.

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