NATIONAL SECURITIES OF SMALL STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

International relations is sometimes defined to be in a state of anarchy because of the absence of an above authority. Nation states are trying to provide peace and security for their citizens in this anarchic environment. Big and strong states have been very influential in directing the international system in promoting their interestests and sovereignity. Small states, however, have a different attitude towards the international system. They have to develop some strategies to provide security to their citizens which they sometimes are unable to supply on thir own. Small states form regional alliances, become members of international institutions or establish strong connections with most powerful states in the international system. In this context, the security perceptions of Baltic States provide a logical ground for the security calculations of small states.

Key Words: National Security, International System, Threat Perception, Baltic States

ULUSLARARASI SİSTEM İÇERİSİNDE KÜÇÜK ÜLKELERİN ULUSAL GÜVENLİĞİ

Özet

Üst otorite olarak hareket eden bir yapının olmamasından dolayı uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinin bazen anarşik bir alan olarak tanımlanır. Ulus devletler de bu anarşik ortamda vatandaşları için barış ve güvenlik sağlamaya çalışırlar. Büyük ve güçlü devletler uluslararası sistemi kendi hükümranlıkları ve çıkarları doğrultusunda yönlendirmede çok etkili olmuşlardır. Ancak, küçük ülkeler uluslararası sistem konusunda farklı bir yaklaşıma sahiptirler. Vatandaşları için bazı zamanlarda yalnız başlarına sağlayamadıkları güvenlik algılaması için bazı stratejiler geliştirmek zorundadırlar. Küçük ülkeler bölgesel ittifaklar kurma yoluna gitmişler, uluslararası kuruluşların üyesi olmuşlar veya uluslararası sistemdeki en güçlü

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[*] International Relantions.

ülkelerle kuvvetli bağlantılar geliştirmektedirler. Bu bağlamda, Baltık ülkelerinin güvenlik algılamaları küçük ülkelerin güvenlik hesaplamalarının mantıksal temellerini içerisinde barındırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ulusal Güvenlik, Uluslararası Sistem, Tehdit Algılaması, Baltık Ülkeleri

1- Introductıon

Discussions in every discipline of academic study usually helps the effective functioning of the clarifying concepts and simplifying the ambiguous issues; international relations is not an except to that.

In terms of clarifying the subject matter and in order to make the field more scientific, scholars emphasized on what to study and how to study the subject matter under discussion. The level of analysis problem consider what to study and how to study the subject matter. It clarifies weather to emphasize on the nation state or the system which in essence is a conflict between those who consider that the study of the actions of the nation state is more fruitful than the study of the inter-actions of the nation states.

The national level of analysis is an analytical approach to the study of world politics that emphasizes how the international attributes of states explain their foreign policy behaviour. The individual level of analysis is an analytical approach to the study of world politics that emphasizes the physiological and perceptual origins of states' foreign policy behaviour, with special attention to leaders. The system level of analysis, on the other hand, is an analytical approach toward politics that emphasizes the impact of global conditions in foreign policy behaviour. The systems approach emphasizes the interactions among the actors. The systems approach focuses on the totality in a wholistic approach.

The following chapters will try to analyse and illustrate the security understanding of the small states in the international system. In this respect, the theoretical analysis of the systemic approach would provide tools for a broader analysis. In this context, the main lines of the Baltic States' security understanding will also have a say in helping to provide a clearer vision of the topic under discussion.

2- The System Approach

After the WWII and especially in the late 1950s and early 1960, the so called system approach started to become popular in the field of international relations as parallel to the trends in other social sciences

with the new developments brought by the behavioralist conception known as the system analysis.

It has been argued that the system approach which came into the field of international relations by criticising the foreign policy analysis, was aiming to extend the field of foreign policy analysis by studying the inter-actions, rather than the actions of the states at the system level and it did not challenge the primacy of the nation state as the unit of analysis (Singer, 1969: 6). It might be argued that the system approach analysts decided to study the interactions of the nation states in answering the level of analysis problem or how to study the problem in international relations (Yurdusev, 1994: 145).

Therefore, the concept of international system for the first time started to be studied systematically and it was used to show that the concept of totality as an aggregate of its parts, ie. the nation states. In other words, unlike foreign policy analysts, international system scholars tried to construct an understanding of totality where the actions of parts, the interactions, contacts and exchanges among the nation states made up the whole (Mc Celland, 1966: 48). However, later on K.Waltz argued that such kind of reductionist approaches which define the whole in terms of its parts (Waltz, 1979: 62) and the examples of which can be found in the works of some international system scholars such as M.Kaplan, McClelland, R.Rosesrance will most probably suffer from some setbacks.

The earlier system studies had a difficulty in defining the totality and relations between this entity and its parts since, beforehand, they have defined the totality as an aggregate of its parts (Rosenau, 1969: 73).

The international system scholars mainly concentrated on the interactions of the superpowers/dominant parts in the system and furthermore by equating them with the total system, they ignored the other actors. Actually this fact can clearly be seen in the central role given to the concept of bipolarity.

It should also be added that, whatever its setbacks, during the 1950s and 1960s, international system scholars like M.Kaplan, Mclelland, R.Rosecrance adopted the unique way of their own and carried out their level of analysis studies within a social scientific or behavioralist perception (Yalvaç, 1997: 135). Though these system analysis are produced by different scholars, they all foresee the similar idea of a system being formed by the inter action of elements which had many common characteristics.

Yurdusev asks that if neither the system nor the system account of the international relations has been novel so far, what distinguishes these so called system theories/analysis that appeared during the 1950s and 1960s from the earlier examples. According to

Spiro, unlike earlier scholars, these newly emerged international system scholars had a kind of self-consciousness and thus they were aware of the fact that they are using the system discourse/analysis. On the other hand, according to Yurdusev, Little explains the distinctiveness of these newly emerged international system scholars in a different way. For Little, these scholars influenced heavily by the premises of behaviouralism were trying to construct the scientific credentials of international relations as master plan of new generations of the Americans. Therefore, the reason behind such novelty of these scholars, according to Little, was the newly emerging behavioralist influence over the systems analysis (Yurdusev, 1994: 147).

There are two main ways of identification of the international system, respectively, deductive and inductive methods.

What is seen in Kaplans analysis is that he uses the deductive method towards the system approach in handling of the international system and answering the level of analysis problem. Kaplan argues that its possible for us to build alternative models of political systems like democratic or totalitarian ones, it is also possible to build different models of international systems. These models might have empirical interpretation. Moreover, the scientific propositions of these models can be tested since some patterns of repeatable/characteristic behaviour does occur within the international system. And under normal circumstances, the theory of international politics cannot be expected to predict individual actions, because the interaction problem is too complex and there are too many free variables. However, according to Kaplan, by looking at the opposite side the model characteristic behaviour within a particular kind of international system can easily be predicted. In addition, according to Kaplan the theory should be able to predict the conditions under which the system will remain stable, the conditions under which it will be transformed and the kinds of transformations that may be expected to take place (Kaplan, 1969: 146).

In order to explain this, Kaplan proposes some international system models for us only two of which have historical counterparts, respectively; the balance of power system and the loose bipolar system. The other systems, according to Kaplan, are the products of our plausible reasoning which are; the tight bipolar system, the universal system, the hierarchical system and unit veto systems (Kaplan, 1969: 159).

An analyst can construct a system if he believes in specifying a set of elements in interaction. Thus, for example in his mind a set of specified variables like Napoleon, the Colombia River and a dinosaur can be examples of a system. The international system is analytically formed by an analyst and is composed of the interactions of the

actors/elements, which are basically states, blocks and international organizations. It is the interactions and patterns of repeatable characteristics that leads to an international system.

Different from the Kaplans deductive method, another famous international system scholar, McClelland uses inductive method in his studies. McClelland follows the main path of Von Bertanfally, whom said to have fathered the General Systems Theory by establishing a universal hierarchy of systems from geography and physics through botany and society to transcendental systems that put aware the existence of a system (Mc Clelland, 1966: 73).

Like Von Bertanfally, McClelland believes that international system is constructed through a generalization process upon the interactions of the individuals and their relations. McClelland argues that it is possible to construct international system as the highest stage of systemmness through generalisation from the interactions of two actors. According to McClelland we can include all interactions, also all the exchanges, transactions contacts and actions of every kind between the societies of the world and the total picture of totality of all the constituencies of the international system (Tanrısever, 1997: 92).

McClelland like Kaplan gives primary importance to the nationstates as the basic elements of international system and claims that a nations behaviour is, respectively, taking from and giving to the international environment and finally all these give and take when considered together constructing the international system. The international system constitutes the most encompassing system or the apex of hierarchies of social organization and international environment (Yurdusev, 1993: 79). Systems framework constitutes on orderly procedure for shifting perspective from one level to the other.

In the final analysis, McCllend rather than dealing with the interaction between national unit and domestic subsytems, mainly concentrates on the interactions between the national units which is observable outside the black boxes that constitute them. McClelland tries to apply scientific behaviorist method to the field of international relations (Tanrısever, 1997: 96). In the so called Events-Data Approach the single actions of non routine, extraordinary or newsworthy character that in some clear sense directed across national boundaries might be used either separately or in conjunction with transaction data, may yield a more precise understanding of patterns of indirection among the states in carefully defined circumstances.

Based on the observation which has just been made, it might be argued that the system theory or the level of system of states tries to explain the behaviours of individual political units in terms of the whole system. The system is composed of parts yet the whole should

be /is a different entity than its parts, the whole is not only the summation of the parts but something more than it (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981: 73).

3- The Securıty Of Small States In The Internatıonal System

There is no clear-cut definition of what constitutes a small state, definitions vary considerably. The qualitative definitions encompass the intrinsic physical, geographical characteristics of small states, degree of insularity, and vulnerability. In terms of the quantitative definitions, it includes land area, the population size, the GNP (Gross National Product), the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the per capita income. The number of small countries also has been steadily changing (Arthur, 2000: 67).

It is evident that there is no agreed upon clear definition of a small state. Moreover, the subject under discussion has also a dimension of the types of small states. There are successful small states, developing small states and vulnerable small states. The location of small states also differs throughout the globe. They can be seen in Africa, Asia, Carribbean, Central America, Southeast and Central Europe, European Union, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Middle East and South Pacific (Handel, 1990: 97).

It should also be noted that the end of the Cold War spawned new relationships, new strategies, and new national political identities. The never-ending process of globalization also has placed mounting pressures on the ability of small states to manage their trade, economic and political relationships. Analysts of international relations are interested in examining different perspectives, focusing on the roles of women, moving beyond the vantage superpowers and regional hegemons, The international trade liberalization reduces the need for large domestic markets.

Historical lessons of small states, in the 20th century eg. The Benelux countries (France, 1996: 73), Scandinavia, Switzerland and Singapore, domination by a superpower or aggressive behaviour and the fragmentation and instability of the Balkans and the Soviet Union led to some political strategies which are used by small states. They can be regarded as; small-small and small-large alliances, regional alliances, multilateral alliances, and neutrality(Canbaş, 1999: 87).

Small states also face some economic, investment and trade issues. There are debates about a minimum right size for their national economic survival and growth. They are also linked to the international financial markets which increases the states vulnerabilities and openness to external economic shocks. The

preferences of European Union on trade for African, Carribbean and Pacific trade preferences are being challenging in the World Trade Organization. In order to compete internationally with the new fields small states adopts differences in their policies (Knudsen, 1996: 137). Iceland, for example, specializes in the medical research. Telecommunications and information technology is being furthered by Finland and Singapore. Small states economies make the transition from commodity producing roles to service-selling roles.

The challenge of sustainable development, large market fluctuation and currency crises pose special risks to small states. Regional stock exchanges capital pools and property insurance are being used as a strategy for attracting investment.

Security as a concept has been confused. The question is, primarily, what is security? Second, security for whom the state, the group or the individual? Third, security for which set of values? Fourth, how much security? Fifth, security from what? Finally, security by what means and at what cost? In this respect the unanswered question remained unsolvable that where does the security understanding of the small states come from in this newly occurred security architecture. What are their defense understanding and how do they achieve? How does small states think and why do they need alliances (Sens, 1996: 78). It seems evident that they create alliances in terms of security. By this way they achieve to establish or maintain their security in terms of being a member of that alliance. The dimension of their relations with the nearest great power to them and the threat of expansionist policies in terms of influence, economy, military determines their ambition and determination to form such alliances.

The change in the nature of security in the post-Cold War world is in part responsible for the shift towards regionalisation, with all of the strategic and normative implications that this entails. By the same token, the traditional narrow concept of security is responsible for much of the inequality and security dilemmas that still exists. In this respect, regionalisation is indicative of the decline of the sanctiy of sovereignty and the emergence of a regional order which is embedded in a global framework in which international organizations mediate between states and individuals in meeting strategic, environmental, developmental and human rights concerns (Richmond, 2000: 164).

In a complex interdependence approach, the regional organizations have become embedded in the normative structure of the United Nations framework, such organizations are obliged to find some way of mediating between the broader security debates. It

appears out to be evident that states are to be placed heavily in this formulation.

The international system of states gives an ambiguous place to small states. In analysing the small states security mentality there should e a great emphasis given to the external factors (Vayrynen, 1997: 98). These external threats should be analysed and digested in detail in order to reach accurate conclusions. These factors seem to influence the prospects for preserving the autonomy of the smaller state: the strategic significance of the small states geographic location to the great power, the degree of tension between great powers, the phase of power cycle in which the nearest leading great power finds itself, the history of relations between the small state and the nearest great power, the policy towards the small state of other, rivalving, great powers and the existence of intergovernmental institutions in the security field (Brezezinsky, 1997: 79). These variables together define the political environment of power disparity: interacting over time, they constitute the most relevant operative surrounding for the policy of small states.

It is evident that small states face a challenging future in the global system. Taking the responsibility of their own future would help them to overcome their vulnerabilities. They can enhance their collective prospects by shrewdly working closer together arguing their common case on the global stage (Katzenstein, 1996: 13). Good governance with political stability is a must for small states. Domestic consensus about economic development, high levels of education, diversification and the exploitation of niche markets all contribute to the long-term economic sustainability. Larger countries and multilateral organizations seem to have a key role in establishing a reliable environment for the security challenges that the small state faces (Wyllie, 1997: 89).

Small states should be encouraged to pursue active diplomacy on the international scene, creating a more coherent, visible and assertive approach. Sub-regional and regional collaboration through co-operaiton and where appropriate, greater integration will enable small states to speak with greater effect and influence on security, economic and other issues (Wiberg, 1996: 31). Building coalitions with larger nations, particularly key regional middle powers, is crucial, for instance the Pacific with Australia and New Zelland, Canada with the Carribbean, and South Africa for some Southern African countries, the EU for those in and around the EUs borders (Moller, 1997: 22).

4- A Case Study: The Securıty Of Small Baltıc States In The Internatıonal System

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the three Baltic States-Latvia, Lithvania and Estonia-have made significant strides in consolidating their independence, putting themselves not only on the geographical map of Europe, but also on the mental map of Western policy makers. In retrospect, the period in which the Baltic States regained their sovereignty from Moscow was astonishingly brief in barely two years, and without widespread conflict or great loss of life, these states shed the status of Soviet Republic and accomplished full independence.

Though these Baltic states have made much progress in reorienting their economies towards the West and developing a comprehensive foreign and security policy, they still face the reality that, for geographical and historical reasons, their role and place in Europe is not that strong. There is the residual threat that Russia still poses and there are the possibilities offered by cooperation among the Baltic and Nordic states in addressing regional security challenges (Heurlin, 1996: 77).

After World War I, the Western powers had originally tried to turn the Baltic region into a buffer zone between themselves and Soviet Russia. However, it is clear that today the Baltic States refuse to function as a modern-day cordon sanitarie, wishing to keep their current period of purgatory as bereave as possible by joining Western security structures (Shepherd, 2000: 23).

The Baltic independence has been supported by the West, especially by Germany, Poland and the Scandinavian countries. All three Baltic States have been directly admitted to the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE-now OSCE). The European Union has granted membership status to the three Baltic States; Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in 2004.

The Baltic States clearly consider active participation in the PFP (Partnership for Peace) as a preparation and prerequisite for their entry into NATO. It has also become clear that NATO is not all keen to accept as new member states countries which have not made a serious effort to establish and develop their own national defence structure. The Partnership for Peace initiative offers the Baltic States the opportunity to bring their defence capabilities up to Western standards (Mottola, 1996: 136).

As Russia considered them part of the USSR, Moscow was reluctant to accept the idea that the Baltic States may become members of the EU and WEU, and has in particular raised strong objections against their joining NATO. The Baltic States have therefore, apart from integration with the West, adopted two other basic foreign policy objectives to strengthen regional cooperation (i.e.

among the Baltic States and with other Nordic countries), and to develop good, stable relations with Russia and other CIS states. These objectives have also been reflected in the way the Baltic countries have developed their security and defence policies (Bifulco, 1998: 18).

Being small states in a volatile area, the Baltic countries have realized that their security could clearly be not guaranteed without outside help. The Baltic States current security and defense policies reflect the need for international and regional cooperation, not only through the establishment of practical links among the Baltic republics themselves, but also with the Scandinavian countries (Craft, 2000: 39).

There is little doubt that the Baltic States belong to the Europe. But this is not enough about their prospect of joining those organizations which exemplify the European idea and identity: the EU and WEU. It might be argued that there is little doubt that the Baltic States will successfully change their societal system and establish a modern market economy. Estonia, in particular has introduced effective economic reforms and has succeeded in achieving impressive macroeconomic stability and a stable currency. The signing of Europe Agreements with the Baltic States facilitated their systemic transformation stabilise their political systems and deepen economic interdependence with Western and Central Europe (Webber, 2000: 14).

Being located in the geographical centre of Europe, the Baltic States were for centuries an arena of confrontation between East and West, as well as between North and East. But at the same time each Baltic State has remained an integral part of Europes' cultural, spiritual and economic development (Mungan, 1998: 70). It is evident that history has shown that the Baltic states lack the essentials of safeguarding their national security and sovereignty independentally on their own. They would be overrun in the event of a military invasion, and their security must therefore be seen in terms of social and economic coherence, and must rest on something more than straightforward military defence. This fact also implies that the foreign and security policies of these states should go beyond setting up national armies.

But it should not be forgotten that the question under discussion is so simple and homogeneous. In their search for a new identity, the Baltic States have discovered that, despite many shared problems and concerns, they are all very different. The Estonians, who live in the north bordering on Russias Leningrad oblast, are a Finno-Ugric nation closely related to the neighbouring Finns. The Latvians and Lithvanians are ethnic Baltic nations whose languages, although

different, belong to the Indo-European group of languages. Latvians, like Estonians are predominantly Lutheran, and share traditionally close ties with Scandinavian culture. Lithvania is almost exclusively Roman Catholic, and has close religious, cultural and historical links with Poland (Mungan, 1998: 79).

It is clear that it is the geographical position of the Baltic States that has in large part determined their common fate. The regions favourable geographical location, bordering the Baltic Sea, has brought great prosperity, but its situation as a bridge between Russia and the West has brought many disadvantages and dangers as well (Gfoeller, 2000: 43). The main drawback is of course that this territory has been the object of competition between the powerful states in the West (mostly Germany) and the east (mostly Russia).

The most acute foreign and security policy challenge facing all Baltic States is the management of their relations with Russia. It seems that after a very constructive attitude during the first five post Cold War years, exemplified by Soviet military withdrawal from Eastern Europe, Russia has entered a period of rethinking its foreign policy. Now that the post Cold War honeymoon has drawn to an end, Russia has made it more clear that the projection of Western influence eastward is unacceptable to Moscow (Shustov, 2000: 47).

Regional cooperation among the Baltic States is an important element of Lithvanians foreign policy as well as all Baltic States (Jarve, 1996: 98). Relations with Latvia and Estonia are coordinated within the Baltic Council. Cooperation in security and defense among the Baltic States should be considered as a major step towards ensuring regional stability and a way of making certain that the Baltic voice is heard in the rest of the Europe.

What the Baltic States needs is to become a part of the new, increasingly integrated Europe as soon as possible. Lacking the military power to defend themselves, Baltic States should base their security policy on active participation in all existing European institutions, including the membership of NATO, the EU and WEU (Cottey, 2000: 84). These seem to be the solution of their security dilemma.

5- Conclusıon

The new world order or the world of the new order and the changes in the international politics which result from the end of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union were at first considered to bring greater stability to the international system. The demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as

the only superpower have raised a series of challenges to the already established security architecture.

The impact of the recent systemic changes seems to have great effects on small states. In the newly established power configuration, small states should form alliances be it regional or international- for the maintenance of their security which they cannot afford to maintain by their own due to the lack of resources be in population, in size or in economic terms.

Geography and resources are important factors in any systemic configuration. The geographic location of the small states is an important factor in their relations with the superpowers. Proximity to strong powers has always created vulnerability to pressure from larger neighbours, while the control of strategic routes and resources has enhanced their position.

It is observable that by using some diplomatic, economic and political means and initiatives, small states try to occupy a considerable place under the protective shield of the umbrella of an organization. By this way they are trying to minimise the costs and maximise the benefits of producing a secure environment for their citizens which they are unable or uncapable to create and establish by their own.

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