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# AN EYE, AN EAR AND A VOICE: NEW ZEALAND'S ROLE AS A SMALL STATE IN INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION NEGOTIATIONS

# LLM SEMINAR PAPER LAWS 538: NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION

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#### Abstract

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The geostrategic picture is changing and human security is declining. This is leading to instability in a range of areas. Diplomats from small states participating in international treaty negotiations are also facing these challenges. In order to ensure they aren't sidelined small states rely on the rule-based international order and develop strategies for overcoming their smallness. Within this context, this paper explores the role of small states in international treaty negotiation and focuses on New Zealand's role in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The paper concludes that while there are challenges associated with size, strategies are available to small states to assist them in overcoming those challenges. Further, the size of a state is no longer the definitive measure of power and influence in international treaty negotiation.

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#### I Introduction

With continuing globalisation, relationships between nations and individuals are changing. New technologies are enabling the world to become more connected and this is influencing global politics. The changing world order is causing shifts in international law and a feeling that human security is decreasing.1 Five key developments present challenges for diplomats working to resolve disputes in this uncertain environment. The first is that the scope, focus and impact of international conflicts has changed. Where armed conflict previously occurred between nations, conflicts are now occurring at interstate, intrastate and non-state levels. These conflicts and the threat of nuclear weapons form the backdrop to an unstable geo strategic picture. The second factor is the emergence of global collective issues such as climate change and cyber warfare. The third change is the emergence of nonstate-based communities who are engaged across traditional positional boundaries. These non-traditional actors are demanding access to and involvement in international dispute resolution (IDR) mechanisms. The fourth development is the increasing range of IDR mechanisms and venues which has led to small states being stretched to attend multiple locations which operate under different rules and procedures. Finally, the paradigm of success has changed. Negotiators have moved from managing and settling disputes to seeking ways to resolve and reconcile them. These five developments present new or increased challenges and opportunities for small states engaging in IDR.

Within this complex picture, nationalist position-based politics has become the norm,<sup>2</sup> and existing structural inequities in multilateral forums have taken on greater significance. Domestic and foreign policy are blurring and the spheres of influence involved in negotiations are being reimagined.<sup>3</sup> Previously simple negotiations now include considerations of a large range of factors and interests. This is impacting on the role small states play in IDR.<sup>4</sup> Despite the world moving at pace, the uncertainty which has been created and civil society/world leaders speaking about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use in any armed conflict which may arise, only a few modest steps towards nuclear disarmament have been made.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme Special Report 2022 - New threats to human security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity (UNDP New York, February 2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Anne-Marie Brady and Baldur Thorhallsson "Small States and the Turning Point in Global Politics" in *Small States and the New Security* Environment (Springer, Switzerland, 2021) 1 at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> W J Hoverd "The Changing New Zealand National Security Environment: New Threats, New Structures, and New Research" (2019) 1(1) National Security Journal 17 at 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Bertram I Spector and Amanda Wolf "Negotiating Security: New Goals, Changed Process" (2000) 5(3) International Negotiation 411 at 412.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Dieter Fleck "Nuclear Disarmament: the interplay between political commitments and legal obligations" (2018) 26(1) New Perspectives 56 at 57.

This paper considers how these factors are impacting on the role that small states play in international treaty negotiation (ITN). This analysis is undertaken through examination of New Zealand's role in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The paper begins with a summary of international negation processes and the challenges small states face negotiating on the international stage. These factors influence how small states determine the foreign policy outcomes they are seeking and the bargaining positions they are likely to take on issues of significant security concern. The next part of this paper provides the context for the TPNW negotiations. The third part examines how small states have turned the disadvantage of their small size into diplomatic advantages with reference to the role New Zealand played in the TPNW negotiations. The final section of this paper reflects on the case study and the strategies available to small states participating in ITN.

While this paper does not examine cross-cultural difference in detail, it is important to keep these differences in mind. For example, when negotiating at the United Nations, the word 'compromise' has been identified as having potential negative connotations for some states. The issue arose because 'compromise' and its translations into languages other than English had been associated with giving away a principled position. This was particularly significant in the TPNW negotiations where parties were all coming from long standing, deeply held principled positions. In response, a common understanding developed whereby 'compromise' is understood to mean reducing your immediate ambitions so that the position of other parties can be accommodated to the extent necessary to reach an agreement. By reframing the term 'compromise' in this way the word has come to symbolise something that is both desirable and admirable. This practical example of cultural/linguistic difference is illustrative of the challenges which can be faced when words are the focus of a negotiation.

#### II The process of international treaty negotiation

This section of the paper outlines the process of ITN, noting the similarities with other types of negotiation and linking the process of negotiation with some of the challenges and opportunities for small states who are operating in the international arena. ITN shares similarities with other types of international negotiation (including conflict resolution, climate change and multinational corporate negotiation) and negotiations which take place in other forums on a much smaller scale. Determining the issues, options and areas of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> United Nations "Fundamentals of Negotiation" Model United Nations (accessed 24 April 2022)

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/fundamentals-negotiation">https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/fundamentals-negotiation</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> United Nations, above n 6

compromise are all shared factors among the negotiation types. Where ITN differs is the starting point - usually a pre prepared text. ITN centres on particular words and phrases in the treaty text rather than objects or money. Another difference is that agreement can be reached by a majority or by consensus rather than requiring all parties to agree with the negotiated outcome. Competitive positional tactics often lead to failure of the negotiations particularly for smaller states who do not have the economic, military or cultural resources to force an outcome on others.

ITN begins with pre negotiation. The role of pre negotiation is to establish that substantive, face to face negotiations are worthwhile and that there is a range of states who are interested in negotiating on a particular topic. 11 Pre negotiations are then used to agree the agenda and conference procedure. 12 This is significant for small states because it is the first opportunity to influence the format of the negotiation and ensure that the parameters for agreement are set in a way which helps to re balance challenges which arise because of their size. 13 The design of negotiation processes can also ensure that momentum is maintained. This is often achieved by phasing agreements, building in confidence building mechanisms and enabling 'back channel' diplomacy. <sup>14</sup> While spending time and effort on the preparatory stages of a negotiation may seem tiresome, planning the process by examining it from all angles then diagnosing barriers to progress and designing each phase that will follow can improve the substantive outcome. <sup>15</sup> Preparation for preliminaries is also important so that diplomats have a clear understanding of the scope within which they are able to negotiate and where they may be able to use strategies to overcome power imbalances arising from their size or the conference procedures. Preparation with likeminded states also ensures that smaller negotiating states have a clear understanding of the likely positions of parties and where they may want to influence to achieve best effect. Pre negotiation can include discussion of a draft text. This allows smaller states the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Michael Watkins and Susan Rosegrant *Breakthrough International Negotiation: How Great Negotiators Transformed the World's Toughest Post–Cold War Conflicts* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> G R Berridge *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed, Palgrave, New York 2015) at 180

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> United Nations "Competitive Bargaining vs. Cooperative problem solving" Model United Nations (accessed 24 April 2022) <a href="https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/competitive-bargaining-vs-cooperative-problem-solving">https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/competitive-bargaining-vs-cooperative-problem-solving</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Berridge, above n 9 at 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> United Nations "Agenda, Workplan, Documents and Rules of Procedure" Model United Nations (accessed 24 April 2022) <a href="https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/agenda-workplan-documents-and-rules-procedure">https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/agenda-workplan-documents-and-rules-procedure</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For discussion of how group power influences the way members of groups in asymmetrical conflict approach intergroup negotiations on agenda setting, see Nour Kteily and others "Negotiating Power: Agenda Ordering and the Willingness to Negotiate in Asymmetric Intergroup Conflicts" (2013) 105(6) Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 978.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Michael Watkins and Susan Rosegrant, above n 8 at 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Roger Fisher and others *Coping with International Conflict: A Systematic approach to Influence in International Negotiation* (Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1997) at 278.

opportunity to seek further information or outside support to enhance their participation in the negotiations.

Negotiation on the text is iterative and consists of narrowing the range of possible outcomes or formulations of the text. Wording which is not acceptable to any one of the delegations is excluded which then limits the areas of possible agreement. This is important for smaller states because it means that the range of issues it likely to be narrower than if the text was open for completely free amendment. To avoid parties being distracted by domestic politics or the media, draft text is discussed informally and in private. Private 1:1 or small group negotiation is possible. Revised drafts of the text are tabled and reviewed line by line in an informal closed meeting lead by a facilitator. This process enables identification of areas of agreement and where delegations want to modify the text of the original draft. There can be multiple drafts with reviews of each before the whole conference agrees the text. The Chair of the conference is able to control all aspects of the negotiation and can intervene to assist delegations to reach consensus. If consensus is not able to be reached a delegation can request a vote to determine the draft text which will be adopted. The voting rules and what constitutes agreement will have been agreed during pre-negotiation.

The process of ITN can therefore hinge on the momentum of a particular conference. <sup>17</sup> Conferences can lose momentum becoming stalled on a single word. As Geoffrey Palmer noted "One trouble with negotiations is that they can be endless – not resolving the dispute now is often better than concluding there has been a failure to resolve it. But negotiation can be quick if there is a will and it is certainly flexible." <sup>18</sup> To address this issue, parties to an ITN can use the assistance of mediators who are not themselves parties to the negotiation. <sup>19</sup> Mediators in this situation can be individuals, non-government organisations (NGO) or neutral states. The role a of a mediator is to carry messages between the parties, provide the parties with an outsiders view of their position and its prospects for success, and suggest possible solutions. <sup>20</sup> The use of a mediator can impact on the balance of power and the political calculations within and between negotiating states. <sup>21</sup> Mediators involved in ITN are often operating in sensitive political environments, balancing the need for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> United Nations, above n 6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Berradge, above n 9 at 54

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Palmer "Perspectives on International Dispute Settlement from a Participant" (2012) 43 VUWLR 39 at 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> United Nations "The Process of Negotiation" Model United Nations (accessed 24 April 2022)

<sup>&</sup>lt; https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/process-negotiation>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Jacob Bercovitch and Allison Houston "Influence of Mediator Characteristics and Behaviour on the Success of Mediation in International Relations" (1993) 4(4) International Journal of Conflict Management 297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation (July 2012) at 5.

agreement against the normative and legal frameworks which govern the negotiation. Decisions about meditation strategy, including the use of directive mediation, needs to be weighted with withdrawing the mediator if the parties are operating in bad faith or contrary to international law. Further, when the negotiations have stalled mediators need to consider the risks and benefits of withdrawing against the value of keeping the parties talking while exploring alternative means for the peaceful settlement of disputes. For small states there is an opportunity to act as a mediator in these situations and to use some of their soft power to move the negotiations forward. This will be discussed in more detail below.

### III Challenges and opportunities for small states participating in international treaty negotiations

The size of a state has historically been connected to the assumed level of power and influence that state brings to a negotiation. Power is defined as the ability to act or affect something. <sup>22</sup> This includes doing things and controlling others, or forcing others to do what they otherwise would not. Commonly the possession of resources including population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability were seen to make a state 'large'. Being large meant that a state was powerful and therefore more influential in a negotiation. Roger Fisher discusses the idea that it takes force to influence another government and notes that "no one ingredient of the influence process is either all important or unimportant" <sup>23</sup>. Instead, Fisher argues that force which is linked to power and influence is only one element which can be changed. This part of the paper examines some of the factors which make a state small and the challenges which can arise from being 'small' when participating in ITN.

#### A Administrative size

It is often argued that a delegation from a large well-resourced state will have an advantage over a delegation from a smaller less well-resourced state. States which have a small administration and budget are more likely to have difficulty developing their negotiating positions, undertaking information gathering activities and defending their positions particularly when there are multiple themes being negotiated. <sup>24</sup> These challenges arise because small states do not have the same number or diversity of diplomatic representatives. This limits the skills and human resource which can be put into forming

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Oxford English Dictionary "power, n.1" (accessed 8 June 2022) OED Online, Oxford University Press <a href="https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/149167?rskey=Kim64a&result=1">https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/149167?rskey=Kim64a&result=1</a>>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Roger Fisher *Basic Negotiating Strategy: International Conflict for Beginners* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1971) at 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Diana Panke "Dwarfs in International Negotiations. How Small States Make Their Voices Heard" (2012) 25(3) *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 313 at 318.

positions and taking part in negotiations.<sup>25</sup> The financial capacity of a state is important. Financial capacity can determine a state's ability to quickly form instructions, actively participate in debate and impact the frequency/effectiveness of negotiation strategies can be employed.<sup>26</sup> Small states are disadvantaged if they are slow to formulate a position or if they do not have a position at all. If instructions arrive from capital late, small states will struggle because other states will have already agreed on the issues. This means that diplomats from small states will be unable to defend their position and influence the negotiations in their favour.

Further, small state delegations have less people available to be actively involved in the negotiations. When there are fewer staff, the individual workload increases and there is less time to engage in networking to develop compelling agreed framing, rules of conduct other argument-based strategies, or to draft favourable text. Large states can more easily fill their delegations with experienced negotiators, have the administrative support available to communicate with their capital and the knowledge and experience to effectively utilise negotiation and engagement strategies to affect an outcome which favours their position.

#### B Military size

Military size has been a traditional factor in determining the size and therefore potential power of a state in a negotiations. A small military means that a state does not have the capacity to act unilaterally beyond their own borders. <sup>27</sup> Small states have less people to draft into service, less funds to invest into military research and development and less ability to securely hold territory. This means that they are less likely to engage in armed conflict to achieve foreign policy outcomes. Further, military size often includes the ability to gather intelligence, store it securely and analyse it to enable outcomes. Small militaries cannot undertake these core functions or have significant weaknesses. This impacts on the small state's participation in negotiations because poorly informed and resource-strapped states make for less valuable coalition partners and may even prove to be a burden for other states.

#### C Economic size and the value of the bilateral relationship

Small and dependant economies are also a significant barrier to involvement in ITN. Economic weakness means that small states are often less effective at bargaining. A small

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See J Corbett and J Connell "All the world is a stage: global governance, human resources, and the 'problem' of smallness" (2015) 28(3) *Pacific Review* 435.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> T A Haque, D Knight and D Jayasuriya "Capacity constraints and public financial management in small Pacific Island countries" (2015) 2(3) Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies 609.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Jim McLay "Making a Difference: the Role of a Small State at the United Nations," (speech delivered at Juniata College, Pennsylvania, 27 April 2011).

states economic dependence on larger states means threats to end an economic relationship are not credible and such threats are therefore less impactful as a negotiation strategy. The value placed on the bilateral relationship leads to small states being more likely to agree with larger states in order to maintain the economic relationship. There are also significant costs associated with participating in ITN. Further small state economic interests are not necessarily aligned with each other meaning that they are prevented from forming natural coalitions to offset the power exhibited by larger states. Smaller states economic size leads to the smaller administrative size outlined above. This administrative imbalance makes small states less attractive coalition partners and incapable of making side payments as a negotiation strategy. <sup>28</sup>

#### D Opportunities to shift the power imbalance

While small states may have less power because they have fewer administrative, military and financial resources; technology, education and economic growth are increasingly influencing the power dynamic. Geography, population and raw materials are declining as accurate predictors of power and influence.<sup>29</sup> Military, economic and cultural power no longer translate directly into favourable outcomes. Instead, reaching agreement relies on how attractive a proposal is to other delegations, the impact of existing bilateral relationships, understanding of the issues and attitudes of other delegations, how active a delegation is, whether a state is able to show flexibility and creativity and finally whether the delegation has a clear understanding of the objectives it is seeking.<sup>30</sup> All of this is underpinned by a productive working relationship between parties to a negotiation. This ensures there is a psychological buffer against any shocks away from the negotiating table and helps to avoid escalating responses.<sup>31</sup> Successful ITN is therefore a result of several factors which enable small states to rebalance the size/power paradigm.

While influence turns on these factors, size remains an underlaying characteristic which will always impact on a state's ability to meaningfully engage in ITN. What is not in doubt is that small states have to work within the constraints of slimmer and less well-equipped delegations. This translates into challenges managing and responding to a negotiation agenda, preparing positions and keeping across the negotiation strategies of other parties.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Diana Panke "Small states in the European Union: Structural disadvantages in EU policy-making and counter- strategies" (2010) 17(6) Journal of European Public Policy 799.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr "Soft Power" (1990) 80 Foreign Policy 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> United Nations, above n 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Michael Watkins and Susan Rosegrant, above note 8 at 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Diana Panke "Dwarfs in International Negotiations. How Small States Make Their Voices Heard" (2012) 25(3) Cambridge Review of International Affairs 313 at 313.

## IV New Zealand's role in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

This section of the paper outlines New Zealand's anti-nuclear position and provides background on the TPNW negotiations. This context is import to understand the analysis of New Zealand's role in the TPNW negotiations and the strategies it used to overcome smallness.

#### E New Zealand's anti-nuclear history

New Zealand has a long history of advocating for a nuclear free world, arguing that the use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic consequences on health, the economy, and the environment. New Zealand was one of the first signatories of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 33 and protested the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific including taking a case to the International Court of Justice in 1973. Widespread public opposition to nuclear-armed ship visits 4 was a catalyst for the passage of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987. which led to New Zealand breaking away from the ANZUS agreement. Since then, New Zealand has led a number of international nuclear disarmament initiatives 6 and participated in the NPT Review Conferences which have failed to move towards implementation of the treaty. After the NPT Review Conference in 2015, the New Zealand parliament called on all nuclear armed states to meet their commitments to disarm under Article 6 of the NPT. In December 2016, New Zealand voted for United Nations Resolution 71/268 to begin negotiations on a new treaty.

New Zealand's support for and involvement in the foundations for the TPNW negotiation was consistent with a long-standing bipartisan political position on nuclear disarmament.<sup>39</sup> The role New Zealand sought to play in the negotiations was also consistent with its statements on international humanitarian, disarmament and non-proliferation issues more generally. Throughout the negotiations New Zealand was in a unique position to take effective leadership because of its respected role with Western countries and its continuing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty" (accessed 8 June 2022)

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/disarmament/weapons-of-mass-destruction/nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty/">https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/disarmament/weapons-of-mass-destruction/nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty/></a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Ministry for Culture and Heritage "Ship visits" (2 October 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/nuclear-free-new-zealand/ship-visits">https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/nuclear-free-new-zealand/ship-visits</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Guy Wilson-Roberts "A nuclear weapons convention: A role for New Zealand?" (2000) 3(4) Centre for Strategic Studies: Strategic Briefing Papers 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> (01 April 2015) 704 NZPD 2785

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> (1 November 2016) 718 NZPD 14537

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade "National Interest Analysis – Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty" A.15A at 1.

membership of the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG) and the De-alerting Group at the United Nations General. 40 New Zealand's independent anti-nuclear policy also earnt it the respect of non-aligned countries. Positive participation in other forums, meant New Zealand was viewed throughout the TPNW negotiations as a party with considerable technical and political experience. New Zealand's overall position was that achieving agreement to the TPNW would make a valuable contribution to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. 41

# F Process and participants in the negotiations to agree a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The negotiations towards agreement on the TPNW differed from other ITN in three key ways. The first was that the range of positions was smaller than would normally be expected in an ITN. The smaller range of issues was based on a growing recognition of the risks and catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons use. Frustration amongst non-nuclear States at the failure of the nuclear-armed States to deliver on their obligations to negotiate and achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament under the NPT was another driving factor. As a result, the TPNW negotiations took place without the nuclear armed states and most other states who rely on the protection of the nuclear umbrella.

The second factor differentiating these negotiations was the involvement of civil society and academic representatives enabled through the rules of procedure. <sup>42</sup> In the New Zealand context, civil society organisations have observed government involvement in the UN over a long period of time. <sup>43</sup> The New Zealand delegation included members of civil society and academia who were given the same status as the government officials. This was unprecedented for non-proliferation negotiations and has created a precedent for involvement in future negotiations. While outside the scope of this paper, the involvement of non-state participants is an area for future research in human security ITN which has traditionally been considered to occur only between state parties. <sup>44</sup> The involvement of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Dell Higgie "Nuclear weapons Statement by New Zealand" United Nations General Assembly First Committee: General Debate Statement (14 October 2019) <a href="https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/united-nations-general-assembly-first-committee-general-debate-statement/">https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/united-nations-general-assembly-first-committee-general-debate-statement/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> National Interest Analysis, above n 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> United Nations "Participation of non-governmental organizations in the conference" (22 February 2017) A/CONF.229/2017/4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Graham Hassall "The civil society perspective" in Graham Hassall and Negar Partow (ed) *A seat at the Table: New Zealand and the United Nations Security Council 2015-2016* (Massey University Press, Auckland, 2020) 291 at 291

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Kenneth R Rutherford, Stefan Brem and Richard A Matthew (ed) *Reframing the Agenda: The Impact of NGO and Middle Power Cooperation in International Security Policy* (Praeger, Westport USA, 2003) at 11.

non-government and academic participants in the New Zealand delegation is discussed in more detail in the following section.

The third factor was time. The TPNW negotiations occurred in a very short timeframe, between October 2016.<sup>45</sup> and July 2017.<sup>46</sup>, only nine months. The shortened timeframe was forced on participants by acceleration of the North Korean nuclear weapons program, Russian statements about the use of nuclear weapons in the ongoing conflict in Crimea.<sup>47</sup> and former US President Donald Trump who was threatening unilateral use of nuclear weapons.<sup>48</sup> To understand how quickly the negotiations concluded it is interesting to note that similar ITN have taken much longer as set out below.

Negotiations on the Biological Weapons Convention	3 years
Chemical Weapons Convention	8 years
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention	14 months
Convention on Cluster Munition	1 year
Arms Trade Treaty	2 years

The heightened sense of urgency and a widely held view that the political window for agreeing a treaty was closing meant that the usual multiyear process for preliminaries was shortened to a few months. Some parties to the negotiation were concerned that the longer the negotiations continued the greater the chance that the talks would become stuck in the same way that progress during the NPT review conferences had been. The time factor impacted on the preparation which was able to be undertaken by negotiating parties and left a gap in knowledge which would usually have been filled by expert groups. This gap and the need for technical expertise was obvious when negotiations occurred on safeguards and nuclear weapons elimination provisions of the treaty. It created an opportunity for New Zealand to fill a leadership void.

The negotiating environment had the added challenge of occurring against the backdrop of widespread opposition from the nuclear armed states. <sup>49</sup> During the first session of face-to-face negotiations, participating states and civil society representatives outlined their thinking on what the future treaty provisions should look like including on the core issues

 <sup>45</sup> See United Nations Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations GA Res 71/258 (2016)
 46 See United Nations "Report of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination" (24 July 2017) A/72/206; and associated

documents for the conference available online at https://www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/documents.html <sup>47</sup> See BBC "Ukraine Conflict: Putin 'Was Ready for Nuclear Alert" *BBC News* (online ed, London, 15 March 2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> The response from US legislators was to introduce the Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017, H.R. 669 and S. 200 and S.1148

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova "The Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty: Negotiations and Beyond" (2017) 47(7) Arms Control Today 12 at 13.

of victim assistance, verification, and provisions for the elimination of nuclear arsenals. Most states agreed to a short treaty focusing on strong prohibition on the use and possession of nuclear weapons. While some states, tried to broaden the scope of the ITN their views did not gain traction and it was agreed that the new treaty should build on and strengthen the NPT rather than replace it.

A first version of the treaty was drafted by the President of the conference and tactically released after the NPT preparatory session. The main negotiations occurred during the second session which lasted three weeks. During this time, it became obvious that while the negotiating states had a smaller range of negotiating positions than normally expected, small group negotiations would still be required. New Zealand was appointed as one of several Vice-Presidents of the conference. Acting as a facilitator, each Vice President provided draft text to the President who drafted the final text based on the group submissions and additional consultations. The delegations then had one day to review the draft final text and consult their respective capitals. This meant that there was little time for significant changes. Since the delegations all had a desire to conclude the negotiation even those with concerns about the text and the process in the final days of the negotiation ultimately decided to support the draft text with only minor amendments.

As the negotiations had taken place under the UN General Assembly rules of procedure, two thirds of the participating states needed to agree to adopt the text. However, the negotiations came close to a consensus. The Netherlands, (the only NATO member attending) sought a vote and voted against adopting the text because it maintained that it could not sign if the provisions were inconsistent with the NATO alliance obligations. Singapore abstained based on the limited time for the negotiations and because some of their proposed text was not included. All of the other 122 participating states voted in favour of adopting the text.

# V Strategies used by small states to influence international treaty negotiations

Despite limited resources, what were previously seen as disadvantages for small states can often by be reduced and turned into a strategic advantage. This requires working together and promoting the rule of law, a strict prioritisation of issues, and the adoption of creative solutions. There are two approaches which are commonly discussed in the ITN literature -

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Olivier Meier, Sira Cordes, and Elizabeth Suh "What Participants in a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty (Do Not) Want" (9 June 2017) Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists <a href="https://thebulletin.org/2017/06/what-participants-in-a-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-do-not-want">https://thebulletin.org/2017/06/what-participants-in-a-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-do-not-want</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade "Case study: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (accessed 28 April 2022) <a href="https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/mfat-annual-reports/mfat-annual-report-2017-18/case-study-treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons">https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/mfat-annual-reports/mfat-annual-report-2017-18/case-study-treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons</a>

the bargaining approach and the problem-solving approach. <sup>52</sup> Bargaining is grounded in rationalist approaches that use strategic interaction including power asymmetry and cost benefit calculations. Distributive bargaining is competitive and parties seek to maximize the relative benefits for a party in the outcome of the negotiation. There is a focus on information and a need to find out when a deal is close to being finalized. This type of negotiation was not used by parties to the TPNW. Instead, the problem-solving approach proposed by Fisher and Ury. <sup>53</sup> focusing on understanding the interests of the parties was adopted. The framing of the topic being negotiated is a key concern because the parties' perceptions about the issue may not be what is actually being negotiated. Communication and information are also critical because the focus is on transforming relationships, breaking down stereotypes and changing perspectives to enable joint gains. Even using a problem-solving approach, small states in the TPNW negotiation needed to adopt strategies to overcome their smallness. For each of the strategies outlined in this section, the use of that strategy is linked back to New Zealand's actions in the TPNW negotiations.

#### G Building coalitions

In order to overcome the disadvantages of small administration, states participating in ITN rely on the expertise of medium and larger states on niche issues where their preferences are shared.<sup>54</sup> In doing so they build coalitions with other likeminded states, develop ties with technocratic bodies of international organisations and rely on the expertise of NGOs. By joining together coalition members can more easily specialise in specific issues of importance to them, profit from the expertise of others and therefore negotiate a better outcome for all coalition members.<sup>55</sup> In addition, having a coalition with a significant number of member states or a mix of small and medium size states can work to rebalance asymmetry in power and influence.

Coalition building has its basis in rational choice theory, whereby the cost of participating in the coalition has to be less than the costs of individual participation in a negotiation. This leads to two types of coalitions – winning coalitions and blocking coalitions. When majority voting is the agreed method of determining agreement winning coalitions are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Kristine Höglund and Daniel Druckman "Making peace through negotiation" in Mara Olekalns and Wendi Adair (ed) *Handbook of Research on Negotiation* (Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham United Kingdom, 2013) 416 at 422.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton *Getting to Yes: Negotiating an agreement without giving in* (Random House, London, 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Baldur Thorhallsson and Sverrir Steinsson "Small State Foreign Policy" Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics (24 May 2017)

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-484">https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-484</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Nicole Deitelhoff and Linda Wallbott "Beyond soft balancing: small states and coalition-building in the ICC and climate negotiations" (2012) 25(3) Cambridge Review of International Affairs 345 at 348.

common because there is an attempt to bring together as many members as is necessary to achieve the desired negotiated outcome. This occurred in the TPNW negotiations where in accordance with UN General Assembly rules, two thirds were the agreed number of participants needed to reach agreement. Alternatively, blocking coalitions are more likely in situations where consensus or unanimity is required.

However, coalition building alone is unlikely to provide a complete solution for a small state. This is because the larger a coalition becomes the more difficult it becomes to coordinate the parties. This leads to increased pressure on the parties to maintain cohesion and bargain internally as well as across the table. Further, where a particular position is dependent on coalition members presenting a united front, large powers may use their influence to buy off some coalition members thereby reducing the impact of the coalition and potentially setting off a domino effect. While breaking down larger numbers of parties into smaller groups with significantly aligned interests is one means of improving the odds of getting agreement. The strategies are also needed to overcome the disadvantages of smallness.

Rational choice theory is therefore not the complete answer to why small states join coalitions and why these coalitions can withstand the pressure of large states in ITN. Coalitions can assist small states to feel a sense of shared purpose, principles and perspectives on an issue of significant importance. Similarly, the success of a coalition might not be about the numbers involved but as happened in the TPNW negotiations, coalition building maximised bargaining resources and the perceived legitimacy of smaller states. Coalitions also allow smaller states to show their leadership, develop bridge building solutions and take a moral stand on an issue. Bargaining power in coalitions is therefore not necessarily dependent on being a part of the rational choice based winning or blocking coalitions but also the coalition's ability to generate and exercise discursive power to persuade other parties of the normative legitimacy of a coalition's position'. 57

Coalition building in negotiation has also been considered in 'new diplomacy' literature which describes the formation of groups of small and medium states and networks of non-governmental organisations.<sup>58</sup> This is a particular feature of multilateral negotiations in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Pennsylvania State University – Smeal College of Business "How do experts in dyadic negotiation make themselves effective multi-party negotiators?" (accessed 24 April 2022)

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://courses.smeal.psu.edu/module">https://courses.smeal.psu.edu/module</a> 1/2019/08/introduction-to-complex-negotiations.html>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Nicole Deitelhoff and Linda Wallbott, above n 55

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Andrew Cooper "Like-minded nations, NGOs, and the changing pattern of diplomacy within the UN system: an introductory perspective" in Andrew Cooper, John English and Ramesh Thakur (ed) *Enhancing global governance: towards a new diplomacy* (UN University Press, Tokyo, 2002) 1.

humanitarian law and security.<sup>59</sup> including the TPNW negotiations. New diplomacy theory notes that small states play an important role in ITN when they are joined by middle powers and NGOs. The TPNW negotiations occurred in parallel to the NPT Review Conference, where New Zealand contributed strongly to the coalition building process by being one of the leaders in the NPT OEWG and advocated for the humanitarian initiative.<sup>60</sup> Throughout the negotiations on the TPNW and following its conclusion the New Zealand Government was in close contact with the range of NGOs and academics.<sup>61</sup> Financial support was provided to these groups to enable attendance at the final negotiating conference. All of these activities ensured that New Zealand had a strong support base and the expertise it needed. Coalitions help to reduce uncertainty for small states, facilitate the exchange of information and simplify the negotiations by seeking agreed positions within the coalition before addressing parties which hold opposing positions.

#### H Prioritisation

Having built coalitions, small states can more easily undertake other strategies which enable them to overcome the obstacles associated with their size. Prioritisation is one of these strategies. For small states prioritisation means identifying specific issues which are of most importance to them and leaving other issues to be managed by coalition partners or not addressing them at all. As a method of compensating for the lack of diplomatic resources, broad based expertise and aggregate structural power, prioritisation enables small states to focus on the areas where benefits can most readily be gained. Once prioritised, a small state can be proactive with their involvement in that issue and expend their limited resources to ensure that the outcome on that issue is favourable. By directing resources to a specific issue small states can influence more than a large state which is covering all issues in less depth.

In the TPNW negotiations, New Zealand focused on the technical areas of verification, safeguarding and the articles on the accession of nuclear-armed states. These negotiations were some of the most complex because of the high level of technical detail and significant political disagreement on the role and necessity of an additional protocol for accession. <sup>63</sup> They were also hampered by the shorter pre negotiation period. This focus by New Zealand

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Fen Osler Hampson and Holly Reid "Coalition Diversity and Normative Legitimacy in Human Security Negotiations" (2003) 8(1) International Negotiation 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> For more information on the Humanitarian initiative see Jenny Nielsen "The Humanitarian Initiative and the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty" in James Doyle (ed) *Nuclear Safeguards, Security, and Nonproliferation* (2nd ed, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2018) 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, above n 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> W Habeeb *Power and tactics in international negotiations: How weak nations bargain with strong nations* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, above n 49 at 16.

on an area where there was a knowledge and leadership gap show that a small state can play a significant role in the negotiation of complex issues. Other issues of lesser importance were left with New Zealand's coalition partners to advocate.

#### I Expertise

Having prioritised issues, small states are also able to offset power imbalance in ITN by developing deep expertise in their prioritised issues. Small states might increase their capacity to influence by contacting the relevant secretariat or chair. This will enable a small state to obtain additional background information on the issue under negotiation and mitigate disadvantage by increasing expertise about the subject matter as well as knowledge about positions of other states. With additional insights, small states can save costs in the development and exercise of arguing, framing or bargaining strategies which are not relevant. Instead focusing on actively participating in the relevant debates. If they are able to work with others within the coalition to cover all of the issues of mutual importance, delegations can develop even further into specialist areas.

Small states are also able to offset the limited number of experts within the government sector by using contacts in NGOs, industry lobbyists or other experts within a network of professionals with recognised competence in the relevant issue. These participants can provide insights, expertise and information about the situation and additional information about risks and opportunities of different negotiating strategies and options. Additional context provided by these participants when they are a formal part of the delegation (as they were in the TPNW negotiations) can empower small states. However, while contact with to non-state actors is useful, not all small states have the close links needed to make the most of these participants.

Further, if the small state has a pluralist non-corrupt regime, open learning environment and an active civil society ideational capacity-building should be able to take place within ministries to develop well-backed up negotiation instructions beyond the immediate period of negotiation. It is important to note, however, that some small states are too small to commit resources and develop sufficient expertise on issues, even those of greatest importance to them. <sup>64</sup>

In the TPNW negotiations, New Zealand took the lead in gathering regional counterparts to develop expertise through education and sharing experiences. This empowered these delegations and developed their expertise. New Zealand hosted a meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament between the first and second session of the TPNW negotiations. Associated with this was a meeting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Baldur Thorhallsson and Sverrir Steinsson, above n 54.

of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) study group on Non-proliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific. <sup>65</sup> These two events brought together academics, NGO's and government representatives to (among other things) better understand the issues which were likely to arise at the TPNW negotiations. Conversations in the margins of these events focused on recent developments in non-proliferation and disarmament <sup>66</sup> and allowed connections/networking to occur ahead of the negotiations. This was an example of New Zealand playing its role in developing expertise among its own delegation and engaging with participating states (a number of whom were small states) to develop their expertise. Utilising New Zealand's long history of civil society advocacy on nuclear issues, New Zealand was able to harness the expertise of decades of research during the TPNW negotiations. This meant that any weakness from New Zealand's small size was mitigated and New Zealand was able to influence successfully on the international stage.

#### J Active participation and leadership

Active participation is enabled for small states when they are a part of an effective coalition. Being active is a prerequisite because no state can trust that the overall distribution of interests and the effective use of negotiation strategies will be undertaken by others (outside of a coalition arrangement) to produce an outcome in the small states interest. However, if a small state is part of a trusted coalition, they are able to actively participate in the issues assigned to them knowing that states in the coalition have agreed interests and that these are also being actively progressed by others. Without coalition enabled active participation, small states are unable to get the same concessions as large states who are more easily able to be passive. One of the ways that small state delegations can be active is to take on a leadership role. Where a state has an aspiration to influence the outcome of a negotiation or where there is a clear opposition to a proposal, the opportunity to lead the negotiation enables delegations from small states to achieve their objectives with the agreement of the whole conference. In this case success is more likely obtained if smaller delegations work together and try to meet each other's aims. In some cases, one of the less involved delegations can find the solution which is acceptable to all parties.

In the TPNW negotiations New Zealand was Vice President and lead the sessions on safeguards and verification. Leadership in this contentious area enhanced New Zealand's reputation which built soft power and the ability to influence the final outcome of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Federica Dall'Arche *A Conference Report on the Third Meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on Non-proliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific* (Issues & Insights Vol. 17-No. 9, May 2017). <sup>66</sup> Federica Dall'Arche, above n 65 at 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Christopher Achen "Evaluating Political Decision-Making Models" in Robert Thomson, and others (ed) *The European Union Decides* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006) 264 at 297.

TPNW. New Zealand also returned to this theme in its statement to the UN First Committee.<sup>68</sup> following the conclusion of the TPNW negotiations when it noted that the TPNW provisions negotiated under New Zealand's leadership mean that no State can evade the basic safeguards. In this regard, New Zealand achieved a successful outcome in one of its priority issues.

#### K Soft power

Soft power is another tool that small states can use when participating in negotiations. A state's soft power is its ability to use culture, education, language and values to exert influence rather than military power. Soft power is the intangible things that produce a positive reputation. It is the product of people, institutions and brands rather than governments but it is used by delegations to shape the preferences of other states. Using soft power requires cooperation, a recognised and solid reputation in an issue and trust that the small state is not a threat. In this regard, small states are likely to benefit from the perception of their image as a neutral and peaceful nation. This neutrality gives small states the opportunity to undertake fact finding, investigative and facilitation duties which are only trusted to those non-threatening states. <sup>69</sup> As noted in the introduction to this paper the world is increasingly multipolar and hyper-connected. Issues of wealth, power and information are increasingly diffuse. Opportunities presented by connectivity through the internet and digitalisation is leading to a greater diffusion of influence and a greater role for soft power, which is largely outside the direct control of governments. Mass peer-topeer international cultural contact is on the increase and is changing the nature of relationships and states' ability to build soft power.

The place of large international advocacy groups which built on these changes was seen in the TPNW negotiations with the involvement of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). ICAN focused on mobilising civil society around the world to support the specific objective of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. The group was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2017 for their participation in the TPNW negotiations and their role in advocating for the TPNW to come into force. The New Zealand delegation included members of ICAN and worked closely with them on issues of mutual interest. The New Zealand delegation was able to utilise its reputation and standing as a good global citizen. In doing so it brought along the participants from ICAN in brokering agreement on difficult issues while playing a facilitation role. This was an example of New Zealand using its soft power as a small state to enhance its diplomatic standing in the negotiations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Dell Higgie "Nuclear weapons Statement by New Zealand" Statement to the United Nations First Committee (13 October 2017)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Baldur Thorhallsson and Sverrir Steinsson, above n 54.

#### L Moral framing/reframing and issue linkage

However, not every persuasion-based strategy is equally successful in negotiations. <sup>70</sup> The ability of small states to influence negotiations is often dependent on the nature of the issue. Effectiveness can be dependent on a match between the type of argument and the issue, as well as the resonance of the position with the prior beliefs of the other parties. More generally, normative arguments put forward by states that do not have obvious and narrow self-interests are usually more effective, if fairness-over-responsibility arguments resonate well with prior beliefs of the other parties. Moral arguing is less likely to have an impact upon states which have strongly adverse positions. In such situations, re-framing is an important strategy that seeks to link the policy negotiations to a broader context and thereby reverse the distributional effects. The re-framing strategy is especially effective, if the new frame is suited to reversing or neutralising cost-benefit calculations in regard to the policy at stake.

Research.<sup>71</sup> points to issue linkage as another possible method for small states to overcome their disadvantage in ITN. If relevant issues can be identified, small states can propose to link previously independent issues where there are differences in preference allowing an exchange of concessions and enabling each state to give something it values less in exchange for something it values more.<sup>72</sup> This remedy has resolved issues that separately had low integrative potential and enabled positional changes to occur when used alongside reframing. However, whether it is possible to effectively link and reframe issues is dependent on the prior beliefs of the parties about the broader context. Re-framing and issue linkage strategies can be expected to be more effective, when the new frame resonates with the actors' beliefs and where there are distributive elements to the negotiations.<sup>73</sup>

In this regard New Zealand was well placed to take a central role in the TPNW negotiations because of its long standing anti-nuclear stance. New Zealand was able to focus on issues which were highly technical and bring causal arguments based on scientific expertise in such a way that they were persuasive. While the issue of nuclear non-proliferation is highly politicised technical arguments were able to be made along with the emotive arguments about the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. New Zealand and partner states were able to complement their emphasis on technical expertise with attempts to shape the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Diana Panke "Being Small in a Big Union: Punching Above their Weights? How Small States Prevailed in the Vodka and the Pesticides Cases" (2012) 25(3) Cambridge Review of International Affairs 329.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Paul Poast "Can Issue Linkage Improve Treaty Credibility? Buffer State Alliances as a 'Hard Case'" (2013) 57(5) Journal of Conflict Resolution 739 at 740.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> John Odell and others "Negotiating Agreements in International Relations" in Jane Mansbridge and others *Negotiating Agreement in Politics* (American Political Science Association Task Force Report 2013) 144 at 162

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Diana Panke, above n 70.

discourse by framing the respective negotiation issues as moral problems in line with earlier statements about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons use.

#### M Agility, autonomy and speed of decision making

Another strategy available to small is to take advantage of their flexible, autonomous and informal delegations. Unlike large states who often have big delegations which take a long time to make decisions, small states delegations often enter negotiations with an envelope of bargaining positions and are able to make decisions rapidly within that envelope of possible negotiated outcomes. Individual delegates in small state delegations are often able to make informal decisions because they know each other and there is less hierarchy within the delegation. Decision making occurs through quick meetings or electronic messages while in the negotiating room. Further, within the envelope of previously agreed outcomes small state diplomats often have autonomy to act without reference to their capital. When important decisions or those which fall outside of the envelope are made, these can also be made more quickly than the processes undertaken by large states. As a result of the delegation size, small state diplomats end up making a wide array of decisions while performing many of the duties which would be spread among a number of people within a larger delegation. In many cases this allows small state delegates to speak with greater authority and credibility because they have the trust and confidence of their governments to act.

In New Zealand's case this is particularly evident when negotiations are held in time zones which are not well aligned to seeking direction from Wellington. In the TPNW negotiations which were held in New York, the unfavourable time zone meant that decisions had to be made in the moment and were reported back to Wellington. This level of autonomy provided the experienced negotiators who were representing New Zealand with an advantage when the final negotiations were held under time pressure.

#### N Negotiation forum

While there a number of challenges for small states participating in ITN, one of the most significant factors in determining outcomes for small states is the negotiating forum. Small states are vocal proponents of multilateralism. Their ability to influence on the global stage is dependant on upholding the international rule of law. <sup>74</sup> As noted above, small state's agile diplomacy and tendency toward international cooperation enable them to overcome some of the challenges of being small. However, the power imbalance between small and large states (predominantly the P5 members of the UN Security Council, but also the other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Andrea Ó Súilleabháin *Small States at the United Nations: Diverse Perspectives, Shared Opportunities* (International Peace Institute, New York, May 2014) at 10.

nuclear armed states) means that multilateral forums based on the rule of law are a vital safeguard for the security of small states.<sup>75</sup> Multilateral rules-based forums prevent power imbalances being used to disadvantage small states and help to protect small state sovereignty while establishing norms that facilitate equal participation.

While multilateral forums require significant resource from small states to enable active participation, there are two additional factors which mean that small states favour these forums. The first is that the longer a small state is a member of a particular international organisation the easier it becomes to counter a power imbalance by learning from past experiences. If a small state is actively participating in negotiations they can learn from other participants in the forum. This increases the expertise of the delegation and allows a focus on shaping strategies rather than having to learn the particular forums policies and rules. This can be further enhanced if small states are able to extend the duration of a posting or establish a cohort of advisors between the post and capital who are able to pass on the institutional knowledge gained from earlier negotiations. In the TPNW, the lead negotiator for New Zealand had been working in the area of nuclear non-proliferation for over 30 years. By building capacity over time and with the benefit of extensive experience small states are able to improve their knowledge of the issues and processes without incurring additional costs. The second is an inherent reliance on open dialogue under the rules-based order. Small states can benefit from the 'sovereign equality of states'. This concept means that in multilateral forums such as the UN General Assembly where the TPNW was negotiated every country has the same legal rights as any other country regardless of its size or power.

#### O Analysis of case study examples

In examining New Zealand's role in the TPNW, three key factors emerge regarding the ability of small states to achieve positive results in ITN. The first is that the success of small states is likely to be greater if the negotiations centre on issues that lend themselves easily to moral argument (and less on issues that are distributive or redistributive). In the case of the TPNW the support for the humanitarian initiative meant that the parties were generally in agreement about the moral reprehensibility of nuclear weapons and the need for their elimination. Secondly, a majority decision rather than a consensus or unanimous decision will improve a small state's ability to impact on the outcome. The latter type of negotiations tends to produce lowest common denominator rules, as middle and large states can easily block agreements which small states have little resource to combat. Thirdly, when small state form coalitions to pool their resources, alternative sources of power are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Jim McLay, "Making a Difference: the Role of a Small State at the United Nations" (speech delivered at Juniata College, Pennsylvania, April 27, 2011).

developed. This is evidenced through New Zealand taking the lead role in technical negotiations on verification and safeguards.

#### V Conclusion

Globalisation has influenced the function of international law and with it the mechanisms used to resolve international conflicts and disputes. Efforts towards global disarmament remain a critical element of New Zealand's approach to wider issues of international security. <sup>76</sup> In response, small state adopt strategies when participating in ITN which are influenced by the environment at the time of the negotiation. The current state of geopolitics is bringing instability and complexity to negotiations which have not been seen since the end of the cold war. Despite the challenges faced by small states, mechanisms are still available to achieve small state foreign policy outcomes. Analysis of small states who have been successful in ITN show that they are able to develop issue-specific power to compensate for a lack of aggregate structural power. In addition, small states have shown that they are able to develop power disproportionate to their size on the few issues of utmost importance to them. Even though small state administrations lack the resources of their larger counterparts, their informality, flexibility, and the autonomy of their diplomats can prove advantageous in ITN settings. Active and successful, small states demonstrate strong leadership, excellent coalition-building skills and an ability to prioritise heavy workloads in order to achieve their foreign policy goals in ITN. 77 Utilising peaceful stable multilateral forums is key to the success of these strategies. Outside of multilateral environments small states will have less success in achieving foreign policy outcomes they are seeking. Small states can and do influence world politics in international forums and there is considerable leeway for manoeuvre. Small state influence is, however, always contingent on the time, effort, and resources available put into supportive diplomacy.

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