

Configuring Foreign Policies for Small States: a Case Study of Sri Lanka

Shakthi De Silva
University of Colombo
Shakthi721994@gmail.com

Despite a wide array of foreign policy strategies employed by small states, there has been insufficient academic analysis on the subject. This article represents a preliminary attempt to address this lacuna. It traces the rivalry between India and China and delineates why navigating the anarchic world in such a backdrop is challenging for a small state. This research employs qualitative data supplemented by quantitative evidence. It draws from diverse sources of primary and secondary literature, particularly from speeches by political authorities, from scholarly foreign policy perspectives and from Neo Classical Realist theoretical insights. As this research is grounded on the theory of Neo Classical Realism, it applies a deductive reasoning in its analysis; a procedure which applies an existing theory into a case study as it probes the causality or causal linkages between variables. Summing up concerns and variables which influence Sri Lanka's foreign policymaking, the paper contextualizes the extant foreign policy under the country's *Unity Government*. Following a cumulative linear progression of argument, where different foreign policy options are examined and where Sri Lanka's domestic determinant variables on foreign policy making are assessed, the paper comes to the deduction that a *balanced approach* is the most utilitarian security strategy for Sri Lanka in the present milieu. The paper concludes that the need for this approach is particularly heightened in the environs of a geopolitical rivalry playing out between India and China.

Keywords: foreign policy; foreign policy decision making; Indo-China rivalry small states; Sri Lanka