

## BOOK REVIEW

**Janne Haaland Matlary**

*European Union Security Dynamics: In the New National Interest,*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2009, ISBN 9780230521889, 248 pp., £ 55.00 hb.

The notion of security has changed significantly in the post-Cold war era. Security is not anymore understood in the traditional sense as state-centric and military-oriented. In fact, the concept of security now encompasses different sectors such as economy, society and environment, different actors such as soldiers, terrorist groups, non-governmental organizations and pirates, and wide range of issues such as terrorism, organized crime, disarmament, peacekeeping operations and piracy. Security concerns defined by the bipolar system gave way to the re-nationalization of defence and security policies in the post-Cold war era. As this has been probably the general trend in world politics for the last twenty years, in the course of the development of European security architecture we have witnessed 'de-territorialization' and 'de-nationalization' of security policies of European states (Matlary 2009:23).

Janne Haaland Matlary, in her book 'European Union Security Dynamics: In the New National Interest' explores the development of the security and defence policy in the European Union starting with the assumption that "the national state model of defence in Europe is disappearing" (p.16), because European states no more need mass armies and conventional military power that solely provide territorial defence. Addressing the non-existential threats and wide-ranging risks has become the main priority of European states. Notwithstanding the author's post-Westphalian understanding of nation-state, her perspective by and large corresponds to the liberal intergovernmentalism approach in European studies. First of all, the unit of her analysis is member states. The author focuses on the three big players namely, Britain, France and Germany who are considered the main engines of the development of a European security and defence policy. Second, the explanatory variable Matlary applies in her analysis is the national interests. The argument she makes throughout her book is that European states, particularly Britain, France, Germany and Italy have attained so-called *new* national interests and 'foreign policy prerogatives' as a result of the new *raison d'état* which helps them maintain their strengths vis-à-vis other actors in the domestic and international arena (p.71). In other words, the European Union Security and Defence Policy has been developed out of economic and strategic necessities of the big three and a half member states rather than neither the aim



to balance US power nor the construction of a European security identity through supranational institutionalization. According to Matlary, ESDP is a new and arguably favourable policy domain where the member states can 'share risk, cost and blame and legitimize the use of force' in an era that European publics are extremely averse to any kind of use of military force (pp.73-74).

The book is organized in seven chapters in three parts. In the first part under three chapters the author dwells on the post-national security concerns and dynamics prevailing since the fall of the Berlin wall. Of these security dynamics the most important ones are the dilemma over how to modernize armies and cut the defence budgets at the same time; and how to be visible, present in world politics and contributor to international security while facing domestic reluctance driven by high concerns for legitimacy and commitment to the military operations.

The second part is devoted to understanding the big three and a half member states' political aspirations and strategies about the development of a European security and defence policy. Deriving from the Putnam's well-known two-level game model the author makes an argument that even great powers of Europe have to give up some of their sovereign rights so that they can design intergovernmental institutions and policies in line of their grand strategies. To put it more bluntly, cooperation among member states arises out of the dysfunctions at both international and national levels. At the international level the dysfunction pertains to state's ineffectiveness and inability to deal with new threats and risks on its own. At the national level the dysfunction appears due to the predominance of economic objectives over security concerns and the existence of social constraints on the use of force. In order to by pass domestic constraints and to treat the dysfunctions, member states need to collude with each other in the realm of security and defence. Matlary asserts that the European Union is the scapegoat used by member states whenever they want to divert the domestic criticisms from themselves.

The last part of the book discusses the recent developments in ESDP. The creation of battlegroups and the foundation of the European Defence Agency suffice to name some of the efforts to enhance capabilities of the EU. Nonetheless, for Matlary, the military capabilities do not fully correspond to the political will. Due to the gap between capabilities and political commitments some of the initiatives proved futile at best or still born at worst. In the last chapter, Matlary asks whether the member states are fully committed to the transformation of the EU into a global actor. Matlary strongly contends that even if the EU acquires military capabilities on the paper, the EU's ability to use military force and coercive diplomacy backed by a big stick will remain limited in practice (p.202). Besides, 'a lack of political direction and the EU's lack of unitary decision-making capacity'(p.180) compound the inability of the EU to use military force in the foreseeable future.

If there is one weakness, it is the author's overemphasis on the role of France and Britain in the development of ESDP because of her intergovernmentalist standpoint. Therefore, she underestimates the effect of political cooperation on the incremental development of a common European security culture from scratch, which in turn



facilitates further cooperation in the security and defence. Her focus on domestic politics and the formation of national interests under domestic pressure offers insightful account for the influence of domestic factors at play in ESDP. However, more thorough analysis should elaborate the interplay between international and domestic dynamics. From a constructivist standpoint, one cannot help but wonder if identity construction and reconstruction at the national level and international level can bridge the gap between capabilities and political will and turns the EU into a fully-fledged global actor with a military arm use for a just and legitimate cause. Overall, this book is lucid and well-argued, and reminds us the recently neglected influence of member states' national interests in the development of ESDP. All in all, I think that Matlary's analysis is genuinely interesting for the students of European studies and it would be an essential reading in undergraduate and postgraduate courses of European integration.

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