Understanding National Security as Contextual: The Implications for Small State Defence Policy

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UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL SECURITY AS CONTEXTUAL: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SMALL STATE DEFENCE POLICY

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This article proposes that the concept of national security is contextual, and therefore is viewed differently by small and large states. Additionally, it is argued that state military responses within their overarching national security approach should reflect the unique demands of their specific strategic environment. This proposition is based on analysis of the national security literature of selected large and small state cases. The national security discourses of United States, China, and Russia indicate a threat-based approach to defence policy which focuses on constructing a narrative around competing actors as threats to global stability. On the other hand, the small state discourses selected from New Zealand, Poland, Canada, and Chile, focus on defining and articulating the strategic environment they find themselves in rather than on threats. Despite these different perspectives, both small and large states employ the same model for developing their military contribution to national security, which may be seen as problematic for smaller actors as government and citizens' expectations of state militaries increase in the post-Cold War international environment.

Keywords: National Security, military forces, small states, defence policy, international security

Introduction

In August 2020, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) began its largest operational commitment since the 1999 deployment to East Timor.[1] The mobilisation of 1,288 military personnel was not in response to an existential threat to state sovereignty or territory, but instead to assume the security responsibilities of the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) facilities established by the New Zealand government in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.[2] The pandemic deployment is not unique in the post-Cold

War world which has seen the risk of conventional interstate warfare diminish, notwithstanding the recent Russian actions in Ukraine, and the increased use of military forces in missions outside of their traditional role of protecting state interests from external aggression.[3] National security issues such as counter-terrorism, disaster relief and response to human and animal epidemics are examples of formerly contingent tasks that have increasingly become the military norm.[4] This expansive use of military assets, more broadly for national security purposes, challenges the traditional paradigms of the military profession and moreover our understanding of the role of military forces in society today. For large states with significant resource pools, these increased demands are met by developing new capabilities to add to their military structures such as the specialised information operations, cybersecurity, and civil affairs functions now seen in large militaries. Small states, however, must incorporate these new tasks within their existing structures and budgets, in order to maintain the ability to respond to the full spectrum of military operations. But is the small state intention for full spectrum operations still feasible? Or even realistic, given the disparity in military power between small and large states? Would small states not be better served by focusing on those military capabilities that are most relevant to their specific national security challenges rather than expending their limited resources on equipment and training that is seldom used in the interests of the state?

The purpose of this article is to compare the national security discourse in selected large and small states and identify the different contexts through which these different types of actors pursue their national security interests. It will examine national security documents from the United States, Russia, and China, to present the dominant themes in large state national security discourse. These three cases were chosen as they are recognised as the preeminent military powers in the global community[5] and demonstrably exert the most significant influence on the structure and nature of the international environment.[6] To demonstrate the contrasting lens through which small states view national security, an analysis of the defence literature of four small states, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, and Poland will be presented. A Defence Studies[7] lens was applied during the analysis of national security literature of the cases selected for this article, to focus specifically on the military contribution to the overall national security response.[8] This article proposes that as the concept of *national security* is contextual, defence policy, and its resultant military strategy, should then differ between small and large actors, and more specifically reflect the unique security challenges of their strategic environment.

Traditionally, the term national security has been interchangeable with military security.[9] External threats to the state's existence or its territory are viewed as most important and consequently are met by the state's most destructive instrument of national power, its military forces. Contemporary concepts of national security, however, incorporate broader social aspects such as economic, human, and environmental security

which require responses that are largely non-military in nature.[10] Despite the apparent change in emphasis of national security operations, contemporary military forces remain organised and equipped to defend the state from other state military aggression. The new national security expectations have been incorporated into existing organisational structures and within extant or reduced budgets.[11] For large states or resource rich small states such as Israel or Singapore, this approach may be both achievable and appropriate given their available resources and the range of potential threats to their national interests across the globe. For most small states, however, financial and physical resource limitations make meeting these broader expectations within their existing military structures and budgets a challenge.

Small states are defined in this work as those recognised members of the United Nations which maintain standing military forces and are unable to significantly change the nature of their strategic environment.[12] This definition is based on the concept of relative power, which focuses on a state's use of power in the international community, rather than its physical possession of human and material resources.[13] Developing and maintaining a national security apparatus with the full panoply of military capabilities appears an inefficient approach for small states which often lack the capacity to generate sufficient power and competency across all military contingencies. Indeed, the small state preference for collective security arrangements through alliances is reflective of their belief that autonomous military operations, even in defence of the state, are largely aspirational.

This preference for collective security approaches leads to the question: does alliance membership necessitate the small state imitation of larger military partner force structures and capabilities? Moreover, traditional collective agreements do not necessarily offer solutions for more localised security concerns. Interoperability is defined by NATO as "… the ability to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve Allied tactical, operational and strategic objectives."[14] The discourse around interoperability, in the military context, mostly refers to the dimension of *technical interoperability*.[15] Technical interoperability refers to the ability for communications, information, and logistics systems to interact and share data at levels that enhance multinational operations.[16] However, for small states behavioural interoperability may be a better approach for contributing more constructively to collective security operations. Behavioural interoperability is related to perception and action such as doctrinal and cultural interoperability both of which are influenced by state constitutional, legal and customary elements.[17] Under behavioural interoperability, small states could effectively interact with larger defence partners without the obligation to develop and maintain expensive military capabilities that are seldom deployed in direct support of their national security interests. This proposition is premised on the assertion that the concept of national security is viewed differently by small and large states.

Large and Small State National Security Approaches

In differentiating between how national security is enacted by small and large states, actors are categorised based on the *structural power* they exert within the international system. Structural power, as it is used here, refers to the ability of a state to individually alter the overall structure of the system in which they exist.[18] As small states are seen to be lacking "structurally meaningful"[19] capabilities such as significant military might or a large economy, they are viewed as structurally irrelevant to the international system of states, in that their existence or demise will not impact the structure of the current Westphalian system.[20] Realist perspectives, such as those put forward by Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, assert that an international system is structured exclusively by its major powers.[21]

For realists, it is the interactions between large actors within an environment that shape the structures, rules, and dynamics of the system in which they exist.[22] Larger states are those actors able to resist system level changes and that possess the capacity to influence their environment to meet their own interests.[23] Large states can therefore act unilaterally and adjust to altered conditions within the international system without suffering significant cost.[24] Unilateral action is not a luxury afforded to small states which "…can do little to influence the system-wide forces that affect them."[25] This power differential between states, for influencing the structure of the international system, is illustrated in the different narratives conveyed in national security documents of large and small states.

Large State Security Themes

Analysis of the 2017 *US National Security Strategy*, *2019 China's National Defense in the New Era* document, and the Russian Federation's 2015 *Russian National Security Strategy* was conducted to identify the most important issues for large states within the national security field. The central national security themes that can be derived from this analysis can be broadly categorised as:

1. Explicit threat narratives;

2. discussion of the state's intent for use of military power; and

3. the state's strategic environment.

Large states use these documents to introduce their strategic narrative for describing the state of the international system and to set the conditions for legitimising any actions taken to strengthen or alter the system's structure.

1. *Explicit Threat Narratives*. Part of this narrative construction is to portray actors with opposing values, ideas, and opinions as threats to the integrity of the interna-

tional community as a whole. For example, the United States claims that "…China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with an authoritarian model…" and "…China and Russia are undermining the international order from within …".[26] Equally, China and Russia propose that the "…United States has provoked and intensified competition between countries and undermined global strategic stability…" and the "…United States opposes Russian foreign and domestic policy as it seeks to retain dominance in world affairs…".[27]

This narrative identifying competing states as existential threats to global stability dominates the discussion in large state national security literature. Supplementary to the construction of these states as threats is a clear articulation of the need to generate sufficient military power to counter this emerging danger. Once an opposing state has been presented as a national security threat, large state strategies outline the approach and means necessary to prevent these threats undermining global stability.

2. *Discussion of the state's intent for use of military power*. This discussion can be seen to legitimise the need for particular military capabilities or increased government powers to counter aggressive forces and protect their view of the 'greater good.' These parts of national security documents will highlight the best instrument for protecting state interests and often in the case of large states this is the military. For example, the US 2017 National Security Strategy proposes that "… US military strength remains a vital component of the competition for influence." and a "…strong military ensures a position of strength…" in this competition.[28] Therefore, the US must "…remain the pre-eminent military power…" by fielding "…a lethal, resilient, and rapidly adapting joint force".[29] These messages are mirrored in Chinese and Russian documentation. Similarly, China asserts that "…building a strong military commensurate with its international standing and its security and development interests is a strategic task for China's socialist modernisation…" and "…a strong military for China is a staunch force for world peace, stability, and the building of a common shared future of mankind."[30] However, Russia's strategy proposes "…the utilisation of military force to protect national interests is only possible if all measures of a non-violent nature have failed."[31] Nevertheless, this sentiment is countered by the statement that:

> "…[Russia's] strategic goals will be achieved through
> - Strategic deterrence,
> - Improving state military organisations, and
> - increased Russian mobilisation readiness and the readiness of civilian defence forces."[32]

The Russian vision of strategic deterrence is to be "…achieved by maintaining nuclear deterrence at sufficient levels, and armed forces at requisite levels of combat readiness."[33]

The threat narrative and intent for use of military power is related to theme 3.

3. *The state's strategic environment.* The description of their strategic environment receives less attention and detail than the first two themes evident in large states' national security documentation.[34] Largely, the treatment of the strategic environment reinforces the key points laid out in the states' threat narrative discussion and aims to strengthen their justification for focusing on enhancing their military capabilities. The US and China do this justification by emphasising the return to overt strategic competition between states, and Russia claims that "…the role of force in international relations is not declining."[35] This limited discussion of the characteristics and nature of the strategic environment may be linked to a key idea introduced earlier in this article; that large states' structural power means they will endeavour to shape unsuitable environmental conditions to their advantage.

When we analyse these three themes together, we see that large states demonstrate a clear optionality for using military power as the strongest expression of their national power. The US, China, and Russia all express the will to act unilaterally, if necessary, against actions they perceive as contrary to international law and global stability.[36] All three states rely upon strategic deterrence as their primary means of achieving national security, and therefore require strong military instruments for this approach to be credible. The examples from the US, China and Russian national security strategies indicate a preference by these large states for a strong military instrument to enhance diplomatic and economic effects and respond overwhelmingly to aggressive action. This approach is largely consistent with traditional realist explanations of international relations phenomena such as the security dilemma.[37] But what if a state lacks the structural power to develop a credible military counter to potential threats, or to be able to change unfavourable conditions within their strategic environment, as is the case with small states? When using the same three themes to examine the national security documentation of small states, the analysis revealed contrasting differences in the strategic narratives presented by large and small states.

Small State Security Themes

The central national security themes identified above for large states were also used to analyse small states' documentation: the *2017 Canadian Strong, Secure, Engaged* Defence Policy document, New Zealand's *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, Poland's 2020 *National Security Strategy*, and *Libro De La Defensa Nacional De Chile 2017*. The most obvious difference between the national security approaches of small and large states is that, for the former, military forces are not necessarily the primary

instrument of national security. For small states, whilst the military remains important, leveraging the soft power advantages provided through diplomatic interaction and international institutions may be more productive.[38] This focus on system dynamics may explain the greater attention that small states pay to their entire strategic environment, rather than the construction of specific threat narratives.

1. *Explicit threat narratives*. The threat narratives of the small states examined present three main hazards: the impact of climate change, vulnerabilities of cyberspace, and the increasing power of non-state actors.[39] The impact of climate change is seen to amplify inequality and disrupt livelihoods which in turn leads to rapid urbanisation and uncontrolled migration.[40] Additionally, the vulnerabilities of cyberspace and states' increasing reliance on digital networks for normal function and critical infrastructure has created new risks for individual citizens, corporations, and within state institutions.[41] Identity theft, industrial espionage, and large-scale disruption of state functions can now happen remotely without physical risk, and always with an element of plausible deniability. Finally, the increasing power of non-state actors has seen these groups exert influence commensurate with state instruments of national power; however, they are unfettered by regulations of international law and human rights.[42] Small states see these threats interacting to destabilise the international order by presenting challenges to "…UN legitimacy and effectiveness …"[43] and "…global governance…".[44] They then propose that cooperative multilateral solutions are required "…to address the uncertainty of a complex strategic context…"[45] and that presence of "…international laws and norms preserve stability against conflict…"[46] and prevent splintering of the current rules-based system. In addition to a general narrative outlining the international strategic environment, small states offer more specificity on certain regionally specific issues. For example, Canada and New Zealand both specifically mention their closest polar regions as areas of "…increased international interest…"and the changing geography of these presents "…challenges to existing norms…".[47] Chile and Poland are respectively concerned about "…trends in international security converging in the Pacific…"and "…Russia's relationship with the West, its region, and Europe…".[48] Interestingly, the risks raised are regional problems, but occur outside of author state's direct area of responsibility and are beyond their ability to control, further reinforcing the preference of smaller actors for collective security approaches.

2. *Discussion of intent for their use of military power*. Small state expression of their intent for the use of national power centres primarily on how these states will contribute beneficially to domestic and global stability. Most of the discussion refers to collective security and multilateral responses to meet the wider demands of national security in the current era, and how small states can valuably contribute to global crisis. Specific military capabilities are not discussed except in the case of Poland which may be explained by their shared border with Russia.[49] Overall, the

small state expression of intent is directed towards portraying themselves as active contributors and participants in international security operations. The discussion of military capability development is largely shaped in terms of the need to address the emerging security threats, such as cyber and outer space, and ensuring interoperability with larger defence partners.

3. *The state's strategic environment.* Small state national security discourse is dominated by a description of their strategic environment, in particular the broad spectrum of risks and hazards that impact national security.[50] The most heavily discussed risk for small states surrounds the challenges to the structure and governance models of the international system, and the implications of a weakening rules-based order. Chile proposes the "…weakening of global governance because of weakening multilateral institutions make it difficult to maintain security."[51] This statement is echoed in New Zealand's identification that "…states pursue influence in ways that challenge international norms…"and the Polish recognition of the "…challenge to the rules-based system from authoritarian states undermining international law, rights, and agreements…"[52] This structural emphasis in small state discourse is unsurprising given the reliance of these actors on international institutions to balance power deficits with larger states. The increasing complexity of the international security environment is illustrated through the identification of inequality, exponential energy demands, and uncontrolled migration as contributory factors to global instability.[53]

The small state documentation proposes that the national security agenda has broadened beyond the consideration of existential military threats to sovereignty and territory. For these states, the broadening of the concept has also blurred the boundaries between the internal/external, and military/non-military dimensions of national security.[54] National security viewed through such a lens moves small states away from actor-centric threat-based models inherited, or emulated, from large states; and sits more comfortably within a holistic risks and hazards approach that considers systemic issues. In focusing on the characteristics and vulnerabilities of their strategic environment, small states are indicating that they can do little to change the conditions within the international, or even regional, system. Therefore, a small state's strategic environment must be navigated by these actors, using the best possible means within the limitations of their resources. Small state discussions of existential threats within their environment are, therefore, less specific than those of their larger peers.

National Security is contextual

The analysis presented above indicates that the concept of national security is conceived differently by large powers and small states. As large powers jostle for influence within the international system, they will try to shape the strategic environment to the conditions that will maximise their power and mitigate competitor states' ability to achieve

any advantage. This is best realised by the relationship cultivation of likeminded actors, and the vilification of potential opponents. This threat-based approach was most evident during the Cold War yet remains effective for today's large powers, albeit in a more nuanced way. Although the threat of conventional interstate conflict has decreased, large states pursue their political objectives through other methods such hybrid warfare and the use of non-state proxies. In addition, large actors will exploit international institutions to legitimise use of military force in achieving their ends e.g., the 'humanitarian' interventions in Iraq and Ukraine. Therefore, the threat-based model applied by large powers allows them to portray their competitors as international security risks and simultaneously justify the strengthening of their military capabilities as a necessary evil on the path to national security. Unsurprisingly, large actors use the simplicity of hard power to explain their decisions and actions within the national security sphere. Their discourse is pointed and constructs a specific threat and response mechanism based on the opponent's military capability.

Contrastingly, the articulation of tangible threats and the need for enhanced military capabilities feature little in the national security discourse of small states. Most of the discussion in small state documents is focused on the characteristics of the strategic environment enforced on them by large powers. Small states then focus on the practical implications this environment has on achieving the security of the state and its citizens. Given their limitations in the use of hard power instruments, small states look to broader soft power tools and international institutions to achieve their objectives. Those small states without an existential military threat often focus their armed forces on contributing to international peace operations and humanitarian assistance missions. This commitment to international security allows these small states to utilise some level of influence in the global community.

**Differences between Large and Small State Approaches
to National Security**

The difference in the national security focus of large and small states shows a clear distinction between how these actors approach the protection of the state and its citizens. Large states tend to conform to the realist perspective in viewing the international system as an anarchic environment in which the strongest actors will compete for dominance to ensure their survival.[55] The competitive nature of this environment drives large states to focus on identifying potential threats to nation states and developing sufficient national power to defeat them. Large states are also interested in shaping the conditions within the international environment to be advantageous to their pursuit of national interests. Both the desire to shape the environment in their favour, and the intent to defeat threats through military power is evident in the national security discourse of the US, Russia, and China.

All three large states identify competing nations as threats, and construct narratives demonstrating the danger their opponents pose to international security. The US documents present the need to preserve the status quo (hegemony) by preventing Chinese and Russian expansionism, particularly their alternative models of governance.[56] Counter to the US position, Russia and China propose that regional collective security arrangements are the best means for resolving security issues in a changing international system.[57] All three large states view the strengthening of their military as the best way to overcome the identified threats. For China and Russia, the modernisation of capabilities and doctrinal improvements are necessary to respond effectively to this renewed strategic competition, as well as to defeat the emerging challenges from non-state actors and cyberspace.[58] The US remains focussed on retaining its military pre-eminence. It expresses the necessity for maintaining a "…lethal, resilient, rapidly adapting joint force…" to achieve this aim.[59] Again, these narratives conform to the traditional national security approaches which focus state military forces on protecting political sovereignty and territorial integrity from external aggression. In employing this traditional approach, it is entirely rational for states to maintain military forces capable of conducting the full spectrum of military operations ranging from expeditionary high intensity warfighting through to domestic military assistance to civil agencies. For large states with larger economies and resource pools, this approach is feasible. However, the same feasibility may not be realistic for smaller states.

Small state national security discourse is more concerned with the strategic environment, rather than resisting the presence of larger predatory states. While these larger actors may present a security risk, generally small states lack sufficient coercive power to influence change in large state behaviour[60]. For example, New Zealand threatening China with economic sanctions over suspected cyber-attacks would not provide a large enough disincentive against continuing these actions and, in fact, may open New Zealand to punitive measures.[61] This lack of power means small states, unlike large states, are unable to change the structure of the international system to suit their own ends. In these circumstances, small states must survive in an environment created by large states. The focus for small states, therefore, becomes interaction with other actors, both large and small, who can mitigate their vulnerabilities and enhance the pursuit of national interests within the given system. New Zealand's inclusion in the Five Eyes group, and Poland and Canada's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO),[62] are examples of these types of relationships. Commonly, small states seek to use the structural institutions and behavioural norms of the Westphalian international system to balance the power mismatch with large states. This acceptance of their position in the international environment explains why small states are more focused on describing and defining their strategic environment and identifying the key risks and hazards they must mitigate when operating within this system. This situation explains the small state preference for multilateral collective security arrangements with other small states and large state defence partners.

Small state articulation of their intent to be active contributors to global security operations, and to maintain interoperability with key allies, is a way of cementing standing relationships and attracting new partnerships with like-minded states. However, this leads to a necessary discussion focusing on whether this expressed desire for interoperability with defence partners necessitates a replication of the roles, structures, and capabilities of large states? A 'one size fits all' type of approach by small states may be both unsustainable from a resource perspective, and ineffective in directly meeting the national security needs of citizens. Yet a rudimentary examination of the 193 United Nations member states shows that 89% of those states maintain standing military organizations based on this model.[63] The near universal application of the western military model is surprising given the disparity in several factors between the states who maintain a standing military force. A simple analysis of empirical factors such as population size, gross domestic product, and geographic area demonstrates significant differences in the resources available for states to generate military power. This uniformity of approach leads naturally to the article's central question: why, given that national security is contextual, do all state military instruments look and act the same? This question gains particular relevance given the changing expectations of governments and citizens of state military forces in the post-Cold War international environment.

Small State Alternatives

Jean-Marc Rickli proposes that small states generally have two defence policy options: influence or autonomy[64] . Autonomous, or neutral, defence policy supplies the advantage of not being drawn into larger allies' conflicts, however, these states run the risk of being left alone in the face of a large aggressor. An influence approach corresponds to being a member of an alliance to seek to join with, or balance against, the dominant actor[65]. This approach affords the benefit of protection, but at the expense of autonomy in defence planning. During the Cold War, an autonomous position by a state was more palatable as a non-interference, defensive posture was seen to contribute to overall stability[66]. In the greater connectedness and interdependence of the post-Cold War international system, an autonomous defence policy is seen by participatory states as "free riding"[67]. Therefore, a cooperative defence strategy is often preferred by small states to strengthen national security and influence larger powers[68] . However, small states may increase the amount of influence they can exert in cooperative defence arrangements by applying niche approaches to military contributions.

A limited example of a niche military strategy can be seen in the contributions of small states to European Union collective defence organisations. The approach adopted by small states such as Norway, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic has been to provide a specialised military capability as their contribution to the larger EU defence organisation[69]. This niche approach can also be coordinated at regional level, for example, the

Scandinavian states, under Sweden as lead nation, each contribute different military specialisations to form the Nordic EU Battlegroup. Despite employing niche capabilities into collective EU security organisations, these states maintain all the traditional roles, structures, and capabilities of the western military model as the foundation of their armed forces[70]. By adhering to the traditional western model as the basis of their military organisation, these states retain expensive, but seldom used, warfighting equipment, and expend resources training for tasks that are rarely undertaken.

This article suggests that for small states there is an alternative to replicating traditional large state military structures. What if a small state applied an a priori environmental niche lens to its defence policy? By first determining the nature of its strategic environment, and then identifying the position it holds within this environment in relation to other actors, a small state can design military forces that directly meet the national security needs and expectations of their citizens - and may indeed increase their value to larger powers; thus, retaining the niche concept offered by the Scandinavian countries whilst de-emphasising less relevant traditional structures. In developing such an approach, small states may achieve enhanced performance across a smaller range of military operations and attain greater autonomy through the concentration of capability development resources towards identified response options. This deliberate environmental focus could complement larger defence partners by providing specialised functions, such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, or stabilisation operations. Additional benefit to larger allies could be realised through burden sharing (small state expertise could release large state assets to other tasks) and the reduced requirement to provide force protection and logistic support to small state allies.

Conclusion

This article examines the concept of national security as it is viewed by large and small states. It applies a defence studies lens to the concept of national security and identifies the different perspectives towards national security in the government literature of selected cases. It proposes three key themes on which these states' responses to security issues are based. An *explicit threat narrative*, followed by a *discussion of intent for use of military power*, and an articulation of *the state's strategic environment* are present in the national security literature of both large and small states. Despite the presence of common themes in their national security discourse, the importance that the themes hold to large and small states is very different. For large states, the narrative constructing competing actors as threats to the stability of the international system, and thereby national security, is the most important. The second theme links to this threat narrative by proposing the necessary military capabilities required to respond to these threats. The least attention, by large states, is given to the description of the environmental parameters outside of the interactions with competitor states. Large state prioritisation of these themes indicates a preference for military force as their strongest demonstration

of national power. The small state national security perspective juxtaposes these themes to place greatest importance on defining and describing the nature of the strategic environment in which they are situated. The threats described by small states are broader systemic risks present within these strategic environments as opposed to direct threats from particular states. The focus for small state national security discourse is management of the broad spectrum of risks and hazards present in their strategic environment. The differences identified in this analysis of national security perspectives between large and small states, demonstrates the contextual nature of the concept of national security, and raises questions of how state military forces should be organised and employed to best meet the expectations of their government and citizens.

Given the different national security emphases between small and large powers proposed above, the traditional western threat-based model for national security and defence planning cannot be the most effective approach for small states. The resource availability and ambition of large powers afford them the ability retain capability to respond across the full spectrum of military operations. The competitive interaction between large states also justifies their prioritisation of conventional warfare capabilities to counter existential threats to their national interests, both domestically and abroad. Additionally, large states desire to shape their strategic environment for their own advantage. They require significant offensive military capabilities consistent with traditional professional practice. Contrastingly, for small states, resource limitations affect their ability to generate sufficient conventional military power to influence their strategic environment; and also inhibit their ability to develop new capabilities in response to emergent challenges. Their approach to non-traditional security issues, thus far, has been to spread the extant resources across the spectrum of expected response options thereby achieving breadth of coverage at the expense of depth in proficiency. This balancing of resources exposes small states' military forces to the risk of being unable respond effectively to any major security crisis without significant additional investment of time and money. These circumstances could then undermine the sense of national security that they were aiming to achieve in the first place. Future research will need to explore whether there are other options available to small states that more directly address the national security interests of their government and citizens. Here I propose that small states be bold enough to choose their own path and not only 'do more with less' but critically begin by examining the actual demands of their strategic environment. From these environmental demands, small actors could focus the roles and function of their military forces towards meeting to the most prevalent challenges, and if necessary, reorganise their forces to optimise their responses to their most important national security issues.

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8   Data collection focused specifically on those words, sentences and paragraphs that related, either directly or indirectly, to the military contribution to the state's overall national security. The selected text from large states was then categorised into similarly themed groups from which the themes presented in this article's discussion were derived. This collection method was repeated for the small state cases and the selected data grouped into the themes identified in the large state analysis. Dominant themes were determined by totalling the number of statements under each theme and comparing this amount with the other two categories.

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13   Clive Archer, Alyson J. K. Bailes, and Anders Wivel, *Small States and International Security* (2014); Hans Mouritzen, "Tensions between the Strong, and the Strategies of the Weak," *Journal of Peace Research* 28, no. 2 (1991); Hans Mouritzen and Anders Wivel, *The Geopolitics of Euro-Atlantic Integration*, Europe and the Nation State (London: Routledge, 2005), Book; Robert Steinmetz and Anders Wivel (eds), *Small States in Europe : Challenges and Opportunities.* (Taylor and Francis Group, 2010).

14   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, *NATO Standard AJP-01 Allied Joint Doctrine*, Edition E Version 1, February 2017, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905877/20200728-doctrine_nato_allied_joint_doctrine_ajp_01.pdf

15   "Technical Interoperability," *Whitehall Papers* 56, no. 1 (2003/01/01 2003). https://doi.org/10.1080/02681300309414760; "The Dimensions of Interoperability," *Whitehall Papers* 56, no. 1 (2003/01/01 2003). https://doi.org/10.1080/02681300309414756.

16   "The Dimensions of Interoperability."; "Technical Interoperability."

17   "The Dimensions of Interoperability."

18   Matthias Maass, *Small States in World Politics : The Story of Small State Survival, 1648-2016* (Manchester University Press, 2017), Bibliographies Online Non-fiction Electronic document; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, "Small State Foreign Policy"," in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2017).

19   Matthias Maass, p. 27-28 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 2-3

20   Matthias Maass, p. 27-28 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 2-3

21   Matthias Maass, p. 31-32 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 4-5

22   Matthias Maass, p. 31-32 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 4-5.

23   Matthias Maass, p. 31-32 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 4-5.

24   Matthias Maass, p. 31-32 ; Sverrir Steinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson, p. 4-5.

25   Robert Keohane quoted in Matthias Maass, p. 32.

26   United States of America*, National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington D.C. 2017).

27   People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press Co. Ltd, 2019); Russian Federation, *English Translation of the 2015 Russian National Security Strategy* (The Kremlin, Moscow: Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2015).

28   This document is the current comprehensive national security strategy for the US despite a change in administration. President Joe Biden released an *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* in March 2021, which maintains themes consistent with the 2017 strategy. Biden's guidance is more explicit in its identification of China as the predominant threat, but also names Russia as a disruptive influence on global stability. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington D.C. 2017); Joseph R. Biden Jr, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance,* (Washington D.C. 2021)

29   United States of America.

30   People's Republic of China

31   Russian Federation.

32   United States of America ; People's Republic of China; Russian Federation

33   Russian Federation.

34   Of the data collected from US, Chinese, and Russian national security documents, only 26 statements referred to issues linked the characteristics, changes, and challenges of these states 'strategic environments. In comparison, 50 statements articulated threats and a further 40 statements outlined the author states' intended use of national power.

35   United States of America ; People's Republic of China; Russian Federation.

36   United States of America ; People's Republic of China; Russian Federation

37   Henry R. Nau, *Perspectives on International Relations : Power, Institutions, Ideas*, 3rd ed ed. (CQ Press, 2012), Bibliographies Non-fiction.

38   Tom Long, "Small States, Great Power? Gaining Influence through Intrinsic, Derivative, and Collective Power: Table 1," *International Studies Review* (2016). https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw040.

39   Canada Department of National Defence*, Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*, (Ottawa 2017); Republic of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, (Warsaw 2020); New Zealand Ministry of Defence, *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, (Wellington: Ministry of Defence, 2018); Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Libro De La Defensa Nacional De Chile 2017*, (Santiago: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2017).

40   Canada Department of National Defence; Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional.

41   Canada Department of National Defence; Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

42   Canada Department of National Defence; Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

43   Republic of Poland.

44   Canada Department of National Defence

45   Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

46   New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

47   Canada Department of National Defence; New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

48   Republic of Poland; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

49   Republic of Poland.

50   Canada Department of National Defence; Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

51   Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

52   Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

53   Canada Department of National Defence; Republic of Poland; New Zealand Ministry of Defence; Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

54   Republic of Poland.

55   Theo Farrell, p. 449-452.

56   United States of America.

57   People's Republic of China.

58   People's Republic of China. Russian Federation.

59   United States of America.

60   Matthias Maass; Jean-Marc Rickli (2008) European small states' military policies after the Cold War: from territorial to niche strategies, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 21:3, 307-325, DOI: 10.1080/09557570802253435; Tom Long.

61   Radio New Zealand , "Little says Chinese hacking claims were corroborated, rebuke was 'tame'", Radio New Zealand website, July 27, 2021, 4:01pm NZST, https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/447815/little-says-chinese-hacking-claims-were-corroborated-rebuke-was-tame; Jonathan Milne, "Furious China threatens retaliation as NZ and allies blame it for cyber-attacks", newsroom., July 20, 2021, https://www.newsroom.co.nz/furious-china-threatens-retaliation-as-nz-and-allies-blame-it-for-cyber-attacks.

62   United States of America Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2021*. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2021. https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/

63   For this data the author replicated research presented by Theo Farrell in his article World Culture and Military Power published in Security Studies journal in 2005. Data was collected by identifying United Nations member states through the United Nations website and utilizing the military and security data from The CIA world factbook. Of interest to this research is the fact that the change in data indicates a strengthening of the trends towards the tri service structure; as some of the states who maintained no military forces in Farrell's original study, have now developed standing military organizations and other smaller forces have expanded. Farrell, "World Culture and Military Power."

64   Jean-Marc Rickli, p.309

65   Jean-Marc Rickli, , p.310-311

66   Jean-Marc Rickli, p. 310-311
67   Jean-Marc Rickli, p. 310-311
68   Jean-Marc Rickli, p. 310-311
69   Jean-Marc Rickli, p. 310-311
70   United States of America Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2021*.