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228

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NATIONAL SECURITY AND SMALL STATES : A THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Ever since the close of the World War II there has been an increasing preoccupation with security among both practitioners and students of international politics in the West. A good deal of works has been done in the field of security studies which has attained almost the status of an academic discipline. While a large number of Centres and Institutes devoted to the study of security and related matters abound in Europe and the USA, there grows a security study community in all important capitals even outside the developed world. Besides, there are frequent meets and conferences in recent years both on regional and international basis to deliberate on security issues. Such gatherings often bring together an impressive array of strategists, policy makers and military brass who laboriously delve into the problems of national security and their implications for international system.

All these security activities are however characterised by their one common orientation and thrust—central strategic balance of East-West conflicts. They invariably revolve round two superpowers and their allies giving an impression that the problems of security pertain exclusively to those of the developed world where these countries lie. The vast majority of Third World countries rarely figure in the myriad of security deliberations that go on since the beginning of post-World War II era. They remain an area only of peripheral interest in the security perceptions of the Western analysts who usually prefer to

keep them at best as an appendice to their studies. Even if some reference is made to some Third World countries—big or small—it is only because they have some bearing on conflicts between two power blocs.

Paradoxically, it is however the Third World which contains far greater potentials for conflicts. In the developed world the nations have, through prolonged period of trials reached a stage of socio-economic and political development that they seem keen to preserve. Although divided into opposing camps through separate sets of values and ideologies the developed world has, however, maintained at the worst a state of 'stabilised conflict' for over forty years with a balance of nuclear deterrence. Compared to this "the Third World became almost the exclusive theatre of inter-state wars in the second half of this century... Of the total 64 wars that have taken place since the end of the Second World War 61 of them have occurred in the Third World areas".¹ By another account "in the period after the Second World War there were 150 instances of major inter and intra-state violence in the world. Of these less than ten occurred in the developed and rest in the developing world. Because of these factors the majority of the developing nations being small, mini and micro nations and their having suffered interventions in a large number of instances of inter and intra-state violence there is an over all sense of insecurity among the developing nations of the world."² This situation is likely to persist and even exacerbate because the countries in the region are generally symptomatic of upheavels common in the formation stage of a nation state. It is also because the region is fragmented into large number of states with boundaries arbitrarily drawn and poorly defined in the wake of rapid decolonisation thereby making

1. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Security of small States in the Third World*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Canberra, No. 25, Australia, 1982, p. 2.
2. K. Subrahmanyam, "International Peace and Security and Its Impact on India's Security and Development", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, June 1984, p. 249.

them small and weak and at the same time sowing the seed of growing irredentism.

Measured by a combination of such criteria as land area, productive population, total GNP and level of military capability, 88 percent of the countries in the Third World fall in the category of small states. The vast majority of these countries lack internal cohesion, economic infrastructure and minimum essential military strength exposing them to all kinds of threats emanating from a variety of sources. Such state of insecurity aggravated by events of blatant intervention in Grenada, Kampuchea or even Libya has much to colour the security perception of these countries. Although the entire security debate of date repeatedly points toward clashes, conflicts and confrontations only of East-West frame, the Third World countries growingly tend to find more relevance in the internal dimension of their security problems perpetuated by "weak state structure, weak domestic political institution, lack of societal consensus, distorted economic development and lack of regime legitimacy."³ Even if there is an international dimension of the problems, more logically it relates to North-South differences in which all these countries commonly confront the developed world as a whole notwithstanding its ideological division.

Awed by such contradiction it is only very recently that some analysts both in the West and in the Third World have started to question "the centrality of East-West rivalry"⁴ in all conflicts of today's world and draw attention to the "relevance of factors other than raw military powers, the danger of putting 'local' issues into East-West matrices and incremental involvement".⁵ These days even in the USA there is a school of security thought whose "regionalist persuasion emphasizes local sources of conflict and the greater role

3. Mohammed Ayoob, "Security in the Third World : the Worm about to Turn?", *International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 1, Winter 1983/84' p. 49.
4. Shahram Chubin, "The United States and the Third World : Motives, Objectives, Policies", *Adelphi Papers*, IISS, London, No. 167, 1981, p. 21.
5. *ibid.*

of economic and political factors over military forces as determinative of global and regional power relations".⁶ Hence there is at long last a new look at the security dilemma of Third World countries. Consonant with such changing approach to national security for the countries in the Third World, this paper addresses itself to the discussion of security problems relating only to the small and weak countries in the region.

For the purpose, we shall first attempt an understanding of national security particularly in the context of Third World countries. Secondly, we shall attempt a similar understanding of small states the security of which is our primary concern. Thirdly, their vulnerabilities will be focussed bringing out various types of threats to their security. Lastly, an argument is to be developed round their options for various means of their survival.

National Security in the Third World Context

The problem about an understanding of national security arises from the fact that the scholars seldom agreed on its precise definition. The phenomenon of security is indeed wide in scope and people have divergent understanding of it. Most definitions available on national security are wrapped in ambivalence. It is said that national security is "the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats".⁷ Any effort to inquire into the explanation of 'internal values' however are characterised by vagueness. Walter Lippmann's conception of security can be summarised as one of "the protection of core values"⁸. Along

6. Edward A. Kolodziej, Robert E. Harkavy (eds.), *Security Policies of Developing Countries*, (Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1982), P. IX.
7. *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, quoted in Abdul-Monem M. Al-Mashat, *National Security in the Third World*, (London, West View Press : 1985) p. 20.
8. Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1943).

this line some prefer to call it "the protection of minimum core values"⁹. But problems crop up while determining core value and its quantum. The ambiguity persists when, after explaining National Security at some length, Arnold Wolfers vaguely concludes : "Security after all is nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value, so to speak."¹⁰ More recently some scholars have spoken of 'vital national value' as the core of national security policy. But who will decide vital national value and how ? Some have called even 'national will' or 'national spirit' as the core for security policies. Nonetheless, the more familiar approach to security is conceived in terms of 'abstract values' and is concerned mainly with the preservation of independence and sovereignty. Thus it has traditionally been equated with military strength of a nation state. Leaders of many developing nations are concerned with having an adequate military apparatus to defend their newly acquired independence against external threats or internal insurgencies. The post-War trend shows an increasing expansion of the military establishment in the developing nations. The desire for advanced military system has increased. The number of developing nations that compete with each other to acquire such system has also risen. In today's international system there is no supranational authority capable of enforcing order and in providing security. So, in the power constellation nations suffer from a sense of insecurity. To attain security from being dominated, attacked or annihilated by others the nations are driven to acquire more and more power. This process in turn renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since no one can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units and conflicting interests power rivalry ensues and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation begins. Much of the dilemma is that states can never

9. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 15.

10. Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, (Baltimore : John Hopkins Press, 1975), pp. 147-165.

be sure that the security measures of others are intended only for security and not aggression.

There is however a growing shift from military biased classical definition of security which is gradually coming to be influenced with the conceptions of real politik. Specially in the context of the underdeveloped and developing small nations of the Third World the security concerns are entirely different. It is increasingly realised that it is poverty, not the lack of military hardware, that is responsible for insecurity across the 'southern half of the planet'.¹¹ So, these days while defining the objectives of the national security the stress is more on fighting the poverty and underdevelopment in all spheres of national life. McNamara very aptly observes: "Security means development: Security is not military hardware, though it may include it, security is not military force, though it may involve it, security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development, and without development there can be no security"¹². In some developing countries, "failing to bring about rapid socio-economic development" has come to be considered "endangering security of state".¹³ The emergence of this school of thought creates a new era for substantial understanding of real needs for security through development in Third World countries. Here the concern is more with "both the maintenance of the flow of vital economic resources and the non-military aspect of nation state functions".¹⁴

The nations perceive security differently depending on their vulnerability, own peculiar circumstances and priorities. In the Third World context a reasonable conception can be one that combines all

11. Robert McNamara, *The Essence of Security* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 149.

12. *ibid*

13. Abdul-Monem M. Al Masbat, *op cit.*

14. Annette Baker Fox, "The Small States in the International System, 1919-1969", *International Journal*, No. 24, 1968-1969, pp. 751-764.

or most of the ideas contained in the viewpoints discussed in the foregoing. The abstract values of sovereignty and territorial integrity can not have enduring appeal for hungry masses while the question of developments or wellbeing presupposes sovereign existence of the state. So, however small and poor the country may be the military aspect of security can not be ignored altogether. But the internal cohesion and strength of the state will be the inevitable precondition for its enduring security. It rests largely on the strong sense of nationhood achieved, among other things, through the wellbeing of the people. ✓

✓ It has always been difficult to choose between the conflicting requirements of defence and development. ✓ Even in the affluent countries the delicate choice between gun or butter often leads to complex debate. ✓ The predicament of small states with their scarce resource is indeed acute. A heavy defence budget is a definite

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strain on small states' small exchequer and can be effected only by curtailing some of the essential developmental programmes. At the same time some minimum defence requirements affording the country at least a deterrent capability can not perhaps be overlooked. So small and poor states are often required to carry out a difficult task of striking a delicate balance between the two. ✓

✓ In the understanding of security we must have a comprehensive approach. ✓ We must understand that security is something indivisible. It can not be achieved piece-meal. Because threat to security anywhere is a threat to security everywhere. It is not only the threat to territorial integrity that should concern us, the threats

developed to all other aspects of national life—political, economic or cultural—should be considered equally alarming. The achievement of security must be attempted totally, for insecurity—in a part will ultimately lead to the insecurity of the whole.

Small States in National Security Context

After having developed some thought on national security we shall now have, in its context, a look at the small states having problems of security mainly because of their being small. As there has been proliferation of new approaches to the security of Third World countries concerns are also expressed these days for the security of the small states. But which are those countries small enough to be concerned about their security? There is considerable debate as to the smallness of a state, its precise definition and exact identification. Are there suitable indicators by which the smallness can be measured? Then how can the abstract value of security strength or security of a state be assessed? Not only that no satisfactory answer can be found to such enquiries they also give rise to further questions: How small is the small? What is the limit of smallness beyond which one can be assured of a country's security? The small states, it is argued "is as meaningless as international system, which varies through time".¹⁵ Indeed the term small is very relative and it can seldom be explained in absolute term. Even the scholars and statesmen sharply differ as to the usefulness of the category of smallness for any analytical purpose. It is a matter more of status incongruity which is nothing new in international system and it keeps changing through the passage to time.

Attempts can however be made to assess, the state of security prospects of a country with indicators like land size, population and resource or combination of them although they are not only factors contributing towards the country's security potential. They

15. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 5.

are however major contributing factors towards the country's security provided many other tangible and intangible conditions that go into making a state strong are already fulfilled. Mere size of land area or population does not suggest much of the strength of a country which is further linked with the question of how much of the land area or population is really productive. How does vast land area of Libya help her getting status commensurate to her size? Or how does the vast population of the most developing countries help them with their rickety resource base in providing improved security? Primarily because of demographic limitations, most of the Arab countries do not wield power commensurate to their vast oil resources. Even when endowed with favourable size, population and resource a country like, say, Nigeria with all her national integration problems can not aspire to rank as high as her size, population and wealth will suggest. These are, no doubt, important elements of national security, but a certain stage of national cohesion, political stability, economic development and social progress, have a great deal to do with security.

In recent times there are improved method of determining relative status of the countries and rank them accordingly. One such method can be to assess the defence capability—a vital aspect of national security on the basis of Gross National Product and defence budget, one reflecting basic long term military potential and another, current defence preparedness. It is argued that "GNP subsumes all the elements that constitute military power of a state".¹⁶ The argument may appear sweeping but is substantially true. The GNP is certainly an indicator of a country's level of development — economic, industrial and technological affording on not the country a sustained production of war making materials. Similarly, a heavy defence budget suggests of a well equipped and well cared military expected to meet a country's security requirements.

16. *Vulnerability : Small States in the Global Society*, Report of a Commonwealth Consultative Group, (London, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House), 1985, p. 8.

The important feature of the findings on the basis of this method is that vast majority of the countries of the Third World fall within the category of small by scoring value less than one as against highest of 150 by the USA. This cut-off point for determining smallness is somewhat arbitrary. Then there are other loopholes in the method. If only defence capabilities are the criterion for security how would we categorise countries like Cuba or Vietnam. While Vietnam's military capability has been a legend in recent time and the impact of Cuba's forces is felt far beyond her border both these countries with negligible GNP rank rather low in this method. The same goes for Israel. She ranks quite below Egypt although the military superiority of the former not only over Egypt but all adjacent Arab countries taken together is recognised all over the world. There are some abstract values that go into enhancing a country's defence capability. Such findings are therefore misleading at places and clearly suggests for other essential factors to be combined with the present ones for a more realistic result.

A Commonwealth consultative group on the vulnerability of small states in the global society has considered population in their report as an important basis for determining small states requiring special steps for their security requirements. "For although composite criteria combining population with other indicators like total national income or land area have sometime been used in the various attempts over the years to delineate a special grouping of small states for economic purpose, no accepted classification on this composite basis has emerged. Population is the one indicator common to all such definitions¹⁷ So, by using population as the key indicator of smallness the group has fixed an upper limit of population at one million implying that countries with population within this limit "tend to experience special problems particularly associated with small size"¹⁸ and having bearing on security.

17. *ibid*, p. 9.

18. *ibid*.

The classification again appears too simplistic for any practical purpose. The consultative group, perhaps aware of such fact, concedes in the report itself that. "All cut off points are by their nature arbitrary and may seem unfair to those just outside the limit. Certainly from the stand point of national security many Third World states with much longer populations tend to confront a similar range of difficulties".¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the consultative group itself broke the limit set by them by including for their study several more countries with larger population because such countries shared "many characteristics" with all the small states in their respective region.

'In practical terms, smallness eludes a realistic definition' and understandably a few have attempted that. Talukder Maniruzzaman a noted political scientist and one of the few attempting it is bold and unambiguous. However his definition that "small states are states with very low war making capability"²⁰ concerns itself primarily with military aspect of security. Then again what is the limit of 'very low' and who is to determine it ?

According to another definition the small states are those that can not guarantee their security exclusively through their own

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capabilities and must therefore rely on cooperation with other states processes, institution or on attempts to balance or manipulate forces in the international system".²¹ Although a bit elaborated,

19. Hans H Indorf, *Strategies for Small-State Survival*, ISIS Research Note, (Malaysia), 1985, p. 3.

20. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 14.

21. *Security Policies of Developing Countries*, *op cit.*, p. 27.

this definition has essentially a similar approach and does not cater for factors and conditions affecting the comprehensive security of a country. In our view the smallness of the countries in this context is associated more with what can be called a Third World syndrome in which the nations are subjected to a stigma of smallness in terms of their total capacity to deter threats to their security because of inherent and enormous socio-economic and political problems of those nations irrespective of the size of their land area, population and even at times enormous wealth.

The smallness can be associated with variety of other factors and conditions imposing limitation on a nation's capacity. The fragility of state structure in the Third World accounts in a big way for the limited capacity of a nation to take a bold posture externally in strengthening security. Whether nation is big or small is manifested more in their total capacity to ensure its own perceived security. Considering enormous socio-economic problems, political unrests, a constant balancing of defence and development, resource scarcity, adverse geographical circumstanceses most countries in the Third World are indeed in weak state syndrome.

Sources of Insecurity

The root of the insecurity prevailing in the small states of the Third World is to be viewed in a historical perspective. Over one hundred twenty five nation states constituting what has come to be known as the Third World are, in a large measure, the product of the process of decolonization after the second World War. Most of these countries were former colonies of European powers and bear many of the legacies of the colonial exploitation. Their transition from the status of a colony to that of a nation state is both pregnant with possibilities and beset with pitfalls. Being late starters in nation building they are far behind the stage of development attained by their counter parts in the developed world i.e. Europe and its offspring in North America and Australia. When the nation states were

borne some three hundred years ago in Europe it was accompanied by a series of upheavals and the process of nation building was long, difficult and at times violent. It brought in its wake enormous turmoils of the magnitude of Cromwellian episode in Britain, French revolutions, Napoleonic wars and so on. And "it is only now, following a series of interstate wars and two world wars, and after formal and informal changes of population during the last two centuries, that the European states seem to have settled down to natural borders"²² and "as a result of centuries old process of development have reached a position which can be referred to as one of 'unconditional legitimacy'"²³ capable of containing internal violence. The conditions under which the nation states developed through centuries are present today in equal measure in Third World states. So the tension and trauma experienced by Europe for several centuries are likely to be repeated in the Third World for quite sometime to come. The conflict situation in the Third World today is in fact pointer to that fear and apprehension. In this milieu the states—small and weak will find it more difficult to survive before the process takes a final shape.

Although, in regional context, physical pressures on the small-states are frequent in the shape of territorial incursions, the threats are very often political rather than military in nature. It is true that

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some of the regional powers in the Third World did physically intervene in weak neighbouring countries, but it was possible only because the congenial condition for such intervention was already

22. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 2.

23. Mohammed Ayoob, *op cit.*, p. 44

existing in most of those neighbouring countries which suffered from weak institutional structure, lack of national integration and existence of unassimilated ethnic groups. By their nature small states are equally susceptible to this type of nonmilitary threat. They can also be too easily penetrated by foreign social and cultural influences. Many of the threats posed to the small states emanates primarily from within their boundaries rather than from an external source. In most circumstances the 'external threat' has been seen only to augment the problems of insecurities that already exist within the state boundary.

The small states are more vulnerable physically largely because they can be seen as potentially easy victims for external aggression in all its guises. Some cases of blatant intervention in small states underscore this point. Indeed their very despondency grown out smallness i.e small resource, small size and population and consequently a small capacity to deter can be said to have acted almost as a positive incentive, attracting efforts to interfere and exploit.

In analysing the potential threats which small states are likely to face, the point must be clear that the threats thus catalogued do not necessarily relate only to the small states. They are in varying degrees applicable to almost all Third World countries, regardless of size. The principal difference is that if small states do become a target for any of these threats they are less capable than other countries of offering adequate resistance. Moreover should a threat materialise into an actual intervention it is far more likely to seriously damage the core values of small states. The extent to which a given small state is subject to an actual threat of external intervention is also determined by the distinctive political realities pertaining to a particular region. The insecurity suffered by a small state may be only due also to the fact that it has just happened to be juxtaposed in a particular geopolitical setting.

Although the insecurities prevailing in the small states can be attributed to a wide variety of factors we will try to depict the threat

scenario that usually develops for them only in territorial, political and economic context.

Threat to Territorial Security

In an environment of irredentism and poorly defined interstate borders the territorial incursions are as likely as they were earlier in the similar circumstances. There is a measure of sophistication in pre-strike political maneuvering these days but the military aggressions are seldom carried out without classical shock surprise and brutality. Such military actions are initiated by strong regional power, stronger neighbours and even great and superpowers. As before the usual targets are weak, small or disadvantaged states adjacent to offending country. The pattern is more or less same when regional military power like Vietnam invades Laos and Kampuchea, a stronger neighbour Libya sent troops to Chad, the USA storms a tiny neighbour Grenada and Soviet Union occupies Afghanistan. The motives are usually the pursuit of hegemonistic ambitions and sphere of influence. The goals are not always outright annexation and sometimes limited to what has come to be known as punitive action only. Even when the limited military actions are initiated to force some political outcome the accompanying ugliness and brutality is same. And in all these cases the inevitable victims, barring a few, are the small states incapable of putting up resistance. Small states have experienced like other states also and increase in the activities of arms, drugs and other type smuggling involving at least a paramilitary action. The small states with little or no security agencies operating for the purpose become ideal ground for such illegal trafficking.

Threats to Political Security

Experiences and events show that small states can be easily coerced into agreements, alliance or formal economic relations. Such coercions are common with land locked small countries. There are often political and economic pressure for policy changes exercise

by large states. Small states can be pressurised to the will of the states with economic and military leverage. Attempts are sometimes made to co-opt a small state into major global military geopolitical arenas either by its agreement to provide facilities for bases or by its open commitment to a sphere of influence. While small states like other states stand to benefit from interaction with the rest of the international community their integrity and penetration of culture and core values. It is relatively easy for the major states to threaten the core social cultural and political values of small societies by influencing the media, nonformal education system, coopting a sector of the elite or alliances in particular with business sector or elements of the military.

Threat to Economic Security

Threats to economic security seldom take overt form but they are more pervasive. The threats are mostly concerned with the ever present dangers for economic independence, economic stability and economic progress arising from inherent limitation of resources. There are dangers also from their exposure to wider variety of relatively strong external economic forces. Limited economic capacity of small states seldom allow them to take security measures and to purchase necessary security related materials. At the most practical level of military or para military needs the combined lack of productive population and financial resources means that most that small states are unable to muster the requisite forces adequately equipped and trained to guard their borders or their air and maritime space effectively. As a result there are frequent encroachments of small states sovereignty particularly in the form of trespass of EEZ by foreign fishing vessels. Not only the practice is disturbing from security point of view, it also eats into the scarce economic vitality of the country.

The sovereignty of the resource poor small states is, in many cases, greatly compromised by excessive dependence on foreign aid. A pervasive donor influence and interference accompanying the aid

restricts the choice and options in the country's economic, social, cultural and political life. In economic front alone donor perspectives and aid conditionalities have been having pervasive influences on the investment and ownership patterns, organisational set up, management styles, technology, distributions system, exchange rate pricing policy and monetary and fiscal policy"²⁴ The entire experience of the aid dependency, common with the developing countries is aptly expressed in the following. "The debt has become a depressive and chaotic actor that subordinates national policies to uncontrollable external factors."²⁵

Also a high dependence, on the part of small states, on external trade while providing enlarged economic opportunities result in greater exposure to external vicissitudes. The problems are compounded by the fact that many of their exports are of either agricultural or mineral origin for which prices are unstable and often dictated by developed countries importing them. The vagaries international trade and marketing as well as the existing world economic order impose considerable restrictions on the independent exercise of economic policies in the developing countries.

Security Options for the Small States

With all of their inherent weaknesses and enormous disadvantages the small states are, however, sovereign entities and legitimate members of the international community. The small states phenomenon is nothing new in international politics. And the discrimination between great and small power is a legacy of the past centuries when it was for the first time formalised in the treaty of Chaumont 1814. In an International Order that prevailed then the small powers were indeed neglected. But things have improved with the proliferation of a large number of small states who in the present world order,

24. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, "Counting the Costs of Foreign Aid in Bangladesh", M. Abdul Hafiz, Abdur Rob Khan (eds.), *Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect*, (Dhaka: BISS, 1986), p. 147.

25. *ibid*, p. 150.

enjoy both overwhelming majority and sovereign equal right with great powers. The provision of Collective Security incorporated in the United Nations Charter stands guarantee at least theoretically to the sovereignty of all including the smallest. These days an "International respect for the principle of sovereignty constitutes the greatest nominal protection for the weak".

With such qualitative changes in the international environment as well as with the proliferation of institutions including international law and world opinion, the small does not anymore mean helpless. However a small state can not totally rely upon only other's respect for its sovereignty or security. One has to bargain, earn and

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maintain it whenever possible from a position of strength manipulating whatever asset it has at its disposal. How can that be done? What kind of policy should it adopt for its security? What can be its strategy for survival? How can it be stronger than what it actually is?

Security perception is the most basic element in evolving the state's security policy. A nation must be able to spell out what all are to be secured. What are the core values of the nation? What priorities it would like to have in pursuing different aspects of security? A nation which is clear about its security objectives is in a great measure equipped to tackle with its security hazards.

Basic Deterrence Capability — A Must

Given the limitations of the small states in most case a full-fledged security establishment may not be possible to achieve. But it is

reasonable to expect that states, however, small they may be, can always master a satisfactory level of deterrence capability well within their means. The idea is only to make the potential offender hesitant and aware of the risks involved. Then there is scope to augment such physical deterrence through various other means. Particularly in the context of the small states these 'other means' are of significance to make the deterrence effective. Before we examine what all options can be availed by a small state to enhance its security it is pertinent to look, in some depth, into the military aspect of deterrence.

A full time military establishment, we would argue, is of absolute necessity for any country irrespective of its size and resource to achieve at least a semblance of strength and give some credence to its external policy. Although the cost involved is normally a strain on the economy of a small state, such force is however a necessary evil and can seldom be dispensed with. Apart from providing adequate deterrence value, in many cases it can, depending on its quality, hold back the aggressor for a length of time enough for international response to reach. It is significant because in that case the aggressor fails to achieve the acceptance of the 'fait accompli' by international community. Once the quantum of deterrence force is decided they must be established with "as high a level of training and equipment as is appropriate and maintained, with high level of motivation and morale."²⁶ It is difficult to suggest any standard military outfit for deterrence and it will vary according to its role and purpose. A hard hitting and disciplined military duly backed by citizen force or volunteer reserves is however considered capable of paying the bill i.e. holding the adversary at bay while other means can be put into motion.

Once the basic deterrence capacity is attained it needs to be augmented through other instruments of security. One such instrument is said to be the foreign policy and diplomacy. The smalls,

26. *Vulnerability : Small States in the Global Society, op. cit., p. 4.*

through the ages survived through skilful diplomatic maneuver as one important strategy for survival. Even today they can compensate much of their security deficiency with high quality of diplomacy. Some small states like to secure their entity in a state of neutrality while others prefer to pursue Non-alignment to steer clear of the turbulence of international power relations. There are optimists who firmly believe in international response as an effective measure to security. They in fact echo the UN Charter declaration of the 'Inherent right of individual and collective self defense'. There are also prescription for bilateral and regional arrangements for deterring military attack. There is growing trend for close regional linkage to contain a threat from neighboring region. Alliance system is sometimes advocated for adding to small's limited power—the power of the ally although it is fraught with the danger of being caught in the vortex of cold war.

The small states are often advised to be up-to-date in their intelligence gathering and keeping posted with latest security information to avoid being superised with unanticipated catastrophe. Also an increased involvement of small states in various agencies of the United Nations and furtherance of international linkages are considered of use in achieving a measure of immunity from security threats. It is difficult to pin point however what exact instrument should a small state adopt to enhance its security. A multidimensional approach is perhaps the best. One must try maximum means while concentrating on a few so that he is always left with some alternative. Let us now examine how some of the 'other instruments of security' can augment the basic deterrence capability of a small state.

Diplomacy — "A Small State's First Line of Defence"?

"A prudent and well thought out foreign policy is a small state's first line of defence".²⁷ Much of the country's military and econo-

27. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 25.

mic deficiencies will have to be compensated through a skilful foreign policy management. A great deal of security objectives will be met if through the diplomacy the small state can first avoid, then mitigate or resolve the conflict. Diplomacy, if skilfully carried out "will tap the hidden sources of national strength"²⁸ fully substantiating the efforts of the meagre security force of a small state. But how do we expect that kind of diplomacy in a country that suffers from an inherent limitations of resources practically in all spheres of national life. If the country does not afford an elaborate military apparatus for the security how does it provide a first class diplomatic corps capable of delivering the good? The small states are likely to suffer from the same kind of constraint, as in other sectors in having an elaborate foreign office, adequate missions in foreign capitals, and sufficient representation in the international bodies. The lack of skill and expertise attainable only through expensive higher training, the absence of research and analysis cell, failure in access to authentic information affect the quality of policy input. Then the poorly staffed missions in the foreign capital seldom match the superior diplomatic resources of the missions of the larger country. As a result the poor small country's diplomacy rarely catches up with the events and trends having bearing on security.

However with judicious utilisation of the resources it is possible to derive benefit even from such dismal state of things. The idea is to get best out of what the country's resource allows. It is not really necessary for a small state to have the luxury of foreign missions in each capital. They can be very selective in having missions preferably only in the countries of the neighbourhood, superpowers, great powers, regional power with relevance and countries with special religious and cultural affinities. With the proliferation of various forums like the Commonwealth, the OIC, the

28. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, Fourth Edition, p. 136, quoted in Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.*

Nonaligned Movement, Group of 77 and many other regional political organisations the contact points for diplomacy have increased manifold. These are the vantage points where the representatives even of the small state are in a position to avail equal opportunity of brinkmanship with those of big countries. Then also with the development of summitry, ministerial meets and frequent official visits there are plenty of occasions that can be availed for personal diplomacy by the leaders and officials. While a number of countries tend to treat these occasions as more of ceremonies and rituals the wise ones will make best use of them.

The representations in important world bodies also enhance the prospect of the country's projection and compensate largely for the deficiencies of little or no representation in many countries.

Then the level of diplomacy and its skill is not always relative to the training and the size of its establishment. Diplomatic acumen has sometimes been displayed by a number of small powers and their leader who seem to have learnt "in the hard school of experience" without either expensive acquisition of formal training from prestigious seat of learning or an elaborate foreign service establishment. With an innovative outlook the people have sometimes achieved it. Algeria, a hardline Arab state with a socialist order at home maintains an excellent relations with the USA which is the largest importer of Algerian goods today. Algerian diplomacy reached a peak with successful mediation in the US-Iran hostage crisis. Algeria's skill is attributed not as much to her formal acquisition of diplomacy as to her wide perspective achieved through her long independence struggle. The small kingdom of Jordan has, with the personal diplomacy of King Hussain, sustained through many crises in a volatile part of the world. The low profile diplomacy of the Saudis provided not only a measure of stability for the Kingdom but also an equilibrium in Middle East politics. Both of them are known to have achieved such acumen in a hard way often prompted by an instinct of survival.

Neutrality and Security

Can the adoption of neutrality provide a guarantee against insecurity? In present international system of growing interdependence neutrality becomes exceedingly difficult, if not illusive. Many Third World small states, weary of both internal and external crises seek to resolve their problems through neutrality least realising that neutrality is easy to be desired but indeed hard to be won. Mere proclaiming neutral does not ensure neutrality for a nation. It has to be recognised by not only the major powers but also by the countries in the region particularly the big ones who are likely to violate the neutrality of the aspirant country. Even when the neutrality of a nation is recognised what is the guarantee that it will be honoured?

The neutral status of several European small states i.e. Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark and Norway was trampled under the feet of Hitler's army when these countries were occupied during the Second World War. Only countries escaping the violence of war in European theatre was Switzerland and Sweden both of which built long tradition of neutrality. The neutrality is not the product only of wishes, it has to be worked for and the international community needs to be convinced of a country's neutral conduct under all circumstances. Both Swiss and Swedish neutrality is hard won reality—internationally respected and recognised either formally or informally. Austrian neutrality, a post-War phenomenon is yet to be tested by time. These examples of neutrality however pertain to very stable society militarily capable in ensuring the inviolability of their neutrality.

Do such circumstances i.e. credibility of neutral practice, internal stability and strong military to safeguard neutral position exist in any small state in the Third World? Some have professed neutrality but few practised it. While internal cohesion and stability are rare, small state professing neutrality is seldom militarily strong. These coupled with many other disadvantageous factors did not

allow small states in the Third World to achieve neutrality although many desired it. Moreover they did not get enough time really to build up a tradition of neutral behaviour in international relations.

Laos, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal are some of the Third World countries which at some stage or other tried or wanted to try neutrality without success. The Malaysian leaders' urge for a neutral South East Asian Zone did not meet much response. Acquiring security from a status of neutrality is certainly a prudent proposition but congenial atmosphere needed for achieving it is far from existence at the moment. The strict nonalignment of Burma is however an exception. With the record of her foreign policy conduct, posture in international relations and her peaceful border with all her neighbours Burma "seems to be moving towards her destiny of being the first neutral country of this part of the world".²⁹

Alliance versus Nonalignment

Alliance is looked upon by the small states as a device for acquiring additional strength from the strength of other nation. As the small states perceive threat from another country many of them tend to enter into alliance with a larger country in seeking security in such arrangements. In post-World War II era in existing bipolarity of power this inevitably meant aligning with either of the super-powers. The threat to the small state usually comes from neighbouring larger states. So a threatened small state is not likely to gain much by forming alliance with another equally small or weak state. So it has been found more profitable to form alliance with great/super power outside the region. Not only it gives adequate sense of security to the threatened small states it also ensures some flow of costly military hardware either as aid or at reduced cost. By one account treaties forming alliance between nations during period from 1945 to 1980 number at least 54 out of which 46 (71%) was

29. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op cit.*, p. 31.

concluded between Third World and non-Third World states. In a general decline in Third World security, it is interesting to note, is due, among others, to much reliance by small state on such alliance. A study of 84 guarantees through written treaties by great/super power reveals that 50% of these alliances were non-effective when the need actually arose.³⁰ This clearly points that the super/great alliances are not only unreliable they can be even destructive at times.

Frustrated by such consequence of alliances and with the bitter memory of colonial repression small states at a later stage turned to Nonalignment to assert their newly gained independence. Nonalignment is a particular political posture in international relations ensuring avoidance of military pact with power blocs and at the same time reserving the right to participate in international politics. Adherent to nonalignment which number 119 today propagate an anti-alliance ideology as a measure to ensure peaceful coexistence and resolution of global tension. But how far does it help ensuring the national security of the small state? While projecting the independent identity of a new state it may contribute to the security of the small state only to the extent it helps promotion of cohesion within that state.

Although the Nonaligned movement is on the whole a preserve of the Third world, it has little contribution in the conflict resolution in the region. Interstate wars with outside support are not the only threat to the security of the Third World small states. As per statistics available out of 54 wars fought in the Third World as many as 39 were purely interstate war without any outside involvement. Twenty six of these involve Nonaligned state including India and Egypt—two prominent pioneers of Nonaligned movement.³¹ Any threat to the security of Third World states are most likely to come from powerful neighbours. Thus the Nonalignment with any power bloc does not necessarily guarantee security of Third World states.

30. *ibid.*, pp. 39-54.

31. *ibid.*, p. 36.

Any more Options ?

In addition to what all have been discussed in the foregoing, are there any more options ? There are hints and suggestions from various quarters dealing with national security studies. Talking about the security of small, mini and micro states there suggestions to look for bilateral and regional arrangements which range between defence arrangements and close political association both looking after most of the small state's external affairs as well as security needs.

Regional linkage has been stressed as an important security measure. Making good neighbours is the essence of it. Many a nation find it profitable to adapt themselves to the surrounding. Particularly Singapore takes it as a cornerstone of her foreign policy totally identifying herself with problems, prospects and aspirations of the region. Special relationship with the neighbours considerably reduces the security problems of a small state because the main

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sources of threat are thus eliminated. Regionalist movements are these days on the increase. The small states have special advantage in joining them both for reasons of status and security. Regional violence in the developing world can be contained, reduced and perhaps stopped by developing regional cooperation organisation. For all its weaknesses, the Arab League, for example, has repeatedly proved during recent years that it enjoys at least some moral authority, which has enabled it to influence the management of certain conflict of internal and external nature. This is true also of the Organization of African Unity which would to a great extent reduce the tensions which surfaced when former colonies gained their independence.

The small states, it is suggested, can make use of 'thousand sources of resistance' which can be awakened in a nation through motivation during a crisis. Although there are cases of intervention in the Third world small states there are few instances of occupation of another country by purely an alien force. With the revolutionisation of communications and media and an introduction of jet travels and 'hot line' diplomacy it becomes seldom possible either to annex or occupy another country without causing equal damage to offending country in some form or other. If at all an 'unequal war' is imposed on a small country, it is not necessary that the weak will perish. In a defensive war, even the small states stand a fair chance of winning because they are only to blunt the aggression and that can be done with a much smaller force, The history is replete with many instance where the superior enemy was humiliated before the resistance put up by unconventional forces of a small country. Finns did it agaist the Russians during the Second World War. Vietnam's glorious resistance of a superpower is a recent history.

Domestic Management Key to Security

In post colonial era most of the newly emergent states in the Third World "have the form but not the substance of nationhood"³². In a significant way they "are not nations in being but only in hope." The socio-economic and political under-development is chronic and pervasive. Their domestic scenes are characterised by "increasing ethnic and class conflicts, recurring rioting and mob violence, frequent military coup-de-etat the dominance of unstable personalistic leaders who often pursued disastrous economic and social policies widespread and blatant corruption....., arbitrary infringement of the rights and liberties of citizens, declining standard of bureaucratic efficiency and performance, the pervasive alienation of urban political

32. L.W. Pye, *Politics, Personality and Nation Building*, (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1969), p. 3.

33. Ruport Emerson, *From Empire to Nations*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 94.

groups, the loss of authority by legislature and courts and the fragmentation, and at times complete disintegration of broadly based political parties.³⁴ Added to these are many more symptoms of the nation states in formation stage. Almost everywhere there is lack of national integration, internal cohesion stability while ruling elites invariably suffer from legitimacy crises. There grows neither political institution nor economic infrastructure.

What sort of security are these states expected to provide for themselves? With the state of things they are in, can these countries be expected to effect order internally and deterrance externally? Can they pursue various alternative means to secure their existence in a turbulent world? Would they be credible actors in carrying out effective diplomacy in international arena? Do they enjoy enough credibility to project their viewpoints in world bodies? Not much of

For the small states the paramount need at the moment is to be able to consolidate first their newly gained independence and then earnestly embark on a nation building task.

encouraging answers to these questions can be found for obvious reason. A mismanaged home is likely to have its negative impact everywhere. Whichever way they want to pursue their security efforts be it diplomacy, neutrality, alliance or Nonalignment the most important prerequisite is a secured home base. Only if it is there the diplomacy will work. Once the diplomats represent a stable society they can talk or bargain from a position of strength and will certainly be heard. If neutrality is desired, it will be honoured. If alliance is made it will not be at least one "between wolf and sheep" pushing the small state to a position of servile partner. In every endeavour to enhance security inevitably an internally well managed state will fare better.

34. S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 3.

“The stability and wellbeing of a society are necessary prerequisites for domestic security. In reality, domestic security and external security are to some extent interdependent. In many cases the greater the degree of domestic security, the less is the vulnerability to external threat”.³⁵ There are evidences that the external forces are encouraged to meddle in a country's domestic affairs whenever internal dissension crops up and becomes exposed to the outsiders. Apart from internal instability, the factors like persistent violation of human rights, the physical spill over of domestic unrest, harbouring political dissident of another country etc. can prompt external interference or even intervention. So, a prudent management of domestic affairs has as great deal to do with the country's security.

For the small states the paramount need at the moment is to be able to consolidate first their newly gained independence and then earnestly embark on a nation building task. While much will depend on the ingenuity of the national leaders to enforce a kind of order in the country the nation building is however a long continuous process. Though it can not be achieved instantly it must start immediately. The intention is to make the country a ‘strong state’ and not just a strong power. Once these countries can be rated as ‘strong state’ through its internal cohesion and strength irrespective of its size, population and resource endowments it will enjoy a built in security and be likely to ‘survive and even thrive. The small states must work for that goal. And they will certainly be adequately insulated from constant pinpricks of insecurities.

Instinct for Survival - An Ultimate Guarantor

Status incongruity of states is an old phenomenon. Despite their all limitation, sufferings and trauma the small states do exist in the world scene. There are instances of pygmies coexisting with giants. They somehow have developed such a modicum of living together. A small country like Finland up well giants like Soviet Union and

35. *Vulnerability : Small States in the Global Society, op cit., p. 36.*

Germany through a very difficult period. They fought, resisted and then existed through the turbulence. Even today it lives alongside a superpower and that too retaining her own political philosophy. It is difficult to explain for such seemingly impossible phenomenon: There is instance of Israel living among powerful Arab adversaries, although the context is different. The city state of Singapore lives comfortably with her much bigger neighbours without coming into clash with anyone of them. Burma has given a good account of living peacefully and honorably with China. A much smaller and inferior Vietnam stood up before a super power and not only blunted the later's offensives but also compelled her for an ignominious retreat from Indo China. Even today we find the ragtag Afghan Mujahedeens resisting another superpower. What can these phenomena be attributed to? When faced with an unwanted reality and adversity a nation, however weak it may be, grows its own dynamics to resist and survive. An inherent instinct for survival pushes a nation for necessary innovation to secure itself from impending threats.