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## Part III

# Nordic handling of the broader dimensions of security in an EU setting

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## **Editor's remarks**

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One of the more paradoxical aspects of the Nordic countries' relationship with the European Security and Defence Policy is the eagerness all five of them have shown to take part in the 'harder'—that is, operational—elements of the new European defence programme, while Nordic policies in general are best known in Europe for their 'softer' qualities—'unselfish, moral, multilateralist and internationalist', as Maria Strömviik puts it in her chapter. One way to resolve the contradiction is to interpret the Nordic countries' activism in the ESDP as a new manifestation of their long-standing support for international peacekeeping, in which they have often shown considerable toughness under pressure. Another is to point out that, ever since the agenda-setting debates of 1998–89, the Nordic members of the European Union have done what they can to 'soften' the profile of the ESDP overall: by keeping it focused on conflict management rather than self-defence, by insisting that civilian capabilities for intervention be developed in step with military ones and by supporting the three non-military missions that were actually launched in the ESDP's formative years. Success in these aims is what has kept compliance with EU defence ambitions a relatively 'painless' operation—so far—for the majority of Nordic governments.

This part of the volume opens with a chapter by Strömviik that tells these first, relatively straightforward parts of the story in more detail. She, and the other authors, also cite some well-known Nordic initiatives that fall in the broader ambit of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy: Finland's 'Northern Dimension' programme for stabilization and joint development planning with Russia, and the Swedish initiative in 2003 to start working on the EU's first-ever strategy against weapons of mass destruction (WMD). There are, however, not many more examples that they can find from Denmark's nearly 32 years and Finland's and Sweden's 10 years of EU membership—and not only because the subject of Nordic involvement in EU security policy has thus far been distinctly under-researched. All six authors of this part of the volume end up in their different ways by asking, or illuminating, the same question: why have the EU's Nordic members not done more to harness the possibilities of their membership, with or without the non-EU Nordics in support, for promoting the broader causes of peace, security and non-zero-sum internationalism that are supposed to be so close to their hearts?

Even in the area of civilian intervention capability, Strömviik argues, Finland and Sweden could have done more to insist on coordination and policy coherence between civilian, military and other EU inputs to a given crisis of concern to Europe. They could have pressed harder for adequate collective funding of ESDP interventions. They could have driven the Union harder to give more than just lip service to conflict prevention and pushed a more idealistic agenda on the larger issues of global security governance. Tarja Väyrynen in her chapter also sees a deficit in realistic and operational conflict prevention work. However, she argues principally that the Nordic countries should champion a more systematic and professional use of mediation as an EU peace-making (and peace-preserving) technique, preferably learning from the Norwegian experience of combining official and 'second-track' elements.

The plot gets more tangled with Nicholas Marsh's and Lars van Dassen and Anna Wetter's chapters dealing with conventional disarmament (especially small arms and light weapons, SALW) and nuclear issues, respectively. Disarmament in all its aspects is a prime example of a Nordic cause that can be both idealistic and self-interested at the same time: yet from the same cause—as van Dassen and Wetter show—quite different policy consequences and nuclear 'styles' have flowed in the cases of Denmark and Norway, or Finland and Sweden, respectively. Only in the case of practical measures for destruction of WMD materials in regions adjoining the Nordic region do these four countries' policies develop in parallel, and sometimes even in collaboration. As for SALW, Marsh's analysis of a plethora of Nordic national initiatives since 2002 shows that any given Nordic country was twice as likely to take an SALW initiative jointly with Canada, the Netherlands or Switzerland during this time as it was with a Nordic neighbour, and that Nordic donors often directed their support to other institutions—such as the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)—or to globally active non-governmental organizations, rather than to or through the European Union.

Last but not least, the chapters by Magnus Ekengren and Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen investigate the interface between EU policies on external and internal ('homeland') security, and they pinpoint the latter as a still inchoate but important and in many ways fascinating growth area. On the face of it, a comprehensive approach to security that does justice to all parts of the spectrum from traditional and military to 'human' security dimensions is a very Nordic kind of construct, and it is certainly something that Nordic states aim at in the theory and practice of their contributions to peace-building abroad. As regards their own territory, however, Nordic governments—with Denmark increasingly an exception—still tend to draw hard lines between the military tools to be used against a foreign aggressor and the handling of 'new' or 'societal' threats. On the latter, their approach is characterized by libertarian values and the minimizing of force. As Ekengren shows in detail, all these governments are being obliged to re-examine the role of the armed forces in internal security, but they are moving at different speeds and towards diverging solutions. The Nordic countries seem unlikely, therefore, to play the role either of a pre-harmonized 'core' or of a 'ginger group' in the EU's collective efforts to build internal-security policies and capacities for the whole European region. Some, especially from the Nordic region, might argue that it is proper for them to play instead a role of brake upon the anti-terrorist zeal that might drive some other Europeans into excessive curbing of liberties, closing of borders and so on. Others might contend that, given the particular structure of potential non-military threats in the Nordic countries' own region, any energy that these governments are able to expend on transnational coordination of policies and readiness measures would better be deployed in a 'Nordic-Baltic' framework including, where appropriate, Russia.

The question remains of why 'Nordic values' have not left more of a stamp across the range of EU security-related policies, especially since the Nordic region accounted for 3 of the 15 members from 1995—and given the frequent keenness of Norway to associate itself with benign EU actions from outside. Three sets of hypotheses may be mentioned here for the reader to reflect on and to test when reading the detailed materials in this part. The first, for which the authors here provide much *prima facie* evidence, is that Nordic policies and interests are simply not similar enough from country to country and from field to field. During the cold war it was natural to play up

common values to offset the strategic segregation of the Nordic region's five states, but as the countries realized their growing freedom of choice in the 1990s there was room both to acknowledge inherent (e.g., geo-strategic) differences and to explore divergent new paths. On first joining the EU, Finland and Sweden made a conscious effort to avoid any impression of 'ganging up' from the north. Since then, Nordic responses to new challenges have had both convergent and divergent features, with Denmark particularly often—at least in the areas covered by this part of the volume—playing a *sui generis* role. It appears, overall, that Nordic establishments' common or coincident interest in seizing the opportunities offered by ESDP capabilities programmes and operations have not been matched by a similar gathering around any prominent security-policy cause, at least within the EU framework as such (see below).

A second hypothesis is that the EU's own power system has effectively discouraged the Nordic countries from attempting security-policy initiatives and would have frustrated them, if made. Not only are two-fifths of the Nordic community outside the Union, but two of the nations inside are recent newcomers, none of them is a large power by EU standards, and none has really large military (or other security) resources. If a particular Nordic country had a vital interest in some security issue, therefore, it might do better tactically—even if the policies of the other Nordic countries were entirely compatible—to seek a larger partner or more diverse coalition for promoting it. In actual cases where Nordic EU members chose rather to go it alone, they have run the risk of seeing their initiatives fizzle out—as arguably has now happened to Finland's 'Northern Dimension'—or being steered by larger powers in other, less authentically Nordic directions (as van Dassen and Wetter suggest happened with the WMD Strategy of 2003). Such practical considerations might well lead Nordic policy makers, when they have a good idea on peace and security to offer either nationally or collectively, to look for a forum where they have a historically better established profile—such as the UN—or where they are less likely to be treated as 'small fish in a big pool'. (It is interesting here to recall Jesper Christensen's argument in part II of this volume that the Nordic countries could only create an influential new paradigm in European defence by a kind of 'flight forward', introducing innovations for which they would have to pay themselves with major breaks in tradition.)

There may, however—and this is the third hypothesis—be other features of the EU framework that affect Nordic choices, aside from its tendency to cramp the ambitions of medium to small member states. At least two levels of ambivalence might be detected in Nordic governments', and indeed societies', approaches to developing the wider security role of the Union. One lies in the recurrent Nordic concern to protect the roles of other institutions—the UN or the OSCE as in the case of SALW and other humanitarian topics, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Atlantic relationship generally in the field of 'hard' conflict management as well as of 'hard' defence. The second and more basic confusion is over whether the EU should be seen, generally speaking, as a 'force for good' in security from the Nordic viewpoint or for the world in general. Is the EU's relatively 'soft' profile really as congenial to the Nordic mind as it would seem? Or is it attributed by at least some Nordic countries—as Strömviik hints—to the Union's relatively powerless and divided nature, fuelling an abiding prejudice that (the EU part of) Brussels is not as serious about defence as all good Nordic countries should be? Conversely, if the EU's growing strategic influence and potential are stressed, should Nordic countries welcome this as a useful new 'counter-balance' to Russia and the USA? Or does it present more of a threat to their

own individuality and to the 'clean hands' strand of their global policies? Is Eken-gren's vision of the EU as the future security provider against society's most intimate vulnerabilities one that the notoriously Euro-sceptic majority in Sweden can ever really be expected to embrace?

The best message to take away from this part of the volume is probably that not enough is known to answer any of these questions yet, so the fields opened up by all six chapters would be excellent ones for further research. It is safe to say that the Nordic countries' security policies are being moulded, directly and indirectly, by the EU experience in ways that go far beyond their responses to the ESDP itself. It is beyond doubt that some influences have flowed the other way from Nordic capitals, not excluding those of the non-NATO members, into the still fluid and malleable corpus of EU security policy. The precise balance of the two processes would be perilous to draw at this stage: but a sentence from van Dassen and Wetter's chapter deserves to be cited as the last word: 'Neither large nor small states in the European Union can ultimately escape from the logic that the strengthening of common positions is bought at the price of national particularities.'