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The Diplomacy of Micro-states

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The publication of our 78th Discussion Paper in Diplomacy and the first in our new format is an appropriate moment at which to review the aims and objectives of the series. Over the past seven years we have published papers by many leading and junior scholars in the field of diplomatic studies and have had contributions from Europe, North America, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa. With the move in production from the University of Leicester to the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' we certainly hope to be able to make the series a still more cosmopolitan exercise. We would particularly welcome papers from colleagues outside the English speaking world, around which the series has sometimes revolved.

Our focus will however remain the same, which is to provide scholars in the field of diplomatic studies with an opportunity to publish their work rapidly and to receive feedback. We are confident that the reduction in the number of papers published from 12 a year to 6 will not prejudice this key goal. Furthermore it is our intention to build on the international network established at Leicester in order to ensure that the papers remain widely distributed among students of diplomacy and practitioners. Our goal therefore remains to publish the best scholarship which is being undertaken in the field of diplomacy and to guarantee it as wide a readership as possible.

We would very much welcome suggestions and proposals for papers and these can be forwarded to me by email at papersindiplomacy@clingendael.nl.

Spencer Mawby

ABSTRACT

Micro-states are the smallest, and usually the weakest members in the international states-system. Without sufficient political or economic power, diplomacy remains the only means through which these states could make an impact in the international system. It is conventionally assumed that micro-states focus on a narrow functional and geographical range of issues, and generally keep low levels of engagement in world affairs. This is exemplified in the limited number of resident missions that these states maintain abroad.

This study examines the value of resident embassies to micro-states. It analyses the various functions of the embassy and evaluates their value and importance to micro-states. The study also examines the foreign policy making and implementing structure in these states. Based on a compilation of data on diplomatic representations, it evaluates the extent to which micro-states are engaged in international diplomacy, and the selectivity of these states in making overseas representations. The main conclusion of the study is that the resident embassy remains indispensable to micro-states in promoting and enhancing their national interests. It also found that these states tend to focus on a narrow range of issues in their external relations and, thus, exercise a measure of selectivity in establishing resident embassies abroad.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Comments and suggestions are welcome and may be sent to Ali Naseer Mohamed at aliny7@hotmail.com.

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THE DIPLOMACY OF MICRO-STATES

Ali Naseer Mohamed

Ranking of states has been a feature of international system since the Treaty of Chaumont in 1817.¹ States are ranked as 'great powers/superpowers', 'major powers', 'middle powers', 'small states', and 'micro-states'.² The ranking of a state is more or less based on criteria such as the size of the population, economy, military power (either proven or otherwise), and influence in world affairs. Using the population and the level of industrial development as the basic criteria, the Commonwealth in 1997 categorised those countries with a population of less than 1.5 million inhabitants as 'small states'.³ The Commonwealth definition has, thus, effectively abolished the category of 'micro-state'. For the purpose of present study, however, there is clearly a need to make a distinction between a category of states, such as Uruguay (population 3 million) and Paraguay (population 5 million), which are much smaller than middle powers (and therefore, in effect, small states), and a group of countries which are very small such as the Maldives (population 276,000) and Malta (population 379,000). In this study, therefore, countries, whose population is less than 1.5 million, are treated as micro-states. In addition to the size of the population, the states included in this study (listed in Table 1), are all developing countries. Although the populations of states such as Brunei, Qatar, and Cyprus, are less than 1.5 million, and are classified as developing countries, they are not included. This is both because the level of economic development in these countries is relatively more advanced and the foreign policy interests pursued by them are characteristically more wide ranging than any of the other countries included.

¹ M. East, 'Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models', *World Politics* 25 (4), July 1973, p. 556.

² G. Berridge, *International Politics: States, Power, and Conflict since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf: London Prentice, 1997) pp. 10-21.

³ Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (Commonwealth Secretariat: London, 1997) pp. 8-9.

Table 1 *Micro-States Included in the Study*

Country	Population (1999)	Gross National Product, 1999		As a % of GDP, Average 1995-99	
		In millions of US\$	Per capita US\$	Industry	Exports
<i>Africa</i>					
Botswana	1,450,000	4,988.6	3,270	46.2	42.0
Cape Verde	427,790	517.3	1,278	18.0	22.7
Djibouti	647,750	510.7	790	20.1	41.1
Equatorial Guinea	442,680	333.7	782	57.2	87.5
Gabon	1,208,410	4,489.7	3,900	49.0	53.6
Gambia, The	1,251,000	401.0	340	13.4	47.7
Guinea-Bissau	1,184,670	228.3	200	12.7	16.7
Sao Tome e Principe	145,260	41.3	298	17.7	27.5
Swaziland	1,019,470	1,365.8	1,424	40.5	90.9
<i>Caribbean</i>					
Antigua and Barbuda	67,430	541.7	8,164	18.5	75.0
Bahamas, The	298,000	3,368.0	11,985	n.a	n.a
Barbados	266,680	2,051.7	7,736	20.7	56.7
Belize	246,850	621.6	2,692	25.6	50.0
Dominica	73,000	225.4	3,086	22.0	54.7
Grenada	97,000	296.5	3,096	20.9	45.8
Guyana	855,920	626.5	744	31.9	99.5
St. Kitts and Nevis	40,880	240.2	5,874	24.8	51.2
St. Lucia	154,200	549.7	3,668	19.8	63.8
St. Vincent - Grenadines	114,080	280.3	2,490	25.7	50.8
Suriname	413,300	504.9	1,230	23.4	22.5
Trinidad & Tobago	1,292,750	5,487.6	4,292	41.6	51.1
<i>Indian Ocean</i>					
Comoros	544,280	204.1	394	12.9	22.4
Maldives	269,290	273.2	1,064	n.a	n.a
Mauritius	1,174,400	4,149.0	3,614	32.8	63.9
Seychelles	80,030	517.7	6,672	23.3	64.9
<i>Mediterranean</i>					
Malta	379,000	3,379.2	9,010	n.a	88.6
<i>South Pacific</i>					
Fiji	801,000	1,893.9	2,416	27.9	61.4
Kiribati	88,400	85.2	1,014	5.4	n.a
Marshall Islands	51,000	99.3	1,950	15.0	n.a
Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	116,000	213.7	1,920	n.a	n.a
Nauru	8,000	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Palau	19,000	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Samoa	168,510	188.7	1,130	n.a	n.a
Solomon Islands	429,030	328.6	816	n.a	n.a
Tonga	99,600	172.7	1,760	11.9	n.a
Tuvalu	11,000	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Vanuatu	193,000	228.6	1,272	12.4	n.a

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 2000-1: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank: Washington, 2000)

Definitions based on the size of the economy and population are helpful in distinguishing micro-states from the rest. However, as Bjød pointed out, 'micro-state' as a category of analysis would only be useful in terms of the characteristics of these states and, the relevance of such characteristics to the role they play in the international system.⁴ Sutton and Payne identified certain characteristics, which many micro-states hold in common and which relate to the way in which these states conduct their external relations.⁵

The first characteristic is their openness. The degree of openness of micro-states is relatively high with their heavy dependence on external trade which is a consequence of their narrow production base. On the political front, these states generally suffer shortages of managerial and technical capabilities, and as such, have higher levels of expatriate staffing and increased reliance on external sources for information of world events.⁶ Secondly, since most of the micro-states included in the study are small multi-island states, life in the islands is conditioned by an awareness of insularity, giving preferences to individual identity over collective solidarity. Moreover, owing to the remoteness of islands from one another, transport and communication between islands is extremely costly and the provision of public service to the islands is difficult and expensive.⁷ The third characteristic is resilience. According to Sutton and Payne, the political systems in micro-states tend to be more robust and exercise a fair measure of democracy in comparison with some large developing states.⁸ This is primarily because micro-states enjoy a greater measure of political consensus. Although a number of micro-states are ethnically diverse, the predominant political culture tends to be one of 'concerted political cohesion', and as a general rule, they tend to exhibit, with the possible exception of Fiji, an enviable record of political stability. The fourth characteristic is economic weakness and a lack of natural resources. Even those states endowed with natural resources have thus far been unable to mobilise them or put them to good use. In fact, 12 of the 37 states included in this study are in the United Nations' list of least developed countries (LDC).⁹ Militarily they have very low capabilities and cannot do much to defend themselves from aggression. This was demonstrated to an

⁴ E. Bjød, 'Small States in International Politics', in A. Schou and A. Brundtland (eds), *Small States in International Relations* (Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm, 1971) p. 30.

⁵ P. Sutton and A. Payne, 'Lilliput under Threat: the Security Problems of Small Island and Enclave Developing States', *International Studies* (1993), XLI, pp. 579-593.

⁶ Sutton and Payne (1993), p. 583.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 584-5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 586-7.

⁹ UNCTAD, Geneva, 15 August 2001: <http://www.unctad.org/en/pub/ldcprofiles2001.en.htm>.

unquestionable extent by the US invasion of Grenada in 1983, and the mercenary attacks on the Maldives in 1988 and on Comoros in 1989. Finally, micro-states are dependent on the larger and more advanced states to meet some of their very basic necessities. The economies of these states are more outward looking, and for many countries the major sources of foreign exchange earnings are the receipts from tourism and the official development assistance (ODA). Moreover, these states have a greater reliance on preferential trade arrangements with larger economies, to ensure continuing access to large markets for their products.

Micro-states have always been a feature of the international system. In fact there have been times in world history when micro-states were the norm rather than the exception. However, the international states-system that emerged following the formation of the United Nations in 1945, began its life with just one micro-state – Luxemburg. During the period up to 1965, micro-states such as Iceland, Jamaica, and Malta joined the UN. However, the admittance of the Maldives in 1965, raised questions as to the viability of these ‘very small states’ to be full members of the world body.¹⁰ Although the Security Council approved the Maldives’ application, it convened a Committee of Experts to study the question of UN membership to micro-states. The report of the Committee included proposals from Britain and the United States, which suggested granting to micro-states a form of associate membership that would exclude the right to vote or hold office in the General Assembly.¹¹ The issue, however, did not proceed much further as the UN Legal Council, in an advisory opinion, suggested that the proposals were contradictory to the principles of the sovereign equality in the UN Charter, which stated that every member state would have one vote in the General Assembly.¹² Henceforth, micro-states continued to join the world body; the newest micro-state to join the UN was Tuvalu, the pacific island nation with a population of 11,000, which became a member of the UN on 5 September 2000.

Micro-states, with the help of the ‘sovereign equality’ principle in the UN Charter, therefore, emerged as legitimate members of the international states-system. However, observers and analysts of international politics have generally portrayed the issue of micro-states as a problem for the existing states-system, rather than trying to understand it. Among the first to explore the subject was Benedict in the volume he edited in 1967 entitled *The Problems of smaller territories*.¹³ According

¹⁰ S. Harden, *Small is Dangerous: Micro-States in a Macro World* (St Martin’s Press: New York, 1985) p. 17.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ B. Benedict (ed.), *Problem of smaller territories* (Athlone Press: London, 1967).

to Benedict and others, micro-states were simply not viable to exist as independent states, and thus were unable to engage in international diplomacy. A former British diplomat, Ronald Barston, referred to these states as 'ceremonial states' and questioned whether they, in fact, pursue a foreign policy in any meaningful sense.¹⁴ According to him, the external relations of these states were of an 'administrative nature', and whenever they interact with the outside world, they do so through the embassies of their large neighbours.¹⁵

Other observers were more realistic in their assessment of the external relations of micro-states. They pointed out that these states, in fact, do engage in international diplomacy, but that their range of concerns and interests are narrower.¹⁶ East, in an extensive analysis of the foreign policy behaviour of small states, argued that since these states lack the necessary resources to establish sufficient diplomatic apparatuses, they depend predominantly on multilateral diplomacy – a relatively economic method, compared to bilateral diplomacy – in their relations with other states.¹⁷ Plischke, in a comprehensive inquiry on the external relations of micro-states, found that except for Vatican City and Iceland, these states 'maintain virtually no regularized diplomatic representation abroad'.¹⁸ According to him, micro-states 'deal diplomatically with other governments through the unilateral representation provided by the other, usually larger states'.¹⁹ Adam Watson, a former British ambassador, pointed out that micro-states lack the necessary resources, experience, and sufficient institutional mechanisms to engage in an effective dialogue with other states.²⁰ Perhaps Watson got a bit carried away in stressing the inexperience factor when he described these states as 'composed largely of pre-literate tribal peoples...[with] no experience or tradition of dealing with other states at all'.²¹ He was, however, more realistic in suggesting that the larger and the more advanced of the micro-states should, at least, maintain three diplomatic missions: one at the United Nations; one in the capital of the former

¹⁴ R. Barston, 'External Relations of Small States', in A. Schou and A. Brundtland (eds), *Small States in International Relations* (Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm, 1971) p. 45.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Among them were P. Selwyn (ed), *Development Policy in Small Countries* (Croom Helm: London, 1975); G. Reid, *The Impact of Very Small Size on the International Behaviour of Microstates* (Sage Professional Papers: Beverly Hills, 1974).

¹⁷ East (1973), p. 565.

¹⁸ E. Plischke, *Microstates in World Affairs: Policy Problems and Options* (American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research: Washington, 1977) p. 46.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁰ A. Watson, *Diplomacy: the dialogue between states* (Eyre Methuen: London, 1982) p. 159.

²¹ Ibid., p. 162.

colonial power; and one in a neighbouring state.²² While other authors, such as Sutton,²³ Espíndola,²⁴ and Diggines²⁵ have discussed the necessity and desirability of diplomacy to micro-states, none attempted to examine the value to micro-states of maintaining resident diplomatic missions abroad.

This study attempts to examine the value to micro-states of maintaining overseas resident missions. The key questions that it attempts to answer are: how do micro-states manage their external relations; to what extent are these states in dialogue with other states; and how valuable are resident embassies to micro-states in promoting and enhancing the national interests of these states? In doing so it first examines the foreign policy making and implementing structure in these states. Secondly, the extent to which micro-states make diplomatic representations abroad is examined. Based on a compilation of data on diplomatic representations, it analyses whether micro-states benefit from unilateral representations provided by other, usually larger states. Thirdly, the extent to which the resident embassy is valuable to micro-states is discussed. It should be noted here that since the focus of this study is micro-states, it does not consider the foreign policy behaviour or the resident embassies of other states. The functions of the embassy are examined in term of their value to micro-states, although whenever it is relevant, comparisons are made with other states.

Foreign Policy Making in Micro-States

Foreign policy making is a process aimed at shaping the implicit or explicit definition of a country's national interests. It involves an assessment and an evaluation of a country's internal life and its external needs. According to Rosenau, the basic orientation of a country's foreign policy consists of 'attitudes, perceptions, and values that derive from the historical experiences and strategic circumstances', which define the country's place in world politics.²⁶ For this reason, any analysis of a country's foreign policy inevitably involves an examination of the structure of the

²² Ibid., p. 172.

²³ P. Sutton, 'Political Aspects', in C. Clarke and T. Payne (eds), *Politics, Security, and Development in Small States* (Allen & Unwin: London, 1987) pp. 3-25.

²⁴ R. Espíndola, 'Security Dilemma', in Clarke and Payne (eds.), *Politics, Security, and Development in Small States* (Allen & Unwin: London, 1987) pp. 63-79.

²⁵ C. Diggines, 'The Problems of Small States', *The Round Table* (1985), No. 295, pp. 191-205.

²⁶ J. Rosenau, 'The Study of Foreign Policy', in J. Rosenau, K. Thompson and G. Boyd (eds), *World Politics* (Free Press: New York, 1976) p. 16.

state and the system of governance of the country concerned. This section analyses foreign policy making process in micro-states and examines the type of policies they pursue. It starts with an analysis of the domestic political environment of the countries included in the study and then examines the system and structure for decision making on foreign policy issues. Lastly the major issues shaping the foreign policies of these states are analysed.

Despite the apparent similarities of the 37 micro-states listed in Table 1, there are significant differences in the make up of their political systems, and in the type of political environment existing in various states. Such differences are the inevitable results of different cultural and historical experiences, levels of economic development and the societies' political sophistication. There is, however, one aspect, more or less shared by all of these states – their historical relationship with one or more of the European colonial powers.

This is most clearly reflected in the political cultures and institutions in the micro-states of the Caribbean, most of which were British colonies. These states inherited systems of governance that are similar, at least in their formal aspects, to those of the colonial power.²⁷ While the parliaments in these states exercise little control in the countries' external relations,²⁸ certain foreign policy issues are subject to some measure of scrutiny, not least from the political lobby groups. In countries like Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, with substantial proportion of descendents from Africa and India, there are interest groups who advocate closer relations with their descendent countries.²⁹ Moreover, although efforts to create a West Indies Federation ended in 1961 there is a strong sense of identity and solidarity among the various island states, particularly among the states which were under British colonial rule.³⁰ The significance of this to the diplomatic relations of these states is that they often make foreign policy *démarche* together, a practice described by one former Caribbean diplomat as 'associative diplomacy'.³¹ For example, in 1972, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados decided together to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.³² Similarly, a number of Caribbean states are

²⁷ P. Sutton, 'Political Aspects', in C. Clarke and T. Payne (eds), *Politics, Security, and Development in Small States* (Allen & Unwin: London, 1987) p. 9.

²⁸ V. Lewis, 'The Commonwealth Caribbean', in C. Clapham and W. Wallace (eds), *Foreign Policy Making in Developing States* (Saxon House: Westmead, 1977) p. 116.

²⁹ *Europa World Year Book*, 2001, pp. 1852-56, and pp. 3877-79.

³⁰ Lewis (1977).

³¹ R. Sanders, 'The Relevance and Function of Diplomacy in the International Politics for Small Caribbean States', *The Round Table* (1989), No. 312, p. 420.

³² *Ibid.*

represented in some important capitals by a single ambassador and a mission. Furthermore, relations with the United States remain an important issue in the domestic politics of all Caribbean states. This is primarily because the neighbouring superpower exercises influence in the domestic affairs of some of the states, to the extent that it determines the membership and ideological orientation of some governments.³³ In the words of the former High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago, Ron Sanders, 'any action by the Caribbean states, which encourages US distaste, could result in punitive measures being taken against them'.³⁴

The second group of countries consists of the micro-states in the South Pacific. All of the countries considered in this group have variations of parliamentary democracy.³⁵ Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, and Vanuatu have elected presidents, in most cases with executive powers.³⁶ Similar to the Caribbean states, the former colonial territories in this group also adopted a system of governance that mirrored that of the nation, which last administered them. Although legislatures in these states are quite active on policy issues, especially in Solomon Islands, where the parliament frequently casts no-confidence motions in the government,³⁷ they exercise little influence, if any, on the direction of each country's foreign policy. There is, however, strong pressure in the domestic political environment to maintain strong relations with their two large neighbours, Australia and New Zealand, perhaps owing to the level of their dependence on these two countries. For most of these states, Australia is the largest aid donor, and remains by far their largest trading partner. Australia also has a large number of emigrant and student populations from these states.³⁸ However, the most significant external factor influencing the foreign policies of these states is the presence of the United States in the region. Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau, individually have signed agreements with the US, known as the 'Compact of Free Association' under which, the United States grants large sums of money towards development projects, and in return assumes control over the states' defence and security policies.³⁹

³³ Lewis (1977), p. 112.

³⁴ Sanders (1989), p. 418.

³⁵ N. Meller, 'The Pacific Island Microstates', in *Journal of International Affairs*, 41(1), 1987, p. 116.

³⁶ *Europa World Year Book, 2001*, respective country pages.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3542.

³⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, 20 August 2001: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/>

³⁹ Department of State, United States, 20 August 2001:

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/

The third group of countries comprise the African micro-states. After a long period of one-party rule, a political transformation took place in these states beginning in 1989. As a result, countries such as Cape Verde, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome now hold frequent elections.⁴⁰ Similar to the larger African states, the micro-states in Africa are relatively rich in natural resources, but have relatively poor living standards. Thus the eradication of poverty has remained the most important domestic issue influencing the foreign policies of these states. They also have relatively high levels of international debt. In fact four of the African micro-states are in the World Bank's list of highly indebted poor countries (HIPC).⁴¹ For this reason, perhaps the most important internal political issue influencing the foreign policies of these states is debt relief.

The domestic political environment in the island state of Malta in the Mediterranean, and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean have a more direct impact on the foreign policies of their respective countries. In the case of Malta, its application to join the European Union (EU) remains the most important domestic political factor influencing the country's foreign policy.⁴² The two major political parties in the country hold opposing views on the issue, and thus, successive governments have been unable to continue with entry negotiations with the EU.⁴³ Similarly, in Mauritius, the legislature takes an active interest in the country's foreign policy, particularly on the issue of Diego Garcia, which was excised from Mauritius by Britain in 1965.⁴⁴ In 1982, the parliament appointed a Select Committee to examine the issue, and since then this committee has taken a keen interest in the government's negotiations with Britain over the issue.⁴⁵

There can be no doubt that domestic political environment is a major factor in defining, to varying degrees, a country's foreign policy interests. This is as true of micro-states as it is in larger, more advanced states. The difference is one of degree rather than kind. This does not, however, say anything about the process in which

⁴⁰ *Europa World Year Book, 2001*, respective country pages.

⁴¹ The World Bank, 10 August 2001: <http://www.worldbank.org/hipc/about/map/map.html>

⁴² M. Craig, 'Malta', in Clarke and Payne (eds.), *Politics, Security, and Development in Small States* (Allen & Unwin: London, 1987) pp. 180-1.

⁴³ *Europa World Year Book, 2001*, p. 2644.

⁴⁴ J. Larus, 'Negotiating Independence?: Mauritius and Diego Garcia', *The Round Table* (1985), No. 294, p. 133.

⁴⁵ When Diego Garcia was leased to the United States by Britain in 1972, the island's inhabitants, Ilois, were expelled to Mauritius and Seychelles. Following a legal case filed by the Ilois, the British High Court in November 2000, decided that the British government's action was illegal and allowed the return of the Ilois to the island and ordered the British government to compensate the Ilois for the resettlement. *The Times*, London, 4 November 2000.

the policy decisions are made. In fact, there is very little information available on the way in which foreign policy decisions are made in micro-states. Analysts and former diplomats observe the personalised and centralised nature of decision making in these states.⁴⁶ At the same time, it is also true that foreign policy decision making in some of the larger and more advanced states, such as the United States under Kennedy, Germany under Kohl, or India under Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi, were not any less personalised. What is different in micro-states is that major foreign policy decisions are based less on an interaction between the head of government and foreign ministry, and more on the conviction and personal knowledge of the leader. For the heads of these states, foreign policy remains an instrument through which they could make their mark on world politics.⁴⁷

Several reasons could be cited for this. The first is structural and institutional weakness. A former British diplomat, Adam Watson, said that most of these states 'have achieved political independence before acquiring the capacities and the skills to end their...administrative dependence on the outside world'.⁴⁸ One cannot agree more with Watson, as far as the conduct of diplomacy of these states is concerned. To begin with, the foreign ministries in these states are a post-independence phenomenon. During the colonial period, their external relations were conducted by the colonial powers' own foreign affairs establishments. Although more or less the same conditions prevailed in the larger countries such as India, Sri Lanka, or Ghana, for various reasons, these countries were better able to integrate into the international system more quickly. Secondly, the foreign affairs establishment in micro-states lack the intellectual calibre to handle the complex issues in international diplomacy. A large majority of states covered in this study do not have the facilities to train their own diplomatic staff, and thus send them abroad for such training.⁴⁹ While this training is helpful, there is no substitutes for a programme tailor-made to the country's needs. Thirdly, a number of these states, such as the Maldives, still lack a professional foreign service cadre, and thus, do not have a mechanism for the continuation and accumulation of experience in the foreign ministry. Owing to its weaknesses in these fundamental elements, foreign ministries in micro-states lack the political importance as far as decision making on foreign policy issues are concerned.

⁴⁶ C. Diggines, 'The Problems of Small States', *The Round Table* (1985), No. 295, p. 197.

⁴⁷ C. Hill, 'Theories of Foreign Policy Making for the Developing Countries', in C. Clapham and W. Wallace (eds), *Foreign Policy Making in Developing States* (Saxon House: Westmead, 1977) p. 6.

⁴⁸ A. Watson, *Diplomacy: the dialogue between states* (Eyre Methuen: London, 1982), p. 159.

⁴⁹ Diggines (1985), p. 197; Watson (1982), pp. 170-2.

There is a further issue relating to the quality of diplomats who represent these states. As diplomacy is one of the few means through which these states achieve relevance in the international system, their diplomats need to be of highest quality. However, as a former Singaporean diplomat Mark Hong, pointed out, micro-states often compromise the qualities of their representation even at the most important postings such as the United Nations by giving too much prominence to the political factors in making ambassadorial appointments.⁵⁰ When diplomats representing the country abroad lack the experience and professional calibre to make informed judgements on international issues, it becomes all the easier for political leaders to base policy decisions on their own knowledge of the issues.

Thirdly, there is the problem of a lack of coordination among various government agencies with regard to foreign policy issues in micro-states. As discussed later the major issues on the foreign policy agenda of micro-states are global environmental change, international trade and strategic vulnerability. These issues are usually the responsibility of other ministries, traditionally considered 'domestic'. Hence, foreign ministries, already under-resourced and with an ill-defined responsibility for the external affairs of their country, have lost, what Hocking calls the 'gatekeeper' role of the external relations of the state.⁵¹ In some states, these 'domestic' ministries have developed their own external interests. They represent the country at international negotiations on these issues, and the foreign ministry is routinely unaware of the decisions being taken on such issues.

Although domestic political, social and economic factors shape the definition of a country's national interests, the foreign policy behaviour pattern of micro-states is guided by constant awareness of their small size and place in the international system. Analysts such as East, characterised the foreign policy behaviour of these states as having a narrower functional and geographical range of concerns, relatively high levels of activity in international organisation, and high levels of support for international legal norms.⁵² The basis of such behaviour arises from the fact that while power – defined as the ability to influence others – is the currency of international politics, micro-states lack it,⁵³ and they depend on the prevalence of

⁵⁰ M. Hong, 'Small States in the United Nations', in *International Social Science Journal*, June 1995, Vol. 144, p. 283.

⁵¹ B. Hocking, 'Foreign Ministries: Redefining the Gatekeeper Role', in B. Hocking (ed.), *Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation* (Macmillan: London 1999) p. 2.

⁵² M. East, 'Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models', in *World Politics*, 25 (4), July 1973, p. 560.

⁵³ M. Singer, 'The Foreign Policies of Small Developing States', in J. Rosenau, K. Thompson and G. Boyd (eds.), in *World Politics* (Free Press: New York, 1976) p. 263.

international legal norms to protect their sovereignty and political independence. The major issues on the foreign policy agenda of these states all exhibit these characteristics.

The most important foreign policy issue for micro-states is that of the 'vulnerability of small states'. This is, in fact, the core issue for these states, acting as a point of reference to all other major foreign policy issues. The concept of vulnerability of small states came to the international spotlight following the US invasion of Grenada in 1983.⁵⁴ The issue gained further attention following the coup attempt in the Maldives in 1988. The Maldives raised the matter at the United Nations in 1991, and proposed setting up a UN-led rapid-reaction force that could be used to meet the security threats faced by small states.⁵⁵ Following the end of the Cold War the focus on the vulnerability of small states shifted from military security to economic problems. Micro-states call upon the international community to recognise the special problems they face arising from factors such as their small size, isolation from major markets, ecological fragility, geographical dispersion and lack of resources.⁵⁶ The perceived vulnerability of these states increased following the implementation of the Uruguay Round trade agreements and the subsequent establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995, which threatened to eradicate the preferential treatments given in European markets to imports from micro-states. There was an accompanying concern that some of these states have 'graduated' from the UN's list of least developed countries (LDC), which prevents them from borrowing at concessional rates from international financial institutions. These issues, therefore, figure prominently in the actions and statements of these states, particularly at international organisations, such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

The second major issue is global environmental change, especially global warming and climate change. Since a great majority of the states included in the study are low-lying multi-island nations, any significant rise in global sea level is expected to cause serious damages to them. As such, these states are among the

⁵⁴ Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (Commonwealth Secretariat: London, 1997) p. 2.

⁵⁵ The proposal, however, did not meet with much success. The United States and some European countries opposed to the idea of differentiating the security needs of any group of countries, as they claimed that the Charter of the UN protects the security of every member state.

⁵⁶ Commonwealth Secretariat 'Commonwealth Ministers seek better deal for small states', *Press Release* 98/46, 6 July 1998.

leading countries calling for global efforts to combat environmental degradation.⁵⁷ Small states, including a large number of the states considered in this study, formed in 1990, a negotiating block known as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), in an effort to strengthen their positions in international environmental negotiations. Since then micro-states have become influential players in global climate change negotiations.⁵⁸

The third major issue shaping the foreign policies of micro-states is the efforts to increase the level of official development assistance (ODA) they receive. Since their independence, and especially during the Cold War, micro-states have been the recipients of large sums of aid money, as both the West and the Soviet Union used ODA as an instrument to win 'friends', and to increase their influence among the countries of the 'Third World'. By the end of the Cold War, however, the developed countries cut back the level of their foreign aid. Presently, only a handful of countries among the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) meet the UN assigned 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance as a proportion of Gross National Product (GNP).⁵⁹ Therefore, since the early 1990s micro-states have made renewed efforts to increase the level of ODA they receive. The policies they pursue and the positions they take at the UN, the Commonwealth and other multilateral forums are oriented towards achieving this objective.

The fourth major issue which defines the foreign policies of micro-states are economic issues, such as foreign direct investment and export promotion. Although micro-states are not well known for their industrial capacities, some of the states, as shown in Table 1 are endowed with substantial natural resources, especially in Africa and the service industries of the Caribbean, have a high level of industrial activities in proportion to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They also have a relatively high share of exports in their GDP. These states, including Botswana, Gabon, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, consequently place export promotion at the top of their foreign policy priorities.⁶⁰

The foregoing analysis reveals that foreign policy making in micro-states is to a significant extent conditioned by the type of political environment in each country.

⁵⁷ J. Anderson, *Climate Change, Clinton and Kyoto*, November 1997, obtained from Resources for the Future website: <http://www.weathervane.rff.org>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ According to the DAC figures for the year 2000, only Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway met the UN target. The average level of ODA by the 22 DAC countries is 0.39 per cent of GNP. *Official Press Release*, OECD DAC 2001.

⁶⁰ Information obtained in August 2001, from the websites of the foreign ministries of the respective countries: <http://diplo.diplomacy.edu/>

The dominant political culture and institutions are based on the individual country's historical experience and traditions, especially by the type of relations they had with the colonial power. The foreign policy decision making is highly centralised, largely because the state structures and institutions are relatively weak and inexperienced, and in particular, the foreign affairs bureaucracy is under resourced. The foreign policy orientation of micro-states largely reflects an appreciation of their size, economic development, historical experiences and strategic circumstances. Thus, these states tend to concentrate on a narrow range of issues – issues that highlight their vulnerability in political, economic, and ecological aspects.

Diplomatic Representations of Micro-States

Diplomatic relations is the expression of the willingness by two states concerned 'to engage in direct communication, the medium for such communication being their official representatives-or diplomats'.⁶¹ The customary channel for conducting relations between states is through resident diplomatic missions. As such, it is sometimes assumed that once a state establishes diplomatic relations with another, the mutual exchange of resident embassies naturally follows.⁶² Although this may be true to a large extent in the relations between the larger and more advanced countries, it is by no means true in the diplomatic relations involving micro-states. This section will first examine the extent to which micro-states use the institution of resident ambassador in the conduct of their external relations. Secondly, it analyses the pattern of overseas representations by micro-states, and argues that for various reasons, micro-states are highly selective in establishing resident missions in other countries. Thirdly, it examines and analyses the methods available to, and employed by, micro-states as alternatives to traditional bilateral representation.

Although it is true that micro-states maintain a relatively low level of participation in international diplomacy, it is not the case that they are not in dialogue with other, or most of the countries in the international states-system. Out of the 37 states included in this study, 15 states of which an enquiry was made, maintain diplomatic relations with more than 70 countries. Some countries, such as

⁶¹ A. James, 'Diplomatic Relations and Contacts', in *The British Year Book of International Law*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1992) p. 349.

⁶² James (1992: p. 348) pointed out that even some eminent diplomatic writers, such as B. Sen, *A Diplomat's Handbook of Diplomatic Law and Practice* (Nijhoff: The Hague, 1979) implicitly equate diplomatic relations with diplomatic representation, as the latter necessarily would follow the former.

the Maldives maintain relations with as many as 132 countries.⁶³ There is no reason to believe that the remaining 22 states would have established diplomatic relations with fewer countries. However, not all of these states, or even the majority of them, have established resident embassies in most of the countries with which they maintain diplomatic relations, and nor do other countries establish embassies in micro-states.

Some writers on diplomacy argue that the number of diplomatic missions that a state maintains abroad stands as an indicator of the state's overall engagement in world affairs.⁶⁴ Micro-states are characterised partly by their low levels of engagement in world affairs. This is exemplified in the small number of diplomatic missions they maintain abroad. Table 2 shows that in the year 2000, the 37 micro-states included in the study maintained a total of 285 resident diplomatic missions around the world: 244 missions accredited to other countries and 41 missions accredited to international organisations.⁶⁵ Only eight states of the 37 states⁶⁶ maintained resident missions in more than ten countries. The average number of missions from each country was about seven.⁶⁷ However, 22 states, or 60 per cent, rank below this average. Of these, ten states maintained less than two bilateral missions.⁶⁸

In addition to resident diplomatic missions, micro-states also maintain consulates and other offices abroad, most commonly tourism offices. Although on occasions consuls are viewed as having the 'same broad representational

⁶³ The President's Office, Maldives, 29 July 2001: <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/>

⁶⁴ C. Alger and S. Brams, 'Patterns of Representation in National Capitals and International Organisations', in *World Politics*, 19 (4), July 1967, p. 19.

⁶⁵ This is mainly to the United Nations. Data is not available on the number of missions that micro-states maintain at other international organisations.

⁶⁶ These states are as follow (the number of missions in parenthesis): Gabon (32), Malta (19), Cape Verde, and Mauritius (each with 14), Guinea-Bissau (12), Djibouti (11), and Botswana and the Gambia (each with 10).

⁶⁷ This is an extremely low level of representation if we compare this with the overseas representations of the larger and more advanced states. For example, in the year 2000, Malaysia maintained 74 overseas missions, Australia, 85; and Britain 145. The average number of missions by micro-states included in this study is also low when compared with other micro-states, which are economically more advanced, such as Qatar, which had 35 missions, and Cyprus, with 29 missions, or developing small states such as Sierra Leon with 15 missions, and Bolivia with 29 missions, or a large developing country such as Ethiopia, which maintained 33 missions. *Source: Europa World Year Book, 2001.*

⁶⁸ They were (the number of missions in parenthesis): The Bahamas (3), Dominica (3), Micronesia (3), St Kitts & Nevis (3), Maldives (2), Comoros (2), Nauru (1), Palau (1), Tonga (1), and Tuvalu (1).

responsibilities as an Ambassador⁶⁹ their functions are traditionally confined to the protection of the sending state's commercial interests and that of their citizens living in the receiving state.⁷⁰ Among the micro-states that maintain consuls are relatively developed economies, mostly in the Caribbean.

⁶⁹ Quoted in G.R. Berridge, *Talking to the Enemy: How States without 'Diplomatic Relations' Communicate* (Macmillan: London, 1994) p. 44.

⁷⁰ Berridge (1994), p. 44.

Table 2 Overseas Diplomatic Missions maintained by Micro-States, 2000

Sending States	Receiving States (by regions)										
	Africa	Asia	Europe	Indian Ocean	Lat. Am. & Caribbean	Mid. East	North America	Pacific	Total (bilateral)	Missions to Int. Org.	Grand Total
Africa	42	9	35	-	6	7	10	-	109	9	118
Botswana	6	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	10	1	11
Cape Verde	2	-	9	-	2	-	1	-	14	1	15
Djibouti	5	1	1	-	-	3	1	-	11	1	12
Equatorial Guinea	3	1	3	-	-	-	1	-	8	1	9
Gabon	14	3	8	-	3	2	2	-	32	1	33
Gambia, the	3	1	3	-	-	2	1	-	10	1	11
Guinea-Bissau	4	1	5	-	1	-	1	-	12	1	13
Sao Tome	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Swaziland	3	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	8	1	9
Caribbean	1	3	23	-	17	-	22	-	66	16	82
Antigua and Barbuda	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	4	1	5
Bahamas	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	4
Barbados	-	-	2	-	1	-	2	-	5	2	7
Belize	-	1	4	-	4	-	1	-	9	3	13
Dominica	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	4
Grenada	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	4	1	5
Guyana	-	1	2	-	4	-	2	-	9	1	10
St Kitts & Nevis	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	4
St Lucia	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	4	1	5
St Vincent & Grenadines	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	4	1	5
Suriname	-	-	2	-	5	-	1	-	8	1	9
Trinidad & Tobago	1	1	2	-	3	-	2	-	9	2	11
Indian Ocean	3	4	8	3	-	-	3	1	22	4	26
Comoros	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	1	3
Maldives	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
Mauritius	3	3	5	1	-	-	1	1	14	1	15
Seychelles	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	4	1	5
Mediterranean	1	1	10	-	-	5	1	1	19	3	22
Malta	1	1	10	-	-	5	1	1	19	3	22
Pacific	-	6	5	-	-	-	6	11	28	9	37
Fiji	-	3	2	-	-	-	1	3	9	1	10
Kiribati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Micronesia	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	4
Marshall Islands	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	4	1	5
Nauru	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
Palau	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2
Samoa	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	4	1	5
Solomon Islands	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	4	1	5
Tonga	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	47	23	81	3	23	12	42	13	241	41	285

Source: Europa World Year Book, 2001

The Mediterranean island of Malta maintains nine consuls in six countries.⁷¹ The country also had 108 honorary consuls in 51 countries, including 16 in Italy. Even those states with only a couple of overseas missions maintain a large number of honorary consuls. The Maldives, for example, with only three overseas missions, maintained over 30 honorary consuls.⁷² Furthermore, since a number of micro-states included in the study are popular tourist destinations, these states maintain tourist offices in Europe and North America. For example, Barbados maintains Tourism Authority offices in Canada, Germany, United States, Sweden, Italy, Netherlands and France.⁷³ In addition to tourism offices, some micro-states also maintain trade offices. For example, the Maldives has maintained a trade office in its major trading partner, Singapore, since 1974.⁷⁴

It has been argued by Watson, East⁷⁵ and Plischke⁷⁶ that the external relations of micro-states are characterised primarily by their selectivity in establishing diplomatic missions abroad.⁷⁷ The bilateral relations of these states tend to focus on the former colonial power, their neighbours and major world powers. A closer look at the distribution of overseas missions of these states supports such claims. Table 3 reveals that a large proportion of the 244 bilateral diplomatic missions that the micro-states maintain are either in their neighbours, or the former colonial powers, or their important trade and security partners. The 12 Caribbean micro-states, for example, maintain a total of 66 missions around the world, out of which 34 per cent are in Europe: Britain, the former colonial power, hosts 11 missions, and Belgium, the seat of the European Union, which is an important trade partner, hosts eight missions. The United States and Canada, the most important regional powers, and countries with substantial migrant populations from the Caribbean, also host 34 per cent of the total Caribbean missions. The next most important geo-political region for these states is Latin America and the Caribbean, in which the Caribbean micro-

⁷¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malta, 15 August 2001: <http://www.foreign.gov.mt/mfahome.asp>

⁷² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maldives, *Diplomatic and Consular Corps with Other Representations*, January 2000, p. 216.

⁷³ Tourism Authority, Barbados, 16 August 2001: <http://www.barbados.org>

⁷⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maldives (2000), p. 215.

⁷⁵ M. East, 'Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models', in *World Politics*, 25 (4), July 1973, pp. 556-76.

⁷⁶ E. Plischke, *Microstates in World Affairs: Policy Problems and Options* (American Enterprise Institute for Policy Research: Washington, 1977) p. 47.

⁷⁷ Selectivity is, of course, a relative term. Every country is, in fact, selective in its diplomatic representations, so long as it does not maintain missions, literally in every other. Since micro-states maintain few missions, they inevitably would be more selective than the rest. This is more or less true to large developing countries as well.

states maintained 26 per cent of their missions. Despite strong historical and communal ties with some African countries and India, the Caribbean micro-states, except Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, have refrained from maintaining missions in these regions.

A similar pattern is apparent in the diplomatic relations of the 11 micro-states in the South Pacific. The South Pacific states, it appears, place paramount importance on their relations with the United States. The latter hosts the largest number of resident embassies from these states. This perhaps reflects the active role that the United States continues to play in the contemporary politics of the region, including strong security ties with some of the states.⁷⁸ The second most important capital was, perhaps surprisingly, not Canberra or Wellington, but Suva, the capital of Fiji, which hosts four embassies from micro-states in the region, while Australia and New Zealand host three and two, respectively.

The micro-states of Africa have followed a slightly different pattern in their diplomatic representation. Unlike the Caribbean and Pacific states, the African states give more importance to their own region. Out of the 109 missions they maintain around the world, 39 per cent, or 42 missions, are in Africa. However, similar to the other regions, they also attach a high value to their relations with the former colonial powers. Thirty-three per cent of their overseas missions are in Europe: Brussels (seven), Paris (six), and London (four), are the most important capitals. Perhaps suggesting the continuing legacy of the Cold War, African micro-states are the only country-group that maintain embassies in Russia. Moscow hosts four embassies from this country group.

There is clear evidence, therefore, to suggest that micro-states are highly selective in establishing overseas resident missions, and thus, keeping low levels of bilateral contacts, at least through the traditional channels, with most of the countries in the international community. Several reasons have been cited for this. Plischke argues that this level of non-representation on the part of micro-states arises owing to their lack of 'personnel and financial and communications resources', and that they are unable 'to maintain relations with an ever-increasing congeries of dissimilar states throughout the world'.⁷⁹ East presented a similar argument. He suggested that the levels of 'economic surplus' available to a country partly explains the level of its involvement in international diplomacy.⁸⁰ On the face of it, East's argument seems

⁷⁸ As pointed out in Chapter 2, the United States maintains security pacts with Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau, under which the US assumes the responsibility for these states' security policy: *Europa World Year Book*, 2001.

⁷⁹ Plischke (1977), p. 42.

⁸⁰ East (1973), p. 558.

to be a plausible explanation. Analysing the data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 demonstrates that the size of the economy and the size of the population are positively correlated to the number of missions that a country maintains. As such, of the eight countries with a Gross National Product (GNP) in excess of US\$ 1.5 billion, six had more than eight overseas missions. Similarly, of the 11 states with populations over a half a million, ten had more than eight overseas missions.

As noted earlier, since the foreign policies of micro-states are in a significant way, oriented towards their economic growth, one would expect that those countries whose industry and exports form a significant share of their GDP, would have more overseas missions. Again comparing the information in Table 1 and Table 2 reveals that there are seven micro-states, whose industry accounts for more than 30 per cent of their GDP⁸¹, and all of them have more than eight overseas missions. Therefore, the size of the country, both in terms of population, and its economy, explains to a considerable extent the number of resident missions it establishes abroad.

In addition to the traditional bilateral representations, micro-states frequently resort to alternative channels to conduct their dialogue with other countries.⁸² The first alternative method of representation is unilateral representation. It occurs when one country maintains a resident mission in another, but the latter does not reciprocate in kind. The country that does not maintain a resident mission is able to deal with the government of the other, through the resident embassy of the latter. In the words of Plischke, the ‘gulf between the desire of [micro-states] to maintain adequate bilateral relations and their ability to do so’ is bridged by unilateral representations in micro-states, made mainly by the advanced countries.⁸³ Thus, it has been claimed that micro-states are, to a considerable extent, able to deal diplomatically with other governments through the unilateral representation provided by larger states.⁸⁴

Table 3 Resident Embassies in Micro-States, 2000

Receiving States	Sending States (by regions)							Total	
	Africa	Asia	Europe	Indian Ocean	Lat America & Caribbean	Middle East	North America		Pacific
<i>Africa</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>26</i>	-	<i>7</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>8</i>	-	<i>108</i>
Botswana	6	2	4	-	-	1	1	-	14
Cape Verde	1	1	3	-	2	-	1	-	8

⁸¹ This is the World Bank’s average for the low-income countries.

⁸² Plischke (1977), pp. 46-55.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Djibouti	4	1	2	-	-	6	1	-	14
Equatorial Guinea	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	8
Gabon	14	4	8	-	4	4	2	-	36
Gambia, the	4	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	8
Guinea-Bissau	2	1	3	-	1	2	1	-	10
Sao Tome	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
Swaziland	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	5
Caribbean	1	19	18	-	38	1	10	1	88
Antigua and Barbuda	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	3
Bahamas	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
Barbados	-	1	1	-	5	-	2	1	10
Belize	-	1	1	-	8	-	1	-	11
Dominica	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Grenada	-	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	5
Guyana	-	3	2	-	5	-	2	-	12
St Kitts & Nevis	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
St Lucia	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	3
St Vincent & Grenadines	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	3
Suriname	-	4	3	-	3	1	1	-	12
Trinidad & Tobago	1	3	6	-	10	-	2	-	22
Indian Ocean	3	11	6	2	-	2	1	1	26
Comoros	-	2	-	2	-	1	-	-	5
Maldives	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Mauritius	2	3	3	-	-	1	1	1	11
Seychelles	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	6
Mediterranean	-	2	6	-	-	3	1	1	13
Malta	-	2	6	-	-	3	1	1	13
South Pacific	-	17	6	-	-	-	5	19	47
Fiji	-	5	2	-	-	-	1	7	15
Kiribati	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Micronesia	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	4
Marshal Islands	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
Nauru	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Palau	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Samoa	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	4
Solomon Islands	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	6
Tonga	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	4
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vanuatu	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	5
Total	43	63	62	2	45	20	25	22	282

Source: Europa World Year Book, 2001

Such claims might have been valid during the Cold War, when the Western and Eastern blocs competed against each other for diplomatic influence, and maintained a large network of diplomatic apparatus in the Third World, including some micro-states.⁸⁵ This is, however, no longer the case.

The pattern of diplomatic representations in micro-states, summarised in Table 3, suggests that the more advanced countries do not engage with micro-states any more than the latter does with the former. The 37 micro-states covered in this study host a total of 282 diplomatic missions. The Peoples' Republic of China tops the list of sending states, with 23 missions, followed by Britain and the United States each with 21, France with 14 and then Russia and Taiwan each with 13 missions. Contrary to Plischke's claim, therefore, micro-states make more unilateral representations in the advanced countries. A simple comparison between Table 2 and Table 3 reveals that while micro-states maintain 81 missions in Europe, and 42 missions in North America, these two regions established in micro-states, 62 and 25 missions respectively.⁸⁶ Moreover, the majority of foreign embassies in micro-states are concentrated in Africa and the Caribbean. The nine African states, and the 12 Caribbean states host 39 and 31 per cent, respectively, of the total number of missions in micro-states. Therefore, although unilateral representations by other states in a micro-state provides an economically viable channel for the latter to deal with other governments, the larger and more advanced countries have refrained from extending this facility to micro-states. Contrary to conventional beliefs, it is clearly micro-states which are providing this facility for the larger and more advanced states.

The second alternative method is simultaneous multiple representation. As stated in the Vienna Convention⁸⁷, when a government employs this technique, it accredits a single embassy or ambassador simultaneously to two or more countries.

⁸⁵ Plischke (1977), and later Berridge (1985) argued that micro-states as well as small states, in average, receive more resident missions than they maintain abroad. This may well be owing to the diplomatic competition existed during the Cold War: G.R. Berridge "Old Diplomacy" in New York', in G.R. Berridge and A. Jennings (eds), *Diplomacy at the UN* (Macmillan: London, 1985) pp. 175-190.

⁸⁶ If we examine specific countries it reveals that the United States received 30 embassies from micro-states covered here, it sent only 22 missions to these countries; for Britain the figures were 21/19; Canada 12/4; Belgium 20/1. However, France sent 12 missions against the 10 it received; similarly Australia sent 7 and received 5, and New Zealand sent 6 and received 2 missions: *Europa World Year Book, 2001*.

⁸⁷ Article 5, and 6 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Vol. 500, p. 95.

There are at least three different ways in which this practice is employed.⁸⁸ Firstly, an ambassador is simultaneously accredited to two or more countries in which the sending state maintains diplomatic missions. In that case, the ambassador resides in the first country, while the missions in other countries are usually headed by a *chargé d'affaires*. Secondly, both the ambassador and the embassy in a country are simultaneously accredited to two or more countries, where the sending state does not maintain a mission. Thirdly, an ambassador, but not an embassy, is accredited to two or more countries. In such cases, the ambassador might head an embassy in a third country or might be in the foreign ministry of the home country.

According to Berridge, this method of simultaneous multiple representation, although relatively economical, is not frequently employed by micro-states.⁸⁹ Information on multiple representations was available for only seven states covered here, and out of which only Malta and Belize employ the method to any meaningful extent. Currently, there are 21 Maltese diplomatic missions around the world, accredited to 56 countries and eight international organisations.⁹⁰ In addition, there are 15 non-resident ambassadors (within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) accredited to 15 countries. Maltese embassies in Saudi Arabia and Sweden are simultaneously accredited to six additional countries. Similarly, Belize almost doubled its representation through this method by accrediting ten missions to 19 countries.⁹¹ Other micro-states that employ this method include Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Fiji, and the Maldives.

The third method that micro-states employ is joint representation. The Vienna Convention, in Article 6, states that 'two or more States may accredit the same person as head of mission to another State, unless objection is offered by the receiving State'. Micro-states, especially in the Caribbean, employ this method notably in their relations with major powers. Out of the countries covered here, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent accredit a single high commissioner to Canada.⁹² As Plischke had rightly pointed out, this practice is most appropriate for 'friendly, neighbouring countries that possess similar cultures and interests, and whose qualified diplomats and

⁸⁸ While there may be various other methods that are within the parameters allowed in the Vienna Convention, these three methods are the most widely used: based on my experience in the foreign service of the Maldives.

⁸⁹ Berridge (1985), p. 187.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malta, 16 August 2001: <http://www.foreign.gov.mt>

⁹¹ Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs, Belize, 14 August 2001: <http://www.belize.gov.bz>

⁹² *Europa World Year Book, 2001*, p. 941.

interests are restricted'.⁹³ Since the micro-states outside the Commonwealth Caribbean do not share such similarities, the practice of joint representations has not been very popular outside the Caribbean. Even the Commonwealth Caribbean states, so similar in their cultures and interests,⁹⁴ insist on sending their own ambassadors to sensitive capitals like Washington.⁹⁵

Finally, as Berridge and Watson pointed out, many micro-states have tried to use their missions to the United Nations to overcome the problem of non-representation.⁹⁶ For this purpose, they have advocated a 'modification of present diplomatic practice', which would enable them to use their missions at the United Nations extensively in bilateral dealings with other states.⁹⁷ Although there has not been an explicit alteration of the existing practice of bilateral diplomacy, as Watson observed, many micro-states apparently use their UN missions to conduct bilateral diplomacy with other countries. It should be pointed out, however, that diplomats at the UN might not be the most competent personnel to handle complex bilateral issues. In some cases they may not be aware of the dynamic nature of the issues between two countries. On the other hand, bilateral diplomacy through permanent missions at the UN enables micro-states to make full use of one competent mission and also benefit from the political climate at the UN that favours equality of all states.

There can be no doubt that the level of participation by micro-states in international politics is relatively low. This is clearly demonstrated by the number of resident embassies that they maintain in foreign capitals. The majority of the states covered in the study maintain about three overseas missions. The capitals where these missions are based typically include their most important neighbour, and the former colonial power. However, the economic development of the country does influence the number of missions it maintains. It has been found that the more developed the country's economy is, the more missions it establishes. There are various methods available to, and employed by, micro-states as possible alternatives to traditional bilateral representation. Among them are unilateral representation, simultaneous multiple representation and joint representation. It has been found that

⁹³ Plischke (1977), p. 53.

⁹⁴ A topic explored by V.A. Lewis, 'The Commonwealth Caribbean', in C. Clapham and W. Wallace (eds.), *Foreign Policy Making in Developing States* (Saxon House: Westmead, 1977) pp. 110-30.

⁹⁵ R. Sanders, 'The Relevance and Function of Diplomacy in International Politics for Small Caribbean States', *The Round Table* (1989), No. 312, p. 421.

⁹⁶ Berridge (1985), p. 177; Watson (1982), p. 174.

⁹⁷ Watson (1982), p. 173.

micro-states do not benefit from unilateral representations provided by other countries. This is because, contrary to the conventional beliefs, micro-states are the ones providing this facility to the larger and more advanced states, rather than vice versa.

The Value of the Resident Embassy: Traditional Political Functions

From its inception in Renaissance Italy in 1450s, the resident embassy has remained as the main instrument through which states advance their national interests. Despite the increasing use in the twentieth century, of new instruments in international diplomacy, such as summitry and multilateral diplomacy, and revolutionary advances in information and communication technology, the resident embassy has remained the principal channel by which dialogue is conducted between states. This section will examine the value of the resident embassy to micro-states in its traditional political functions as the basis for a further discussion of economic and consular functions. The distinction between 'political/traditional' functions and 'economic/consular' functions is rather artificial, and is made here only for the purpose of convenience. Moreover, it has to be pointed out that although political issues, such as global environmental change and the vulnerability of small states, are on the agenda of the foreign policies of micro-states, little information is available on the extent to which these states raise such issues in their bilateral relations with other states. Furthermore, the available information is insufficient to generalise the extent to which embassies of micro-states engage in negotiations with the governments of the receiving states on traditional political issues. Therefore, in this study, discussions on the negotiation function of the embassy are limited to its economic and technical aspects.

Listed on the top of the Vienna Convention's functions of the resident embassy⁹⁸, the representational function, legally and symbolically, demonstrates the *representation* of the sending state in the receiving state. Its value to micro-states is that it is 'a permanent reminder of the importance and traditions of a state'⁹⁹, and cannot be easily performed by any other method. While there can be no reason why a state cannot be represented in another by a special mission or by a visiting minister, the fact is that such representations are made for a specific purpose (a

⁹⁸ Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Article 3 (1), *United Nations Treaty Series*, Vol. 500, p. 95.

⁹⁹ G. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Allandale Online Publishing: Leicester, 1999) p. 56.

bilateral official visit, or to attend a state funeral)¹⁰⁰, and the visiting official leaves the country as soon as the event is over. On the other hand the resident embassy is permanently and physically present in the capital of the receiving state, literally and figuratively showing the national flag of the sending state.¹⁰¹ The embassy represents the sending state and the ambassador is the personal representative of the head of state of his/her country to the head of state of the host country. If one takes Morgenthau's view that diplomacy is a central element in a country's national power¹⁰², then the representational function of an embassy stands as a symbol of that power. Hence, the representational function of a resident embassy is more valuable to micro-states than to the larger and more powerful states because the former lacks material or political power to make much impact on international politics.

In a multilateral setting, the representational function is perhaps more important. For micro-states, and indeed for other states, becoming a member of the United Nations means being welcomed by other states to the family of nations. It is the ultimate recognition of their statehood and political independence. Perhaps it is for this reason, and following the examples set by the Gambia and the Maldives in 1965, that most micro-states lined up to join the UN, only a few weeks, if not days, following their political independence. In fact, barring Kiribati and Vanuatu, all of the states included in the study joined the UN in less than three months following their political independence.¹⁰³ Whether micro-states were capable of contributing meaningfully to enhance the work of the organisation, or whether indeed they were able to discharge the responsibilities of being a UN member is another matter. What is important is that the UN provided them with a forum to demonstrate their international personality. It made them equal, at least nominally, to any other country in the world. Their votes in the General Assembly of the organisation carry the same weight as that of the most powerful countries in the world.

Although micro-states could very well be represented at the UN by visiting delegations, such temporary measures could not substitute a permanent representation. Apart from being able to represent the country in all meetings held at the UN headquarters, the value of a permanent mission is also based on the fact that

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁰¹ A. James, 'Diplomacy and International Society', in *International Relations*, Vol. 6, No. 6, (November 1980) p. 940.

¹⁰² H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (McGraw-Hill: New York, 1993) p. 361.

¹⁰³ Respective country pages of R. Famighetti *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 2001* (World Almanac Books: New Jersey, 2000); UN Secretariat, New York, 20 August 2001: <http://www.un.org/Overview/unmember.html>

it is a dramatic symbol of the state's permanent presence among and along with the missions of the most powerful nations of the world.

In the Vienna Convention, it is listed as a function of the resident embassy to promote 'friendly relations' between the two states.¹⁰⁴ This idea has, however, come under attack from both scholars and diplomats. James dismissed it as 'cant' by saying that since it is a function of the embassy to promote its country's policy, 'it may find itself deliberately trying to make life awkward for itself'.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Trevelyan argued that since the principle duty of the ambassador is to advance his country's interests in the receiving state, the ambassador would be concerned to improve relations between the two countries 'only if their improvements serve those interests' and thus 'it may be the duty of an ambassador to make relations worse'.¹⁰⁶ Noting these arguments Berridge makes a distinction between the cultivation of friendly relations on the policy level and friendly relation on the personal level, and suggests that 'it is an important function of the embassy to promote friendly relations with local elites (non-governmental as well as governmental) *in so far as this is compatible with policy* [emphasis original]'.¹⁰⁷

Berridge's distinction is indeed true and has special relevance to micro-states. For these states, unable to make a significant impact in terms of material or political power, it is important to create, in countries where they have interests to promote, an environment conducive to promote those interests. The resident ambassador is well placed to create such an environment. Firstly, the ambassador, by virtue of his/her permanent presence in the receiving state, usually would have accumulated knowledge of the local customs and traditions, a firm grasp of which is vital in dealing with the receiving state. As a former American diplomat found out in Japan, the observance of local customs is a prerequisite to get the respect of both the general public and the government establishment in the host country.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, establishing good working relations at personal level with the elites in the receiving state also helps to serve the interests of the home country. A former diplomat of a micro-state went as far as to say that if a resident ambassador is on 'first-name terms

¹⁰⁴ Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Article 3, 1(e), United Nations 'Treaty Series, Vol. 500, p. 95.

¹⁰⁵ James (1980), p. 938.

¹⁰⁶ H. Trevelyan, *Diplomatic Channels* (Macmillan: London, 1973) p. 55.

¹⁰⁷ Berridge (1999), p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ W. Heinrichs *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1986) p. 214.

with the men and women at the very top, nothing but good...could come out of it for his country'.¹⁰⁹

Secondly, resident embassies are instrumental in creating awareness in the receiving state, of the problems and constraints faced by micro-states. Such awareness is created through what Kishan Rana called 'constituency-building'¹¹⁰ with influential sections of the society, sometimes termed as 'opinion leaders' – the academics, research institutions, the media, and other professional associations and ecological pressure groups. The embassy is not only valuable in maintaining sound working relations with them, but it also helps to establish similar relations between such institutions and important government personalities of the home country. As pointed out in the next chapter, high-ranking government officials of micro-states make frequent visits to countries where they maintain missions. In the words of Moore, such visits present occasions for the resident ambassador, 'with his [*sic*] eye to the future and with his ear to the ground...[and] invite some members of professional associations to meet his officials'.¹¹¹ Such contacts help to establish relationships with important personalities who are in a position to influence public opinion and gain sympathy for the micro-state's cause.

Among 'opinion leaders' the media is perhaps the most important, especially when the sending state is in the headlines of the local media. In one such instance, following the unsuccessful coup attempt in the Maldives in 1988, the government of Maldives introduced certain security measures to monitor more closely the foreign workers arriving in the Maldives. This had special impact on the Sri Lankan workers (the mercenaries who helped the coup leaders were from Sri Lanka), who were the largest expatriate population in the country. The new measures required Sri Lankans to obtain a visa prior to their arrival in the Maldives.¹¹² The Sri Lankan media, especially the Sinhalese language newspapers, gave full coverage to the events in the Maldives, and were initially critical of the Maldivian government. As the Maldivian High Commission in Colombo had long established relations with most newspapers and journalists in the capital, it was able to use these ties to prevent a potential negative media campaign against the Maldives.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ R. Moore, *Third World Diplomats in Dialogue with the First World* (Macmillan: London, 1985) p. 113.

¹¹⁰ K. Rana, *Inside Diplomacy* (Manas Publication: New Delhi, 2000) p. 103.

¹¹¹ Moore (1985), p. 121.

¹¹² Prior to this, Sri Lankan nationals did not require visa to visit the Maldives. The visa requirement was a temporary measure, which was lifted in 1992.

¹¹³ Based on my experience at the High Commission in Colombo during the time.

When the resident embassy was established in the fifteenth century Italian city-states, one of its principle duties was gathering information and reporting it back to the home government. Reporting was such an important function as the ambassador's dispatches were the only source of information for the government at home about the outside world.¹¹⁴ Moreover, these dispatches often contained information crucial to the security of these states. The leaders of these states feared of potential subversion against them by their neighbours with the help of opposition groups.¹¹⁵ Almost five and half centuries later, political reporting remains one of the most important functions of the resident embassy and not entirely for different reasons. This is more the case in micro-states which frequently experience subversive activities originating from their neighbours. The overthrow of the government in Comoros in 1978 and 1989 by French mercenaries, the coup attempt in the Maldives in 1989 with the help of mercenaries from Sri Lanka and the American military invasion of Grenada in 1983 constitute striking examples. Therefore, despite being very small in size or 'micro' in the international system, there is no doubt that political reporting is as important to micro-states as it is to any other country.

For micro-states, the best means of information gathering and political reporting is through their resident embassies. Although diplomats of these states might not be as experienced as those of advanced states the reports they dispatch contain more valuable information relevant to policy decisions than policymakers can obtain from other sources. Although satellite communication and the invention of the World Wide Web have made information literally instant¹¹⁶, it is difficult to see how governments of micro-states could rely on such information on crucial policy decisions. Firstly, as pointed out by Diggins, news media in most micro-states are still relatively underdeveloped.¹¹⁷ Even those countries that have their own television and radio stations as well as daily newspapers can hardly afford to maintain correspondents even in capitals with which the country interacts most intensely. Therefore, the media in these states rely on agency or other syndicated

¹¹⁴ K. Hamilton and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (Routledge: London, 1995) p. 33.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ For example, the major news channels like the CNN or the BBC provide minute-by-minute news updates. The Internet also provides access to newspapers from almost every country, including micro-states; one of the websites providing this service is that of the American Journalism Review: <http://ajr.newslink.org/news.html>

¹¹⁷ C. Diggins, 'The Problems of Small States', *The Round Table* (1985), No. 295, p. 202.

news from abroad, the contents of which inevitably reflect the interests and prejudices of the countries from which it originates.

Secondly, although the modern electronic media provides to its viewers news of events by the minute, its content is not necessarily what policymakers look for. In competing to be the first to break the news, accuracy is often compromised in such media reports.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the media essentially reveals what they want their consumers to know, while in diplomatic reporting, the embassy gathers information from its sources (including newspapers), and the reports it compiles are answers to questions asked by the government.¹¹⁹

Thirdly, as pointed out by Trevelyan, resident diplomats are most ideally placed to obtain information that their governments are seeking, not least because they enjoy immunity from prosecution in the host country. They routinely come in to contact with government officials, including military officers of the host country, exchange information with the other members of the diplomatic corps, and at times the ambassadors get opportunities to interact with the leader of the country.¹²⁰ These are sources, not routinely accessible to media correspondents, and which provide the resident embassy with an opportunity to obtain the information that its government so importantly requires.

The foregoing discussion, examining the value to micro-states of their resident embassies in its traditional political functions reveals that despite advances in information and communication technology and multilateral diplomacy, the resident embassy remains the principal channel through which dialogue is conducted between states. There can be no doubt that in their traditional political functions, resident embassies are not what they used to be when their dispatches were the only source of information for policy decisions of the home government. Now it is one among many such sources. However, it remains particularly valuable to micro-states. Firstly, it stands as irreplaceable in representing the state and in its symbolic assertion of the state in foreign capitals and international organisations. Secondly, it is ideally placed to make informed judgments on the political developments in the receiving state. Thirdly, its value remains paramount in cultivating friendly relations between the two countries. The resident embassy, thus, remains the ideal instrument in safeguarding and promoting the national interests of micro-states.

¹¹⁸ Trevelyan (1973), p. 85.

¹¹⁹ Berridge (1999), p. 65.

¹²⁰ Trevelyan (1973), p. 86.

The Value of the Resident Embassy: Economic and Consular Functions

The resident embassy assumes a central role in promoting the economic and consular interests of micro-states. Even from the very early days, states (both small and large) have been using this institution to promote their commercial interests. Since the 1960s, however, commercial diplomacy and consular work have become a core function of the resident embassy. This section examines the extent to which the resident embassy is valuable to micro-states in promoting their economic and consular interests. In this context, it examines the embassy's role in (a) obtaining development assistance from the receiving states; (b) negotiating trade concessions; (c) export promotions; and (d) carrying out consular work.

Development assistance is high on the agenda of foreign policies of micro-states. It can be assumed, therefore, that their embassies in donor countries would play a vital role in obtaining and working towards increasing the levels of assistance. However, only a small number of micro-states maintain embassies in major donor countries (Box 5.1). Moreover, some of the micro-states that maintain missions in donor countries, like Britain, often send high level delegations to London to hold aid negotiations with the British government. In most cases, ministers lead such delegations and the ambassador is only a member of the delegation. On certain issues, governments of these states tend to negotiate directly with the British missions accredited to them rather than through their missions in London.¹²¹ On other issues, various 'domestic' ministries in these states charged with a particular development project, often deal with embassies of donor countries without the micro-states' embassies or even foreign ministries being aware of it.¹²² On the face of it, such practices reflect the centralised and uncoordinated nature of foreign policy decision-making in micro-states. As Trevelyan pointed out it also 'devalues the ambassador and makes people think that his [*sic*] government has no confidence in him'.¹²³ Furthermore, it also reveals that, despite having only few overseas missions, some micro-states are unable to derive the maximum benefit from these missions.

Some negotiations could indeed be more successfully conducted at summit level or by visiting delegations. However, Trevelyan suggested that even in highly technical negotiations, it is important that the ambassador leads the home country

¹²¹ Private information.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ H. Trevelyan, *Diplomatic Channels* (Macmillan: London, 1973) p. 71.

negotiation team and embassy officials actively participate in them.¹²⁴ There are important reasons why resident embassies are more appropriately placed to negotiate (on all issues, either political or technical) with the receiving states. Firstly, as micro-states maintain only a few missions in other capitals and the economic cost of maintaining these missions is relatively high, it is important that they are used to their maximum capacity. Secondly, owing to the general level of economic development in these states, they can hardly bear the costs of sending special envoys or other officials to hold frequent negotiations with other governments. Thirdly, a visiting official could not substitute for the representational character of the ambassador, and the integrity and respect generally associated with that position. Fourthly, the embassy, by virtue of being permanent in the host country, usually would have institutionalised knowledge of the local customs, traditions, and important local personalities, which sometimes play a crucial role in such negotiations. Finally, even when negotiations are conducted by visiting delegations, the embassy's role is valuable. The embassy would generally hold talks with the local authorities in preparation for such negotiations. After the negotiations, the embassy has to follow up on the issues discussed or any agreements made, reflecting the fact that diplomacy is a continuous process rather than an *ad hoc* event.

As pointed out earlier, economic and commercial issues had long been an important function of the resident embassy. In fact, since the early nineteenth century, the European powers have been using their overseas missions to win new markets, obtain raw materials and create investment opportunities.¹²⁵ More recently, especially since the late 1960s, it has been revealed that countries such as Britain value its overseas missions primarily for their contribution to export promotion.¹²⁶ A former British ambassador, Humphrey Trevelyan, said in 1973 that commercial diplomacy was one of the more 'fashionable activities' of British embassies.¹²⁷ More recently, a former Indian ambassador reinforced this point by saying that commercial matters now 'lie at the heart' of relationships between states.¹²⁸

Given that micro-states tend to establish resident embassies in the capitals of their major trading partners, especially in Washington and in European capitals (the two major export markets), they inevitably play a key role in trade negotiations with

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ K. Hamilton and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (Routledge: London, 1995) p. 116.

¹²⁶ Review Committee on Overseas Representation, *Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968-69* [The Duncan Report] (HMSO: London, 1969) p. 78.

¹²⁷ Trevelyan (1973), p. 103.

¹²⁸ K. Rana, *Inside Diplomacy* (Manas Publication: New Delhi, 2000) p. 96.

the governments of the receiving states. George Saliba, the Maltese ambassador in Washington revealed recently how the Maltese embassy in the US is being strengthened to enable it to play an active role in attracting US investment to Malta.¹²⁹ Similarly, when the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries were negotiating with the European Commission during the late 1990s for the renewal of the Lomé Convention, the embassies of the ACP micro-states in Brussels played a valuable role in that negotiation. Exports from the ACP countries to Europe came under threat following the introduction of new trade rules brought about by the Uruguay Round agreements. These countries were also threatened by the decision of the European Union (EU) to redefine its external relations, to give greater prominence to its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).¹³⁰ As a result, the ACP countries conducted a series of consultations and meetings among themselves, and held several rounds of negotiations with the EU, aimed at maintaining trade preferences and development assistance.¹³¹ In this regard, the embassies of micro-states especially from the Caribbean, jointly as well as individually, held extensive talks with the EU.¹³² Moreover, the Caribbean micro-states' embassies in Washington were also actively engaged in negotiations with the US government, holding talks with the State Department and a number of other federal agencies.¹³³ The then US Deputy Secretary of State John Hamilton declared the negotiations as the 'most intensive' that the US had ever held with her Caribbean neighbours.¹³⁴

Micro-states urged the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to adjust its rules to the special needs of the fragile and weak economies of these states.¹³⁵ They also called upon the WTO to provide them special concessions until they are able to fully integrate into the world economy.¹³⁶ However, out of the 37 states included in the study, only 22 are full members of the organisation¹³⁷, and only four maintain resident missions in Geneva, the seat of the WTO.¹³⁸ Thus, most micro-states are

¹²⁹ 'The Consummate Diplomat Wants Malta on Map', *Washington Post*, 13 July 2001, p. A16.

¹³⁰ Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (Commonwealth Secretariat: London, 1997) p. 43.

¹³¹ A. Haijink and P. Hoebink, *European Cooperation with Small Island Developing States*, (Third World Centre/Development Studies, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 1999).

¹³² Embassies of the East Caribbean States, Brussels, *Press Statement*, 22 September 1999; Various issues of *The Week in Europe*, issues by the London based Caribbean Council for Europe.

¹³³ US State Department, *Press Release*, 22 September 1999.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Commonwealth Secretariat *Press Release*, No. 98/46, 6 July 1998.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ WTO, Geneva, 20 August 2001: <http://www.wto.org>

¹³⁸ The four countries are: Barbados, Belize, Malta, and Trinidad and Tobago.

unable to attend and make their case in the meetings that routinely take place in the WTO. Perhaps realising the difficulty faced by the smallest of its members, and possibly to improve its somewhat tarnished image, the WTO has now introduced a scheme in which the non-resident members are constantly kept informed of what is taking place in the organisation. Under the scheme, trade ministries of non-resident member countries are allowed access, via the Internet, to the organisation's official documents. Moreover, the WTO frequently organises seminars in Geneva for the officials of these countries, designed to 'up date them on the activities' of the organisation.¹³⁹

Despite having missions in their major export markets, micro-states may not be able to get involved in export promotion to the same extent that the British or the Indian embassies do. Although Britain remains a major export market for most of the micro-states, embassies of some of these states in London, play only a marginal role in export promotion.¹⁴⁰ There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, although the contribution of exports of goods and services to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is high in most of these states (See Table 1), with exports accounting for well over 40 per cent of total GDP in the majority of them, the volume of exports is quite low.¹⁴¹ Secondly, the most prominent feature of the export patterns of these states is the narrow range of products: in several Caribbean states, bananas accounts for almost 70 per cent of exports; in Mauritius and Fiji, sugar accounts for more than 25 per cent of exports.¹⁴² Moreover, in most countries production is largely by small operators, and a large majority of the merchandise exports of these states go to the EU and other countries, which extend them preferences. Therefore, at most, there is only a very limited demand on the embassies of these states to provide information on the market conditions in the receiving states. Thirdly, the capabilities of the embassies of micro-states do not allow them (for reasons outlined earlier) to engage in export promotions to any meaningful extent. Not only are the embassies of these states generally small in terms of personnel, they also lack the resources to collect market intelligence and deal with the local business community.

Apart from trade and commerce, the other context in which the resident embassy is valuable to micro-states is in the area of consular work. Providing consular protection to their citizens visiting or residing in other countries has been the responsibility of the state from the very early days. As such, micro-states, by virtue of being independent nation-states, are expected to provide consular services

¹³⁹ WTO Press Release: *Press/195*, 16 October 2000.

¹⁴⁰ Information obtained from micro-states' embassies in London, July-August 2001.

¹⁴¹ IMF, *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook, 2001* (IMF, Washington, 2001).

¹⁴² Commonwealth Advisory Group (1997), p. 34.

to their citizens abroad. Moreover, before these states gained political independence and assumed control of their foreign affairs, their citizens living or visiting abroad were provided with consular services by the embassies and consuls of the colonial power. Therefore, even after independence, their citizens demanded and expected the same kind of services from their own embassies and consuls.

There are other important reasons why the resident embassy is valuable to micro-states in its consular function. Firstly, although not all micro-states have a history of large-scale emigration, a substantial number of nationals belonging to these states emigrate to other countries. A large majority of them emigrate to the advanced industrialised countries neighbouring them. According to Diggines, in some instances the emigrant communities of micro-states can be almost 'as large as the population of their mother country'.¹⁴³ The demands and expectations of such a large community for consular and other forms of attention is considerable and is unlikely to be met without a resident consul or embassy. Moreover, a number of these states derive considerable economic benefits from the emigrant population. The remittances from the emigrant community are a major source of foreign currency earnings for micro-states.¹⁴⁴

Secondly, the countries in which most micro-states have established resident embassies are also countries to which most of their citizens visit, either for studies, medical treatment or business purposes. Inevitably, some of these people run into trouble in the receiving state, and require consular assistance. It would not be correct to assume that all micro-states are equally responsive to the demands and needs of their citizens. However, those governments facing periodic elections to remain in office can not afford taking the risk of being insensitive to the demands of the public.

Thirdly, since most states covered here, especially the island states, are famous tourist destinations, the issuance of visas to potential visitors to the country remains an important function of resident embassies. Since tourism plays an important role in the economic growth of these states, and the visa counter of the embassy is the first point of contact with the country for the potential visitor, it is imperative for the embassy to provide a more efficient and friendly service to visa applicants. It should, however, be noted that many micro-states waive the requirement for obtaining visa for the nationals of countries considered as important tourist markets.

¹⁴³ C. Diggines, 'The Problems of Small States', *The Round Table* (1985), No. 295, p. 200.

¹⁴⁴ The World Bank *Small States Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy: Report of the Commonwealth Secretariat / World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States* (World Bank: Washington, 2000).

The forgoing analysis reveals that the resident embassy plays a valuable role in promoting the economic and consular interests of micro-states. The embassy is indispensable in the negotiations to obtain and increase the levels of development assistance that micro-states receive. It also plays a valuable role in negotiating trade agreements and winning preferences for the country's exports, and in following up any negotiations that were conducted between the two governments. However, owing to the centralised, and at the same time uncoordinated, nature of foreign policy making in micro-states, some of the states are unable to derive the maximum benefits from the few missions they maintain abroad. Moreover, micro-states that do not maintain resident missions in capitals in which continuous multilateral negotiations takes place, are severely handicapped as they have no means of making their voices heard in such negotiations.

Conclusion

Diplomacy is the conduct of relations between states by negotiations rather than by force. As such, it has special relevance to the weakest members in the international community. The micro-states included in this study embody the characteristics of remoteness, weakness, and vulnerability in economic and political terms. Thus, diplomacy remains the chief, if not the only, instrument of statecraft available to them.

Domestic economic and political factors play a significant role in shaping the foreign policy interests of micro-states. These interests reflect a constant awareness of the countries' small size and lack of power in the international system, and thus, tend to have a narrow functional and geographical range of concerns. This does not, however, mean that the external relations of these states are of an administrative nature. In fact, these states have wide ranging issues on their foreign policy agenda, although these issues are generally pursued in multilateral forums.

There is only limited information available on the foreign policy management in micro-states, and virtually no information on the internal workings of foreign ministries in these states. The available information, however, suggests that foreign policy making structures in these states are institutionally weak and centralised. The foreign ministries in these states lack adequate resources and sufficient experience to obtain, assess and analyse information and advise their respective governments on the countries' external relations.

Consistent with the assumption that micro-states focus on a narrower geographical and functional range of issues, the study has found that these states are highly selective in maintaining overseas resident embassies. On average the 37

states included in the study, maintained about seven overseas missions each. However, a great majority of the states maintained missions significantly less than this average. The study also found that these states typically maintain missions in the capitals of their former colonial power, their most important neighbours, their trade and security partner, and at the United Nations. Contrary to previous suggestions, micro-states do not benefit from unilateral representations provided by the larger and more advanced states. In fact, micro-states maintain more unilateral representations in advanced states than the latter do in micro-states. This reflects, among other things, the diminishing levels of interests that the advanced states have in micro-states.

Although micro-states maintain relatively few overseas resident embassies, these missions remain not only valuable, but also irreplaceable in their core functions, such as representing the country in foreign capitals and international organisations, promoting friendly relations with other countries, and information gathering and political reporting. The available information is, however, insufficient to determine and generalise the extent to which embassies of micro-states engage with the governments of the receiving states on traditional political negotiations. Moreover, further information and research is required to determine the extent to which these states utilise the embassy to derive the maximum benefit from this valuable institution. What can be determined is that the resident embassy remains extremely useful and valuable to micro-states in all its functions, especially in its economic and consular functions. It engages in, and prepares for, trade, economic and aid negotiations with the government of the receiving state. Its relations with the government elites in the country, its connections with the country's opinion leaders and its institutionalised knowledge in the local customs, traditions and political dynamics play a crucial part in such negotiations.