

**EUROPEANIZATION  
WITHOUT EUROPEAN UNION ?  
FRENCH MILITARY REFORMS 1991-1996**

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Paper delivered to the ECSA Seventh Biennial International Conference  
May 31 – June 2, 2001 Madison,

Panel 1B : European Integration and Domestic Reforms

Comments are very welcome

During the last ten years, France has thoroughly modified its military policy. Its armed forces have experienced a deep restructuration following at first a progressive movement of gradual adjustments during the first half of the nineties. Then, in 1996, a few months after his election, the new president Jacques Chirac undertook a thorough reform of the armed forces, a « revolution », in which the complete professionalization of the army and the relinquishment of the draft is the main line. The nuclear arsenal has also been changed while the place of nuclear deterrence is considerably reconsidered, now relegated to a position of secondary importance to the benefit of foreign military interventions and of projection which henceforth compose the heart of the defense policy. This evolution corresponds to a change of paradigm of the French military policy (Mc Kenna 1997).

According to the French authorities, these changes are necessary in the perspective of the development of a European defense which is one of the main targets of the French military policy. The 1996 reform is notably presented as a response to the challenges linked to European integration. Jacques Chirac thus declared : « This European ambition affects, first and foremost, our conventional forces. It is equally present in our nuclear deterrence and in the restructuring of our armament industry » (Chirac 1996). All official speeches and documents highlight the European dimension of the reforms. Jolyon Howorth, a British specialist of French defense policy, concludes with reason : « In France, the radical defense reforms announced in February 1996 were, as presaged in the *Livre Blanc* of 1994, predicated quite explicitly on the imperatives of Europeanization » (Howorth 1997a).

Nevertheless the question of the europeanization of the military policy raises a strong paradox. Not only from the European point of view is defense the least integrated of all public policies : in 1996 it is still indecent to talk of a common defense policy ; there are no institutions dealing with military issues at European level ; defense issues remains governed by a strict intergovernementalism (Surjsen 1998). Furthermore from a national point of view, since 1958 and the Gaullist legacy, France has implemented, the most independent and the most nationalist of military policies within the European Union, based on the sacred principle of strategic autonomy (Yost 1994 ; Gordon 1993). This paradox raises first an empirical puzzle concerning the reality and the importance of the europeanization of the French military policy. To what extent is there a europeanization of the French military policy ? How has the substance of French military policy been affected by European integration ? Did European integration make any difference as regards to French reforms ? Or is europeanization nothing more than a rhetorical justification in order to legitimate the reforms ? Is it an alibi to hide the perpetuation of a national style / orientation for the French traditional military policy ?

But the paradox raised by the europeanization of the French military policy is also theoretical. Is there any europeanization of a policy which is actually not within the scope of the European Union ? Can one truly talk of europeanization as regards the defense realm ? How can europeanization be understood and conceptualized in that particular area ?

In order to sort out both of these puzzles, I will first focus on the concept of europeanization and on the problems raised by its use in the military domain. The second part discusses the thesis of europeanization as an alibi or an illusion. The third part analyzes the tendency to europeanization in the French military policy and clarify its mechanisms.

## **Europeanization and military policy : reconciling the irreconcilable ?**

### **What is at stake :**

At first glance, addressing the question of a state's change in its military policy from the angle of europeanization seems like attempting the impossible : "irrelevant" would call it a large number of specialists in military policy and in europeanization. Nevertheless, it is established that the European dimension is one of the key factors taken into account by the member states when defining their military policy. This issue is mostly tackled through the problematic of alliances a standard question of the defense policy - and of the creation of international institutions : in the European context, the Western European Union and its relations with NATO dominates the literature. The French policy towards NATO and WEU is indeed substantially documented (Menon 2000). Within the more specific scope of European integration, author's attention mainly focuses on institutional issues regarding Common Foreign and Security Policy, and henceforth on European Security and Defense Policy. It is here necessary to specify what I mean by military policy : it is the decision-making process which that aims at defining, putting in place and using the armed forces.

In the midst of this abundant literature, the impact of European integration on the military policy of France or of any other member state remains at the bottom of the list. The collective work directed by Anand Menon and Jolyon Howorth is generally thought of as the exception (Howorth and Menon 1997)<sup>1</sup>. This instance shows that military policy is also an important stake and particularly rich research field to discuss the problematic of europeanization.

### **Defining europeanization :**

The question of europeanization is one of the richest amongst theoretical European integration issues. Long neglected, it is now at the heart of most studies on the European Union and one of the main guidelines for collective research projects<sup>2</sup> such as : ARENA, CNRS (*L'identité européenne en Question*), Forum of the Center Robert Schuman, ECSR (*One Europe or Several ?*) ...

The concept of europeanization remains difficult to delimit despite numerous attempts to define it. Indeed, a distinction must be made between a bottom-up approach and a top-down approach (Risse and Börzel 2000). In the first case, the focus is on the process of integration itself and on the creation of common institutions and policies which contribute to the emergence of a European polity. Neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and multi-level governance follow this approach. Other researchers insist on the impact of European Union on national policies and politics. Risse et Börzel favor this second approach, even though their definition of europeanization is curiously very bottom-up : « we define europeanization as the emergence and development at the European level of a distinct political system, a set of political institutions that formalizes and routinizes interactions among the actors, and the growth of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative rules » (Risse and Börzel 200).

This definition is rightly criticized by Radaelli who - out of conceptual precision - clearly distinguishes European integration, the construction of the European Union and europeanization « which has something to do with the penetration of the European dimension

<sup>1</sup> This question nevertheless benefits by some renewal which benefits more to the Foreign policy than to the security policy (Glarbo 1998 ; Smith 2000).

in national arenas of politics and policies ». Grounding his analysis on Ladrech (Ladrech 1994), Radaelli puts forward a definition more consistent with a bottom-up lens : « a set of processes through which the European Union political, social and economic dynamics become part of the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures and public policies » (Radaelli 2000).

This interpretation of europeanization nevertheless appears to be too restrictive. According to this interpretation, Europeanization is limited to the realms which are subject to specific treatment by the European Union. It thus exclusively concerns areas where common institutions, rules and policies exist. Radaelli is clear on this point when he refers to the distinction between ontological and postontological perspectives (Caporaso 1996) : « Europeanization would not exist without European integration » (Radaelli 2000). Europeanization can only be a process posterior to integration. Consequently, questioning europeanization in a non-integrated realm seems incongruous. In the military sector, europeanization could be understood only in a very loose way since there is no European institutions sufficiently strong to influence directly the national defense policy-making. In the case of France, europeanization means nothing more than a correlation between historical developments across Europe and domestic developments through a closer interdependence between France and its European partners because of bilateral relations (Howorth 1997b).

Radaelli's definition is incomplete in the sense that it underestimates the fact that integration in one realm can have significant effects for a member state in another realm. The Single Market and the principle of free movement of goods and persons is not without incidence on national security policy (Bigo 1996) or in arms procurement (Hayward 1994). This strict delimitation between two successive phases, i.e. europeanization after integration, is too static. If, from a theoretical point of view, it is relevant, it is however too rigid to express the empirical reality. It does not sufficiently take into account the dynamic of europeanization and integration. Signs of europeanization can take place during the integration process, which can be very progressive. The links between europeanization and integration are more dialectical than unidirectional. The specific example of the military policy is, in this respect, very instructive. The movement towards integration in the Defense realm already has an impact during the early process and not only once proper European institutions and a Common Foreign and Security Policy come to exist. It is notably true for countries which intend to play a decisive part in the emergence of a European defense, such as France. In other words the military policy could be europeanized through two different channels : , the impact of the general political integration and that of the sector integration in progress in the Defense field. This is why it could be appropriate to amend Radaelli's definition so as to take into account the interactions between integration and europeanization: « A set of processes through which the European integration political, social and economic dynamics become part of the logic of domestic discourses, identities, public structures and public policies »

### **The scope of europeanization :**

Europeanization implies a process of change. The crucial point is the need for member states to adapt their own institutions, rules, collective understandings and policies to the institutions, rules, collective understandings and policies adopted or prescribed at the European level. Europeanization is about the discrepancy between European and domestic policies, processes, and institutions. The « goodness of fit » (Green-Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001) between the European level and the domestic level determines the degree of pressure for adaptation generated by Europeanization on the member states. The greater the

discrepancy between European and domestic processes, policies, and institutions, the greater the adaptational pressure and the europeanization will be. Europeanization is a process of change at the domestic level in which member states adapt their processes, policies, and institutions to new practices, norms, rules, and procedures resulting from the emergence of a European system of governance (Olsen 1996, 1997).

Europeanization can lead to four types of domestic changes (Radaelli 2000, Risse and Börzel 2000, Héritier and Knill 2000):

**Absorption:** member states are able to readjust their institutions or policies by incorporating European pressures without substantially modifying their existing processes, policies, and institutions (Héritier 1998). The degree of domestic change is low. Intuitively, the military policy which is not submitted to a strong integration at the European level, without institutions able to compel member states and without a European model, should fall at the most within this category.

**Accommodation:** member states accommodate Europeanization pressure by adapting existing processes, policies and institutions without changing their essential features and « patching up» new policies and institutions onto existing ones without changing the latter (Héritier 2001). The degree of domestic change is modest.

**Transformation:** member states replace existing policies, processes, and institutions by different ones, or they alter existing ones to the extent that their essential features and/or the underlying collective understandings are fundamentally changed. The degree of domestic change is high (Risse et Börzel 2000).

**Resistance :** This is the negative version of europeanization, which can take the form of inertia (delay, partial implementation...). Carried to extremes, europeanization can entail a national retrenchment position against European trends. Between 1991 and 1995, there was a strong plausibility that France would follow that course regarding its military policy.

Europeanization can affect all the policy fields. We can distinguish the impact of European integration on political and institutional order from its impact on public policies. As far as the political system is concerned, europeanization can affect public administrations (Page and Wouters 1995), intergovernmental relations, relations between the executive and the legislative powers (Andersen et Burns 1996, Dyson and Featherstone 1999), policy-making (Lequesne 1993, Cole and Drake 2000), legal structure (Weiler 1994), representation and mobilization structures of societal interest (Chabanet 2001), electoral and party politic, national identities (Checkel 2001, Marcussen et al 1999). Considering the close links between foreign and defense policy and the definition of national identity, this last aspect is of real importance as regards military policy (Aggestham 1999, Surjsen 2001). In the public policy sphere, europeanization can affect policy-making and policy style, actors and institutions, instruments, cognitive and normative structures (Surel 2001) policy discourses (Schmidt 1997).

### **Paths of europeanization :**

Europeanization can follow three main paths : institutional compliance or coercion, change in domestic opportunity structures, framing cognitive and normative structures (Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999, Radaelli 2000). Each path is more or less correlated with a degree of integration. When the policy domain is the most integrated, i.e., when a European model is clearly defined, when it is based on European legal sources and when adaptation by members states can be controlled and sanctioned by European institutions, europeanization is backed-up by institutional compliance. The second case concerns more specifically « market-shaping »

policies, a kind of negative integration which removes barriers to trade and to investment but without predicating how the market activities should be organized. European legislation modifies the national structures of opportunities.

There is no doubt that military policy does not fit either of these two paths of europeanization. The lack of a strong European institutional model excludes compliance. Besides, the European level is not able to alter significantly the domestic opportunity structures. So in order to analyze the europeanization path of military policy, one must focus on framing processes. In the third path, « framing », europeanization follows a cognitive logic by changing the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors. According to Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999), such a europeanization implies a high degree of supportive mobilization for domestic reforms. In the specific case of military policy, mobilization is less important in so far as public policy is dominated by the executive power. This preeminence of the executive is particularly strong in France (Cohen 1994). This is why attention must be essentially devoted to the high political, administrative and military officials who actually "make" the military policy (Irondelle, forthcoming).

### **Methodology :**

In order to evaluate the impact of European integration, it is necessary to pay attention to the content of French military policy, to its organizational changes, in the choice of its instruments, in the allocation of its resources, in the discourses (notably those about the goals), in the duties devoted to the armed forces. This approach, however, raises the problem of the discrepancy that might exist between the rhetoric of official discourse and the actual policy (Menon 1997a). However, this criticism must be qualified. The importance of argumentation in public policy must be taken into account (Majone 1989). More important, such an approach is limited to correlational arguments between European developments and domestic changes (Checkel 2000). Europeanization is reduced to a historical correlation between developments at the European and national levels.

To avoid both of these dangers, one possibility consists in focusing on the decision-making process of domestic reforms in order to evaluate the impact of European integration. Where one seeks to investigate and explain the decision process, one would employ the "process-tracing procedure". The purpose of this article is to analyse the military reforms introduced in France since 1991, particularly the 1994 *Livre blanc sur la défense* (White paper on defense). Specific attention will be devoted to the radical reforms announced by President Chirac in February 1996. Apart from secondary sources (press and academic literature) and the accessible official documents, this article is based on numerous interviews<sup>3</sup> with officials participating in these decision-making processes and to the consultation of some unpublished documents.

Before demonstrating the weight of europeanization and attempting to grasp its mechanisms, it is necessary to rule out the null hypothesis, namely that of europeanization as nothing more than an alibi or an illusion.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be underlined that the interviews referred to originally dealt with the decision-making process. Neither europeanization nor European integration were at the heart of the research to begin with. It is highly significant that this question was always spontaneously discussed by the greatest majority of interviewees.

## **Europeanization of the French military policy : an alibi or an illusion.**

From a skeptical point of view, europeanization of the military policy can only be an alibi or an illusion (Freedman and Menon 1997). The champions of the alibi thesis sustain that manipulation is at stake concerning the official authorities' discourse about europeanization. It is concerned with political elites manipulating mass public in order to impose difficult and unpopular changes. European integration pressures are no more than a scapegoat. A soft version of the argument deals with the legitimacy support that European Union adds in some cases. Numerous studies have highlighted that phenomenon in France, the European Union is often used by policy-makers as a legitimating tool or a scapegoat : "it's Brussels's fault" (Cohen 1996). This situation notably occurs in fields where there are strong institutional veto points or strong capacities to mobilize opposition against reforms. This hypothesis implies that there is a discrepancy between official declarations and the reality of the decision-making process in which European stakes would not be taken into account. There would be a discrepancy between public speeches and private speeches.

This argument comes up against several objections. The process of adaptation of Europe is also a discursive one. This a fundamental dimension of europeanization (Schmidt 1997). Firstly, one must take into account the constraints entailed by the speeches of justifications and legitimation on the rank of alternatives (Anderson 1981). Besides, the reforms undertaken in the field of military policy between 1991 and 1996 do not really need a European justification. They are well accepted by the public opinion (Lellouche 1996). There is little chance that they should be meeting strong opposition. The number and the importance of institutional veto points are rather limited in the defense field when confronted to the will of the executive power (Irondelle 2001). In front of these potential veto points in the Defense ministry or even in Foreign Affairs, it might be more counterproductive than efficient to resort to europeanization as an legitimating tool.

Furthermore, the interviews we made and the unpublished documents we could consult, testify that the discrepancy between public speeches and working discussions is not obvious. On the contrary, the impact of European integration and the European issues are proportionally more present in the latter than in the former. The alibi approach also rests on the idea that europeanization would in fact be the means to preserve a national style in the French military policy. For France, European integration in the military field would certainly mean strategic autonomy or power status by other means. The insistence of French authorities on the question of Europe's autonomy and the extensive meaning autonomy bears in France, especially in relation to the United-States and NATO, confirm this approach (Howorth 2000). However, this does not imply a europeanization denial, quite to the contrary. The admission by French policy-makers that Europe is nowadays the main course to ensure prospects to France's defense policy shows the impact of European integration on military policy. Since the end of World War II, even and maybe mostly under De Gaulle, France has indeed sustained the emergence of an autonomous European defense (Bozo 1996). What is new, however, is the admittance that it is the only possible course to follow, the recognition that independence is not appropriate anymore.

The national feature of the decision-making process as regards the 1996 reforms reinforces the alibi thesis. Decisions were elaborated in a very restrained framework and in the greatest secret, outside the European partners' knowledge. Symptomatically, the Franco-German Security Committee was completely ignored and German officials were neither

consulted, nor warned about the decisions<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the announcement relating to the end of conscription in February 1996 entailed a crisis in the Franco-German relations and very sharp anger on the part of the German minister of Defense (Le Gloannec 1997 ; Coudurier 1998). Some decisions would show that europeanization is a chimera in the French military planning French withdrawal from a program conducted in cooperation with Germany and named *Brevel* is the best example. The postponement until 2003 of the French financial involvement in the European transport aircraft is also sometimes presented as a lack of europeanization in the 1996 decisions (Howorth 1997b). In the nuclear domain, the removal of the strategic ballistic missiles from the Albion plateau is often interpreted as a telling blow against europeanization. In the decision-making arenas, some actually pleaded for France to maintain this arms system and to put it at "Europe's service" (Conze and Picq<sup>5</sup> 1993). The Albion plateau would have been the only system able to sanctuarize Europe. The final decision was due to numerous other factors besides European stakes. However, one must underline that the territory's sanctuarization theory is essentially French and scarcely shared by most of its European partners. More fundamentally, this interpretation is compensated by the withdrawal of the short-range missile *Hades*. In this decision, made at the end of 1995 and after having consulted the German authorities, the European stakes were decisive were actually the ones are the ones which "made" the decision.

The europeanization of the French military policy, if not an alibi, would be an illusion. Indeed the impact of European integration would not be significant in the progress of domestic reforms between 1991 and 1996. Menon and Freedman (1997) vigorously support this thesis as they highlight that other factors entail the changes. Nevertheless, the factors they put forward - i.e. the importance of possessing sophisticated weapons (cruise missiles, space systems, command and control, strategic transport aircraft...) and the increasing cost of the weaponry - are incentives to strengthen European cooperation in the military sector. Furthermore, it is obvious that the pressures from the European integration were not the sole, nor even the decisive factors in the French reforms. Decisions such as the end of conscription, the revision of the strategic doctrine, the down-sizing of the armed forces and procurements are multifactorial. Other factors from the strategic context, the social dynamics, the economic environment or the electoral politics, play a decisive role on the decisions relating to defense planning or military recruitment (Irondelle 2000, 2001). The question is to determine whether the pressures from European integration play a role and, if so, whether this role is significant. What matters is to determine whether europeanization was a major or marginal trend in the changes which occurred between 1991 and 1996 in the French military policy.

This illusion-thesis takes us back to our theoretical puzzle. Is a europeanization of the military policy possible in spite of the "lack of the European Union competence over defense matters" ? (Freedman and Menon 1997, p. 156) "There are no European institutions with sufficient political or military autonomy to influence directly a centuries-old national policy-making process such as that of France" (Howorth 1997b, p. 24). Nevertheless, the impact of the European Union can proceed from indirect pressures on the policy-making, a point agreed by the contributors in Howorth and Menon (1997).

I will now try to demonstrate that domestic changes in the French military policy indicate that Europeanization without European Union is possible .

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<sup>4</sup> Interviews at the Quai d'Orsay.

<sup>5</sup> In 1995-1996 Henri Conze was the General Armament Delegate and Jean Picq the General Secretary for National Defense.



## **The europeanization trend of the French military policy.**

The changes that have occurred since 1991 illustrate the europeanization of the French military policy, which affects the actors, the institutions, the doctrine and missions.

### **Actors and instruments :**

Since the end of the cold war, France has taken part in numerous multinational forces. That, in itself, is an essential innovation as regards the French doctrine of non-integration of its Armed forces in multinational structures, since its withdrawal from NATO military organization. France has created with Portugal, Italy and Spain the Rapid Deployment Force (EUROFOR) equipped with land and air capabilities and the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR) which form together a Mediterranean Rapid Reaction Force). These forces belongs to the Forces Answerable to WEU (FAWEU). Each state identifies units which are preconfigured to be put at the WEU's service. At the Franco-German summit held in la Rochelle in 1991, President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl created the Franco-German corps. Since the La Rochelle agreement, Belgium, Luxemburg and Spain joined Eurocorps. The European Corps has been operational since November 1995, with its multinational Headquarters in Strasbourg. 50,000 possible troops are assigned to the European Corps, 14,000 provided by France.

The multiplication of these multinational european structures was one of the strong arguments in favor of a professionalization of French armed forces. The conscripts were not destined to serve multinational forces in foreign interventions. The reform of armed forces in 1996 ensues essentially from the objective of having professional forces at disposal, organized within a modular and interarmed system. The main mission of these forces is to participate at any given time in operations amid a multinational coalition, preferably within a European framework. European integration, which was essential under a bilateral form during the period considered, and the expectations of a European common defense policy have in this sense powerfully contributed to the "1996 revolution" of the French military policy with a purpose to conceive, recruit, organize armed forces in order to participate in military operations in a multinational, if possible European, context.

The policy-making has also experienced adjustments in the sense of europeanization. Some institutions were created or renovated in order to better take into account the European dimension. It is notably the case for the Strategic Affairs Delegation, which were created within the Defense ministry in 1992, and include an important and very active Europe office. The Strategic Affairs Director from 1992 to 1997, Jean-Claude Mallet, who is one of the mainsprings in the reforms, played a key role in the taking into account by the Defense ministry of the European dimension. The command organization was deeply restructured (Palmer 1995).

As regards arms procurement, europeanization is, in 1995-1996, an important factor in the decision-making process. Admittedly, European cooperation programs, notably the *Tiger* helicopter and *NH 90* helicopter, were severely hit by budget restrictions (Hebert 2000). However, during the bureaucratic negotiations within the Defense ministry and between Defense and the Treasury department, the cooperation programs were rather spared in the name of European integration, after the fashion of *Helios* space programs. From a quantitative point of view, the most severe cuts affected national programs such as the aircraft *Rafale*. In a very down-to-earth fashion, the *NH 90* was maintained in the French planning solely on the European criterion, whereas the majority of actors concerned pleaded very strongly for its relinquishment. Only the European cooperation imperatives in the arms industry and the

symbolic value of a common planning between European partners rescued the *NH 90* at the last minute.

The postponement of the European transport aircraft, one of the highest priority in the French planning, is mainly due to European considerations. The European cooperation not being ripe in 1995, France only view this program within the context of cooperation and non-European solutions (Hercules ; Antonov) are studied quite seriously but put aside in the expectation of a European solution. On a more structural level, the part of cooperation programs in the Defense budget constantly increases : from 1996 to 2002 the share of cooperation programs will increase from 15 % to 34 % in the defense budget (Helmer 1996). As regards the Land Army, which is considered as being the least European military body, more than 70 % of its major equipment are cooperation programs. In the decisions of the military planning, regarding programs targets reduction in 1995-1996, savings are less important the cooperation programs than for national programs. At the same time, the share of the defense budget allocated to nuclear expenditure, which traditionally benefited from an absolute priority and a form of budgetary sanctuarization, has been reduced by 58 % since 1990. In other words, the French defense budget moves from a logic of nuclear expenditure sanctuarization to a logic of sanctuarization of European cooperation programs. When new Prime Minister Juppé asserted in his inaugural speech of 1995 that "all aspects of defense are concerned with the European dimension", he insisted on equipment policy (Juppé 1995).

During that period, France assumed a leading role in the Europeanization of the military policy from a bottom-up point of view, by being the initiator, or by supporting initiatives in favor of a greater European integration in the defense field, such as including a Common defense policy perspective in the Maastricht Treaty, relations between Western European Union and the European Union, institutional and capability developments of the Western European union. Until 1998, progress remains modest considering the difficult articulation with NATO.

### **Cognitive and normative frame : revising French exceptionalism ?**

European integration not only affects institutional structures, it can also affect the values, norms, ideas that influence state action in a policy field. A growing literature emphasizes the influence of cognitive and normative elements in public policy-making (Surel 2000). Be it a belief system (Sabatier), a *référentiel* (Jobert and Muller), a paradigm (Hall), a narrative (Radaelli 2001), these frames constitute a structure of meaning from which a complex and problematic situation can be made sense of and acted upon by policy-makers (Muller 1991 ; Muller and Surel 1998). Authors illustrate the importance of the europeanization of the cognitive and normative structures of public policy in the case of steel policy (Dudley and Richardson 1999), tax policy (Radaelli 1997) or arms industry (Hamel forthcoming).

The less the policy sector is integrated at the European level, the more the framing logic of europeanization matters. In such a case europeanization is provided by changes in the domestic political climate by stimulating support for European reforms. Thus, this path of europeanization is prevalent in domestic reforms and may encourage next steps towards integration (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2000).

Between 1991 and 1996, the French military policy went through a change of paradigm in the sense that all the components of the public policy are modified, via a change in the levels or settings of instruments, or the introduction of new instruments, i.e., first and second order changes in Hall's mode (Hall 1993). Third order change occurred when " not only were the settings of policy changed but the hierarchy of goals and set of instruments

employed to guide policy shifted radically as well" (Hall 1993). Such a third order change, namely a paradigm shift, describes the evolution of the French military policy in 1991-1996. In fact, the 1996 "revolution" means that the age of « national deterrence », built on the principle of national independence, served by the *force de frappe*, and the essential mission of which is the defense of the national territory, evolves towards that of « multinational action » founded on the principle of cooperation – essentially European - served by an army which is immediately available and operational to participate in multinational interventions outside metropolitan France, mainly in Europe or at the neighborhood of Europe (Gregory 1999)

The transformation in the French security and defense policy is so radical that one can assimilate it to a shift in French nation-state identity meaning the end of exceptionalism (Sjursen 2001 ; Aggestham 2000) and the europeanization of exceptionalism (Marcussen et al 1999). The 1996 military reform is indeed quite an "identity transformation" (Bureau 1997). French military policy is marked by a radical transformation from national independence and the sacrosanct principle of strategic autonomy to a much more cooperative and European orientation. Such a paradigm shift can be observed in the evolution of the armed forces missions as well as in the strategic doctrine.

### **Doctrine and missions :**

Indeed, a europeanization of the strategic doctrine and of the missions assigned to the armed forces is asserted during the 1991-1996 period.

Thus, in the 1994 White paper defense clearly comes within the scope of a European framework. It is highly symbolical that the White paper should be entitled White paper on Defense and not on National Defense, as was its 20 year-old predecessor. Just before and during the first meetings of the Commission, the idea of a European White Paper rather than a national one was seriously debated. Some members thought that the idea of a national White paper was outdated<sup>6</sup>. Prime Minister Balladur and Defense Minister Léotard asserted, in their respective forewords to the *Livre Blanc*, the ambition to construct a common European defense as a priority (*Livre Blanc* 1994). Some of the internal documents vouch for the fact that the aim of common European defense is merely a priority of the French policy-makers at the highest level. It is not simply an legitimating argument for the public. The 7 december 1993 French President, François Mitterrand, sent a letter to the Prime minister in order to reveal his position on the elaboration of the *Livre Blanc*. Mitterrand highlighted that "our military system can not be defined today without taking into account this [European defense identity] perspective" (Mitterrand 1993). When he addressed his letter of mission to the Defense ministry on the 6 June 1995, Prime minister Alain Juppé defined the main tasks of the Defense minister for the next few years "Your other high priority is to prepare the transition to a Common European Defense" (Juppé 1995)

The impact of European integration on the strategic doctrine particularly concerns nuclear deterrence. With various formulas, the French experts reflect on the way of asserting the European dimension of French deterrence. The thesis of concerted deterrence rapidly becomes the favorite course. It receives official unctioin in January 1995, when the Foreign Minister, Alain Juppé, makes it a central theme for his speech in the honor of the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Planning staff. The formula will be taken up by the President Chirac during the year 1995, in the context of the French nuclear testing. Although it remains imprecise, the notion of concerted deterrence is a way for France to cross the Rubicon. Indeed, the French deterrence theory was founded upon the impossibility of sharing deterrence and upon incompatibility between nuclear deterrence and alliance. 1995-1996 represents a big step

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with members of the Commission du *Livre Blanc*.

forward, especially since, at the same time, France accepts for the first time to debate nuclear questions within NATO (Tertrais 1999).

It is also possible to detect a sure European influence in the priority given by both the 1994 Livre Blanc and the findings of 1995-1996 to prevention. Indeed, prevention is not part of the French strategic culture. The notion of prevention is rather foreign to French policy culture. In this field, the European norm which emerges in the military field clearly spreads in France in the first half of the 1990s.

French strategy experiences an inversion of priorities between nuclear deterrent and conventional forces “whose primary mission” consists, from now, in projection and foreign interventions. The European theater is a top priority in the 1995-1996 defense planning. Furthermore, the Armed forces are configured above all to participate or to conduct operations in Europe and its neighborhood. Thus, in the first preparatory documents of the Army, the 1996 reform entailed the complete withdrawal of troops from Germany and the relative stability of the French presence in Africa. “That meant an arbitration of 6000 men in Africa and 0 in Germany<sup>7</sup>. It was incoherent with our involvement for the construction of a European Common Defense”<sup>8</sup>. Thus European imperatives provoke a revision of this plan. In the practice of the French armed force’s operations an increase of the means used in Europe and with Europeans can be noted. In most major operations France intervenes with Europeans. Generally, France has endeavored to promote European structures, the WEU notably, as framework for action : in Bosnia in 1991, in Rwanda in 1994.

This inversion between nuclear deterrence and conventional forces tasks and the new priority given to interventions results from a major strategic change on France and its policy-makers part. French borders are no longer threatened. The defense of national ground territory is not the absolute priority any longer, this conditions the whole military planning and gives its size to the armed forces. The first lines of the 1994 Livre Blanc highlight the fact in the following statement “There are no more threat on France’s borders” (Livre Blanc 1994). This diagnosis, which was at the heart of the overall study of the changes of French military policy in 1995-1996, breaks the existential link between the defense of the homeland and conscription. It constitutes one of the direct reasons for the professionalization of Armed forces. Although we have a tendency to forget it, European integration plays a historical role here. If France feels secure, it is due to European integration which makes it unthinkable for policy-makers that France could be threatened by one of its neighbors and partners of the European Union. The switch to a professional army is linked to European integration on another, more down-to-earth level. In the eyes of the 1996 reform’s designers, the professional army is the best tool to ensure that France will be able to play a forefront part and if possible one of leadership in the future Common defense policy. There is no denying that this argument was not in itself conclusive but it undoubtedly carried weight in the choice of professional armed forces.

### **Mechanisms of europeanization :**

It is plain that europeanization is one of the heavy trends in the transformation of the French military policy during the 1991-1996 period. The study of the decision-making process of the main reforms testifies for the impact of pressures from European integration on the actors and instruments, on the objectives and on the cognitive and normative frames. How

<sup>7</sup> These figures are evaluations. They correspond to the state of findings on scenarios at a given moment.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with a close advisor of the 1995-1996 French Foreign Minister.

does Europe matter ? What are the mechanisms of europeanization without European Union ? How are the pressures from the European level exerted on the such particular domestic policy as military policy ?

### Indirect pressures :

The most obvious mechanism lies in the indirect pressures exercised by European integration on military policy. Three main types can be distinguished. First, European integration transformed Western Europe into a security community (Adler and Barnett 1998). This security community is grounded on a feeling of natural solidarity between the European partners, which radically alters the perception of their interest by the French policy-makers. European integration has strongly modeled the interests of member states towards a more European conception. President Chirac mentions a community of destiny and a growing interpenetration of our vital interests (Chirac 1996). Speaking of nuclear deterrence, John Major and Jacques Chirac asserted, in October 1995, the commonality of French and British vital interests. (Chirac 1995).

This feeling of a community security plays a substantial part in some decisive choices of military planning. At the beginning of the 1990s, the image of the strength of the French Army remains strongly influenced by the comparison with the Bundeswehr. The Defense minister, Chevènement, is then very much concerned with the preservation of the conventional parity with Germany. In 1993, Army Staff internal documents drafted for the preparation of the White paper show that the parity argument of the military balance between France and Germany is a major concern. For the Army, this strategic imperative imposes the preservation of conscription. At the time of the *Livre Blanc*, it was one of the main strategic reasons, although never officially stated, for maintaining conscription. This position is not as strong in the Army's findings of 1995. Above all, it does not appear credible to the majority of Defense ministry officials anymore. It is absolutely not retained as an important criterion in the choice between conscription and professional armed forces. According to policy-makers, the progress of European integration invalidates this type of argument.

This europeanization of France's interests is also strongly linked to the preparation for the Single Currency. Foreign Minister Juppé raises the point in 1995 : Single Currency "has an effect on French perceptions of its own vital interests (Juppé 1995a). The question of the Single currency pinpoints the second strong indirect pressure, which is the budget problem. The evolution of the Defense policy between 1991 and 1995 is essentially accomplished under the pressure of budgetary imperatives in order to be able to match the Maastricht criteria. The driving force behind the reduction in the defense budget in France are not the peace dividends (Gautier 1998), but the pressures of European integration on the budget. The reform of the Armed forces in 1995-1996 directly originates in the cut in the defense budget. The Military Program Act covering the period from 1997 to 2002, calls for a substantial cut by 20 % in the annual military equipment expenditure. Meeting the Maastricht criteria is the determining factor when it comes down to defining the budget for the Defense ministry<sup>9</sup>. In 1995, the budgetary situation has deteriorated so much that it is necessary to find massive savings, especially since the eligibility time for the third step to the European monetary union is imminent. During the negotiations between the ministries of Defense and Treasury, the European argument is the sledgehammer argument. They are confronted to what the high official of the Budget Direction call the "*principe de réalité* of the convergence criteria"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Interviews Finance Minister, Primer Minister Staff.

<sup>10</sup> Interview Finance Minister

### **Institutional mediations :**

Be they inspired by sociological or rational institutionalism, several recent studies have shown that national institutions play a crucial role in the europeanization process (Green-Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001 ; Montpetit 2000). Börzel underlines that institutions determine the impact of European integration. Institutions dictate the distribution of resources between actors affected by Europeanization (Börzel, 1999).

Nevertheless, one must fully take into account the consequences of europeanization on the allocation of power and of resources in military policy-making. Europeanization is not neutral : it can alter the allocation of resources between actors and thereby their influence in the process. Thus, in the French military policy, European cooperation in the armament sector reinforces the position of the General Armament Delegation in face of the three Armed forces staffs whereas underlyingly GAD's position within the Defense ministry is declining since the end of the 1980s. Europe contributes to give to the Strategic Affairs Delegation a pivotal role and a central influence on military policy due to its relation with the Foreign ministry and with the European partners. At the intergovernmental level, the role of the Treasury ministry in the elaboration of the military policy is considerably increased by the European integration impact. In France, the fundamental stake represented by the Single Currency enables the Budget direction to have powers that it has never had before under the Fifth Republic on issues of defense policy. Significantly during the 1991-1996 period, the closer the Single Currency is to fall due, the greater this power becomes.

Domestic institutions mediate the pressures and effects of europeanization as in the case of internationalization (Garret et Lange 1996). They are key intervening variables explaining the differentiated impact of European integration from a national or a policy sector point of view . Indeed, the country's institutional structure, and also the policy-making of the specific public policy can facilitate or inhibit the process of adaptation. They are decisive in determining the path and importance of the change.

Among others, three mediating factors must be specifically taken into account : the presence of multiple veto points, the executive leadership and the degree of technocratic capture. First, the existence of numerous veto points can constrain the capability to produce change by increasing the powers of actors opposed to reforms (Tsebelis 1995 ; Haverland 2000). Second, an integrated or fragmented executive leadership can generate different results in the process of europeanization (Héritier and Knill 2000). Third, while some policies are governed by technocratic elites, others require complex interactions between constellations of actors and institutions. The existence of a small technocratic policy community which monopolizes the policy-making process often favors changes (Radaelli 2000). From a European point of view, these features are much more relevant in a complete intergovernmental sector such as military policy than in more polycentric and multi-level governed sector.

These factors are particularly relevant in the case of France which is a strong state where policy-making is dominated by a statist policy style (Schmidt 1996). The executive power has very large room for maneuver in the formulation and the elaboration of policies at its disposal. The part played by the technocratic elite trained in the *grands corps de l'Etat* is essential. This policy style is very strong in the military field which belongs to the *domaine réservé* of the President. In this context, military policy is ruled by a few state actors who form a very closed policy community. Policy-making is dominated by the executive and a core of top officials both civilian and military, to a large extent insulated from pressure groups, societal pressures, parliamentary groups and to a less extent from interest groups (Cohen 1986, 1994 ; Müller et Risse-Kappen 1994). The decision-making of the French

military reforms in 1991-1996 confirm these features. In the case of the 1996 "revolution", the political will of the French President is the key factor. However, the change is supported by core actors of the military policy who are prone to strong modernization of the French military policy towards a more cooperative and European policy (Irondele, forthcoming).

Checkel underlines that, in such an institutional context as that of statist model, learning by elite decision-makers is essential (Checkel 1997).

### **Socialization and learning :**

Incorporating the European issues in the elaboration of the French military policy implies a double process of socialization and learning from decision-makers.

A number of studies have shown the importance of socialization between the elite in charge of foreign policy in the countries of European Union within the framework of the European Political Cooperation, then of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Glarbo 1999 ; Dumond and Setton 1999). With the multiplication of European formal or informal (Gymnich sessions) meetings personnel relationships and an *esprit de corps* between Foreign ministers and high diplomats develop (Hill and Wallace 1996). Simon Nuttal argues "The success of the EPC came through socialization" (Smith 2000). In the military area, the institutionalization and the multiplication of bilateral summits between France and its European partners deeply contribute to this socialization. In each of these summits be they Franco-German, Franco-British or Franco-Italian, the questions of military policy and European security are tackled. These meetings and the intense preparatory phase they require draw the participants to collaborate and take the other's point of view into account. It is within the French institutions most concerned by this socialization, those which work the most in European cooperation that the actors the most open to military policy adaptation to European issues are recruited. : the Air Force is prompter than the Army for instance. The General Armament delegation or the Strategic Affairs Delegation are often leaders.

This socialization concerns the political level, the members of the government and their civilian or military collaborators. In 1995, the French President and the Prime Minister are favorable to progress in European integration in the defense field. The Defense minister, as his Foreign Affairs counterpart are fervent Europeans. For the most part it acts on the high level and lower-level officials inside the administration who participate and prepare all these meetings within the Defense and the Foreign Affairs ministries and the Prime Minister's services. Furthermore this socialization also acts on the national level between the different branches of government. In France, European integration is one of the major causes<sup>11</sup> of the growing cooperation between Foreign Affairs and Defense ministry and between the military and the diplomats, which is a sort a "cultural revolution". The preparation of the European meetings implies a heightened cooperation between departments on the national level. This internal socialization of European origin entails the emergence of a common apprehension of the military policy stakes and directions between traditionally rival departments.

An advocacy coalition pleading for a europeanized military policy thereby grows in the first half of the 1990s. Made up with high officials from the Defense and Foreign Affairs ministries, often from the planning staffs, and from the cabinets of the Defense and Foreign affairs ministers, the Prime Minister and the President, this advocacy coalition promotes a reorientation of the military policy in a more cooperative and european sense. Its components plead for definitively breaking away from the policy of *splendide isolement* (splendid isolation) of the French military policy. They favor a strong European orientation and a

<sup>11</sup> The other very important factor lies in the multiplication of foreign military interventions.

pragmatic reevaluation of the relations with NATO. Representatives of this advocacy coalition hold cardinal places in the writing process of the 1994 White Paper. In 1995, most of the strategic positions in the ministries advisory staffs and in the high level of the Defense and Foreign Affairs administration are occupied by members of this advocacy coalition.

The learning process is not solely the result of socialization within institutionalized European settings on a bilateral or multilateral basis (European Union, Western European Union). Europeanization is also due to the realization that the national model was worn out (Irondele forthcoming). The limits of pure national independence clearly appeared during the Gulf War, which in this perspective plays the part of a traumatic event for the reformers. Levy underlines the role of traumatic events in the collective learning phenomenon (Levy 1994). The imperative of reinforcing France's cooperation with its allies in the military field is one of the main lessons of the Gulf War. This dramatic acknowledgment is confirmed by the military intervention in Bosnia, during which the French painfully experimented the consequences of Europe's military weakness. From then the europeanization of the military policy, the progress of integration in the military field become a major priority. The aim is to adopt reforms which will enable France to play a leading role in the construction of a European defense liable to act autonomously. Bosnia, as much as the Gulf War, are determining factors in the 1996 reforms. Deeply impregnated with the lessons of Bosnia, the men who prepare and decide the reform are particularly aware of the European requirements. A lot of those in key positions come from the advisory staff of the 1993-1995 Foreign minister, Alain Juppé, who becomes Prime minister.

The European learning process also concerns public opinion. A major trend in favor of a European defense is perceptible in French public opinion. Even though in the French military policy-making this factor is less determining, the public support is one of the mechanisms of europeanization (Smith 2000).

### **Conclusion :**

The paradoxical relations between europeanization and the French military policy during the first half of the nineties has been explored throughout this article. Through a decision-making approach, this analysis shows that europeanization is one of the major trends in the transformation of the French military policy. The impact of European integration significantly contributes to French military reforms.

This article also demonstrates that European integration pressures affect the cognitive and normative frames of the military policy more than its instruments and institutions, revealing the ambivalence of europeanization in an intergovernmental sphere. Indeed the dialectical relationship between integration and europeanization must be taken into account to analyze the paradox of europeanization without European Union. French military policy illustrates a form of europeanization which intervene before a true sectorial integration of the defense issues at the European level. This process has benefited from spectacular progress since 1998 with the emergence of the European security and defense policy (ESDP). This dialectical relationship is all the more important in the French case since French military choices can influence the design of the europeanization of military policy at the European level (Aggestham 2001).



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