

Chapter 2 - Defence without force - The factors that influence the development of military forces.

Geography, demography, history and strategic circumstances influence the world outlook of every state. The 20 states covered by this paper are no different and each of them have a number of geographic, historical and strategic factors involved in their decision not to possess armed forces. What makes these decisions interesting is that there are many states that seem similar in geographic, demographic, historical or strategic situation that have made the opposite choice and developed armed forces of their own. This chapter will examine these factors and look at examples of where states in similar situations have made different choices about the need for armed forces and why that has occurred.

No Single Common Factor

In looking at these factors it is important to examine that while there may be some unifying threads between the 20 states without armed forces in terms of geography, demography, history and strategic circumstance, there is no one magic formula. Each state has made decisions due to very different experiences, in different parts of the world.

The diversity starts with geography. It is reasonable to say that all of the 20 states without armed forces are geographically small. Defending a small area is difficult. They lack any sort of depth from which to manoeuvre or resupply, it concentrates targets for an enemy to strike and there is little room for military infrastructure like airbases or training ranges. While there is a wide difference between the smallest of the 20, Nauru at 21 sqkm⁹, and the largest, Iceland at 100,250 sqkm, Iceland is still only ranked 108th in the world for land area¹⁰. That being said there are states smaller than Iceland that have powerful militaries to defend their territories such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Singapore or Israel¹¹. Indeed the two smallest sovereign states in the world, Monaco and the Vatican City, both have their own military forces, the Caribiniers du Prince¹² and the Pontifical Swiss Guard¹³. Size on its own is influential in not having a military but not an absolute determinant.

Likewise the nature of the terrain can be influential but is no certain guide as to whether a country will have armed forces or not. It is true that 15 of the 20 states without armed forces are

⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, 601.

¹⁰ Ibid, 394.

¹¹ International Institute of Strategic Studies, **The Military Balance 2016**, (London: Routledge, 2016), 89-90, 122-124, 286-288, 333-336.

¹² <http://en.gouv.mc/Government-Institutions/The-Government/Ministry-of-Interior/The-Palace-Guards>.

¹³ <http://www.swissguard.va/content/guardiasvizzerait.html>.