

The World of Small States 7

Anne-Marie Brady
Baldur Thorhallsson *Editors*

Small States and the New Security Environment

 Springer

The World of Small States

Volume 7

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Small States and the New Security Environment

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ISSN 2627-5996

The World of Small States

ISBN 978-3-030-51528-7

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51529-4>

ISSN 2627-6003 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-030-51529-4 (eBook)

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Chapter 1

Small States and the Turning Point in Global Politics



Anne-Marie Brady and Baldur Thorhallsson

A series of events has put massive pressure on the previously stable international order and the rule-based multilateral global system of governance in the last few years—to name just a few: Putin government’s disruptive foreign policy, the disastrous impact of Brexit on the economy and politics of both the UK and the EU, President Trump’s iconoclastic foreign and trade policy that alienates allies as much as it affects strategic competitors, Xi Jinping’s promotion of a new China-centred bloc, the Belt and Road Initiative and the pressure on countries to accept Huawei for 5G, China’s deepening security partnership with Russia, and the global impact of the devastating Covid-19 pandemic; meanwhile, smaller Middle Eastern powers are also caught in a two-way regional Cold War (Iran versus Saudi Arabia; Saudi, United Arab Emirates, and Egypt versus Turkey, Qatar, and the Muslim Brotherhood), plus another set of tensions that emerge from an actual hot war, the Syrian civil war, a war that has been inflamed by the failing global order and return of great power and regional power competition. In recent years, all states, large and small, have further been challenged by the spread of radical terrorist acts on a global scale, the refugee crisis, greater trade protectionism, and the ever-worsening effects of climate change.

The formerly stable post-World War II international order is coming to an end, but the new global order is as yet unclear. Earlier expectations about a multipolar order emerging, characterised by cooperation among the great powers, has failed to

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A.-M. Brady, B. Thorhallsson (eds.), *Small States and the New Security
Environment*, The World of Small States 7,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51529-4_1

come to fruition.¹ The world is now seeing a return of both “might is right” politics and the reassertion of spheres of influence.

The very nature of conflict and how we define it is shifting too as foreign political interference, terrorism, and cyberattacks are on the increase. The boundaries between domestic and foreign policy are becoming less and less distinct. Porous borders, whether climactic, cyber, or physical, make it impossible for even small island nations such as Iceland and New Zealand, the home nations of the two editors of this book, to remain remote from the changing global order.

The new security environment is especially challenging for small states. Time and again, at great turning points in history, small states have been the pawns of great power competition. Small states are heavily affected by global shifts in power, and they must rely on the rule-based international order to protect their rights. Small-state security depends on stability, predictability, and cooperative solutions to global problems.

Small states are generally defined as those nations that are small in landmass, population, economy, and military capacity. Yet in the era of hybrid warfare, the old concepts of size of territory as a measure of relative power may no longer be as significant as the size of a nation’s maritime or space boundaries—or cyber defence, national resilience, and unity, plus digital diplomacy capacity.²

Henderson defined the characteristics of small states as follows: 1) low participation in international affairs due to limited resources; 2) narrow scope, as limited resources lead to the limiting of foreign policy interests and the small size of the state’s foreign affairs bureaucracy restricts its ability to have a broad international role; 3) economic focus, a tendency to focus foreign affairs interests on economic issues and trade; 4) internationalism, as small states tend to rely heavily on multi-lateralism, international organisations, agreements, and alliances to protect national interests; 5) moral emphasis, as small states tend to be moralistic but have no resources to back up their rhetoric; and 6) tendency to be risk avoidant and fearful of alienating powerful states, though occasionally they can be risk takers.³

Small states make up half of the membership of the United Nations. Our three-year research project “Small States and the New Security Environment” (SSANSE) has assessed the defence and foreign policy choices and challenges of small states in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) such as Albania, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway; NATO partner states like Armenia, Bahrain, Finland, Georgia, New Zealand, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates; as well as the situation in small island developing states (including overseas territories of NATO member France) in Oceania. All of these states must face up to the new security

¹Chris Seed, Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, “Opening Remarks to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee,” New Zealand Parliament, December 12, 2020, https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCFD_EVI_92819_FD3013/51eea4ab1967c2ba7bddb9d7d6824f0f8ba2e6e.

²See Chaban et al. (2019).

³Henderson (1991).

environment and develop a nimble and proactive strategy to deal with it. Yet one of the characteristic weak points of small states is that they tend to be deficit in the dedicated think tanks and research institutes that provide governments with the deep policy analysis and contestable policy advice they need in a changing, challenging, geostrategic situation.

The SSANSE project is a preparedness initiative, examining the current defence and foreign policy choices and challenges of small states. The SSANSE project contributes new thinking on how small states can respond to the “new normal” in international security. We asked researchers to examine a series of questions, including the following:

- How can small states survive and prosper in the current unpredictable and hostile security environment?
- How can small states best deal with new challenges, such as cyberattacks, political interference, and climate change?
- How can small states compensate for their structural weaknesses?
- Should small states work more to partner with other like-minded small and medium power governments and give up the notion that they need to seek shelter with one or other of the great powers?
- Is neutrality or pacifism the ultimate goal of an independent foreign policy path?
- How can small states make themselves more resilient in the new security environment?
- For this book in particular, we looked at how the small states of NATO and partners are adjusting to the new geopolitical, geo-economic, security environment. Do they need political, economic and societal shelter provided by larger states and international organizations?
- Do NATO small states manage the tension between alliance commitment and economics differently from non-NATO small states?
- What are the core strategic interests of the small states we studied, and how can they be strengthened?
- How can NATO better work with its partner small states in future?

The SSANSE research team organised several conferences and workshops in New Zealand, Iceland, and the USA to develop the ideas of the project. We also provided many open and closed-door policy briefings to policymakers as our analysis had a strong policy focus. The SSANSE Project leaders, Anne-Marie Brady and Baldur Thorhallsson, and co-directors, Margarita Šešelgytė and Alan Tidwell, led a team of international emerging, as well as senior, researchers to create a series of written projects responding to the parameters of investigation. The result of all this work was two edited books,⁴ including this one; doctoral and masters’ theses; op eds aimed at the wider public; and a series of policy briefs targeted at

⁴Brady (2019).

policymakers.⁵ Our project has helped train a cohort of international young researchers on small state studies. We hope they will use this knowledge and training as a stepping stone to careers in diplomacy, defence, and academia.

There is an extensive body of research on small state theory upon which the SSANSE project was built, which exceeds what can be summarised or addressed here.⁶ The University of Iceland's Centre for Small State Studies has fostered a number of research teams on small state studies resulting in influential publications such as Archer, Bailes, and Wivel's study of small states and international security; Ingebritsen, Neumann, Gstöhl, and Beyer's study on small states and international relations; and Bailes, Herolf, and Sundelius's study on Nordic states as small states.⁷ Efraim Karsh has analysed the question of small states and neutrality.⁸ Jeanne A. K. Hey has provided a useful overview of small state theory,⁹ as did the work of Henderson, Jackson, and Kennaway in their studies on New Zealand as a small state.¹⁰ Larsen has discussed the need for new thinking on NATO strategic policy and the need to work more closely with NATO partner states in order to respond to the "new normal" in security.¹¹

Overall, the majority of scholarly studies on small states have tended to focus on the small states of Europe. There has never before been a study specifically focusing on the foreign policies of the small states of NATO or the small states of Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), or those of Oceania. Nor has any study evaluated small states from the perspective of NATO's strategic priorities, particularly in the light of the current global strategic environment.

Much of the small state theoretical literature is on the experiences of and outcomes for specific small states. We found that there is a scarcity in approaches and theories that draw lessons about small states in general. This is problematic since

⁵SSANSE Pop Up think tank at University of Canterbury: <https://canterbury.ac.nz/arts/research/ssanse/pop-up-think-tank/>.

⁶Alcala and Ciccone (2004), pp. 613–646; Alesina and Spolaore (2003); Archer and Nugent (2002), pp. 1–10; Archer et al. (2014); Bailes et al. (2013); Bailes et al. (2006); Bailes et al. (2016), pp. 9–26; Baker (1959); Barston (1973); Brady (2019); Carvalho and Neumann (2015); Cooper and Shaw (2009); Corbett and Connell (2015), pp. 435–459; Deudney (2007); Easterly and Kraay (2000), pp. 2013–2027; Finnemore and Sikkink (2001), pp. 391–416; Frankel and Romer (1999), pp. 379–399; Henderson et al. (1980); Hey (2003); Ingebritsen et al. (2006); Karsh (2010); Kattel and Thorhallsson (2013); Katzenstein (1984); Katzenstein (1985); Mathisen (1971); Neumann and Sieglind Gstöhl (2006); Olafsson (1998); Rokkann and Urwin (1983); Steinmetz and Wivel (2010); Thorhallsson (2012); Thorhallsson (2010); Thorhallsson (2011), pp. 324–336; Thorhallsson (2019); Thorhallsson and Steinsson (2017); Vital (1967); Wohlforth et al. (2017), pp. 526–546.

⁷Archer et al. (2014), Bailes et al. (2013) and Bailes et al. (2006).

⁸Karsh (2010).

⁹Hey (2003).

¹⁰Henderson et al. (1980) and Henderson and Kennaway (1991).

¹¹Jeffrey A. Larsen, "Time to Face Reality: Priorities for NATO's 2016 Warsaw Summit," Research Paper 126, NATO Defense College, 15 January 2016.

scholars of small states emphasise that small and large states are vastly different in terms of needs and challenges, and this ought to lead to different logics of behaviour.

The lack of theorising about small states means that there is a dearth of simple abstract frameworks for thinking intelligently about small states. In a sense, theories are like maps. They are intended to simplify the world by removing unnecessary details in an attempt to make it easier for us to navigate it. Unfortunately, there are few maps to guide our thinking about small states. This means that scholars of small states often have to rely on realist, liberal, and constructivist theories as they think about small states.

A common complaint is that both realist and liberal approaches are too imprecise for analysing small states' foreign policy. Realist theories are primarily concerned with large states and are derived from studies of great power politics. Critics of constructivism claim that it is not a comprehensive theory about international politics but rather a framework for thinking about social facts. This means that there are no consistent lessons that can be drawn from constructivism about small states, unless care is taken to craft specific theories about small states rooted in constructivist theory.

To fill the theoretical gap, a framework referred to as shelter theory has been developed over the last decade by scholars at the Centre for Small State Studies in Iceland.¹² This theoretical framework hopes to guide scholars, students, and policymakers to better evaluate the options and policies of small states, as well as forecast outcomes for small states.

Of course, like any other theory or framework, it is an un-nuanced depiction. It may tell us a lot about the challenges and opportunities facing small states, and their general patterns of behaviour, but it cannot perfectly explain every single action that a small state takes. The shelter theory framework is derived from the challenges and needs that the literature documents as unique to small states, as well as a large literature on the actions that small states have tended to take to alleviate the burdens and satisfy the needs that come with smallness.

Shelter theory holds that small states need to seek political, economic, and societal shelter. What this means is that there are certain inherent political, economic, and societal problems that small states face (or problems that small states need shelter from) and certain actions that small states take to alleviate these problems (what the framework refers to as "shelter-seeking").¹³

Small states need political, economic, and societal shelter provided by larger states and international organisations in order to thrive and cope with crises. Political shelter takes the form of direct and visible diplomatic or military backing and other strategic coverage at any given time of need provided by another state or an international organisation, as well as the protection provided by international rules and norms.

¹²Thorhallsson (2010, 2011, 2019).

¹³Thorhallsson (2019).

Small states are militarily weak as they have fewer resources, including human resources, which can be put towards military use. They lack the economies of scale needed for a strong military with diverse capabilities. Historically, small states' vulnerability to conquest and coercion was seen as their main vulnerability. Small states lack the resources to support a large diplomatic force, and they are unable to keep diplomatic missions in every corner of the world. Small state external affairs representatives often have to be generalists, as opposed to issue experts, which risks undercutting the knowledge and deliberation behind small state foreign policies and negotiations.

Due to the aforementioned disadvantages, whether explicitly or not, small states rely on the security assurances and military assistance of larger states or alliances. Small states also need diplomatic backing or assistance from other states. Shifting negotiations from bilateral to multilateral venues is favourable for small states as the norms and rules of international organisations can constrain the brute power of large states and reduce the power asymmetry between the large and the small states.¹⁴

Economic shelter can take the form of direct economic assistance, a currency union, help from an external financial authority, beneficial loans, favourable market access, or a common market; it could even include access to strategic goods such as medical equipment, as was shown during the Covid-19 pandemic. Economic shelter can be provided by a more powerful country or by an international organisation.¹⁵ Small states have small domestic markets, which means that their economies are more reliant on foreign trade, tourism, and foreign direct investment than those of large states. This dependence on external markets exposes small states to the instability of global markets and can lead to more volatility in the economies of small states. Small state economies rely on an open and stable world economy where they can trade freely.

Small state economies also tend to lack sectoral diversity. So unlike large and diverse economies, small state economic growth may fluctuate wildly depending on what occurs within a single sector. This means that small states frequently experience more booms and busts. When a crisis occurs, small state governments may lack the means to lift themselves up on their own. In contrast, medium and large powers have greater ability to redistribute resources from one sector or from one affected region to another and are thus able to dampen the blow of a temporary crisis. Yet in crisis situations—like Covid-19—the smallness of the small state economy can be an advantage, allowing small state governments greater agility to make policy adjustments.

Small states need to position themselves in a way where they access economic assistance in times of crisis. Small state governments do this by joining and supporting international organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund, or

¹⁴Thorhallsson (2019).

¹⁵Thorhallsson (2010, 2011).

by developing strong ties to larger states. Economic shelter enables small states to reduce the frequency and severity of economic crises and to achieve greater prosperity.

Societal shelter refers to the importance of cultural transactions, the transfer of new ideas, norms, lifestyles, ideologies, myths, and ritual systems in order for small states to compensate for the lack of expertise in their small communities.¹⁶ Traditional international relations theory tends to focus on the pursuit of security and prosperity, which are indeed important. However, shelter theory also holds that small states require societal shelter and that this need can account for some of the behaviour of small states. The extent of societal shelter that a small state has may also account for the quality of life within the small state. Small states' pursuit of societal shelter is potentially as important as the pursuit for political and economic shelter. This is one way that shelter theory clearly distinguishes itself from other alliance theories.

In the societal realm, small states may be at a disadvantage relative to larger societies. Some small states have homogenous populations, so there is a greater risk that these states may experience social stagnation, as there are potentially fewer unorthodox and influential innovators, artists, entrepreneurs, and leaders from which to draw on. Much more so than larger states, small states rely on interactions with other cultures, ideas, and ideologies to ensure that there is a healthy marketplace of ideas. Many small states take active measures to avoid isolation by importing innovation and ideas from other cultures. It is through constant interaction with other cultures, ideas, and ideologies that a society evolves and moves forward.

Shelter theory addresses three interrelated issues of common concerns to small states: the reduction of risk before a possible crisis event, assistance in absorbing shocks in times of crises, and help in recovering after such an event. In short, shelter theory posits that small states will need some form of external shelter in order to survive and prosper. They are dependent on the economic, political, and societal shelter provided by larger states, as well as regional and international organisations.¹⁷ It should be noted that for many small and medium-sized countries, shelter is quite complicated. As the case studies in our book richly illustrate, small states may seek security shelter from traditional friends, diplomatic shelter from those same partners, while leaning heavily in to the multilateral system, and they seek economic shelter from a range of countries, not necessarily the same as those powers that provide them political, societal, and security shelter.

Shelter relations can have costs for the beneficiary. For instance, the post-2008 global financial crisis European Union-International Monetary Fund (EU-IMF) rescue packages were provided with strict conditions regarding states' domestic policies. NATO and EU shelter may carry considerable financial as well as political

¹⁶Thorhallsson (2019); Thorhallsson, "The Icelandic Collapse." For a historical account on the importance of political, economic, and cultural features in centre-periphery relations see Rokkan and Unwin (1983).

¹⁷Thorhallsson (2019).

costs for small states.¹⁸ The shelter provider tends to expect the protected state to follow its foreign policy preferences, and this may have a negative impact on small state domestic policies and domestic public opinion.¹⁹ Seeking shelter can potentially cause rifts within small societies, which can be seen in the deep divisions in Iceland and New Zealand in relation to these two countries' special relationship with the US during the Cold War,²⁰ and up to the present day, and controversy over present-day relations with China.

The pursuit of shelter, its costs, benefits, or lack thereof, should be carefully examined by small state policymakers. Shelter theory could help shed light on a small state's bilateral political, economic, and societal relations with larger powers such as China, Russia, and the USA. It may also help to evaluate the cost-benefit balance of multilateral cooperation. The choice of a shelter provider will always depend on the proportion of benefits to cost.

Our book *Small States and the New Security Environment* uses the theory of shelter to examine how some representative small states in NATO, MENA, and Oceania are responding to new and old security threats in the new security environment. One third of the membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are small states, and most of NATO's partners are small states too. All the major NATO powers have strategic interests in the regions of their partner states—so any security challenges or new developments there are of direct interest to NATO priorities. NATO is at a pivotal point as it responds to the complex new security environment. The Alliance is reassessing these threats and planning how to respond. The new security environment is forcing NATO to consider re-conceptualising its Strategic Concept, set at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, which is currently defined as collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security.

The small states of NATO such as Albania, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Norway and NATO partner or neighbouring small states such as Armenia, Bahrain, Kuwait, New Zealand, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates are on the front lines of the challenges in the new security environment. The global great powers of China, Russia, and the USA are once again jostling for dominance. Each small state has finite resources to protect itself, so each must find their own way to manage relations between the dominant powers while protecting their national interests.

Small States and the New Security Environment extends theoretical debates on the role of small states in the changing international system, as well as on the issue of how states manage their relations between the major powers in the new security environment. We examine how two representative small states, Norway and New Zealand, engage in policymaking, lobbying, and maintaining shelter in the changing politics of Washington, DC. We look at small states' risks and opportunities related to the global proliferation of armed drones and the challenge hybrid warfare poses for traditional defence mechanisms. We discuss a case study of shelter

¹⁸Bailes and Thorhallsson (2013) and Katzenstein (1998).

¹⁹Thorhallsson and Gunnarsson (2017).

²⁰Thorhallsson and Steinsson (2017).

balancing in action, examining how tiny Albania manages political interference attempts by China while developing economic links at the same time as maintaining strong political links with the USA while leaning in close to NATO and working hard to get into the EU. We look at how small states like Denmark have responded to Russia's pressure in the North Atlantic by building a NATO West Nordic Security Zone. We look at the New Slovak Security Strategy in the context of V4 and Euro-Atlantic security environment, with a specific focus on Visegrad security and defence cooperation and their contribution to NATO. We analyse how the Baltic states have engaged in close regional defence cooperation and societal resilience strategies in order to respond to increased Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

We also look at small European neutrals such as Ireland and Malta and examine their relations with NATO. We found they have extensive cooperation with NATO and use their neutrality to gain greater status and influence in their relations with NATO. Finally, we analyse the foreign and security policy dilemmas of Armenia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates (four out of six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)), all of which cooperate with NATO within NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

We could not have achieved all of this research without the support of NATO Science for Peace and Security (NATO-SPS), which provided student scholarships for the emerging scholars of our project, travel support for our workshops, and funding for the project administration at the Centre for Small States Studies in Iceland. We also benefited from crucial conference funding and additional graduate assistance funding provided by the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand; the New Zealand Political Studies Association; the Amiya Foundation; the Wigram Foundation; and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The editors are grateful for the support of their families throughout the life of this project and for the hard work of all the researchers who tried out the project ideas within the various activities we all organised. With finite resources, our project has demonstrated the capacity within small states to pool resources and expertise to come up with proactive policy choices.

We dedicate this book, with admiration and respect, to Alyson J. K. Bailes (1949–2016), diplomat, scholar and polyglot, and friend to so many, whose ideas helped to shape thinking in the project.

The current global operating environment is unpredictable and unstable. States face a long transition towards a new global order. Small state governments must be adaptable, resilient, and entrepreneurial in their response to the new security environment. Small states can compensate for their inbuilt vulnerability by adopting strengthening measures such as digital diplomacy, cyber defence, and foreign interference public awareness campaigns. They can partner with other like-minded small and medium states and work to reinforce shared global norms. The new security environment requires governments to be proactive rather than reactive.

Small can be huge. We are indeed at a turning point in global affairs. But with careful actions and proactive thinking, small states can secure their future and strengthen national security and independence.

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Chapter 2

Building Shelter in Washington: The Politics of Small State Engagement

Alan C. Tidwell

2.1 Introduction

Small states seeking shelter with the United States face the daunting challenge of ensuring that both their economic and security relationships are durable. Building shelter requires both establishing a standing functional relationship with both the executive and legislative branches of the US government and creating a platform for the advocacy of critical interests. The specific nature of these relationships and political operations necessary to create and sustain them varies substantially. With this in mind, the three case studies below illustrate the diversity of engagement options available to shelter-seeking states according to their position relative to the great power.

Israel presents a unique case study insofar as its politics reflects its singular position in the international arena. The lessons of the Israeli case, however, can have broad applicability inasmuch as they demonstrate the range and depth of options available to states with substantial interests in US politics. The Norwegian case frames a structure for long-term engagement exemplary of a small state with a broad array of interests that are not limited exclusively to one area, such as defence. Finally, the case of New Zealand reflects the advantages and drawbacks of a shelter-seeking strategy defined by a small number of key critical interests focusing on free trade.

The overlap and contrast of the three cases tell a story of shelter seeking that is instructive of how small states engage with the US government and the challenges they face with respect to managing the politics of shelter with the US. Many small

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states seeking shelter vie for political attention and access. Similarly, decision-makers in Washington must manage numerous small states as they seek attention.

2.2 The Politics of Shelter

The quality of shelter varies depending upon the relationship between the sheltering and sheltered states. Shelter's contractual nature means that not all shelter relationships are the same. Moldova's shelter relationship with the US compares poorly with Denmark's. Numerous factors account for the variance in shelter relationships. Some of the variance arises from factors that cannot be changed, such as geography, whereas some variance comes from the behaviour of states. Writing about alliance relationships with the US, Frühling observes that treaties create "... both expectations and obligations of support. ..." for the parties. The signatories "... must decide how much emphasis they will place on either aspect when they decide how to ..." implement their agreement. The manner in which such agreements are implemented is "... inherently political".¹ While small states may well have a broad panoply of foreign policy settings with the US, how and whether they are honoured is ultimately political. The politics of shelter focuses more on how states engage rather than on what issues they pursue. Hardly passive when facing these political decisions, states will seek to influence the outcome in their favour. Larger states, such as the UK or Japan, do not merely wait for Washington to decide the fate of their relationships. Instead, London and Tokyo actively pursue their preferred outcomes. The same can be said of many small states seeking shelter in Washington. Even those small states that do not have a formal treaty with the US must contend with the political nature of their relationship. Like their larger cousins, some small states manage the sheltering relationships better than others.

Many states seek shelter with the US, and this fact alone makes the politics in Washington challenging. The nature of decision-making in Washington also creates difficulties for small states, which must contend with the divided nature of the US government. Finally, recent shifts in the American political landscape have forced some small states to reconsider the way in which they engage with Washington. For many small states, their sheltering relationship with Washington is weak, if not non-existent. Fiji, Mauritius and Guinea-Bissau, for example, have similar relationships with the US. Their visibility in Washington is minimal, as is their capacity to influence US decision-making. The shifting American political landscape also leaves them largely unnoticed. On the other hand, Israel remains the pre-eminent sheltering small state, although Israel's unique relationship with the US makes it difficult for other states to replicate. Norway serves an interesting example of a sheltering relationship because of its diverse policy agenda. Finally, New Zealand's sheltering relationship has been buffeted when the *niche* policy settings pursued by Wellington

¹Frühling (2016), p. 13.

ran afoul of changes in Washington. Each of these three states has fully developed foreign policies with the US, but the pursuit of those foreign goals concerns politics. Taken together, these three states illustrate the many political challenges that small states encounter when seeking shelter.

Before considering the politics of shelter encountered by Israel, Norway and New Zealand, it will be useful to highlight some relevant aspects of politics of advocacy and decision-making in Washington. Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser and speech writer in the Obama administration, coined the colorful term “the blob” to refer to the foreign policy establishment.² While reflecting the amorphous nature of the foreign policy community in Washington, “the blob” needs some exploration. The executive branch dominates foreign affairs. Within the executive branch are a diverse range of agencies and departments, many of which contend with one another for influence. Take for instance competition between the state and defence departments, where the former lays claim to leadership on foreign policy whereas the former has a far greater budget and more extensive presence overseas. While the executive branch has primary responsibility for foreign affairs, it does not have a monopoly. The co-equal legislative branch also shares a significant interest and controls the purse strings that enable the executive branch’s actions. Both branches operate within an advocacy environment in which interests—corporate and social—advocate for policy preferences.

Advocacy and lobbying emerge from freedom of speech and representative government and has grown into big business, although precisely judging its size proves difficult. One way of determining the number of lobbyists is to use the 1995 Lobbying Disclosure Act, which requires all lobbying on behalf of clients to be reported. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, some 11,502 lobbyists worked in 2018 and are generating US\$3.36 billion in spending.³ The reported spending may actually exceed US\$6 billion because of lobbying carried out through think tanks and consulting.⁴ Poor compliance with the requirements outlined in the Lobbying Disclosure Act leaves the total number of lobbyists and money spent somewhat speculative.⁵

Lobbying relies on the provision of information and maintaining relationships.⁶ Providing information helps to develop relationships with the executive branch and members of Congress and their staff. Both the executive and legislative branches swim in a sea of contending interests. The 535 voting members of Congress, for example, have at least three groups when it comes to foreign affairs. Local

²D. Samuels, “The Aspiring Novelist Who Became Obama’s Foreign-Policy Guru,” *New York Times*, 5 May 2016.

³Center for Responsive Politics, *Lobbying Database*, <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/>. Accessed 30 June 2018.

⁴T. LaPira, “How Much Lobbying Is There in Washington? It’s DOUBLE What You Think,” *Sunlight Foundation*, <http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2013/11/25/how-muchlobbying-is-there-in-washington-its-double-what-you-think/>. 2013.

⁵Newhouse (2009), pp. 73–92.

⁶Nownes (2006).

constituents come first, then a broader domestic business and social interests with embassies trailing at a distant third. Effective lobbying of congressional offices requires personal contact,⁷ a difficult goal to meet. The best way for lobbyists to build relationships revolves around “providing credible, reliable information”.⁸

Washington’s crowded foreign policy environment often requires more than diplomats to represent on behalf of their country. More seasoned advocacy may be required to deliver the desired shelter results for small states. Lobbying on behalf of a foreign entity, such as a government or business, requires compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act. For example, the Embassy of Vietnam hired three firms in 2006 concerning their efforts to secure congressional approval of Permanent Normal Trade Relations status for Vietnam.⁹ As of 17 January 2019, 430 active registrants representing some 650 foreign entities appear in the Foreign Agents Registration Act database. The Fratelli Group, for example, works as an agent representing countries including Colombia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.¹⁰

Beyond lobbying, small states may promote their foreign policy interests through organisations such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Brookings Institution or the Wilson Center.¹¹ These “think tanks” often do less conceptual policy work and frequently act as venues and conveners promoting ideas. The United Arab Emirates, for example, has donated more than \$500,000 in support of CSIS programming.¹² Countries such as the UAE can then rely on CSIS to promote ideas in line with their foreign policy goals. These sorts of contributions, to think tanks, universities and other similar organisations, do not get reported as “lobbying” under US legislation. They also become an input in the foreign policy process; they become part of the blob.

In most instances, small states engage directly with the administration in pursuit of shelter. After all, the executive branch is home to the departments of defence, treasury and commerce. The US President is the commander-in-chief of the military and ambassadors represent the President. In some instances, effective shelter requires not only concurrence of the administration but also funding from Congress. Usually, the executive branch can advocate successfully for their own policy outcomes. Sometimes, however, additional advocacy is required to get congressional

⁷Baumgartner (2009).

⁸D. Rehr, “Congressional Communications Report,” Washington, DC, 2018, <http://www.congressionalcommunicationsreport.com/>.

⁹US Department of Justice, *FARA Database*, <https://www.fara.gov/docs/5611-Exhibit-AB-20060522-3.pdf>. Accessed 15 May 2006.

¹⁰US Department of Justice, *FARA Database*, https://efile.fara.gov/pls/apex/f?p=181:200:12190325063119::NO:RP,200:P200_REG_NUMBER:5867. Accessed 17 January 2019.

¹¹E. Lipton, B. Williams and N. Confessore, “Foreign Powers Buy Influence at Think Tanks,” *New York Times*, September 7, 2014.

¹²Center for Strategic and International Studies. *Government Donors* [WWW Document], <https://www.csis.org/support-csis/our-donors/government-donors>, 2019. Accessed 7 January.