

Clive Archer, Alyson J. K. Bailes and Anders Wivel (eds.)

## *Small States and International Security: Europe and beyond*

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This book is a collection of articles written by various international scholars who analyse the security challenges of small states in a contemporary and global context. It is divided into three parts containing a number of different chapters. The first part examines the security of small states from a conceptual and theoretical perspective. It is followed by chapters which focus on small state security in Europe, while the book's third part explores examples of small state security in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, often by drawing parallels with European experiences.

The book opens with an introductory chapter written by Anders Wivel, Alyson J. K. Bailes and Clive Archer which establishes a general framework. The aim is to offer a structured and focused analysis of small state security without attempting to construct and test a grand theory of small states. A small state is defined as the weaker part in an asymmetric relationship which is unable to change the nature or functioning of the relationship on its own. Building on that definition, it is stressed that today a state may be "small" in one relation, but simultaneously "great" or powerful in another. Small states today emerge with a very different combination of security priorities. While only a minority of small states have the experience of recent armed conflict, most of them face economic challenges which call for constant efforts and inventiveness. The following chapter, authored by Alyson J. K. Bailes, Jean-Marc Rickli and Baldur Thorhallsson, explores the survival strategies of small states. The authors note that since the end of the Cold War, an overall drop in the numbers of armed conflict, and the realization of the limits to the nation-state's authority, there has been a broadening of perception of security issues. In order to examine how this broadening affects small states, the authors propose a table of potential threats which covers: i) traditional military problems, ii) non-state human threats, iii) economic and social vulnerabilities and iv) accidental and natural hazards. This conceptualization represents a starting point

for geographical experts, which in the subsequent chapters explain how far, and why, these issues do or do not figure in the security concepts of particular regions or states.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 deal with the economic, societal and environmental security of small states. In his analysis of the economic security of small states Richard T. Griffiths discusses their economic vulnerability, resilience and security strategies in terms of economic development. He concludes that despite their inherent vulnerability small states still tend to perform well in economic terms. He sees this as a result of the effective use of the different strategies to counter small state vulnerability in the context of global interdependence. The chapter on societal security of small states written by Alyson J. K. Bailes views a functioning and peaceful society as a resource in security building. The author argues that a societal approach has features that are particularly helpful to small states, which, while exposed to transnational trends, possess limited resources and often atypical security profiles. Environmental security challenges are seen by Auður H. Ingólfssdóttir as particularly challenging to small states when they originate outside their borders. However, the author argues that small states have opportunities to influence environmental policy at the international level by acting as norm entrepreneurs.

The second part of the book which focuses on small state security in Europe starts with the chapter written by Clive Archer dealing with the security of the Nordic states. It evaluates security developments in Nordic countries by asking the question why the Nordic region has remained so stable since 1945 while producing much international activism. The answer is found in wise policies, the national cohesion of these states and in using the opportunities that the widening of the security agenda brought for these small states. In the seventh chapter Mindaugas Jurkynas assesses the security concerns of the Baltic states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He identifies the neighbourhood, history, identity, as well as national size and power as relevant factors. Both traditional "hard" and new "soft" security concerns directed the Baltic states towards more regional integration primarily within the EU and NATO. While in the case of "hard" security challenges their security strategies are clear, the management of "soft" security problems remains dispersed. The eighth chapter written by Višnja Samardžija and Senada Šelo Šabić discusses security challenges in the

Western Balkans where all states of the region represent small states or even micro states by the relativist definition. The authors identify accession to the EU as the common denominator for the region which provides the greatest incentive for implementing broad political, economic and social reforms. However, the EU and NATO integration strategy as a mechanism for stabilizing this post-conflict region could face a credibility problem if the timetables become too extended. The authors attribute particular importance to regional cooperation in the area of security, particularly in the fields of justice and home affairs, due to limited capacities of the Western Balkan states to address contemporary challenges.

Ruxandra Lupu Dinesen and Anders Wivel evaluate the security challenges of Moldova and Georgia. These countries pursued contrasting strategies regarding their hard security. While Moldova has chosen a defensive strategy by attempting to “hide” from Russia and its role in the Transdnistria conflict, Georgia has refused to give in to Russian interests concerning its renegaded provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In both cases the authors identify the problem of replacing the modern view of policy making based on the persistence of the national authority in economic and security affairs with the postmodern view that accepts multi-level decision making and overlapping political authorities. The central section of the book concludes with a chapter on the security of the European micro-states authored by Archie W. Simpson. It stresses that despite their vulnerability, the micro-states in Europe developed a series of strategies to ensure their economic viability. Since the economy represents the central security issue for micro-states they all rely on the openness of their markets and encourage inward investment.

The book’s third part consists of four chapters (No. 11 to 14) which by applying a similar analytical approach attempt to draw parallels with the examples from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. In chapter 11 Ian Taylor reviews developments in Botswana which could be considered as a successful small state in the African continent that kept control over its national resources and maintained a strong and competent bureaucracy which implements interventionist development planning. The next contribution, written by Alan Chong, examines the tradition of small states in Asia by reviewing the examples of Sri Lanka and Singapore. Both of these states demonstrate similar security challenges characterised

by external asymmetrical relationship and the fears of internal dissent. The question of who belongs to the citizens and who is excluded represents the primary security topic for these multi-ethnic states.

Chapter 13, written by Timothy Shaw, discusses the security challenges of the small Caribbean island states which are among the most heavily exposed to non-military security hazards. The author concludes that in the future the majority of these states will have their prospects for development largely determined by a mix of regional and global circumstances and climate change which in all likelihood means the persistence of fragile or even failed states. Finally, the concluding contribution in this volume, written by Godfrey Baldacchino, deals with the theme of small territories worldwide which possess statehood but lack some of its traditional characteristics. The author argues that many such states and territories traded in their sovereignty in exchange for economic advantages by financial centres of power.

This thought provoking book represents a pioneer attempt to advance the research of small state security in contemporary circumstances where economic and environmental challenges often overshadow traditional security concerns. It builds on the notion that small states today face the need for constant adaptation of their security and survival strategies. The book explores these relevant themes in all of their complexity and from a multi-continent perspective. The chapters refer to abundant multidisciplinary literature yet they all revolve around clearly conceptualized threats to small state security set in the introductory chapters. The chapters neatly correspond with the goal of identifying and presenting challenges and opportunities for the security of small states and discussing the successes and failures of their diverse adaptation patterns. Written with clear argumentation and possessing a multitude of highly relevant and well-structured insights, this book sets a standard in the research of small state security and represents a must read for all scholars and students of this emerging research topic.

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