

Audio file

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Transcript

Speaker 1

And will be.

Speaker 1

Speaking to us today on the strategies of small states, safeguarding autonomy and influencing great power.

Thank you.

Speaker 2

Thanks for the introduction.

Speaker 2

Inviting me here. Thank you all.

Speaker 2

For coming out on this very rainy.

Speaker 2

Evening and especially to hear talk about small states.

Speaker 2

I know we usually.

Speaker 2

Draw a crowd and we're talking about Russia, China, the US states that dominate the news.

Speaker 2

But today I'm going to be talking to you about slightly different group of actors who don't get quite as much attention.

Speaker 2

So I'm going to talk to you about the strategies of small states, safeguarding autonomy and influencing great powers.

Speaker 2

OK, So what I'm going to talk.

Speaker 2

About today to give you a quick overview, I'm going.

Speaker 2

To define what I mean by small states.

Speaker 2

I'm going to talk to you a bit about their characteristics, focusing today on public administration, administration and economic systems. Because I believe these shape a lot of foreign policy behaviour, I'll talk about vulnerability and resilience.

Speaker 2

And then once we've established, kind of the nature.

Speaker 2

Of the small state, I'll talk a bit about the strategies that they then nurture, so we'll talk about strategies for autonomy, and I've put down hedging, seeking shelter and neutrality and strategies for influence.

Speaker 2

So I'll talk.

Speaker 2

About finding smart States and status seeking and if this is a lot of words that all sound very foreign to you and things you haven't come across.

Speaker 2

By the end of this talk, hopefully.

Speaker 2

You'll all be experts.

Speaker 2

In these will be.

Speaker 2

Part of your vocabulary and I'll.

Speaker 2

Try and close with some case.

Speaker 2

Studies and overall my goal is to make the case that a small state doesn't have to mean a weak state, so we'll see if I've convinced you by the.

Speaker 2

End of this talk.

So I thought I'd.

Speaker 2

Start by telling you a bit of a.

Speaker 2

Story, and so I don't know if.

Speaker 2

You're familiar with these Aesop's.

Speaker 2

Fables that we read when we're children not.

Speaker 2

Quite the books, I think you'll find in the bloodline.

Speaker 2

Over here but.

Speaker 2

And there are stories that give us a lesson. So Once Upon a time there was this frog.

Speaker 2

And he had a problem because he was trying to get away from this terrifying snake, and I think you'd probably want to get away from him too.

Speaker 2

So he goes to the owl who's a symbol of wisdom in the animal Kingdom, and he says, please help me get away from the snake.

Speaker 2

And the owl says no problem getting away from the snake is easy. You just need to learn to slide.

Speaker 2

Which of course leaves the frog with a.

Speaker 2

Problem because he can't possibly learn to slide.

Speaker 2

And the reason I'm telling you this story is to make the point that there is no global applicability of strategic choice.

Speaker 2

There is no one size fits all approach to strategy. And yet in our discipline we often take knowledge and lessons from great powers and we assume that because these other states were studying that many.

Speaker 2

If the strategies will be the same and state is a state and it will act in the same way, and that is not the case.

Speaker 2

So I'm going to tell you why it's not the case for small States and why does it matter? Why have you come out here today to listen to something about small states? Well, first of all, small states are located in every region of the world.

Speaker 2

They also comprise the majority membership of the UN. In fact, 105 countries make up the form of small states at the United Nations.

Speaker 2

A loose grouping at the UN. So actually the majority of states in the world are small States and we're not studying them. Are we really studying international relations?

Speaker 2

And finally I want to make the case from the very beginning that even though small states are not a homogeneous group, they're not all exactly the same by any means, and that was the point I tried to get.

Speaker 2

Out with my example.

Speaker 2

Before they are characterised by many common factors which affect their behaviour and those are the ones that I'm going to talk to you about.

Speaker 2

So there are two dimensions when we talk about small states. The first one is whether the characteristics of a small.

Speaker 2

State again, what is their nature and the 2nd is then how do we study the security of small states? What strategies can they nurture?

Speaker 2

So I'll start with telling you the characteristics. The first question you're asking is, well, what do we mean when we say small state?

Speaker 2

What are we talking about? Well, traditionally size was measured by geographic area, population, and economy of armed forces and essentially the reason why is because the states with the most territory and.

Speaker 2

The biggest population had the most land in agrarian societies to produce food, and the most people to recruit into their armies.

Speaker 2

So the more land and people you had, the more productive your land was and your people were. So if you have less of that.

Speaker 2

You were considered small.

Speaker 2

But over time, we've seen that there's a lack of agreement about well, but what constitutes that small bid in 1982?

Speaker 2

The academic challenge said well, it states with a population of 5,000,000, that's a small state. And then in 1998 Armstrong comes along.

Speaker 2

It says it's 3,000,000.

Speaker 2

3,000,000 or less. That's a small state, and today the.

Speaker 2

Commonwealth Secretariat, which is the most commonly cited definition, says 1.5 million.

Speaker 2

So what is happening here? Why is the number going down?

Speaker 2

Well there are few.

Speaker 2

Obvious reasons we have more states in the international system because of processes of decolonization.

Speaker 2

The breakup of the.

Speaker 2

USSR there are more states so comparatively.

Speaker 2

There are more.

Speaker 2

To compare and so the number is changing, but.

Speaker 2

Why does this matter? Well, it shows that population alone is insufficient if you just look at this number. So if you came today for me to give you one Holy Grail answer of this number is a small.

Speaker 2

Wait, that's not what I'm here to do. You can go to the academic literature. You can find these definitions, but what matters isn't a specific number.

Speaker 2

It is that it's all relative, right? You know that I'm I'm not very tall because I'm stood here in front of you. But if I was on my computer.

Speaker 2

I spent all of our online teaching trying to convince everyone I was 6 foot five because they had nobody standing next to me.

Speaker 2

To compare it to so.

Speaker 2

What matters isn't the number.

Speaker 2

It's the fact that as your relative share of population and territory and these other things that I mentioned get smaller, certain characteristics become more pronounced, and so this is what Paul Aquino calls the small scale syndrome. There are certain characteristics in the society.

Speaker 2

That become more pronounced and which we say. This is what makes it a small state. The ones that conform to these kinds of behaviour.

Speaker 2

So I'll talk to you about what some of these types of behaviour are, and I'm going to look at the public administration and the economic system just to pick two, because you know, this is I'm not going to talk.

Speaker 2

To you for a whole week so.

Speaker 2

Let's talk about public administration and the the article that I recommend you look at if you're interested in this topic is by Ranma live and sarapu too.

Speaker 2

To Estonian academics and they looked at the public administration systems in small States and compared the situation in what we would consider large States and small states so and they came up with four paradox sits in the first paradox is that of small versus large government. We assume that.

Speaker 2

A state is a.

Speaker 2

State and should.

Speaker 2

Fulfil all of the same functions, right?

Speaker 2

But in reality, small states often have limited resources and small scales, so the market for some services might be missing.

Speaker 2

For example, if you want to study to be a vet in Malta, you can't do that. The course isn't offered, you have to go abroad to study and that brings about problems of brain drain for instance, or other issues.

Speaker 2

So it really, even though every state has to prioritise and be selective, there is additional pressure on small states to do.

Speaker 2

That the second is the paradox of specialist versus generalist administration. We assume that addressing complex policy problems requires specialisation, right?

Speaker 2

You have specialists who do things, but the reality is that in small organisations you often have this lack.

Speaker 2

Specialist expertise that forces you to be generalist administrators. You might have one person doing a job in Finland where you have an entire department or team doing something here in the United Kingdom.

Speaker 2

Right, so that also has an effect. It's not necessarily.

Speaker 2

A bad thing it.

Speaker 2

Could be if you lose that one person and then suddenly you've lost the knowledge they bring with it, but sometimes it makes things much more efficient and quick to get things done, like in a crisis situation. Third is formal versus informal governance that we assume.

Speaker 2

Transparency, predictability, neutrality, all of these things require formalisation, formal processes, and ways of doing things.

Speaker 2

But the reality is that often in small states you have high personalism, close social relationships and multifunctionality which contribute to informal governance.

Speaker 2

It's a lot of, oh, I know this person. I'll just ask them for you and I'll I'll cheque that thing for you and you can be walking down the streets of Valletta, the capital city of Malta and walk past ministers or walk past the Prime Minister.

Speaker 2

You're never going to be walking down the mall in the United States and walk past Biden, right? It's just not going to happen so that access and the way a mode of doing things can be quite different.

Speaker 2

And finally, the presumption of centralised versus decentralised governing where in a democracy we assume we should have decentralisation like the German system.

Speaker 2

But the reality is because you lack economies of scale and limited resources, there's also a pressure towards centralization of processes and.

Speaker 2

Again, it's because of.

Speaker 2

Also, having fewer people involved doing things now again, I'm not saying these are necessarily bad things. They all come with their pros and cons. It's just a case of understanding the situation. So for example.

Speaker 2

With centralised governance, I'll give you an example from the COVID-19 crisis we it might be seen as a vulnerability that there are fewer human resources to respond to a problem, right?

Speaker 2

In actuality, you can actually build resilience because you've got those individuals who have those multifunctional generals.

Speaker 2

Roles means that in the outbreak of COVID-19 in many small administrations they could have this helicopter view over what was actually happening as opposed to in many large states where the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing, right? So it was easier to be flexible and to respond because of those special characteristics of the way small states are.

Speaker 2

So in COVID it was easier for governments to identify shortcut comings in their jurisdiction. It's easier to survey over the population and innovation is kind of easier to implement more quickly because you don't have to jump through all of these hoops and red.

Speaker 2

Kate, so there can be advantages and I don't want to come away from this thinking you know everything that characterises a small state is.

Speaker 2

Necessarily a bad thing.

Speaker 2

I'll give you another example from COVID-19 where it comes to this idea of centralization and bringing flexibility. Much of the success route by the Faroe Islands in the early fighting.

Speaker 2

It's COVID-19 was because they quickly adapted a lab for salmon infection testing to test for COVID-19, and they did that very quickly, which allowed them to adapt.

Speaker 2

And in Finland, and they have a system where they have a monthly security committee meeting and they bring together the chief of the Border Guard, the head of Intelligence, Chief of police, who all come together to discuss issues of Finnish security, so that when a crisis happens, everybody already knows each other.

Speaker 2

And they're already discussing issues of resilience and an ongoing fashion, and they also take what's called a comprehensive security approach, which means the government works very closely with NGO's business and public organisations.

Speaker 2

So that it's.

Speaker 2

Point so that they work together and confronting the crisis and that part of that is that accessibility and being slightly closer because you don't have all those layers that separate you.

Speaker 2

OK, so let's just shift quickly to the economic dimension and typically in economics.

Speaker 2

We think of.

Speaker 2

It as being measured by GDP and falsely.

Speaker 2

And I'll say that immediately in case you're writing this down and you write down what I'm saying in the past, they one would assume that you know.

Speaker 2

If I have a GDP of 1 and somebody else has a GDP of two, we would think that's twice as strong.

Speaker 2

But that's not the case. So for example in the 1980s Malta had a GDP that was 20 times.

Speaker 2

That of India.

Speaker 2

So should we assume that it's 20 times stronger? No, because the Maltese economy is disproportionately exposed to externally originating shocks that larger countries.

Speaker 2

Have much more of a buffer against and you could see this when the Libya crisis broke out and tourism was affected towards multi even though it's not because of its proximity to Libya.

Speaker 2

So a shock that had absolutely nothing to do with the island impacted on its economy. So there's much more exposure to these kinds of shocks.

Speaker 2

And so small states economically are characterised by a high reliance on exports. Because of the limited size of their market and also to meet import expenditure and a high reliance on imports because of limited natural resource endowments and limited diversification possibilities. So what does this all mean? Economics?

Speaker 2

Illness is associated with a relatively high reliance on international trade. A small economy has.

Speaker 2

To be open.

Speaker 2

You have to trade. You cannot produce everything you need yourself.

Speaker 2

And you have to.

Speaker 2

Be trading with others now. Who to trade with then that?

Speaker 2

Is a policy.

Speaker 2

Choice so the nature is having to be open to trade.

Speaker 2

The nurture is and who you trade with what you trade, things like that and so if we think about the situation of small states as having certain funder abilities.

Speaker 2

For instance, exposure to external cost shocks, and you can also think you know these are the things that are.

Speaker 2

Or like I said, the.

Speaker 2

Nature we can do this is a fact of life, but it doesn't mean we're doomed.

Speaker 2

It's up to policymakers to build resilience, which means coping ability. How you bounce back from those shocks. And that comes with what kinds of macroeconomic policies you're putting in place. What kind of market policies? What kind of policy?

Speaker 2

Making you choose to build resilience.

Speaker 2

So remember this. The Vulnerabilities and resilience. If you take something away from that section and you can see that in again, I'll sum up COVID-19 because that's something I've been working on quite a lot at the moment.

Speaker 2

Some of the vulnerabilities are that you have the potential for easier transmission of the virus in states that are small.

Speaker 2

And especially densely populated, you have higher medicine costs per capita because it costs more to create things for fewer people.

Speaker 2

And through our resources to contend with the problem, you know you can't like in the UK they designated one hospital for COVID patients one hospital.

Speaker 2

For everyone else.

Speaker 2

You can't do that if you have only one hospital, right? If you replace like van water that only had one ventilator, what do you do in these kinds of situations? But we also saw that they could build.

Speaker 2

Resilience, right? Having those much more flexible and adaptable and agile modes of doing things, economic agility to change and to change rapidly the way you were producing things or what you're selling.

Speaker 2

And also the idea of social capital, which is the idea that in small states often that because of these closer relationships, even if you don't get along and it's a very polarised society in times of crisis the people are much more willing to band together. And this is characterised by the just in the order of New Zealand calling New Zealand.

Speaker 2

A-Team most 5,000,000 in confronting the virus. Just very different to the situation we had here in the UK and in regard to our politicians.

Speaker 2

OK, so if you take anything away from the things that I've talked about so far in the talk, it's that small states they will need alliances because they can't do everything by themselves.

Speaker 2

They'll need to trade because.

Speaker 2

Their economy has to be open and which I will come to talk about a.

Speaker 2

Bit more some of the ways to do this.

Speaker 2

Is through international organisations and for the real diehard IR theorists in the room you can remember it as this is what the realists would really care about.

Speaker 2

That's what the Liberals would really care about, and this is what the constructivists would really care about. But they all matter for studies of small states.

Speaker 2

OK, and what do they?

Speaker 2

Use these three things for.

Speaker 2

Well, Ghoshal who is a.

Speaker 2

Scholar said in 1998 that the dilemma of states is to do two things they want to protect their autonomy and they want.

Speaker 2

To project their influence.

Speaker 2

Just checking how long I've been talking for, so I did not.

Speaker 2

Start my timer so you'll have to tell me when I run out of time, OK?

Speaker 2

So what do?

Speaker 2

They so have you've understood. Now I.

Speaker 2

Think a bit about.

Speaker 2

What characterises the small state?

Speaker 2

And so how do we to protect their autonomy and project influence? Let's start with protecting their autonomy, their independence, their existence, right as sovereign actors in the international system, which historically we know, and we know from.

Speaker 2

The news this.

Speaker 2

Week not everybody wants to leave them.

Speaker 2

Just you know.

Speaker 2

Live their lives and be in peace. So what do they do? Traditional IR scholarship says.

Speaker 2

That states will either align with great powers or balance against potential threats. So either you join with the big guy who's threatening you, or you join with other people as well. States against this threat, right? We know this as bandwagoning and.

Speaker 2

And same but scholar, the small states say this is was this is sometimes the case. This also explains medium to large state behaviour and not the behaviour of small states who often prefer to do a number of other things.

Speaker 2

And those are the three things I'm going to talk to you about because you're less likely to have heard about them. So I'm gonna talk about seeking shelter developing.

Speaker 2

Hedging strategies and staying neutral.

Speaker 2

OK, so there is a famous proverb in South Korea which says that which talks about its position between China and Japan and it says, uh shrimp breaks its back in a fight among whales, and the idea is that small states don't really like to be caught in the middle of great power competition. Don't like to be squeezed and.

Speaker 2

It's often said that this creates problems for them, but actually for many small states, they've found a way to navigate where conditions of strategic geostrategic competition can actually be quite favour.

Speaker 2

And this is because they don't necessarily want to choose a side, and they prefer to go in the middle.

Speaker 2

And if you manage that effectively, it can actually be quite lucrative and quite a successful strategy for small states they.

Speaker 2

Give you the example that all.

Speaker 2

Southeast Asian states maintain.

Speaker 2

Economic and diplomatic ties with China.

Speaker 2

But it doesn't mean they're just ready to accept the power ascendancy.

Speaker 2

Of China in terms of political or military alignment, and they often balance that by having a relationship, for instance, with the United States and Singapore is a perfect example of this.

Speaker 2

So pure balancing or bandwagoning is not necessarily economically wise. It might be risky, so they choose to take a middle position and.

Speaker 2

There are various.

Speaker 2

And various types of strategic hedging depending on how close you are to one side or the other. And if you want to read more about this, I'd suggest looking at Denny Roy in 2005.

Speaker 2

And when done well, this can actually. This can actually be great for the small state, and I put this cartoon from the height of the Cold War where you can see the US and the USSR dressed as Santa Claus. Coming to many of the small states that they were vying for influence. Overbearing dance.

Speaker 2

And steel works and bridges, and saying we're going to build all.

Speaker 2

These things for you, if you will just support.

Speaker 2

Hurt us right? And so if you were, if you're savvy, it can be an opportunity to actually navigate the risk and come out with quite a lot of rewards.

Speaker 2

And there's a lot of examples of this from the Cold War today. It's a tightrope that's being walked by ASEAN in relation to the US and China, and many small states.

Speaker 2

State explicitly that they don't want to choose a side. If you think of the 2019 Shangri-La dialogue, which is Asia's premier defence summit and Lee Kuan Yew. Opened the summit by explicitly stating.

Speaker 2

Great powers ask us.

Speaker 2

Are you my friend, are you not my friend? Well, we

Speaker 2

Want to be?

Speaker 2

Friends with everybody, and that's the way the.

Speaker 2

World has to be.

Speaker 2

So as long as they are able to navigate this tightrope and have a relationship with the two it can actually be quite favourable for small States and they don't really want to bandwagon or balance.

Speaker 2

Despite what you might have read in your IR theory books.

Speaker 2

Now sometimes small states might also need assistance, even in this. In this situation, which is not necessarily bilateral, but they want something a bit more certain, and so baldar, torreilles, and and other scholars have argued that what best describes the situation of small states that join.

Speaker 2

For instance, the European Union is the idea of seeking shelter, and they've become dependent on economic, economic, political and societal shelter provided by larger States and regional and international organisations.

Speaker 2

So what does this mean? Political shelter is the idea that alliances detur conflict, and if you enter in and if you enter an organisation, you'll cooperate.

Speaker 2

More economic shelter means you have access to the markets they trade in a more regular way. But there's also the idea of societal shelter. So remember that I said you can't.

Speaker 2

Study to be a vet in Malta, right? Sometimes there is knowledge and skills and ideas that are not indigenous to your country.

Speaker 2

So by joining these kinds of international organisations you also gain access to training and knowledge as well from abroad.

Speaker 2

There are always costs to everything, so I put this there so that you I try.

Speaker 2

And add some balance and it's.

Speaker 2

That there are, you know, joining organisations comes with conditions. You might have to cede some of your sovereignty to reap the greater rewards of pooling sovereignty. Something for instance the UK was not happy about doing and.

Speaker 2

As we know then there might be, you know you have to decide how much of your sovereignty are you willing to give up, which is a big question for a small state when its own its very existence could perhaps be subsumed.

Speaker 2

The third one is staying neutral. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this because I will refer to it again in a moment and but I had to put it in because because of what's happened this week and so some small states, especially in in important geostrategic locations to avoid being drawn into conflict.

Speaker 2

Preferred to declare neutrality, military neutrality, and so a good example of this is Finland because it's.

Speaker 2

It's a very long border with an overbearing and dangerous neighbour, but it also that it doesn't want to antagonise.

Speaker 2

But on the other side, also wants to maintain good relationship with the West, so it's been neutral and something that's so interesting about what's happening this week. Besides of the obvious is that in country, in a country like Finland.

Speaker 2

Last year they only had a.

Speaker 2

About 19% support to join NATO now it's shot up this week to about 53% and that goes up to 64%.

Speaker 2

If Sweden were to join as well, so the current crisis is actually causing states with a long standing history of neutrality to reconsider whether they would be better off as part of one of those security organisations and benefiting.

Speaker 2

From strength in numbers than risking being caught out in the cold, we can talk about this more. Maybe in the Q&A section later.

Speaker 2

So those are.

Speaker 2

Some of the ways small states.

Speaker 2

Protect their autonomy. Let me talk to.

Speaker 2

You now about how?

Speaker 2

They project influence and.

Speaker 2

I'm going to talk about 3 strategies again.

Speaker 2

All good things come in three.

Speaker 2

So the first one is institutional binding, and this one might be a bit familiar to anybody who's interested in international law.

Speaker 2

It's basically the idea that in international affairs, if you have rules and norms they will formalise acceptable behaviour that will bind the behaviour of great powers.

Speaker 2

And this has become prolific after the Second World War. There are many organisations, many rules and norms put into place, and these are seen as levelling the playing field in an asymmetric relationship. So instead of having this.

Speaker 2

And here it looks a bit more like the situation here, where you have to have more of a negotiation over what's acceptable behaviour, and it's also good for small states because it lowers transaction costs.

Speaker 2

If you negotiate as a group in an organisation, you need fewer resources to do that.

Speaker 2

Kind of thing and.

Speaker 2

So think of it.

Speaker 2

Like Gulliver's Travels, if anybody read that Gulliver goes on an adventure, falls asleep on an island, and wakes up to find he's been tied down by all these tiny little Lilliputian people.

Speaker 2

And so the idea here is that just like the little cushions tying on Gulliver small states, if they can get what they want turned into international law or a norm, they combined the behaviour of great powers, and so, as Michael Barnett argues, world orders are created and sustained not only by great power preferences.

Speaker 2

Not just what great powers want to do, but by changing understanding of what constitutes a legitimate international.

Speaker 2

Order now I know this won't necessarily be the case for everything and great powers will always be able to not follow those rules, but even getting them to think twice or getting them to abide by certain rules that they wouldn't have otherwise.

Speaker 2

It's still a positive step in that direction for small States and we've seen many.

Speaker 2

Small states put rules.

Speaker 2

On the international agenda, like the Norwegian treated to ban landmines or the law of the sea, came from a proposal put forward by Malta in the 1950s.

Speaker 2

So you can see small states are able to shape the international order through law instead of might and deep pockets.

Speaker 2

Second one is the idea of smart states. So many of the problems we face today are not well, unless you're Ukraine right now, I suppose, but are typically not the ones that require a military response, right? Things like organised crime, pollution, illegal immigration, and so.

Speaker 2

States are able to offer a contribution to dealing with these things by being what we call smart states. Smart states means they turn their weaknesses into strengths.

Speaker 2

I'll give you an example. One role they can play is being an honest broker. This means a mediator, someone who brokers compromise. Small states are often seen as the.

Speaker 2

Best mediators because they're not considered to be as self interested as great powers, especially neutral small States and so Norway's Oslo Accords are a good example of this.

Speaker 2

The second one is the technical expert where you influence through becoming the expert in something, having that knowledge and capability, any influence through that instead of again military might, and so you can think of Estonia branding it Estonia and being the world leader in E governance or the Welsh well being of future generations.

Speaker 2

Act, which is the only act in the world that turned the Brundtland definition on climate change and sustainability into law, which is crazy given we're in a climate emergency. So influencing through expertise.

Speaker 2

And the last one is status seeker and all of this is kind of tight together, and so some of this you'll be doing at the same time.

Speaker 2

So for the idea of status is that of power, and through honour and reputation, right? Your status, and for a great power that is often about being a state to be reckoned with.

Speaker 2

But for a small state, it's often about being noticed and being seen and being useful to others and so to give you.

Speaker 2

A little bit of.

Speaker 2

So political philosophy, we all love a bit of Hobbs, he says in.

Speaker 2

Leviathan that in the nature of.

Speaker 2

Man, we have three causes of quarrel.

Speaker 2

First competition second. Diffidence and 3rd glory. The first makes me invade for gain, so think economic might the second for safety.

Speaker 2

So think security and the third for reputation and it's a third one which he lists all three as being important sources of power.

Speaker 2

But we barely talk well. We do more now, but we don't talk enough about the power you can get from reputation. And so I think I missed a slide there.

Speaker 2

Oh, I don't have to.

Speaker 2

Go backwards, OK and so.

Speaker 2

Your reputation, yes. So if I add onto Hobbs and we'll Durckheim, he says as long as there will be states there would be national pride and nothing can be more warranted.

Speaker 2

But states can have their pride not being the greatest or the wealthiest, but in being the most just the best organised and possessing the best moral constitution.

Speaker 2

So we shouldn't assume all states are trying to do the same thing and be the same thing and be the world policeman.

Speaker 2

Some can achieve influence in other ways, and so it's going to ask if anybody recognises any of the people in this picture.

Speaker 2

Who can you recognise?

Graco bump.

Speaker 2

Yes, I hope everyone recognises. I mean besides Obama, can anybody recognise anybody?

In there.

Speaker 2

Close Nordic, so this is from 2016, so they're not. You know most of them aren't in these positions anymore, so it'll be forgiven.

Not exactly.

Speaker 2

But basically this is 2016. The Nordic leaders met with Obama and he said this great quote.

Speaker 2

I really believe the.

Speaker 2

World would be more secure and more prosperous if we just had more partners like our Nordic countries.

Speaker 2

There have been times that I've said why don't we just put all these small countries in charge for a while and they could clean things up?

Speaker 2

OK, it's a nice thing to say, but why does it? Why does it matter? Well, he's saying this. He's not saying look how rich these small countries are.

Speaker 2

They can give us money to buy weapons or look what big armies they have. They can come and help us fight. He's saying they have. They can clean things. Obviously they have this reputation of being.

Speaker 2

Well governed, effective societies, and that's what people what is giving them a reputation that other states respect and makes them willing.

Speaker 2

To work with them.

Speaker 2

Of course, in this picture you can also see kind of some of the downsides of small state diplomacy, right?

Speaker 2

Look at them well. All their meeting together. I'm pretty sure he would have had a one on one with Angela Merkel at.

Speaker 2

That time or.

Speaker 2

One on one with Putin, so sometimes you do have to deal with the fact that you might not be. You have to. There is strength in numbers, but sometimes you're also part of a group. So then.

Speaker 2

How do you distinguish yourselves in that group is something small states also need to be mindful of?

Speaker 2

OK, I'll give you some examples of case studies in case you know for the examples of the strategies that I've talked about, I'm not going to talk about all of them.

Speaker 2

I'll only talk about one, but I'll just read them out to give you.

Speaker 2

Some examples if you.

Speaker 2

Want to go?

Speaker 2

Away and think.

Speaker 2

About this afterwards for neutrality, many of the Cold War nonaligned states are also militarily neutral.

Speaker 2

And the idea of binding through institutions right? Using international law Luxembourg. A great example the honest broker. We mentioned Norway the technical expert.

Speaker 2

I mentioned Estonia, another one who binds through norm entrepreneurship. If you look at Denmark in the European Commission, it's incredible. The number of policies they've managed to get.

Speaker 2

The honest broker, again, I'm going to talk about motels, course and another one is the idea of being a smart state strategy.

Speaker 2

The Hub Singapore, you know, logistics in the region and its skills. You think of that country. Strategic hedging. Really all Southeast Asian small states but also Gulf small states.

Speaker 2

Really, any region where alliance commitments are a bit uncertain and intentions can change. So you see for example, Oman is a good example there as it hedges between it joined the GCC to kind of balance the Iranian threat, but also without alienating Saudi Arabia. So you have this kind of balancing maderos a scholar actually calls.

Speaker 2

This kind of hedging, a geopolitical insurance?

Speaker 2

Strategy, which I quite like.

Speaker 2

And the last one of.

Speaker 2

Small state is being an issue champion.

Speaker 2

So you can think of many of the small islands in the Pacific like the Marshall Islands has really had a lot of global leadership on the environment.

Speaker 2

OK, so I'm going to talk to you now quickly about this. In practise how the one small state does this and it's.

Speaker 2

The place, right?

Speaker 2

Here in the middle multi.

Speaker 2

I don't know if you the people at the back. They definitely can't see it.

Speaker 2

All the way.

Speaker 2

From down there, and so just quickly to.

Speaker 2

The room what's the first thing you?

Speaker 2

Notice if you.

Speaker 2

If you look at Malta on this map, any things that stand out immediately.

Speaker 2

Central location, yeah.

Speaker 2

Central location where?

Speaker 2

Between two continents brilliant.

Speaker 2

Anything else that stands out of this country?

Speaker 2

No, OK, I'll tell you some things about it, but everything you've said is basically right and.

Speaker 2

It's very small.

Speaker 2

Is the first thing that maybe would have said I. Also I always get to avoid the question of.

Speaker 2

You know the question you get asked to be in, but is this country a small state? Well multi is small in every metric.

Speaker 2

So it actually is a good example.

Speaker 2

To use to prove the points.

Speaker 2

I want to say it is a population of half a million or crammed into 316 kilometres squared, which makes it both the 10 smallest country by area in the world and the fifth most.

Speaker 2

Densely populated, so it's a.

Speaker 2

Lot of people in a very little.

Speaker 2

Case it's been independent since 1964 and it conforms to many of the same issues that small states face that I outlined before.

Speaker 2

So small local markets and need to trade few natural resources except for its human resources and all of those characteristics that we talked about so.

Speaker 2

How does this small state protect its?

Speaker 2

Autonomy and project influ.

Speaker 2

Well, you looked at the map and you saw where mortar was located. So historically you'll understand that every power with geopolitical ambitions wanted that rock wanted.

Speaker 2

To have access.

Speaker 2

To North Africa and Europe, especially because many states at the time were maritime nations rights or training.

Speaker 2

To stop to refuel and things like that.

Speaker 2

So as a result, Malta was colonised by essentially.

Speaker 2

Every great empire in the Mediterranean, and I wrote these down because there are so many of them that I can't remember them all in order.

Speaker 2

So we'll go through them quickly, finish in's carthaginians's the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Normans, the Swabians, the Angevins, and the Aragonese. The Knights of Saint John.

Speaker 2

Who stuck around for two?

Speaker 2

168 years.

Speaker 2

The French, because Napoleon definitely wanted a piece of Malta and then the British kicked out Napoleon and so after.

Speaker 2

Then another 164 years under the British Malta became independent in 1964. So gives you a taste of the colonial experience of the small island. So you've been colonised for throughout.

Speaker 2

Much of your history what you want to do. You want to protect your autonomy. You want to make sure you're not going to be subsumed again and so multi protected autonomy through a strategy of neutrality.

Speaker 2

It says in the Constitution that it's a neutral state, actively pursuing peace, security and social progress among all.

Speaker 2

Nations by adhering to a policy of non alignment and refusing to participate in military alliances. It's neutral. OK, that's autonomy.

Speaker 2

Now, how does it project influence? So I put.

Speaker 2

A picture of.

Speaker 2

This here which.

Speaker 2

Is called the chippy of Melqart and its two.

Speaker 2

Votive offerings too.

Speaker 2

To the God Melkart, which date back to the finishing period and why are they special? Well, they're written on one side in the finishing language and one side in Greek, so think of it like the Rosetta Stone for the finishing line.

Speaker 2

And there's a copy of it at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Malta, and I think it makes a great metaphor for Malta's strategy, which is one that I call the Mediterranean interlocutor.

Speaker 2

And I put the definition of inter locution, which means a speaking between. So like those chippies speak between 2 languages.

Speaker 2

Malta speaks between what this gentleman said different continents, right so?

Speaker 2

Malta aims to be this bridge between the contents. That's how it tries to project influence and across both political parties you constantly have these quotes from all leaders that say this.

Speaker 2

They say motors the voice.

Speaker 2

Of the Arab world in.

Speaker 2

The EU it has a vocation to serve as a.

Speaker 2

Bridge between Europe and the Mediterranean.

Speaker 2

Want to be considered by all stakeholders in the Air Israel? Palestinian conflict as a bridge builder and then just 2020 on the Libya crisis. Malta is in nobody supporters club. We're not taking sides. We're talking to everyone.

Speaker 2

OK, so how does this play out? Well, sometimes I think it's extremely successful and one of them is a good example is that when the Arab Spring flared across the region and Libya basically descended into crisis, Malta was catapulted into a leading position on the international state.

Speaker 2

Stage due to its proximity multi is closer to Tripoli than Tripoli is to Benghazi. Just to put that into perspective and what what was this country going to do? We are a militarily neutral country. When motor became the staging hub for all humanitarian Relief's going.

Speaker 2

To Libya, so water food evacuating the wounded, evacuating people went through Malta and I think this was a really good example.

Speaker 2

And at the same time this was at the Thai Prime Minister. Lawrence Gonzi was at the EU, advocating that we need to care about what's happening.

Speaker 2

In the southern shores of.

Speaker 2

The Mediterranean and really speaking on behalf.

Speaker 2

Of the region, and I think this.

Speaker 2

Case study really shows that you can be neutral but not neutralised in your foreign policy. You can still play a role and because Malta was neutral they accepted that humanitarian aid and it played a very different role to the British or the French or other sending in planes and military.

Speaker 2

Minutes, you know, having a military operation, but just as important, is a humanitarian dimension, so a different role. But just as important.

Speaker 2

But to close, I can't just tell you the the good bits. I also have to tell you what happens.

Speaker 2

When all of this goes wrong.

Speaker 2

And so in 2017, multid the presidency of the European Union.

Speaker 2

And throughout that time it was plagued by accusation the government was plagued by accusations of corruption, largely stemming from the pen of this person. Does anybody recognise her?

OK.

Speaker 2

This is Daphne Corona Galicia, who was Martha's premier investigative journalist, just a few. She was the one.

Speaker 2

Her new her blog was the most read news site in Malta, a few months after Multiz presidency of the EU. She was assassinated by a car bomb.

Speaker 2

These are the last words she ever wrote before she went out of her house and got into her car.

Speaker 2

And was blown up. There are crooks everywhere you look now. The situation is desperate.

Speaker 2

This situation this.

Speaker 2

Scenario caused an outcry across the EU. There were questions about the rule of law in Malta, the situation that led to a journalist being assassinated in a European Union Member State and missions were led to Malta.

Speaker 2

To try to find out what was going on. In particular, they critiqued something known as the Golden Passport scheme, where if.

Speaker 2

You anybody in the.

Speaker 2

Room here has enough money you could go and buy a Maltese passport and it's back in the news being critiqued because it's being called basically a free passport for Russian oligarchs at the moment, and it was never in Labour Party manifesto.

Speaker 2

Before they were elected, so this is.

Speaker 2

Been extremely critiqued. Why? Because it's not just a Maltese passport. You gain access to EU banks financial sectors. It's a European Union passport free movement across the EU, so it's been accused.

Speaker 2

Of helping money.

Speaker 2

Launderers and other corrupt initiatives. So we see that when Ana Gomes, a Portuguese MVP.

Speaker 2

Had a mission to Malta to investigate.

Speaker 2

Investigate what was going on. She said the culture of impunity in Malta fosters corruption, organised crime, and it was that culture that created the conditions for the murder of Daphne, Corona, Galicia and she said what's happening concerns us all, not just in Malta, because it happened. You know, there are these effects across the whole EU, so the actions of in collective.

Speaker 2

Security organisations the impact of 1 Member State affects the others as well. So instead of thinking of Malta and thinking of these like the oldest Neolithic temples in the world and beautiful beaches and our capital city, UNESCO World Heritage.

Speaker 2

Which side and the headlines are saying something much darker over the last few years, right? And the headlines have been critiquing the country for causing all of these kinds of problems and so.

Speaker 2

If your strategy is.

Speaker 2

Being an interlocutor and an honest broker that wants to mediate between.

Speaker 2

Different regions it's implicit in the name, honest. Well, Malta hasn't been seen as being honest, so it risks jeopardising its ability to trade with others, which we said is fundamental for a small.

Speaker 2

States we said it affects its ability to do a lot of things and which can be, you know, extremely problematic.

Speaker 2

So instead of foreign Minister Bartylla saying we're in nobody supporters club Malta risks finding herself with no supporters and just.

Speaker 2

To bring it.

Speaker 2

Really up to date though there is some hope.

Speaker 2

And it's about a month ago and this.

Speaker 2

Is just to make the case that.

Speaker 2

But the loss of reputation. There are some ways you can pull back. It might for a small state.

Speaker 2

And that is a few weeks ago.

Speaker 2

The European Union elected a new President of the European Parliament. It's this woman, Roberta Metsola, who's multas me P. This is the highest position a multi multi person has ever held in.

Speaker 2

And she was part of the group the the EP Group at the EU that had LED a mission to Malta to find out what was going on with the corruption situation and then, particularly because members of the Prime Minister's cabinet were being accused of being involved and the case is still ongoing.

Speaker 2

And and this picture went viral, where she's refusing to shake the hand of the Prime Minister at the.

Speaker 2

Time so it could.

Speaker 2

So her election was very much about being, you know, being a clip of cleaning up rule of law being someone that really stands up for the things that we said and gives more seats or reputation. So it might not all be gone.

Speaker 2

And so my last slide is just to recap what I've talked about today.

Speaker 2

And so states are characterised by. If you take anything away.

Speaker 2

From this talk.

Speaker 2

I've said small states are characterised by distinct vulnerabilities.

Speaker 2

But that's the nature.

Speaker 2

But Despite that, good policymaking can build resilience that alliances trade and international institutions will all be important. That they have several ways to protect their autonomy.

Speaker 2

That are not just bandwagoning or balancing and some examples I gave you are hedging, neutrality and seeking shelter that they have many ways also projecting influence that doesn't have to be my tour. Deep pockets and I talked about binding smart state strategies and seeking state.

Speaker 2

It is, and I've talked about overall small states being flexible and agile in responding to opportunity, but also they face risk.

Speaker 2

It takes longer to build a reputation than it does to tarnish it, and especially as much of your power currency is on your reputation. You really have to think through the tradeoffs you're making in your policy making.

Speaker 2

So if anybody now listened to absolutely nothing, I spent the entire.

Speaker 2

Time worrying about this poor.

Speaker 2

Frog at the beginning that's trying to get away from this.

Speaker 2

Snake, you know, don't worry, because the frog doesn't.

Speaker 2

Need to soar.

Speaker 2

Like the ego when he's cultivated, is this amazing capacity to jump to safety?

Speaker 2

And so in just in the same way, we find that small states don't have to be weak states, they can act. I hope I've argued as small powers and.

Speaker 2

For those again thinking about that shrimp breaking its back, I'll close with a quote from Lee Kuan Yew, who says that in.

Speaker 2

A world where the.

Speaker 2

Big fish eat the small fish and the small fish.

Speaker 2

Eat the shrimp.

Speaker 2

Singapore will become a poisonous shrimp. Thank you for listening. I'm looking forward to the discussion into your feedback.

I'm just.

Speaker 1

Thank you, Harry. That was very interesting indeed.