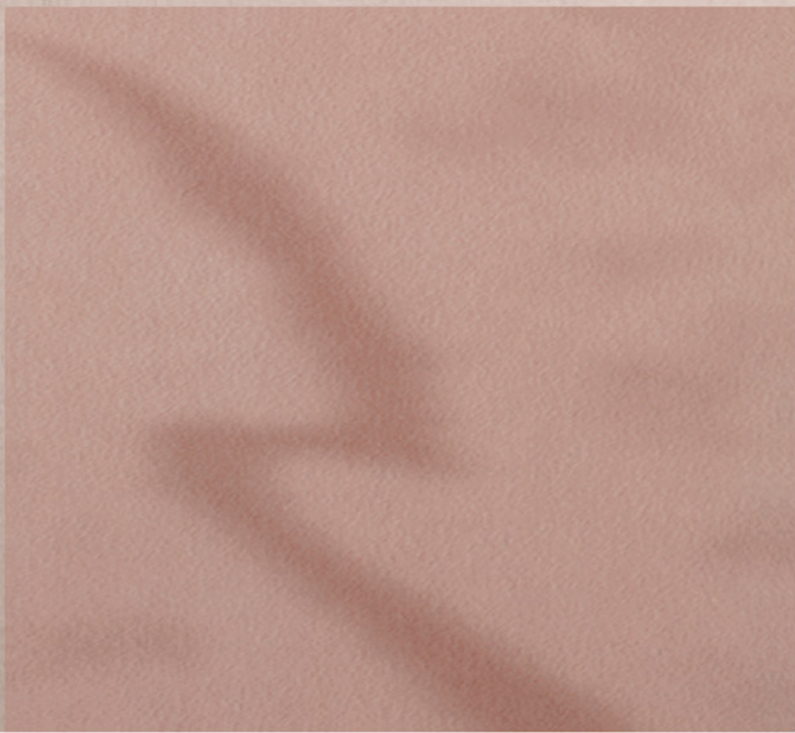


The European Union and National Defence Policy

Edited by

Jolyon Howorth
and Anand Menon

The State and the European Union



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The European Union and National Defence Policy

Have pressures from the integration of Europe resulted in a shift in national defence policies? Have developments in integration affected the way in which policy is made at the national level? Is national defence policy inclining increasingly towards co-operative action?

Focusing on the role that European integration has played in shaping the defence policies of various European countries, this book fills a surprising gap in existing studies. The editors have brought together an impressive array of contributors, who consider the pressures on state policy emanating from the process of integration. The book is divided into three distinct parts: the first outlines the tortuous history of attempts to link defence with European integration and highlights some recent initiatives. The second part includes studies of the four larger member states—France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, as well as a chapter on The Netherlands—providing an insight into the different national factors that condition the impact of EU action. The final part considers the key questions of nuclear weapons and arms procurement policies.

The national defence policies of European states are currently undergoing a period of radical transformation. This, the second book in *The State and the European Union* series, sheds light on an increasingly important and topical aspect of contemporary European security and will be essential reading for those studying European Politics, Public Policy and International Relations.

Jolyon Howorth is Professor of French Civilization and Jean Monnet Professor of European Political Union at the University of Bath. **Anand Menon** is Lecturer in the Politics of European Integration at the Oxford University Centre for European Politics, Economics and Society and Professeur Invite at the Institut Supérieur des Affaires de Défense, Université de Paris II.

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Preface

This volume is based on a series of research seminars, funded by the Economic Social Research Council, on 'State Autonomy in the European Community', held in Oxford in the academic year 1993–1994. The seminars examined the impact of European Community action on the content of national policy and on the relationships between actors at the national level, with the aim of assessing the implications of EC policy for the member states and the extent to which their autonomy has been affected. The seminars, which were interdisciplinary, addressed developments in the following areas: industrial, financial and service sectors; social policy; environmental protection and consumer policy; macroeconomic policy; and defence policy. The impact of EU membership on national administrative systems was also the subject of a seminar.

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Introduction

*Anand Menon*¹

This is the second volume of a series which examines the impact of the European Union on its member states. It shares with the others in the series the aim of evaluating the ways, if any, in which the process of European integration has impacted on both the substance of national policy and the way in which that policy is made. The volume on industrial policy (Kassim and Menon 1996) pointed out how little work has been done on the subject of the effects of integration on the state. This is, if anything, all the more true of defence. The vast majority of studies carried out on the relationship between defence and integration concentrate solely on the moves made towards the creation of a European defence identity, ignoring the question of whether achievements to date have exercised an impact on the national level.

None the less, the EU's impact on the nation state is an important element of integration. Andrew Moravcsik has recognised as much, classifying 'substantive domestic policy adjustment' as one of the crucial elements of the integration process, in that 'policy co-ordination is most significant where it imposes greatest adjustment on domestic policy' (Moravcsik 1994:479). Indeed, much of the contemporary debate on defence within the context of the ongoing Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on institutional reform has hinged on whether the West European nation states could ever agree to alienate decision-making power and hence the ability to reshape national defence policy in a collective supranational body.

DEFENCE, INTEGRATION AND THE STATE

There are two aspects to the issue of the impact of European integration on the member states. First, how has the substance of policy at the national level been affected by European-level institutions and policies? Have pressures resulting from the progress of integration resulted in a shift in national defence policies? Second, have developments in integration affected the way in which policy is made at the national level? Is there any evidence, for instance, of national military elites

picking up 'habits of co-operation' which in turn have the effect of inclining national policy increasingly towards co-operative action?

A conceptual tool we have found useful in attempting to ascertain the degree of impact of integration on the member states has been that of autonomy. By this we do not in any sense seek to imply absolute national defence self-sufficiency. Indeed, a convincing case can be made for the assertion that the notion of an autonomous national defence policy is something of an illusion. The coming of the nuclear missile revolutionised warfare and impinged severely on state autonomy. Certainly, the concept of nuclear deterrence may have proved successful in preventing the use of these weapons, and hence protecting national territory. Yet, as deterrence is all about bargaining with a potential adversary concerning the possibility of nuclear use, national defence is no longer something that can be assured by the state acting in isolation. Thus, as the development of gunpowder undermined the defensibility of the mediaeval fortress, long-range weapons of mass destruction have undermined the 'hard shell' of the contemporary state (Herz 1957).² According to some, we have witnessed 'the final demise of the impermeable territorial state and its boundaries...in the military sphere' (Kahler 1987:290). This was perhaps all the more true of a western Europe confronted with a huge military threat from the East and reliant on American protection.

In this volume, we employ the notion of autonomy, as developed in Eric Nordlinger's seminal work on the subject (Nordlinger 1981). According to this view, the state 'is autonomous to the extent that it translates its preferences into authoritative actions' (Nordlinger 1981:19). One problem inherent in Nordlinger's analysis of autonomy is that it focuses solely on societal constraints on the state, thus ignoring those pressures which may emanate from outside the state's own boundaries. This is unsatisfactory for all policy areas, but especially for one which deals primarily with the outside world. Broadening the notion of autonomy to encompass both domestic and external forces provides us with a useful tool to determine which constraints affect the ability of a state effectively to formulate and implement a defence policy of its own choosing.

Another area in which it is useful to refine Nordlinger's original analysis concerns the state itself, whose preferences, in his formulation, are taken as in some sense 'given'. Clearly this is problematic. The existence or absence of consensus over preferences amongst those various individuals who together form the state is an important determinant of the ability of the state to translate these choices into policy. Internal divisions may well mean public authorities are unable to pursue a coherent strategy, so rendering the state somewhat disadvantaged in squabbles with societal actors over policy outputs and reducing its ability to translate its own preferences into authoritative actions. The chapters that follow, therefore, do examine, where necessary, the complexity of state preference formation, with a view to ascertaining whether the very workings of the state machinery itself have evolved, perhaps as a result of exogenous pressures.

The concept of autonomy serves our purposes in several respects. First, it allows us to differentiate between desired and imposed policy change at the national level. Policy adaptation can occur for any number of reasons, not least because it corresponds to a shift in policy preferences. The concept of autonomy also allows us to differentiate between policy change resulting from integration which accords with state preferences and change which does not. In the former case, Europe does not entail a reduction in state autonomy, whereas in the latter it clearly does. To give a practical example, the decision by the European Commission to block the proposed merger between de Havilland and ATR represented a constraint on the autonomy of the French state to carry out its preferred industrial policy. On the other hand, whilst the deregulation of British industry which occurred in the 1980s was completely consistent with the deregulatory thrust of EC industrial policy at the time, it also corresponded to the preferences of the Thatcher government. National policy outcomes tallied with the requirements of European-level policy and the British state did not, in this instance, find its autonomy circumscribed.

Moreover, the use of autonomy helps us to avoid the problems that arise when, as is often the case, the notion of sovereignty is used as the basis of assessments of the impact of European integration on the member states. Using autonomy allows us to concentrate on *de facto* state capacities rather than on *de jure* legal authority. In other words, we can concentrate on whether governments have the power to adopt certain policies or achieve certain objectives, rather than whether they have the legal right to do so. Whilst in no way undermining sovereignty, integration may impact on autonomy by, for instance, increasing the ability of states to turn preferences into policy through acting as part of a collective.

A final necessary clarification concerns the nature of defence policy itself. In talking about defence policy, we are, in reality, referring to several interrelated yet often distinct strands of policy. First, a distinction must be made, as with all policy sectors, between rhetoric and actual policy. It is important to distinguish between the rhetoric used by national officials, which may appear to have taken on a more 'European' hue, and practical policy choices which are made and implemented. Thus, when the French Prime Minister asserts that 'all aspects of defence are concerned, in one way or another, with the European dimension: the organisation of our forces, our intelligence and logistical capabilities, our industries, our equipment policy' (Juppé 1995), one would need to examine the reality closely before taking this at face value.

Second, actual as opposed to declaratory policy can itself be subdivided. At one extreme, war fighting is clearly a central aspect of defence policy. Beyond this, however, are several increasingly 'routine' aspects of this sector, ranging from nuclear to conventional strategy, to the organisation and deployment of military forces, to procurement policy. Clearly, different strands of policy are vulnerable in different ways to different pressures. Some aspects of defence policy, such as procurement, involve the direct participation of societal actors (for instance

private companies) in the policy process (through activities such as lobbying for contracts); the constraints on state autonomy in this context will be very different from those manifest in areas such as nuclear strategy where the state is virtually the sole actor. Similarly, whilst the absence of an EU-level military policy limits the impact of integration on, say, military strategy, procurement policy may well be affected by developments in civilian sectors such as industrial policy.

Having examined the nature of state autonomy as it pertains to defence, we now consider how that autonomy can be circumscribed.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE AUTONOMY OF THE STATE

The focus of this volume is on the role European integration has played in shaping national defence policies. The contributors, therefore, were asked to concentrate on the pressures on state policy emanating from the process of European integration. Defence, however, as Jolyon Howorth illustrates in his chapter, has not developed the complex and powerful institutional framework at the European level that characterises many other policy areas. Therefore the scope for formal institutional impact on national policy is limited. In contrast to other policy sectors where the supranational institutions and EU law exercise a very real impact on the national level, as far as defence is concerned the progress of integration is registered as much in terms of rhetoric and bold intentions as through practical institutional (let alone legal) developments. A more amorphous issue is the role played by the ambitions and intentions of some to move further towards integration in shaping national defence policy. It may well be, for instance, that policy makers will assume future moves towards defence integration from ambitious declarations such as those contained within the Maastricht Treaty. This will lead them to 'factor in' the European dimension even where practical steps have not yet been taken. Hence, the current attempts being made by President Chirac to restructure the French arms industry are partly predicated on the expectation that national firms will soon have to compete in a European arms market.

The authors in this volume have also tried to consider the relative importance of pressures emanating from the European level compared to the other forces which act on the autonomy of the state. As suggested in the discussion of the concept of autonomy, two additional categories of constraint on the autonomy of the state can be identified: first, those imposed by the workings of the external environment; and second, those emanating from within the borders of the nation state.³

International pressures can take many forms, ranging from the influence of the structure of the international system (bipolarity) on state action, to the shifting technologies and capital and corporate mobility associated with globalisation. A further issue, given the centrality of NATO to discussions of national security, is the role of international organisations other than the EU and of extra-European

states. Such external factors do not necessarily affect all states equally. Domestically, a whole panoply of forces acts on the state, ranging from the influence of powerful arms companies to that exerted by peace movements and trades unions.

Of the three sets of pressures on policy discussed here—domestic, international and European—it is the second that has been the focus (at least implicitly) of most attention in the literature on defence policy. Students of defence matters have traditionally tended to look at national defence policy as a response, or series of responses, to shifting international conditions, though many studies tend to make this assumption implicitly rather than explicitly. Indeed, game theory, based on the notion of unitary states interacting in an environment they dominate, has ‘been elevated to the exclusive status as the paradigm of security studies’ (Cederman 1996:2). Similarly, theorists of international politics have tended to point to questions of security as best exemplifying the systemic constraints on state action.

That this has been the case is perhaps unsurprising given the overwhelming constraint on national defence policy that was the Cold War. As one observer has put it:

no European country *can* have an independent defence policy if the potential adversary is the Soviet Union; for fighting the Argentines in the South Atlantic, perhaps, or the Libyans in Chad, but not for keeping out the Russians. The independence of any European country is contingent on the independence of its neighbours. Therefore the starting point for any European defence policy is the concept of alliance. Not just a purely declaratory alliance either; nor an alliance whose practical arrangements are maintained *sub rosa* by the military while denied by the political elite; nor an alliance where total loyalty is somehow combinable with total independence of national decision-making; nor, because of the speed with which danger could erupt, can it be an improvisatory alliance. A real alliance means integration in advance.

(Davidson 1988:151)

Such an alliance, moreover, had to include the only Western power capable of deterring Soviet aggression—the United States. However, since 1989 this has all changed. As the burden of the Cold War has been lifted, so Europeans have come increasingly to talk in terms of equipping Europe with a defence capability of its own. The profound changes that occurred after 1989 affected not only international pressures on European states. Within these states, these changes may also have eased some of the constraints on groups seeking to influence policy outcomes by removing the all-encompassing threat facing Western Europe and hence placing defence issues back within the framework of legitimate political debate and dispute. The particular interest of this study at this time is that it enables us to examine the changing nature of the constraints facing the state while these are in mutation.

As far as the EU itself is concerned, we did not, in undertaking this volume, expect to discover that it played as central a role in shaping national defence policies as it does in some other policy areas. In itself, this does not negate the validity or value of the study, in that defence provides a useful contrast to the other sectors investigated in the series and will improve our understanding of integration through a consideration of the differential impact it exerts across policy sectors. Moreover, given the prominence accorded to questions of defence in debates over integration in recent years, it would be fair to expect to find at least some evidence of European influence over national policy. In this respect, we can usefully distinguish between the different kinds of impact that could be looked for.

First, the relationship between integration and the state can have various implications for the autonomy of the latter. In some cases, state autonomy is clearly reduced by integration as national decision-making competence is watered down or supplemented by European institutions. At other times, however, EU action may actually enhance state autonomy (for a strong statement of this, see Moravcsik 1994). The gains of collective action may outweigh an individual state's loss of decision-making autonomy as the collective manages to achieve goals no longer feasible for a single state. This would be the case if it were found that the EU allowed members the financial and technological means—clearly unavailable to each of them individually—to protect themselves against missile attacks.

This hypothetical example also serves to illustrate that the EU may exercise an impact through its interactions with other pressures coming to bear on the state. In this case, the effects of advancements in weapons technology which render states vulnerable to attack are mitigated through collective European-level action. The same may be true of domestic pressures. In some cases, the Union may serve as a justification, or alibi, for policy initiatives; in others as a scapegoat to be blamed for unpleasant policies which displease powerful domestic lobbies. Francis Mitterrand, for instance, made a virtue out of necessity by explaining his 1983 U-turn on macroeconomic policy in terms of a renewed desire to strengthen and enhance European integration.

The EU's impact on national defence policy will not always be direct. While in many cases one would expect developments in defence co-operation at the European level to feed back into national policies, this is not always the case. European initiatives in other spheres could also have an impact on defence policy: we could expect, for instance, that the convergence criteria for economic and monetary union, by necessitating greater fiscal parsimony, may well have played a part in shaping national defence budgets. Moreover, the effects of European-level activity may not be felt, in the first instance, at the level of the state itself. Action taken at the European level may alter the behaviour of private actors, which in turn influences state behaviour. The creation of a European Armaments Agency, and increasingly urgent talk of the need to remove barriers between heavily insulated national armaments markets, could spark a round of mergers between

defence-related firms, in much the same way that the Single European Market scheme provoked a flurry of intra-European mergers and takeovers in late 1988 by holding out the prospect of a larger market.

Finally, it is important, in our quest for traces of European influence on national policy, not to make the mistake of attributing any signs of an increased pro-European enthusiasm on the part of member states to this influence. Indications that national officials are starting to favour further moves towards bestowing a defence role on the EU may well not be explicable in terms of the impact of Europe itself. Often, international pressures (doubts about the continued American commitment to Europe, the prevalence of regional conflicts in a post-Cold War international system and so on) or domestic factors (shrinking budgets), may lead governments to adopt this attitude. European outcomes are not necessarily the result of European pressures.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The first chapter provides an empirical background to the subject. Howorth, in chapter one, outlines the tortuous history of attempts to link defence with European integration and highlights recent initiatives whose effects on the national level the later chapters investigate.

A number of country studies follow. They provide a comparative national perspective on the question of EU impact. Four chapters are devoted to the larger member states—France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Howorth, Bohnen, Hill and Andreatta, and Chuter respectively point to the very different factors that have shaped and continue to shape defence policies in these countries. They show how different histories and geographies have led to very different outlooks on, and responses to, European defence integration. David Chuter's insightful cultural deconstruction of the British defence establishment's almost visceral anti-European instincts points to one factor which may help to explain why, whatever the pressures and whatever their prominence, state preferences may be slow to change. Alfred van Staden then examines the pressures on Dutch defence policy, giving an idea of what the question of defence autonomy means for a small state without real power potential in this field. The survey of countries is not exhaustive, and an obvious lacuna is the absence of any chapter dealing with a neutral state. The countries chosen, however, provide enough contrast to allow a judgement on whether and, if yes, which national factors condition the impact of EU action.

The volume then looks at two key issues in the contemporary debate over defence, integration and the nation state. It underlines the point that defence is a sector of tremendous diversity in which the pressures acting on one segment of policy may differ radically from those on others. The question of nuclear weapons, investigated by Croft, is a crucial one. This is so not only because of their perceived connections to autonomy in both Britain and France, but also because of repeated recent claims, emanating in particular from Paris, regarding the need

for a European deterrent in order to have a European defence. Croft examines the debates in Britain and France and analyses the often contradictory pressures at work on the nuclear stances of these two states. Taylor considers the pressures on national procurement policies, often considered the 'soft' end of defence policy. His analysis serves not only to illustrate the various constraints that hinder as well as promote more europeanisation of national policy, but also makes clear the links between defence and the economic questions touched on by other books in the series.

National defence policies in Western Europe are undergoing a period of radical transformation. Even now, some seven years after the end of the Cold War, it is clear that statesmen have, in many if not most cases, failed to come to grips with the full implications of that momentous watershed in international affairs. Whilst clearly not presenting an exhaustive study of defence policy in Western Europe, this volume will cast light on an increasingly important and topical aspect of contemporary European security: the role of the European Union in influencing the shifts in national policy currently underway.

NOTES

- 1 The author would like to acknowledge the support provided by ESRC Research Grant R000221254 which has enabled him to carry out research on the pressures affecting national defence policy.
- 2 It is the combination of weapons of mass destruction along with the means of their delivery which has successfully undermined the notion of national defence. The one without the other simply would not have the same effect: the initial stages of the development of the *force de frappe* saw a French nuclear force that depended for its delivery on *Mirage* attack bombers whose range implied the necessity to refuel over Warsaw Pact territory. Clearly, the possibility of a successful mission against Russian soil was therefore limited.
- 3 This is not to claim that it is possible to distinguish clearly between these, as they often overlap or can be mutually reinforcing. For example, technological developments, which can be viewed as a systemic phenomenon affecting all states, by increasing the technological complexity of warfare, can strengthen the position of specialist groups at home, so making it harder for political leaders adequately to understand, and hence refute, their claims and demands.

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