

## NEW ZEALAND'S POTENTIAL IN SMALL STATE PEACEMAKING

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A strengthened New Zealand peacemaking programme would build on existing foreign policy and advance New Zealand's interests among larger powers.

### Key findings

- In keeping with its national values, New Zealand should broaden its peacemaking activities beyond the immediate region
- With a professional diplomatic corps, strong anti-nuclear stance, a commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, and a limited colonial history, New Zealand is well situated as a peacemaker
- New Zealand will gain enhanced standing and greater access to larger powers

### Executive summary

In an increasingly multi-polar world carving out a niche for its diplomacy is critically important for New Zealand. Global shifts in relative power create both threats and opportunities in coming years. Some of these changes include:

- A rising China, with all the tensions that brings into play, underscores the importance of an engaged and effective New Zealand foreign policy.
- Changing character of US engagement around the globe further complicates New Zealand foreign policy.
- A diminished European Union adds to the rising tide of global uncertainty.

Amidst this change violent conflicts persist in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central America any of which can intensify and grow. How New Zealand positions itself in the face of these global changes is a matter of considerable importance. The temptation to ride out the changes will not best serve New Zealand. Instead, a proactive and engaged foreign policy will best serve New Zealand.

Taking on the role of peacemaker will be a productive and beneficial role for New Zealand. Several benefits will fall to New Zealand along the way. Adopting a peacemaker role will deliver greater



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access to larger powers. The additional value that accrues to New Zealand by pursuing an expanded peacemaking role is that it reinforces other elements of New Zealand's foreign policy including support for international law and institutions, nuclear nonproliferation and the poverty alleviation. New Zealand's professional diplomatic service, a critical resource for peacemaking, puts it ahead of many countries. The market for peacemakers can hardly be said to be saturated - many peacemaking opportunities exist in which New Zealand could focus its peacemaking energies, especially outside of the Pacific. In taking on the broadened peacemaking role New Zealand will increase the range of benefits it can accrue from the international environment.

## Analysis

In a rapidly globalizing world, conflicts persist and numerous peacemaking opportunities exist around the world. Many of these conflicts threaten the security and economic stability of the international community. These developments have particular salience for smaller states, such as New Zealand. For New Zealand, involvement in peacemaking has the potential to be both insurance against disruption of its economy and an opportunity to increase its influence in decision-making in the international system.

Peacemaking is a process of reaching agreements. Any country which aspires to be a peacemaker needs to establish its *bona fides*, though there are many paths to follow. Norway, Switzerland and Qatar (see table 1) all have peacemaking credentials.<sup>1</sup> Norway can point to its tradition of liberal and religious internationalism and its history of colonial rule under Sweden and Denmark, which gives it more credibility than a state with a colonial history might have. It also has a reputation for its progressive missionary activities. Switzerland has its longstanding policy of neutrality and its status as the headquarters of many major international organizations. Qatar can emphasize its effectiveness in facilitating negotiations and direct involvement of its most senior officials, up to and including the Foreign Minister and the Emir himself.<sup>2</sup> Where Qatar differs from Norway and Switzerland is in its thinly staffed foreign office and its more regional focus.<sup>3</sup> This difference in regional focus is partly by design and partly by necessity-- Qatar seems to be seeking regional, rather than global, influence, but at the same time Norway and Switzerland would struggle to focus on their own region if they wanted to owing to the relative strength of their immediate neighbors.

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<sup>1</sup> Bandarage, Asoka. 2011. The "Norwegian Model": Political Economy of NGO Peacemaking. Research Article, Providence: The Brown Journal of World Affairs.

Lanz, David and Mason, Simon. 2012. Switzerland's Experiences in Peace Mediation. Research Article, Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, pp.73-78.

<sup>2</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. 2011. "Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy." The Middle East Journal 539-556.

<sup>3</sup> Barakat, Sultan. 2014. Qatari Mediation: Between Ambition and Achievement. Analysis Paper, Washington, D.C., Doha: Brookings Doha Center.

Dickinson, Elizabeth. 2012. "Qatar Builds a Brand as Mediator." The Christian Science Monitor, March 28.

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	Resources	Colonial Past?	Geographic Focus	Advantage	Free dialog?	Benefit?
<b>NORWAY</b>	Yes (oil)	No	Global	Peacemaking & missionary traditions	Yes	Discuss trade
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	Yes (banking)	No	Global	Commitment to Neutrality	Yes	Banking, FDI, access
<b>QATAR</b>	Yes (oil & LNG)	No	Within region	No Bureaucracy, quick access to senior figures	Yes	Regional influence; Pro-Palestinian
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	Yes	Yes	??	National Values Impartial	??	Promote free trade; nuclear disarmament, good governance

Table 1 Small State Peacemakers

Small states involved in peacemaking have several distinct motivations. Access to great powers is a significant factor in developing a peacemaking role. For example, the Norwegians were able to gain access to the then US Secretary of State Rice, briefing her on the peace process in Sri Lanka. Of course, such access also affords an opportunity to raise issues beyond the peacemaking issues. In the case of the Norwegians, they could also raise bilateral trade issues. Peacemaking can also afford a government an opportunity to act out popularly held national values. Switzerland's commitment to neutrality is played out every time the Swiss government offers its good offices to countries who do not share diplomatic relations. Qatar's peacemaking activities are more regional in nature - by resolving regional conflicts greater focus can be placed on what they believe the most important issue, namely Palestine.

What sets New Zealand apart as a peacemaker? There are several strengths that give New Zealand a unique advantage in peacemaking. One is that it is in New Zealand's interest to see violent conflict peacefully resolved, both in because the pacific resolution of disputes is an end in itself and because violent conflict has negative consequences for free trade -- war is quite damaging to trade indeed. Next, New Zealand already has credentials as a peacemaker. Their successful involvement in the Bougainville conflict is proof positive of New Zealand's peacemaking capacity.<sup>4</sup> A third strength is that New Zealand has stood against a powerful ally (the US) in the pursuit of its anti-nuclear policy. To that end New Zealand was prepared to pay a heavy price in the name of principle. The final strength which New Zealand might present as a unique advantage is its comparatively better relationship between its original people (the Maori) and the colonizers (Pakeha). While still domestically fraught, recent work to honor the Treaty of Waitangi suggests New Zealand is comparatively better off than many others (e.g. Australia, Canada, the US). In sum, New Zealand's *bona fides* as a peacemaker are informed by its history and values.

<sup>4</sup> Reddy, Peter. 2008. Reconciliation in Bougainville: Civil war, peacekeeping and restorative justice. Research Article, Canberra: Contemporary Justice Review.

## Why does this matter?

Relatively few small states are capable of advancing the dual agendas of helping to secure a more peaceful international order while at the same time promoting their relationships with larger powers. Many small states exist in crowded regions where they must contend with the larger powers. For example, the Baltic states are largely unable to work as peacemakers in their own region, squeezed as they are between Russia and Germany. In addition, small states to be effective at peacemaking must also have a strong foreign service. Once again, small states in highly contested regions must deploy their diplomatic service sparingly outside their own region.

Small states that have been most effective at peacemaking have operated outside of their region. Norway and Switzerland are the two most notable examples of successful extra-regional peacemaking. New Zealand is one of only a handful of countries in the world in a position to make a serious attempt at becoming a major state peacemaker. To do so, New Zealand will need to actively engage in conflict resolution beyond its own region. Expanding peacemaking to a global operation will allow New Zealand to increase its standing and influence with great powers while simultaneously taking public action to advance the country's popular national values in a public way and on a global scale.

## What should concerned governments and other relevant actors do?

The New Zealand government should seek increased funding from Parliament with the express purpose of expanding peacemaking activities. In addition, the government should commission a scoping exercise to 1) identify 'best practice' in country led peacemaking around the globe, 2) collaborate with New Zealand civil society in building its peacemaking capacity and 3) develop a five year plan on creation of a peacemaking arm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## Conclusion

There is much potential for New Zealand in peacemaking. New Zealand is enough like the other peacemaking countries for the possibilities to be clear, yet it is different enough that the case for a peacemaking New Zealand is unique from the histories and qualifications of Norway, Switzerland, and Qatar. The professional diplomatic service, which is critical to being able to credibly and sustainably implement conflict resolutions over the long term, is already in place. If it wishes to pursue the peacemaker role, if it deems the benefits of assuming this part in the international system worthwhile, then it is time for New Zealand to act.



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