

THE FOREIGN, SECURITY & DEFENCE IMPLICATIONS OF BREXIT: A GUIDE TO THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE¹

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Since the first steps towards common European foreign and security policies in the 1970s, a multitude of scholars have observed, examined, and analysed the emergence of the European Union (EU) as a crucial international organization in the area of foreign, security, and defence affairs. Some even suggest that the research field of European foreign and security policies has become so popular that more scholars analyse these policies than practitioners implement it.² Unsurprisingly, the existing body of academic literature on the subject can be perplexing, even for experts. There are countless academic journal articles, research reports, monographs, and edited volumes addressing a myriad of issues, for example what type of actor the EU is in international affairs or how certain EU policies work in practice. There are even specialized academic journals that publish exclusively on European foreign, security, and defence policies, in particular the [European Foreign Affairs Review](#) and [European Security](#). Fortunately, several useful textbooks have been published in recent years, most notably the [SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy](#) and the [Routledge Handbook of European Security](#). These textbooks offer concise overviews of the relevant theories, actors, and policies as well as suggestions for additional reading. Furthermore, the European Union Institute for Security Studies publishes its [Yearbooks of European Security](#), which compile the most relevant information and official documents in a given year.

However, almost without exception the academic literature on EU foreign, security, and defence policy was focused until very recently on the EU as such, i.e. on the EU

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² Bickerton, Chris J., Bastien Irondelle, and Anand Menon: 'Security Co-operation beyond the Nation-State: The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49, no. 1 (2011): 1.

as an international actor, on the EU's inner working, and on the EU's collective foreign, security, and defence policy output and its outcomes.³ Although due to the intergovernmental nature of EU foreign, security, and defence policies member states often play a key role in this literature, research studies of individual member states are rare. The major edited volumes focusing on single country studies are more than fifteen years old.⁴ Only the literature on Europeanization has produced more recent studies on individual countries and foreign, security, and defence policies in the context of the EU, in particular Wong and Hill's 2012 volume on [National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanization](#). Yet, even this type of literature is mainly about how intertwined the EU and its member states are in certain policy areas. In other words, it is fair to argue that the existing body of literature on European foreign, security, and defence policies is focused on integration – or even further integration – in this area at the European Union. Disintegration, in particular a key member state such as the United Kingdom leaving the EU, has never been contemplated by scholars to any significant degree. This is certainly a wider problem in the European studies literature. Erik Jones has argued recently that 'Disintegration is not integration in reverse. We cannot simply take the many different models or interpretations of what brought European countries together and run them backward to understand events as they are unfolding.' Consequently, he identified a clear need for a 'theory of disintegration'.⁵ However, despite this need for a new conceptual orientation of the scholarly work on the EU and, specifically, EU foreign, security, and defence studies, Brexit does not mean that the existing literature has become obsolete. On the contrary, a significant amount of the literature is relevant for understanding the foreign, security, and defence implications of Brexit on both the EU and the UK.

³ Keuleers, Floor, Daan Fonck and Stephan Keukeleire, 'Beyond EU navel-gazing: Taking stock of EU-centrism in the analysis of EU foreign policy', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 51, no. 3 (2016): 345-364.

⁴ Howorth, Jolyon and Anand Menon (eds.), *The European Union and National Defence Policy*, London: Routledge, 1997; Manners, Ian and Richard Whitman (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of European Union Member States*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001; Hill, Christopher (ed.), *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 1996.

⁵ Jones, Erik, 'Why we need a theory of disintegration', *UK in a Changing Europe Initiative*, 9 November 2016, <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/why-we-need-a-theory-of-disintegration/>.

The objective of this guide is to outline the type of literature that is potentially relevant in this regard. To this end, it has identified six particularly relevant research areas, each of which will be addressed in turn: strategy, policy-making, British contributions to EU policies, Europeanization, EU-NATO relations, and Brexit proper. Each section will explain why the literature is relevant for understanding the implications of Brexit and what its shortcomings are. It is based on and refers to the online [Brexit Reader on Security & Defence](#).

Strategy

Strategy and, more broadly, strategic thinking are crucial to understand the security and defence policies of both nation states and larger entities such as the European Union. They inform how these policies are made, which goals they have and what influences them. In the context of Brexit, the three key questions are:

- a) In how far does the EU inform British strategic thinking?
- b) Vice versa, in how far does the UK inform EU strategic thinking?
- c) To what extent do strategies and strategic thinking converge between the UK and the remaining EU member states?

Understanding the mutual influence of national and EU-wide strategies and strategic thinking can tell us to what extent the two are interdependent in strategic terms. Yet, in general terms, the literature on strategy reveals fairly little interaction between British and EU strategic thinking, in terms of both the actual strategies and the analyses of these strategies. The EU is almost absent as a strategic referent object for the UK. To what extent this is a reflection of reality or a mismatch between strategy and reality is, of course, another question. *International Affairs* has published recently (but still well before the British EU referendum on 23 June 2016) two articles on British grand strategy, which put British strategy clearly into a European context.⁶ Although they are merely two exceptions to the rule, they

⁶ Blagden, David, 'Global multipolarity, European security and implications for UK grand strategy: back to the future, once again', *International Affairs*, 91, no. 2 (2015): 333–350; Stokes, Doug and

suggest that the UK might be more firmly embedded in Europe and the EU than other studies on British strategy (implicitly) assume.

Similarly to the literature on British strategy, the existing studies on EU strategy ignore largely the role of Britain and/or British strategy (or any other EU member state for that matter). This kind of literature is mainly concerned with the EU as an international actor in its own right. More recently, several scholars have also discussed to what extent the EU possesses a 'grand strategy', even though none of the formal European strategies qualifies as such and the concept is usually associated with nation states.⁷ All this literature has offered useful insights into the EU as a strategic actor, but it has also remained narrowly focused on the EU as such (with the exception of the literature on European strategic culture). As in the case of the literature on British strategy, it has paid fairly little attention to the relation between EU strategies and the national strategies of the EU member states. In sum, there is a real mis-connect between the bodies of literature on British and EU strategy. This has only started to change with the EU Global Strategy, which has been adopted shortly after the British EU referendum.

The most promising research area on Britain, the EU, and strategy is 'strategic culture'. The literature in this area has explored systematically the European and British strategic synergies. More specifically, since the early 2000s, numerous scholars have examined in how far the national strategic thinking converges in Europe and creates, thus, a common European strategic culture.⁸ This body of

Richard Whitman, 'Transatlantic triage? European and UK "grand strategy" after the US rebalance to Asia', *International Affairs*, 89, no. 5 (2013): 1087-1107.

⁷ Howorth, Jolyon, 'The EU as a Global Actor: Grand Strategy for a Global Grand Bargain?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 48, no. 3 (2010): 455-474; Kornprobst, Markus, 'Building agreements upon agreements: The European Union and grand strategy', *European Journal of International Relations*, 21, no. 2 (2015): 267-292; Smith, Michael E., 'A liberal grand strategy in a realist world? Power, purpose and the EU's changing global role', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18, no. 2 (2011): 144-163.

⁸ Biehl, Heiko, Bastian Giegerich and Alexandra Jonas (eds.), *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013; Meyer, Christoph O., 'Convergence Towards a European Strategic Culture? A Constructivist Framework for Explaining Changing Norms', *European Journal of International Relations*, 11, no. 4 (2005): 523-549; Schmidt, Peter and Benjamin Zyla (eds.), Special issue: European Security Policy: Strategic Culture in Operation?, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32, no. 3 (2011).

literature offers the most in-depth insights into strategic divergence and overlaps among EU member states. The large majority of studies conclude that there is some degree of convergence, but few argue that there exists a European strategic culture as such. In the context of Brexit, the insights into European strategic culture(s) are important, as they highlight both a certain degree of embeddedness of British strategic thinking in wider European strategic thinking and the relative independence of the UK from the EU in strategic terms. The remaining question is if in strategic terms the UK is closer to EU member states or other types of international actors such as some of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Policy-making

The potential roles of the UK in European foreign, security, and defence policies after Brexit depend on how the EU works and functions in this area. Research over the last few decades has shown that EU policy-making is influenced by myriads of factors ranging from formal legal arrangements to unwritten norms and rules. Consequently, a thorough understanding of EU policy-making in foreign, security and defence affairs is necessary to explore the most realistic options for the UK after Brexit. This includes knowledge of the EU's legal framework, in particular as devised by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, of the main theories on how EU policy-making works in practice, and of informal policy-making arrangements among EU member states and third countries.⁹ In-depth knowledge in each of these three categories will allow to devise schemes for UK participation in EU foreign, security, and defence policy, which are both legally and politically feasible. In general, the literature shows that from a legal and procedural perspective the UK can cooperate with the remaining EU member states in a number of ways.¹⁰ In principle, this can be both effective and efficient, not least if it builds on the EU's previous experiences with

⁹ See *The Brexit Reader on Security & Defence*, <http://brexitreader.weebly.com/>.

¹⁰ Koutrakos, Panos, 'External Action: Common Commercial Policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Common Security and Defence Policy', in *The Oxford Handbook of European Union Law* (Ed. Anthony Arnall and Damian Chalmers), Oxford: Oxford University Press (2015): 271-299.

informal forms of cooperation. However, the theories of policy-making also show that it is necessary to treat this with caution in terms of political practicality.

Theories are helpful tools to simplify and understand better the complex realities of policy-making in EU foreign, security, and defence affairs. All strands of Political Science and International Relations theories have developed important insights in this area, including the different variants of realism, liberal institutionalism, and constructivism. The introductory article to a recent special issue in the *Journal of Common Market Studies* and several textbook chapters offer useful overviews of the current state of the theoretical debate.¹¹ Interestingly, many theory-based studies focus on the three largest EU member states, the so-called 'big 3' (Germany, France, and the United Kingdom). This includes not only realist studies,¹² but also constructivist¹³ and institutionalist¹⁴ analyses. Thus, there appears to be widespread agreement in the literature that the UK, together with France and Germany, has played a key role in European foreign, security, and defence policies. This is important to keep in mind while reflecting upon the UK's roles after Brexit. However, the concrete role of individual EU member states in EU foreign, security, and defence policies has not been examined systematically in the conceptual literature. Rather, key debates in the literature include, but are not limited to, issues of 'power' and how they influence the cooperation between EU member states, the role of 'institutions' in the policy-making process, and the development and influence of informal norms and rules.¹⁵

Institutional studies generally highlight the cumbersome, multi-layered policy-

¹¹ Bickerton et al., 'Security Co-operation beyond the Nation-State'; Giegerich, Bastian, 'Foreign and Security Policy: Civilian Power Europe and American Leadership', in *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Ed. Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack and Alasdair R. Young), Oxford: Oxford University Press (7th edition, 2015): 436-463; Menon, Anand, 'Defense Policy', in *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union* (Eds. Erik Jones, Anand Menon and Stephen Weatherill), Oxford: Oxford University Press (2012): 585-599.

¹² Jones, Seth G., *The Rise of European Security Cooperation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

¹³ Wagnsson, Charlotte, 'Divided power Europe: normative divergences among the EU "Big Three"', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17, no. 8 (2010): 1089-1105.

¹⁴ Mérand Frédéric, Stéphanie C. Hofmann and Bastien Irondele, 'Governance and state power: a network analysis of European security', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 49, no. 1 (2011): 121-147.

¹⁵ The debate about a European strategic culture has been included in the section on strategy.

making process in the EU and the need to take any decisions by consensus. Crucial decisions are often taken in national capitals, though the intense coordination efforts in Brussels have become increasingly important. Concerning Brexit, this means that the UK's collaboration with the EU after Brexit will make EU policy-making even more cumbersome in the sense of adding an external voice to the existing decision-making process. Yet, the intergovernmental nature of policy-making can also make the UK's integration as an external actor more straightforward, as it would not alter fundamentally the consensus-based decision-making process that already exists in the EU foreign, security, and defence policies. In this regard, the UK and the remaining EU member states can also build on the already well-established habit of working together, which is usually emphasized by the literature on informal norms and rules.¹⁶ Perhaps the most intriguing part of the theories on EU foreign, security, and defence policies in light of Brexit and the other key event of 2016 – the election of Donald Trump as US President – is the debate about in how far Europe unites to 'soft balance' against the United States.¹⁷ At this point, however, the 'soft balancing' hypothesis remains controversial.¹⁸ Furthermore, there exists also the possibility that European nations, including the EU's member states, re-nationalize their foreign, security, and defence policies and disintegrate further.¹⁹

Arguably the most useful aspect of the theories on EU foreign, security, and defence policies is the analysis of informal policy-making arrangements.²⁰ Since the inception of European foreign, security, and defence policies in the late 1970s, such informal arrangements have played a central role in the development of these policies. Due to their sensitive nature, EU member states have often avoided the

¹⁶ Smith, Michael E., *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

¹⁷ Posen, Barry R., 'European Defense and Security Policy: Response to Unipolarity?', *Security Studies*, 15, no. 2 (2006): 149-186.

¹⁸ Howorth, Jolyon and Anand Menon, 'Still Not Pushing Back Why the European Union Is Not Balancing the United States', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 53 issue: 5, page(s): 727-744.

¹⁹ Hill, Christopher, 'Renationalizing or Regrouping? EU Foreign Policy Since 11 September 2001', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42, no. 1 (2004): 143-163.

²⁰ Delreux, Tom and Stephan Keukeleire, 'Informal division of labour in EU foreign policy-making', *Journal of European Public Policy* (2016): <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1216151>; Giegerich, Bastian, and Eva Gross, 'Squaring the Circle? Leadership and Legitimacy in European Security and Defence Cooperation', *International Politics*, 43.4 (2006): 500-509.

restrictions of legally binding rules and the rigidity of formal institutions by cooperating outside the established EU structures. Precedents include the leadership role of so-called core groups of a small number of EU member states or the division of labour that has developed in certain issue areas between EU member states. One of the most well-known and arguably most successful example of informal cooperation are the E3 negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme. Once the UK leaves the formal structures of the EU after Brexit, informal cooperation between the UK and the remaining EU member states will certainly be crucial to maintain the dynamic of foreign, security, and defence cooperation in Europe.

British Contributions

The potential effects of Brexit in the area of foreign, security, and defence can hardly be understood without a thorough knowledge of what the UK has actually contributed so far to EU policies in terms of political support and capability commitment. Although few, if any, academic studies have addressed systematically the question of what the UK contributes specifically to EU foreign, security, and defence policies, the existing body of literature reveals at least indirectly how these contributions have manifested themselves in practice. The insights can largely be divided into two blocks: One suggests that Britain has been of considerable value for EU foreign, security, and defence cooperation due to its support for key policies such as EU enlargement, its 'special relationship' with the United States and initiatives to bring Europe closer to NATO, and attempts to further the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP²¹) in cooperation with France. As the relevant academic literature duly recognizes, the United Kingdom has been a prominent supporter of both enlargement and the EU-US strategic partnership. In the early 1990s, support for EU enlargement, i.e. the incorporation of the former communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe, was a shared priority among

²¹ Before the entry into force of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the CSDP was known as ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy).

British foreign policy elites. Under the catchphrase ‘wider, rather than deeper’ the UK undertook considerable efforts to promote the expansion of the EU – with all the costs and benefits associated with this policy. Likewise, the literature on transatlantic relations highlights – explicitly or implicitly - the consequences of the UK’s close relationship to the United States and NATO for the EU’s ties with the United States. Furthermore, the literature on EU military cooperation shows how the UK has acted as a ‘pioneer’ in defence matters, especially in the wake of the 1998 Anglo-French Saint-Malo declaration, which kick-started EU defence cooperation.²²

By contrast, a second body of insights suggests that the influence of the UK in the area of CSDP and, more broadly, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has been either minimal or even negative. It highlights, in particular, more recent British attempts to block permanent military structures in the EU. The literature on transatlantic relations also points out the tensions created in the EU by the UK’s special relationship with the United States as well as the tensions between US- and EU-focused priorities in British foreign, security, and defence policies. This was particularly acute in the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to deep divisions among EU member states, not least between the UK, on the one hand, and France and Germany, on the other.²³

A major gap in the literature on British contributions is the lack of systematic analyses of the capabilities in terms of personnel, military hardware, or logistics that the UK has contributed in the context of European security and defence cooperation. Most studies have been conducted by the International Institute for

²² Biscop, Sven, ‘The UK and European Defence: Leading or Leaving?’, *International Affairs*, 88, no. 6, (2012): 587–603; Jones, Ben, ‘Franco-British military cooperation: a new engine for European defence?’, European Union Institute for Security Studies, *Occasional Paper*, 88 (2011): http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/op88--Franco-British_military_cooperation--a_new_engine_for_European_defence.pdf; Smith, Karen E., *The making of EU foreign policy: the case of Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave (2nd ed., 2004).

²³ Forsberg, Tuomas and Graeme Herd, ‘Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship’, *Chatham House Papers*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006; Wallace, William and Tim Oliver, ‘A Bridge too far: The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship’, in *Atlantic Alliance under Stress* (Ed. David M. Andrews), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005): 152-176.

Security Studies.²⁴ There are even fewer studies on intelligence capabilities, reflecting arguably the low degree of European cooperation in this area. A lot of the studies are also slightly outdated and/or do not focus specifically on the EU. In fact, official government publications remain a key source in the area of capabilities, e.g. the 2015 Ministry of Defence policy paper on '[2010 to 2015 government policy: international defence commitments](#)'.

Europeanization

During the process of European integration, scholars have realized that national and EU-level policies have become increasingly intertwined. In other words, national policies have been carried out increasingly with a European dimension attached to them. The academic concept to capture this phenomenon is Europeanisation. In the case of an EU member state leaving the Union, it is important to be aware of the existence of Europeanisation, as it might affect the separation process and the future relationship between the EU and its former member state. The Europeanisation of UK policy, i.e. the penetration of British systems of governance through the dual processes of 'uploading' and 'downloading' between the British and European levels has been addressed in the scholarly literature in numerous ways. While some scholars stress converging policy contents as well as institutional changes meant to increase the UK's relationship with and its influence in the EU, others underline that Whitehall has maintained a sceptical attitude towards EU foreign, security, defence policies and sought to resist the latter's influence on UK positions and activities.²⁵ More specifically, in light of the UK's close cooperation with the United States, its Atlanticist orientation, and its emphasis on national

²⁴ Giegerich, Bastian, and Alexander Nicoll, 'European Military Capabilities: Building Armed Forces for Modern Operations', *IISS Strategic Dossier*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008: <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/strategic%20dossiers/issues/european-military-capabilities--building-armed-forces-for-modern-operations-bf44>.

²⁵ Aktipis, Michael and Tim Oliver, 'Europeanization and British foreign policy', in *National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanization* (Eds. Reuben Wong and Christopher Hill), Abingdon: Routledge, 2012: 72-92; Bulmer, Simon and Martin Burch, *The Europeanisation of Whitehall: UK Central Government and the European Union*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009; Schmidt, Vivien A., 'Adapting to Europe: Is it Harder for Britain?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 8, no. 1 (2006): 15-33.

autonomy, British foreign policy elites are often seen as reluctant towards closer cooperation in the EU, and sceptical of any developments that did not fall into the 'uploading' category. Among the suggested reasons for this outcome are geopolitical considerations, institutional blockages, and a Eurosceptic population. After initial moves towards greater cooperation, British policy-makers have resisted further Europeanisation of defence and security policies even more strongly than in other policy areas. Some traces of Europeanisation can be found nonetheless, as the UK has turned increasingly to Europe towards the second decade of the 21st century. As a key work on the subject in this area concludes,

Tension remains (...) as to whether the UK will come to accept further Europeanization. The UK is apprehensive about the EU becoming some form of lodestar to which allies and international organizations turn while ignoring Member States themselves. This may seem implausible for a Member State that, along with France and Germany, drives forward and largely defines the EU's foreign and defence policies. It must not be overlooked, however, that the ever-present spectre haunting British decision makers is that of the country's former independent greatness, maintained in the last century by standing shoulder to shoulder with American presidents.²⁶

Whether and how Europeanisation will continue after Brexit is even more questionable, as the tools, forums, and mechanisms which have been crucial in this context so far are likely to undergo a number of changes once the UK is no longer a regular member of the EU. Yet, even the UK's modest degree of Europeanisation to this date might still be a factor in the type of relationship the UK establishes with the EU after Brexit.

'We'll always have NATO'? EU-NATO Cooperation

Due to its self-perception as a 'transatlantic bridge', the UK has traditionally been one of the staunchest supporters of a close relationship with NATO while other member states sought to push the EU towards the primary place in providing military security in Europe. Brexit hence raises questions about the future development of the EU-NATO relationship and about the extent to which the latter

²⁶ Aktipis and Oliver, 'Europeanization and British foreign policy', 92.

will be characterized by coordination, cooperation, or competition. The formative phases of post-Cold War ESDP and NATO strategies were characterised by an enlargement of institutional bodies and by an increasing convergence with respect to their respective aims and scope. In the new millennium, terrorist attacks and the financial crisis further contributed to greater cooperation between the two institutions. Much of the scholarly literature has therefore underlined successes in the cooperation between NATO and EU institutions within the C/ESDP framework. Especially the ground-breaking 2002 'Berlin Plus agreements' has been highlighted in this respect. Berlin Plus is essentially about the use of existing NATO assets by the EU if NATO as a whole does not get involved. So, it does not require the development of independent European capabilities that already exist in NATO, especially of an independent EU operational headquarters. The two organizations have also established relations at the political and strategic level (e.g. the consultations between the North Atlantic Council, NATO's key decision-making body, and the Political and Security Committee (PSC), its EU counterpart in security affairs).²⁷

Despite the cooperation and coordination that exist between the EU and NATO, some authors see the relationship between the two mainly in terms of competition, stressing that C/ESDP and NATO cover the same political areas and compete for political space, influence, and resources.²⁸ Although there is a general consensus on the potential usefulness of combining the strengths of each organization (NATO's military credibility and the EU's broad range of soft power instruments), cooperation between the two has been very limited in practical terms. Not least the Berlin Plus agreements to allow the EU to use NATO military assets has been used very rarely. The key problem in this regard is the unresolved conflict between Cyprus (an EU but not a NATO member) and Turkey (a NATO but not an EU member), which basically blocks mutually the use of the Berlin Plus arrangements.

²⁷ Reichard, Martin, *The EU-NATO Relationship: A legal and political perspective*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006; Schleich, Caja, 'NATO and EU in conflict regulation: interlocking institutions and division of labour', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 12, no. 2 (2014): 182-205.

²⁸ Howorth, Jolyon, 'NATO and ESDP: Institutional Complexities and Political Realities', *Politique Etrangère*, no. 5 (2009): 95-106; Ojanen, Hanna, 'The EU and NATO: Two Competing Models for a Common Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44, no. 1 (2006): 57-76.

Arguably, other states are not always unhappy with this situation. There is still a subliminal conflict between ‘Atlanticist’ countries, which give preference to NATO and transatlantic relations, and ‘Europeanist’ countries, which prefer an independent EU as a European security actor. Moreover, the lack of deeper integration at the political level has created serious problems at the operational and tactical level. This includes key activities such as the coordination of missions or the sharing of information and intelligence. A common problem has been the duplication of efforts.

Thus, the future key question is if Brexit will strengthen the coordination or the competition between NATO and the EU. As shown above, the research in this area has demonstrated that intense cooperation between the two organizations is possible and would have clear benefits, not only for the organizations but also for their member states. Yet, it has also clearly outlined the possibility of competition and mutual blockages due to political conflicts.

Brexit Research: Where is it heading?

Before and after the referendum on Britain’s membership in the European Union, publications on the consequences of Brexit have mushroomed in a wide variety of media outlets. Depending on the author(s)’ supportive or sceptical stance on Brexit, they have outlined varied security and defence scenarios for both Britain and the EU in a post-Brexit world, ranging from an improved British security environment once the country ‘takes back control’ to new security threats looming after Brexit. There is no clear consensus on the security and defence implications of Brexit emerging. Arguably, this is different in the academic literature. Although many relevant peer-reviewed journals have not yet published research articles on security, defence, and Brexit, e.g. the *Journal of Common Market Studies* or the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, a few European journals in the area of security and defence have included research articles by respected scholars and practitioners in the field in their recent issues, especially those journals with a clear policy focus

such as *International Affairs*, *Survival*, and the *RUSI Journal*.²⁹ These articles cover a wide variety of themes, but they share at least two general assessments: On the one hand, they usually argue that Brexit will not have major negative security and defence repercussions, especially in the short term. Richard Whitman argued, for example, ‘that security and defence is an area in which the impact of a vote to leave the EU would be relatively marginal. Because cooperation in this area is intergovernmental, disentangling the UK would be relatively straightforward. And because of the limited impact that EU policies have achieved in this area, it is an open question as to whether Britain’s global role would suffer unduly as a result’.³⁰ On the other hand, they are also sceptical about any net security benefit for either Britain or the EU after Brexit. As Nigel Inkster concluded, ‘it is hard to identify any significant security advantage that the UK would derive from leaving the EU’.³¹ At the same time many caution against the unintended negative consequences, in particular in the long term.

In general, however, this kind of literature is still in its infancy and it is difficult to predict how it will develop during the next couple of months and years. After the referendum on 23 June, a couple of studies have developed scenarios and possible steps forward. These studies tend to advocate pragmatic measures that would keep post-Brexit security and defence arrangements in Europe as close as possible to the current status quo. They generally share the assumption that UK-EU cooperation based on the existing intergovernmental models developed in C/ESDP and CFSP are the best option to preserve both national and European security. In this context, two publications are noteworthy. First, RUSI and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in

²⁹ Oliver, Tim and Michael John Williams, ‘Special relationships in flux: Brexit and the future of the US–EU and US–UK relationships’, *International Affairs*, 92, no. 3 (May 2016): 509–529; Uttley, Matthew R. H. and Benedict Wilkinson, ‘A spin of the wheel? Defence procurement and defence industries in the Brexit debates’, *International Affairs*, 92, no. 3 (May 2016): 569–586; Whitman, Richard G., ‘Brexit or Bremain: What Future for the UK’s European Diplomatic Strategy?’, *International Affairs*, 92, no. 3 (May 2016): 509–529; Freedman, Lawrence, ‘Brexit and the Law of Unintended Consequences’, *Survival*, 58, no. 3 (May 2016): 7–12; Heisbourg, François, ‘Brexit and European Security’, *Survival*, 58, no. 3 (May 2016): 13–22; Simón, Luis, ‘Britain, the European Union and the Future of Europe: A Geostrategic Perspective’, *The RUSI Journal*, 160, no. 5 (3 September 2015): 16–23.

³⁰ Whitman, Richard G., ‘The UK and EU Foreign and Security Policy: An Optional Extra’, *The Political Quarterly*, 87, no. 2 (2016): 254.

³¹ Inkster, Nigel, ‘Brexit, Intelligence and Terrorism’, *Survival*, 58, no. 3 (May 2016): 29.

Germany have published a joint report, which tries to extrapolate the security and defence implications of Brexit by examining in detail Britain's contributions to EU security and defence policies.³² In this sense, this report is a first attempt to address some of the shortcomings that were identified in the existing academic literature above. Second, Richard Whitman has developed three main models of EU-UK relations in matters of security and defence after Brexit, namely an integrated, associated or detached relationship.³³ The study draws heavily on the analysis of the existing relationship between the UK and the EU and of the relationship between the EU and selected non-member states. So, it is another important step towards filling some of the research gaps outlined above.

Conclusions

At first sight, the abundant academic literature on European foreign, security, and defence policies appears to be only marginally relevant for the analysis of the security and defence implications of Brexit. After all, Brexit – or more generally a member state leaving the EU – has not been a factor in academic studies until very recently. Lamentable as that may be, it is hardly surprising, as scholars tend to work on the basis of observable phenomena rather than hypothetical events in a distant future. What is lamentable is the lack of systematic analysis of the UK's role in EU foreign, security, and defence policies. Although there are exceptions, e.g. the studies on Europeanization, the literature does not offer a coherent picture of the UK's relationship with and contribution to the EU – and vice versa. In other words, the literature does not offer a ready-made response to what the security and defence implications of Brexit might be. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, this guide has

³² Lain, Sarah and Veerle Nouwens, *The consequences of Brexit for European security and defence*, Research Paper prepared for FES Berlin workshop on 1st December 2016, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Royal United Service Institute, <http://www.feslondon.org.uk/cms/files/fes/css/FES%20RUSI%20Research%20Paper%20Final%202016%2012%2012.pdf>.

³³ Whitman, Richard, 'The UK and EU foreign, security and defence policy after Brexit: integrated, associated or detached?', *National Institute Economic Review*, 238 (Nov. 2016): <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-UK-and-EU-foreign-security-and-defence-policy-after-Brexit.pdf>.

also argued that there are different areas, where the existing research offers important insights into the repercussions of Brexit, in particular the literature on:

- The convergence of strategic cultures among European nation states;
- The importance of informal groups and decision-making processes;
- The UK's contribution to some, though by no means all, EU foreign, security, and defence policy developments;
- The intricate relationship between NATO, the EU, and their member states.

All these areas require further analysis regarding their relevance for the understanding of the implications of Brexit. Recently, the emerging literature on Brexit has started to take these issues into consideration, but there is still a lot of work ahead.

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