

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Security of Small States in the Third World** by Talukder Maniruzzaman, Canberra, The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1982, 79 pages, price \$ A 7.00

Security in the present day world, as in the past, is a common concern to all nations, big and small. Sources and hence perception of threats to security may differ. But the concept of security is indivisible and inter-state comparison of the degree of concern for security is not fair either. However, present day global security concerns seem to be dominated by those of the great powers and larger states. Studies and hence existing literature on security, likewise, have been lopsided in favour of the larger states. Security problems of the smaller states have been dealt with in some length only in the context of the European smaller states. Thus, the problems and issues of security of small states of the Third World have hardly received any attention from the strategists and scholars of international relations. What strategies and tactics do the small states of the Third World follow to ensure their survival? How effective are they? How do a small state on the border of a larger state save itself from being trampled down? What options, choices or combinations of these do the small states have to maximise their security? These are questions that require a fair treatment not only for a balanced development of literature on global security but also for gaining greater insights into how these small states ensure their survival in the international system. Prof Talukder Maniruzzaman's *The Security of Small States in the Third World* may be considered as a bold attempt at exploring answers to these questions.

The book is the outcome of study of the author while a Visiting Fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University in 1981. The study presents a comparative analysis of

the security problems of the small states in the Third World. The strengths and weaknesses of the means available to small states to enhance their security are examined in the light of their actual experiences from 1945 to date. The discussion, it appears, also draws on the literature concerned with the security of the small European states. The author shows that the prospect for political survival of the small states is rather doubtful from the point of view of war capability alone. The prospect could be much improved by better diplomacy and judicious handling of other tools of foreign and military policy.

The book has no specific chapter marking. The thesis has been developed under a number of parallel headings. At the outset, two cardinal terms of the study, namely 'small state' and security' have been defined. Then the text proceeds in the following order: Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Security of Small States; Neutrality, Neutralisation and Small States Security; the Non-aligned Movement and Small States Security, Balance of Power: Key to Small States Security? Weakness and Cost of the Small States: Super/Great Power Alliance System; Great Powers' Courtesy and Security of Small States. On the basis of findings of the earlier sections a viable strategy for ensuring national security has been advocated in the last section: 'A thousand sources of Resistance': Defence Strategy for a Small State.

In defining the term 'small state' the author reviews a number of objective and subjective indicators like area, population, GNP, interaction with the external systems, self as well as external perception and behavioural variables like propensity to risk taking, non-verbal action, level of commitment and flexibility, as used in existing literature. Judging by the primary concern of the study, e.g. security of small states, the author takes 'war capability' as the indicator of size of the state. The author goes into the detailed exercise of finding the rank order of the countries of the world on the basis of war capability defined in terms of GNP and military budget. It could be argued that security of nation is much more a broader and positive

concept than would be connoted by 'war capability'. In particular, looking at the type of suggestion that the author has for the small states toward the end of the book, it would have been better if the inner strength of a nation in terms of socio-political integration, level of overall development, etc. were recognized in defining the term small state. And with present days' available statistical and mathematical tools even qualitative variables may also be rendered quantifiable. Moreover, even if one accepts war capability as an appropriate index of a nation's size, the question is: would GNP and military budget of a particular year reflect objectively the war capability of a nation? Cannot a nation have high GNP without mass production? Foreign aid and other external inflows are also reflected in GNP without having to enlarge the production base. In countries where foreign trade constitutes a high proportion of GNP, a large GNP does not necessarily indicate the existence of a large home market or a fairly large population and territory (p. 5). Perhaps GDP could be a better indicator which would subsume all the elements that constitute the potential military power of a state.

Secondly, current military budget would indicate just a fraction of war capability which is the cumulative outcome of gradual development and acquisition. Moreover, in most of the Third World countries, addition to war capability is made through military aid/assistance programme which may not be reflected in the military budget. One can cite the classic example of Israel neither of whose military budget nor GNP is commensurate to her war capability. As such, placing Israel as the 36th military power of the world seems to be unrealistic. It seems that the physical magnitude of armed forces armaments and equipments could have been a better indicator of war capability.

It should be noted that the author studied the question of security at a time when the concept of strategy has undergone some fundamental changes. Naturally, security should include not only protection and preservation of minimum core values of any nation e.g. political independence and territorial integrity, but also social

economic and political development which in the final analysis, make a nation invincible to threats to her security.

In the process of defining two terms, the author sort of comes to the conclusion that the prospect of protecting security on the part of the small states solely on the basis of war capability is limited. What alternatives are available to nation states for protecting their security? In answering this question, the author brings out a number of alternatives on a comparative footing, all pertaining to tools and postures of foreign policy. As the discussion unfolds, Prof. Maniruzzaman shows how personal diplomacy of Heads and Kings of States can protect security or at least ward off the threats to security for some time. The author's assessment of the role of diplomacy is quite realistic and corroborated by empirical evidences. From this assesment one thing comes into sharp relief: it is the maneuveribility of a nation that is effective in the final analysis. The same vein of argument underlies the discussion on experiences of the small states with other alternatives like neutrality, neutralisation, non-alignment and alliance with great powers. One cannot but agree with the author when he points out the limitations of non-alignment or alliance with great/super powers in protecting their security. The auther brings out a bare truth that of the 39 interstate were since 1945, 26 involved the non-aligned countries, 12 of the non-aligned countries signed friendship and cooperation treaties with the USSR which, according to the auther, are no less than military alliance. Similarly, in most cases, alliance with great/super powers is made in broader context than the security needs of the small states as such. In the process of discussion, the author frequently brings out the success stories of Burma, Romania and Finland and Partly Nepal. Question is what factors lie behind these success stories? The author sheds only some faint light on these factors in the main discussion. But these were the factors based on which, probably the author brings out the concept of a 'thousand sources of resistance' strategy. This is rather a non-conventional but realistic approach to national security. And this is where the role of national integration and national

development comes to the force front. But such a suggestion would have logically followed is the preceding discussion created the necessary ground for it. In any case the author deserves praise that such a comprehensive approach to national security of small states has been brought into focus to provide material for future research.

The rather small but well-researched book contains excellent documentation on (a) interstate wars, 1946-81, (b) region, country and bloc-wise military expenditure as percentage of GDP (1971-79), (c) number of diplomats sent abroad by 119 countries of the world (e) list of alliance between the Third World states and Great powers, and between the Third World states themselves and finally, (f) French and Cuban troops in Africa. Compilation of so much of useful data in one volume would be a handy piece of reference to students of political science and strategic studies.

A small error may be pointed out. In the publisher's note, the author's own work **Group Interest and Political change: Study of Pakistan and Bangladesh**, has been erroneously titled as **Pressure Groups and Political Changes: Study of Pakistan and Bangladesh**. Otherwise, printing and get-up is excellent.

—Abdur Rob Khan

## ERRATA

<i>Page No.</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Correct</i>
4	25	tht ASEAN	the ASEAN
6	Foot Note (b)	USS 10	US\$ 10
9	5	aquisition	acquisition
16	29	anothers	authors
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20	7	nations will	nations,
21	F. Note 9	Dennis E.,	Dennis E
32	9	territerial	territorial
63	Col. 3 line 6	men 2 years	men 3 years
63	Col. 3 line 7	wemen 3	women 2
80	F. Note. no. 8	—	<i>will be added :</i> besides Austria and Mexico.
93	1	Expnditure	Expenditure
"	2	1989	1979
"	caption	Armmments	Armaments