European small states’ military policies after the Cold War: from territorial to niche strategies

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Abstract This article looks at the evolution of European small states’ military policies after the Cold War. Traditionally, small states faced a security dilemma between favouring influence and guaranteeing sovereignty. These security options were embodied by the strategy of alliance and the policy of neutrality. This article argues that in today’s unipolar world small states’ security policy must be cooperative either in the form of joining a security institution or an ad hoc coalition. This has two consequences for small states’ military policies. These can either favour niche or lead/framework nation strategies. This in turn, depends on the strategic ambitions of the small states, which are ultimately mediated by their strategic culture. This article concludes by looking at the military policies of Cold War neutral states after the Cold War.

Introduction

An important characteristic of the European strategic environment since the end of the Cold War has been the proliferation of small states, which represent the majority of the new European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states. The aim of this article is to explore European small states’ military policies after the Cold War. Military policy concerns the use of military power to uphold defence and security policies. It has a broader meaning than most states assign to defence policy—which relates to the defence of the national territory—and a narrower sense than security policy, which coordinates all relevant state instruments to ensure the security of the nation and its people (Art 2003, 3; Posen 1984, 13; Rosecrance and Stein 1993, 4). Military policy encompasses four dimensions: the military aspects of security policy, military doctrines, force structure and operational deployments.

The current European strategic environment is very different than that existing 20 years ago. Former divisions have been subsumed through the integration of the EU and the enlargement of NATO. As a corollary, traditional territorial threats have been replaced by multifaceted risks, and the use of military force for territorial purposes has become increasingly irrelevant. A new paradigm focusing on expeditionary operations has emerged. In order for military power to be relevant it has to be projectable. Small states invested considerable resources for

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their territorial defence during the Cold War. Since, by definition, small states lack resources yet military restructuring is costly, an interesting question arises: what military options do small states have at their disposal in the current unipolar environment? In other words how have European small states’ military policies changed after the Cold War?

The interest in small states’ security has been cyclical (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004). With the decolonization, from the 1950s to the mid-1970s, the main interest was in the survival of small states in a world dominated by two superpowers. It contrasted those arguing for cooperation through alignment (Keohane 1969; Rothstein 1968; Vital 1971) with those favouring an independent policy through neutrality (Däniker 1966; Ralston 1969). From the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s small states’ security was discarded. The proliferation of small states after the Cold War especially in Europe has aroused a renewed interest in small states’ security (Inbar and Sheffer 1997; Neumann et al 2006; Wiberg 1996). Some studies have looked at the impact of the EU on small states’ security (Baillie 1998; Goetschel 2000; Molis 2006; Thorhallsson 2000; Wivel 2005), others on the security options of small states within a military alliance (Gärtnert 2001; Mouritzen 1991; Wivel 2003) and in NATO (Männik 2004; Setälä 2004; Simon 2005) or independently (Matthews and Zhang Yan 2007). Though there has been an interest in small states’ foreign policy (Fendius Elman 1995; Hey 2003; Jazbec 2001), very few studies have discussed the general security options that small states face since the end of the Cold War (Goetschel 1998). Similarly, the issue of the use of force for small states has hardly been analysed after the Cold War (de Wijk 2004).

The aim of this article is to contribute to filling these gaps. It argues that European small states’ security options in today’s unipolar world have been narrowed down to adopting cooperative strategies, either in the form of joining ad hoc coalitions or security institutions. It follows that small states have two options to conduct their military policy: they can either adopt niche or lead/framework nations’ strategies. These arguments are developed by first defining small states and then looking at the security dilemma they are facing. The next two sections discuss small states’ military strategies during the Cold War: alliance and neutrality. Changes in the strategic environment are then highlighted and their consequences for small states’ military policy options are the subject of the next two sections. This article concludes by confronting the assumptions with the actual development of the European neutral and nonallied states’ military policies after the Cold War. The states discussed below have been chosen because they represent—due to their Cold War experience—the most unlikely candidates for adapting according to the assumptions laid down in this article.

**Small states’ security**

There are fierce disagreements over the definition of small states, which can be delineated by four generations of scholars dealing with this issue. The first...
generation, which stems from the realist tradition, adopted a definition that was based on the geographic or demographic size of the country or the gross domestic product (GDP) (Vital 1966, 1971). As a reaction to these quantitative definitions, other theorists choose a more qualitative standpoint. The second generation, associated with the neoliberals, focused on the role and the influence of small states in the system (Keohane 1969; Rothstein 1968), whereas the third generation influenced by the constructivists, adopted a psychological definition which maintained that smallness was a matter of self-perception (Hey 2003). These definitions are not really helpful because they are static and do not improve our understanding of the behavioural consequences of smallness. This has led some scholars to reject small states as a conceptual tool of analysis (Baehr 1975; Handel 1990). However, a fourth generation of scholars has adopted a dynamic definition by considering smallness through its relation with power (Goetschel 1998; Wivel 2005): a small state is a state that has a deficit of power due to its weak ability to mobilize resources, which could be material, relational or normative. Rather than considering small states on the basis of the power they possess, the focus is thus on the actual power they exercise (Mouritzen and Wivel 2005, 3). Power is here conceived as both the capacity to modify the conduct of other states while at the same time preventing other from affecting its own behaviour (Goetschel 1998, 15). In other words, power represents the ability to remain autonomous while influencing other. Adopting such a definition avoids the problems highlighted above by relating small states’ behaviour to power, which in return is defined by the norms and rules in the international system. Moreover, this relational perspective accounts for power differential in different relations as a state can be weak in one area but powerful in another. For instance, Switzerland is a small state in all but the financial field where it exerts some global influence.

This article adopts the relational approach of the fourth generation. Thus, smallness will be treated not as primarily stemming from the size or the population of states but from the lack of power that can be exerted (Thorhallsson and Wivel 2006, 655). Due to their lack of resources, small states lack the power to set agendas—meaning they have a limited capacity to influence or modify the conduct of others and lack the power to prevent others from influencing their own behaviour (Fendius Elman 1995, 171). The aim of small states’ security policies therefore becomes to minimize or compensate for this power deficit (Goetschel 1998, 19).

Due to their lack of resources, small states have to choose between two security policy options: they can either opt for influence or autonomy (Mouritzen 1997, 101–106; Wivel 2005, 396) (see Figure 1). If a small state decides to maximize its influence, it adopts a cooperative strategy, which corresponds to joining an

![Figure 1. Small state’s strategic dilemma (with small states’ strategic options in italic)
alliance. The security policy options for a small state favouring influence are thus either balancing or bandwagoning strategies (Waltz 1979). A small state can either ally against or with the threats (Walt 1987). This allows the small state to benefit from the protection and the dissuasion engendered by a great power but at the expense of its autonomy. A small state risks being entrapped by the policy of its bigger partner and, therefore, fighting wars that are not in its direct interests. Moreover, uncertainty is always present since protection by the bigger partner can never be taken for granted (Wiberg 1996, 37). On the other hand, a small state can choose to protect its autonomy. In this case, it adopts a defensive policy. This security policy option favours sovereignty. The small state does not expect protection from major powers and consequently can expect to stay out of others’ wars. The corollary to this is that the small state risks being abandoned by the great powers in the system. Traditionally this option was characterized by the adoption of a policy of neutrality (Reiter 1996).

In any case, because of their deficit of power, small states cannot adopt an offensive strategy. This requires that they would be capable of both exerting influence while guaranteeing autonomy. As former Finnish President Urho Kekkonen argued,

> One of the lessons which history teaches us is that a small people like the Finns cannot coerce its neighbours into the kind of settlements which it would like. Our own resources are not adequate for that and relying on outside support would mean throwing oneself on the mercy of the unknown as well as sowing the seeds of discord. (1982, 17–18)

Because only great powers have the ability to influence the structure of the international system while guaranteeing their security, they can have an offensive strategy (Reiter 1996, 65). They do it for reasons of self-preservation and to maintain their relative positions and prestige in the system (Claude 1986, 725). It is important to note that small states can nonetheless sometimes use offensive strategies if they are confronted with smaller states. Yet, their military policies are always modelled on defensive or cooperative structures because it is the only way to compensate for their power deficit

\[ vis-à-vis \]

more powerful states.

The traditional security dilemma for small states is therefore between protecting autonomy or maximizing influence. The means chosen to deal with this dilemma depend in turn both on the meaning of power within the international system and on the domestic acceptability of different policy strategies within the given small state. According to Hedley Bull, states live in a society of states defined as ‘a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values’ which ‘conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common organizations’ (1977, 13). Since power is a relational concept, it is affected not only by states’ material capabilities but also by the norms and organizations of the international society. It follows that the perception and significance of smallness depend on the nature of the international society (Goetschel 1997, 37). As Goetschel rightly puts it, ‘depending on the general normative nature of the international system and the specific international arrangement concerned[, ] small states have to make different kinds of reflections in order to maximize their sovereignty or to minimize their power deficit’ (1998, 27). In situations of mature anarchy—that is, when the system reaches a certain degree of institutionalization—the influence of norms
and organizations will be greater than in a zero-sum game situation typical of immature anarchy. This fact is even truer for small states since they have limited access to material resources and therefore tend to ‘favour discourses that institutionalize rules and norms, such as international law, international regimes and international organizations’ (Neumann and Gstohl 2004, 19). Institutionalization, by formalizing certain sets of norms and rules, opens them to debate and question and therefore makes them subject to revisions.

It follows that in international society, the existing international norms and international organizations ‘qualify the power deficit of small states and the policy strategies open to them’ (Goetschel 1998, 19). Although all small states evolve in the same international system they do not respond to its challenges in similar ways. Indeed, strategic culture defined as ‘a nation’s tradition, values, attitudes, pattern of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and particular way of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat and use of force’ (Booth 1990, 121), determines the shape and the content of its military policy by acting as a lens through which the international system is seen and by defining the ranges of military responses that a state can choose from. The deficit of power of small states forces them to adopt cooperative or defensive strategies, but strategic culture impacts on their interests by determining the ideal ratio between their dual goals of autonomy and influence in the international system. Strategic culture therefore contributes to explaining why a small state chooses a rather cooperative or defensive policy as well as variations between states adopting a similar defence posture.3 The next section analyses the different European small states’ military policies during the Cold War.

Neutral military policies during the Cold War

During the Cold War, the content of the security policy of the armed neutral states4 derived from the legal definition of neutrality codified in the 1907 Hague Convention. Since such states must abstain from war directly and indirectly—they are not able to support or favour parties with military forces—therefore their security policy was marked by the impossibility of taking part in any military alliance or collective defence agreement. This condition was even stronger for permanent neutral states that worked unequivocally to prevent themselves from being drawn into future conflicts. The choice of neutrality also implies that the neutral state acknowledges that greater security cannot be guaranteed by joining a defence alliance or a collective security organization, which obliges its members to join military sanctions. Consequently, the armed neutrals had to demonstrate the ability to defend themselves autonomously against violation of their neutrality and to maintain their territorial integrity. Moreover, their neutral status required that they achieved this by conducting a nonaggressive policy.

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3 For reasons of space and also because of the focus of this article, I will not deal with the influence of strategic culture and domestic factors to explain variations between similar strategic postures or of the process of policy adaptation. These issues are addressed in Rickli (forthcoming).

4 These were Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland.
The military policy of armed neutrality relied on a two-tier military doctrine composed of dissuasion and territorial defence. The former relied on the assumption that the military cost the aggressor would be prepared to risk in fighting would be relatively low because of the marginal strategic value of the small neutral states (Karsh 1988, 64). Dissuasion was achieved by the adoption of an independent and comprehensive conception of defence: total defence, which combined military forces with a ‘well-developed civil defence structure and an attempt to “link” the civilian economy and political infrastructure explicitly in defence planning’ (Stein 1990, 17). The territorial defence system could take different forms as long as it upheld a nonaggressive policy that was not adapted to the conduct of external military operations (Roberts 1986, 43). The force structure of the armed neutrals derived from the requirements imposed by their defence strategy, namely being dissuasive and autonomous. The linchpin of the neutrals’ armed forces organization relied on its draft system, which considers the ‘citizen’s capability to fight’ as a ‘prerequisite for the success of the defence strategy’ (Callaghan and Kernic 2001, 193). The epitome of this draft conception is the militia system. Unlike conscription, this draft system is not aimed at winning a war or defeating the enemy’s army but at preserving the country’s independence; therefore, the neutrals’ concept of a soldier was closer to the idea of ‘citizen in uniform than the one of warriors’ (193).

In terms of operational engagements, since the neutral state had to avoid anything that would entangle them in war, their armed neutrality policy was characterized by an aversion to use force outside one’s own territory. Although Austria, Finland and Sweden contributed to peace-keeping operations during the Cold War, they did not conceive their participation as a military contribution to international security. Peace-keeping was considered a political practice, rather than a military option, undertaken by the United Nations (UN) as the neutral third party, to prevent conflict escalation. Moreover, for the neutral states participating in peace-keeping operations, such operations were considered as enhancing their national and international prestige and thus increased the political cost of violating their neutrality, which in turn strengthened their own security (Sundelius 1989, 110). Still, the constraints linked to the conduct of a credible military policy of armed neutrality required that this policy should not be perceived as threatening. This was achieved by the build-up of dissuasive military capability, which could not be used beyond the neutral state’s territory. This military policy was upheld by a neutral strategic culture, which was composed of an unmitigated objective to remain in peace even when the others are at war and of a general aversion to the use of military force (Vetschera 1985, 67). In short, the neutrals’ strategic culture was underpinned by a peace culture. Yet, it did not mean that neutral states could not have a military policy: these states adopted a defensive military policy, which justified the use of force only for the preservation of the national territory (Penttilä 1994, 65). The neutral strategic culture was therefore based on Vegetius’ aphorism ‘if you want peace, prepare for war.’

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5 It is worth noting that Switzerland is the only state to have adopted a true militia system.
Allied military policies during the Cold War

In contrast to the neutrals, the allies’ military policy was strongly influenced by their membership in a military alliance, either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. For NATO member states, the obligation of collective defence defined the overarching aim of their security policy as these states agreed to assist each other by any actions deemed necessary, ‘including the use of armed force’, in case of armed aggression (NATO 1949, article 5). Unlike neutral states, the hallmark of NATO member states’ military policy was that their national security was heavily dependent on their allies’ military policy. Potentially divergent national security interests were brought together by an underlying sense of common security interests—associated with the predominant threat of the Soviet Union—as well as through NATO integrated military structure. This provided the umbrella for bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the allied armed forces.

Collective defence was implemented at the strategic level by the doctrine of nuclear deterrence with all European allied states relying on the American nuclear umbrella to deter any attack from the Soviet Union. At the operational level, each national member states’ armed forces were tailored for territorial defence. Yet, contrary to the neutrals, NATO members’ armed forces were trained for the defence of both national territory and neighbouring NATO countries. To this purpose, eight allied army corps were lined up in the Federal Republic of Germany and the bulk of NATO armed forces were trained to stop a conventional territorial invasion of the Warsaw Pact armed forces in central Europe and Germany (Rearden 1995). Similarly, multinational units such as the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (AMF) were created so as to integrate forces from several allied nations. However, it is important to note that although NATO provided an integrated military structure, the bulk of the Allies’ national armed forces were still primarily designed to fight on their national territory and were therefore structured for territorial defence missions and relied on conscription. In terms of operational engagement, the NATO armed forces’ deployments were primarily focused on national territories and those of the neighbours. Although the Allies’ armed forces were never committed in real combat operations, they nonetheless acquired international experience through various joint military exercises such as the yearly multinational naval exercise Ocean Safari.

Unlike the neutral strategic culture, the allied strategic culture was thus marked neither by a desire to remain in peace when others are at war, nor by an aversion to use military power. On the contrary, the obligation linked to collective

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6 The Warsaw Pact was composed originally of Albania (which left in 1961), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union since 1955 and then the Democratic Republic of Germany since 1956.

7 During the Cold War, NATO founding members comprised Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States since 1949, which were joined by Greece and Turkey in 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955 and Spain in 1982.

8 France left the NATO integrated military structure in 1966; Spain never joined.

9 The AMF was originally composed of Belgium, Germany, United States and United Kingdom but counted troops from 17 allied nations when it was disbanded in 2002. It originally aimed at responding to any crisis on NATO’s flanks (Gambles 1989).

10 One exception was the United Kingdom, which switched to professional troops in 1963.
defence compelled NATO member states to adopt a very proactive military policy to support a collective endeavour in order to thwart a potential Soviet aggression. The allied strategic culture was therefore based around the concept of deterrence through ‘l’union fait la force’. By pooling military capabilities together and demonstrating the willingness to adopt offensive behaviour, it was hoped that the Soviet Union would be deterred from resorting to force.

Small states’ security after the Cold War

The end of the Cold War has been marked by three important developments for military policy. Firstly, the United States’ (US) power has consistently outpaced those of its rivals since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thus, in 2006 US military spending amounted to 46 per cent of the world total military expenditure and accounted for 62 per cent of the total increase in world military expenditure (Stalenheim et al 2007, 269). This imbalance is characteristic of a unipolar system (Mowle and Sacko 2007b; Reus-Smit 2004; Wohlforth 1999). The direct security implication for small states is that the incentive for bandwagoning increases and cooperative strategies become the only realistic strategic option (Mowle and Sacko 2007a, 603). By allying with the most powerful state in the system, small states increase their power without being as concerned about possible retaliations from other states, as they would in a bipolar or multipolar system. This can be illustrated by South Korea’s support of the US war in Iraq: the rationale behind the decision was not related to a perceived threat of the Iraqi nuclear program but rather linked to Seoul’s attempt to influence Washington’s policy towards Pyongyang (Geunwook Lee 2006). The only danger associated with this cooperative strategy is represented by the punishment that the hegemon can exert on the small state. Yet, the US is depicted as rather benevolent (Kagan 1998) and when faced with a benevolent hegemon, small states will try to increase their influence by siding with the strongest side. That the US did not seem to represent a danger to small states despite the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was demonstrated by the support of 13 post-communist states—most of them small states—to the Anglo-American position on Iraq in 2003 (Fawn 2006).

Secondly, in a benevolent unipolar strategic environment threats of strategic importance are replaced by risks (Bailes 2007). As Moskos rightly argues, ‘one key difference between Modern and Postmodern societies lies in the character of the threats they face and the ways they perceive them’ (2000, 16). The clearly identified territorial threats arising from the bipolar struggle, which served as the guidelines of defence planning, have been replaced by increasing uncertainty embodied in the concept of ‘risks’ (Fitzsimmons 2006). Unlike threats, which are precisely identified through hostile intent supported by the required capabilities, risks are the ‘product of the probability and utility of some future event’ (Adams 1995, 30). They give more importance to perceived future consequences than do threats. As Rasmussen convincingly argues, ‘it is not present actions that are to produce future results but perceived future results that produce present actions’ (2006, 38), thus meaning that if states know that they might be able to prevent an unwanted occurrence from happening this gives them the duty to protect the future from the present. It therefore follows that the logic of risks leads to preemptive and preventive strategies (39). Yet, these strategies are characterized by the subjective perception of risks. Therefore the main consequence of the
replacement of concrete territorial threats by risks is that European states have become more selective in their use of military force (Rickli 2007a). This in turn implies that they no longer fight wars of necessity but wars of choice. Before 2001, military power was used by the European states when it became obvious that crisis at their doorstep could destabilize Europe, such as in the case of Bosnia or Kosovo. They also used force for humanitarian purposes (Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Sierra Leone) or for reestablishing a regional (Kosovo) or global order (Iraq). Thus far, the EU has conducted eight military operations or operations with a military component (Concordia, Artemis, AMIS Darfur, EUFOR Althea, EUSEC RDC, EUFOR RDC, EU SSR Guinea-Bissau, EUFOR Tchad), and NATO is strongly committed in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Kosovo (KFOR) (Rickli 2007b). More recently, although the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001 and in Madrid on 11 March 2004 have contributed to giving priority to fighting terrorism, European small states’ military policies are nonetheless marked by an increasing selectivity of the use of military force after the Cold War.

Finally, the last development pertains to the transformation of the European security environment. The transformation of NATO and the EU into security and risk management organizations represents a typical example of a situation of mature anarchy. These organizations now provide security governance in Europe and are building blocks on which a European security community develops (Webber et al 2004). In this environment, where the threats of territorial attack have vanished, adopting a policy favouring autonomy is counterproductive. As Wivel rightly notes,

defending autonomy by means of institutional opt-outs has little effect when the greatest threat against state autonomy is the ability of other states to carry out their agenda either inside or outside EU institutions. (2005, 407)

It follows that the adoption of a cooperative strategy has become the most efficient strategic option and that European security organizations are therefore the main channel for the conduct of small states’ military policy. In the case of NATO, small states use the organization to strengthen their security and to influence the policy of the US in their favour (Simon 2005). Unlike great and middle powers, which have access to larger resources and, therefore, greater room of manoeuvre, small states’ military policies are mainly influenced by the developments within these organizations. Faced with new risks and challenges that can only be addressed through multinational cooperation, both the EU and NATO have been very instrumental in shaping European security policies towards greater solidarity beyond the sole case of territorial aggression (European Council 2003, 1, 13; NATO 1999, article 8). Both the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and NATO have promoted a vision of international politics, which relies on states’ cooperation to address any challenges that may destabilize the Euro-Atlantic areas and to promote a liberal order (European Council 2003, 13; NATO 1999, article 26).

To sum up, the current unipolar strategic environment characterized by risks and a high level of security institutionalization renders a defensive posture for small states counterproductive. During the Cold War, neutral states’ autonomy was acceptable because their defence preparations contributed to international stability, but in today’s environment an autonomous posture is equated with security free-riding. Opting out cannot combat global risks. Therefore, small states’ security strategy must favour cooperation. The best way to achieve this is by joining and exerting influence through either institutional membership or
participation in coalitions. The next section identifies the main military policy options for small states in this new strategic environment (see Table 1).

**Post-Cold War military policy options for European small states**

In an era of global risks, adopting preventive and preemptive strategies, which rely on the projection of military power, is the only way to defuse crisis and avert dangers. As the European Security Strategy (ESS) puts it, ‘we need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary robust intervention’ (European Council 2003, 11). The hallmark of the post-Cold War European strategic culture is thus based on the requirement of prevention, which aims at defusing conflicts before they erupt (7). The Europeans acknowledged the importance of crisis management early on by making the Petersberg tasks\(^\text{11}\) the core functions of the Western European Union (WEU) and then of the EU. The 1999 NATO Strategic Concept reached the same conclusions (NATO 1999). However, the rise of strategic terrorism and other asymmetric threats has extended the scope of the use of military force beyond crisis management. The ESS has therefore expanded the Petersberg tasks to include ‘joint disarmament operations, support for third countries in combating terrorism and security sector reform’, and NATO, with the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF), is ready to project a war-fighting force wherever it is needed (European Council 2003, 13). As Lindley-French rightly observes, the post-Cold War strategic reality has imposed on European armed forces the need to ‘go further, fight harder, stand tougher and stay longer’ (2004, 202).

The new strategic environment requires the abandonment of the fixed legacy capabilities of the Cold War and the development of new capabilities to project and maintain forces, as well as fight in distant places (NATO 1999, article 52). Yet, adopting expeditionary capabilities to cover the full spectrum of risks implies the ability to sustain extensive combat operations far beyond one’s national territory and is therefore beyond the reach of small states. On the other hand, the ability to work and to fight jointly has set the standard for the reform of European military forces. Thus, interventions supported by the ability of joint power projection represent the hallmark of post-Cold War European military doctrines.

Small states can basically contribute to two types of operations, which in turn depend on the strategic ambitions of the country (de Wijk 2004). In the framework of a cooperative strategy, the strategic ambition of a small state is defined by the extent of the influence it would like to exert on a coalition or an alliance. This influence is conditioned by its strategic culture and is strongly related to the type of operations the small state is ready to contribute. Small states with low strategic ambition limit their participations to low intensity Petersberg operations (Howorth 2006, 59). These comprise stabilization and reconstruction operations. In terms of assets required, light armoured infantry, civil-military units, C4I and combat service support elements such as maintenance, construction, medical services and transportation are sufficient (Kerttunen 2005, 29). Small states with higher strategic ambitions can participate in high intensity Petersberg operations. These comprise small-scaled enforcement or counterterrorist operations. In addition to the aforementioned assets

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\(^{11}\) These operations consist in ‘humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking’ (WEU 1992).
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this type of operations also requires combat support elements such as special operations forces, nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) protections, air defence, unmanned aerial vehicles or mine hunters.

For each type of operation, a small state has two basic operational choices. It can adopt a niche strategy by specializing in a specific type of force, which is in need. For instance, Norway has specialized in special operations forces, the Czech Republic in NBC elements, and Lithuania is developing water purification capabilities. Niche strategy can also be developed within a multinational pool of forces gathering military forces of several small states. Thus, the Benelux countries have developed an integrated staff structure of their naval units for use in external operations (Admiral Benelux), \(^\text{12}\) and the Nordic states have pooled some of their military resources through the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), \(^\text{13}\) to enhance cooperation in crisis management operations. Adopting a niche strategy allows the small state to have codecision power at the operational level and strategic leverage if its specialized capabilities are desperately needed. However, the disadvantage of such a strategy is that scarce resources will be used extensively and, therefore, small states’ capabilities can be overstretched. If a small state wants to play a more important operational role it can adopt a framework or a lead nation strategy. In that case, it will be responsible for planning the operation and providing the key elements of C4I. For instance, Sweden has adopted this strategy by deciding to become the framework nation of the Nordic EU Battlegroup (EUBG). This operational choice provides the small state with a strategic role since it is responsible for the conduct of an operation. Yet, in addition to the disadvantages mentioned for a niche strategy, a framework/lead nation strategy also entails international responsibilities, making the small state more vulnerable to international pressures. These two strategies imply role specialization that can only be achieved through enhanced defence integration, which pools resources and creates more collective capabilities (de Wijk 2004). The EU 2010 Headline Goal (HG 2010) through the European Defence Agency is working in this direction by favouring role specialization.

The complex nature of intervention operations and the increasing sophistication of weapon systems have also imposed strong constraints on the structure of the armed forces. The necessities of power projection require armed forces to be structured along the principles of deployability, sustainability, interoperability, flexibility, mobility, survivability and command and control (European Council 2001, 98; 2005, 111; NATO 1999, article 53d). In particular, based on the European approach and experiences in crisis management, interoperability includes not only military, but also civilian and civil-military aspects (European Council 2005, 112). Moreover, in order to maintain a minimal interoperability with the US military, the Europeans must transform their armed forces along the lines of network enabled operations and effect based operations (de Wijk 2004, 132). \(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{12}\) Luxemburg participates only financially.

\(^\text{13}\) After the establishment of the Nordic EU Battle group, the NORDCAPS pool of forces was abolished in May 2006.

\(^\text{14}\) Network enabled operations rely on the ability to work along the principles of network centric warfare (Garstka 2003, 58). Effect-based operations can be defined as ‘coordinated set of actions directed at shaping the behaviour of friends, neutrals and foes in peace, crisis and war’ (Smith 2002, 108).
With the obsolescence of a major territorial conflict in Europe, the time of Western mass armies appears over and instead there is an increasing demand for highly flexible, mobile and well-trained military forces. At the same time, the internationalization of crisis management operations requires armed forces to become interoperable so as to be plugged into a pool of multinational forces. The requirement for jointness thus imposes that military units adopt the same standard operating procedures and language. A direct consequence of this evolution is the necessary professionalization of armed forces. This tendency is also confirmed by the rise of multinational rapid reaction forces (NATO NRF or EUBG). For instance, with the creation of the EU Battlegroups, contributing states must be able to provide forces within 5–10 days. The short deadlines, as well as the complexity of the missions, mean that nonprofessional units become increasingly unqualified for these new military tasks. Thus, the structure of European armed forces after the Cold War has evolved towards the abolition of conscript military units and a generalization of small, highly flexible and professional armed forces deployable at very short notice.

The transformation of the strategic environment not only has consequences for the use of force in external operations but also for the domestic sphere. Traditionally, a strict division between the use of the military in territorial defence and the use of the police for the maintenance of order was held. This functional distinction stemmed from the internal pacification that produced the modern nation state (Giddens 1985). The post-Cold War developments and processes of globalization have blurred the dividing line between ‘external military security and internal policing functions of states’ (Andreas and Price 2001, 33). This implies an expansion of traditional military tasks beyond war-fighting towards crime-fighting and the protection of critical infrastructures. Concretely, military forces are increasingly used for law enforcement purposes and in cooperation with civilian security forces. The consequences of 9/11 have magnified this evolution by profoundly questioning the relationship between the domestic and the external dimension of security. The EU clause on terrorism adopted on 25 March 2004 is a perfect example of this change. It states that the EU member states ‘shall mobilize all the instruments at their disposal, including military resources to prevent the terrorist threat in the territory of one of them’ (European Council 2004). This clause therefore links the member state and the EU levels to provide military assistance for internal EU use. This has immediate consequences regarding the traditional divisions of roles between the police and the military (Lutterbeck 2004).

However, the national legal frameworks inherited from the Cold War concerning military assistance to civilian authorities and the police have impeded the creation of new means to counter terrorism. Traditionally, the domestic use of the military below the war threshold was conceived only in case of natural disasters or exceptional circumstances, which required heavy logistical

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15 Belgium abandoned conscription for a professional army in 1992, Holland in 1993, France in 1996, Spain in 1998, Italy and Portugal in 1999. Hungary and Slovenia have fully professional military forces since 2004, the Czech Republic since 2005 and Slovakia since 2006. Ireland, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg already had professional armies during the Cold War (Howorth 2006, 43). Germany, Denmark and Greece are on their way to professionalize units participating in peace support operations.
contributions. Yet, current needs for the domestic use of the military include intelligence, deployment of special forces, transport, nuclear, biological and chemical weapon expertise, command and control, medical support and evacuations, logistic support, borders and maritime patrolling and law enforcement support (Ekengren 2006, 274). There are no typical models of how security forces should look like to fulfil these functions, but the French Gendarmerie or the Italian Carabinieri provide good examples of paramilitary forces addressing these security issues. Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg have all developed concepts along these lines. These forces are specialized in terms of training, capabilities and lines of command for tasks that straddle the border between internal order and security and external security (Ekengren 2006, 275). This suggests that domestically small states’ military policy must shift from territorial defence to territorial protection so as to help civilian security forces preventing new risks.

The Cold War neutral states’ military policies after the Cold War

This last section confronts the above assumptions through a brief analysis of the evolution of Cold War neutral states’ military policies after the Cold War. As these states adopted a defensive strategy during the Cold War, they represent the best candidates to test the expectation that small states’ strategies must be cooperative and that their military policies must be oriented towards expeditionary operations. The neutral states that had an active military policy during the Cold War can be divided into two categories after 1989.

The first group represents the neutral states that joined the EU after the Cold War, namely Austria, Finland and Sweden. These three states, together with Ireland, have abandoned their defensive posture and adopted a cooperative strategy by streamlining their military policy on the requirements of the EU. Though these states were initially reluctant to promote defence integration, they lobbied strongly to include the Petersberg tasks in the EU treaty (Laursen 1998). During the Finnish Presidency in 1999, the Helsinki Headline Goals that laid down the basis for military capabilities integration were launched. In 2003, Sweden participated in Operation Artemis. This represented a departure from Cold War practices not so much because Swedish forces were deployed in Africa, but because of the nature of the military contribution. During this operation, Swedish special operation forces were deployed, together with French forces, as a spearhead to secure the airport of Bunia to guarantee the safe arrival of follow-on forces. The engagement of military forces for such an operation no longer had anything to do with merely providing peace-keeping forces that monitor a truce, such as was the case during the Cold War. Though Austria and Finland have not gone as far in the type of offensive operation they are ready to carry out, together with Sweden they have adapted their military policies to be interoperable with the armed forces of the other EU member states. Thus, all have reformed their armed forces towards expeditionary operations. For Sweden and Austria, these operations have become the main raison d’être of their military forces (Bundesheerreformkommission 2004; Swedish Government 2004). This was demonstrated by Austria taking the lead as a framework nation for the EUFOR Multinational Task Force North in Operation Althea on 1 December 2005. In the
The case of Finland, though territorial defence still plays an important role, participation in international operations has become on a par with the defence of the country (Finnish Government 2004). Finland has specialized in communication system and in 2003 it became the first non-NATO member to lead a multinational brigade in NATO KFOR (Finnish Ministry of Defence 2004). These three states and Ireland—which did not have military capabilities during the Cold War—have all earmarked some of their forces for the EUBG. Ireland, with the lowest strategic ambitions, contributes 80 soldiers specialized in bomb disposal. Sweden has accepted to become the framework nation of the Nordic Battlegroup; this commitment completely drives the reform of the Swedish armed forces. From this overview, it appears that the traditional Cold War defence posture of former neutral states has been abandoned in favour of a cooperative strategy that has led to the adoption of niche or lead/framework nation strategies.

The second group is composed of Switzerland, which has adopted a different military policy orientation. The latest armed forces reform, Army XXI, has transformed the military so that they can contribute to domestic subsidiary operations and area protection. This more inward orientation is nonetheless met with an increasing internationalization of military policy. The catchword of the Swiss security policy reform is ‘Security through Cooperation’ (Conseil Fédéral 1999). This has been translated notably by the first important contribution of Swiss military forces in international operations through the engagement of an armoured military company (Swisscoy) in NATO KFOR. Swisscoy mainly has a logistical role, but still represents a total departure from Switzerland’s Cold War practice of nonmilitary participation in international operations. The bulk of the Swiss armed forces though, remain trained for domestic operations.

This brief description confirms the predictions regarding the shape of small states’ military policies after the Cold War. Even the most unlikely candidates, the Cold War neutral states, have shifted their security strategy towards cooperation. For the EU nonallied states, and to a lesser extent Switzerland, this has implied increasing defence integration and role specialization to become interoperable with the standards set by NATO and the EU.

Conclusions

Traditionally, the highest security threat for a state was the one that violated its border because it implied a threat to its sovereignty and indeed its very existence. Territorial defence supported by military capabilities and international law were the key instruments to uphold states’ security during the Cold War. This was even more acute for small states since they had limited means to protect their sovereignty. With the obsolescence of territorial threats in Europe after the Cold War, the use of military force has become less centred on traditional wars and more focused on dealing with domestic and foreign crisis situations and the prevention of conflicts and international crimes. External operations have become the major source of operational engagement for European armed forces, and support to domestic civilian authorities has increased. The rise of military interventions has compelled armed forces to work far beyond their national territories. This imposes a complete shift in military policy from fixed ‘legacy’ weapons and systems towards power projection and crisis management enablers.
Expeditionary capabilities require both the means to project power and the ability to cooperate between armed forces. Power projection has thus become the priority for European small states’ military forces since risks to national and Euro-Atlantic security are often located beyond their immediate territorial boundaries. This poses demanding strategic challenges for European small states. Due to their lack of power small states cannot shape events. They seek to position themselves as advantageously as possible in the system. Not only is an autonomous defence option no longer feasible but the adoption of a cooperative strategy imposes difficult military choices. In today’s globalized environment, depending on their political ambitions, small states can maximize their influence through the adoption of niche or lead/framework nation strategies. This role specialization, however, implies a convergence of strategic cultures and practices, which can only be reached through further institutional integration in Europe.

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