



## Book Review

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### The EU and the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons

**Edited by Spyros Blavoukos, Dimitris Bourantonis, and Clara Portela**

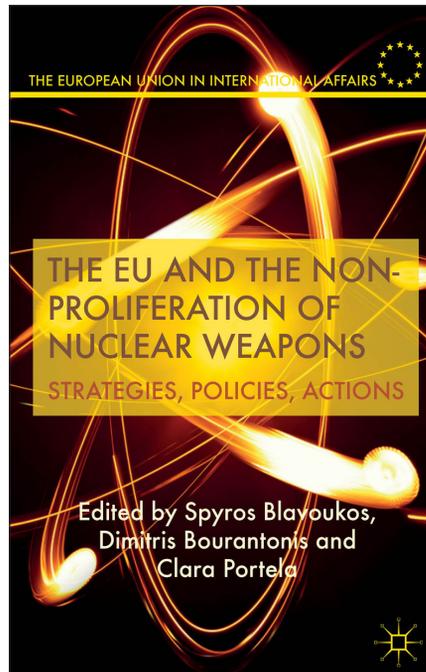
Hardcover, 264 pages

ISBN 978-1-137-37843-9

Palgrave Macmillan, New York, USA and Houndmills, UK, 2015

The Brexit phenomenon has both heightened and potentially lowered the usefulness of this text, which is part of the publisher's series on "The European Union in International Affairs." Written prior to the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), this assessment of the effectiveness of that organization in the nonproliferation regime makes the book somewhat anachronistic if indeed the loss of UK expertise and financial backing will result in a significant detriment to that organization's efforts. No matter, as this significant effort is worthy of attention despite Brexit's unintentional potential effects.

To set the stage correctly, the EU acts as a separate entity within the nonproliferation regime although its constituent nations also sit separately at the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) table. The European Economic Community, later to expand into the twenty-eight nation EU, was formed by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. It was amended in 1992 by the Treaty on the European Union (the Maastricht Treaty). These agreements were further modified by the Treaty of Lisbon that entered into force on December 1, 2009. The Treaty of Lisbon abolished the



European Economic Community and the European Union "the EU," was created. The EU adopted a nonproliferation strategy in 2003. This has been backed up since then by financial resources that allow the EU to implement the strategy with a global emphasis rather than a focus say, on the dangers posed only by the former Soviet Union. The 2009 "Reform Treaty" (the aforementioned Treaty of Lisbon), modified the previous two European Union treaties (the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaty of Rome), creating an official president of the European Council and a consolidated "legal personality" for the EU (legal personality allows the EU to enter into treaties and other binding obligations). Thus, the EU became a consolidated legal entity, which allows it to be part of international treaties.

This text grades the EU's efforts in nonproliferation activities up to about the year 2013. There are a few issues for American readers that require comment. First, the very brief and cursory explanation above about the EU's history is more than one will obtain from the text. The authors assume familiarity with the EU's predecessors and structure. Without it, the discussions are still decipherable but cannot be fully appreciated. Secondly, this text is not an easy read. The syntax can be heavy, depending on the author in this ensemble effort of a dozen international contributors. Thirdly, the semi-quantitative manner in which the EU's progress is judged may leave many readers wanting. It is difficult to quantify "success." The authors use a grading system to judge EU performance based on the following criteria: output, outcome, and impact. Respectively, each refers to the policy formulation, the change in EU actions caused by the policies, and the effect the EU actions have on international activities.

What measures are used to judge the EU as a player in nonproliferation fora? The authors looked at several key issues, each author specializing on one of them in separate chapters. An obvious area was performance in the Nonproliferation Treaty review negotiations. Others include U.S.-EU interactions, EU-International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) collaboration, EU financial assistance to the nonproliferation regime, EU control of sensitive technologies, the EU response to the Iranian and North

Korean crises, and EU nonproliferation governance.

The essays on each are rich in detail and well organized but overall, the involved language will make this a challenging read for all but the most die-hard amongst us. One of the easier, more straight-forward, and resonant chapters is penned by Clara Portela (Singapore Management University) who assesses the EU's performance in the proliferation crises spawned by Iran and North Korea (DPRK). Her introduction concisely points out that the EU had not been a historically effective nonproliferation force. Her analysis proceeds using the book's framework, focusing on output, in this case the EU's policy formation regarding each crisis; followed by outcome or the implementation of the policies in the international arena; and finally concluding with the impact of the policies i.e., the effects the EU policies produced. As an example of the difficulties associated with the measuring of such parameters, Professor Portela points out that proving causality linked to the EU policies in the mix of policies enacted particularly by those of the U.S., which tend to dominate, is a real challenge to the analyst. To illustrate the many factors involved in evaluating performance, the author points out that Europe was much more engaged economically in Iran than in North Korea. Therefore, applying European sanctions on an already isolationist state like the DPRK has marginal effect. That said, Europe has remained engaged in North Korea by supplying humanitar-

ian aid and agricultural assistance. The EU to its credit entered the fray in both instances and did so when U.S.-Iran and U.S.-DPRK tensions were heightened thus extending international engagement in both instances. Regarding Iran, the EU adopted U.S.-inspired sanctions that also supplemented United Nations actions. However, Portela points out that the EU's cohesive response to the Iranian crises developed under U.S. leadership and pressure and implies strongly that the U.S. influence was necessary for an EU response. As for North Korea, the EU sanctions went farther than those of the United Nations by including numerous bans on trade, banking and military technology, but with less overall effort as compared to its involvement with Iran. Portela does a rather straight-forward grading analysis in this chapter. Elsewhere in this book the various discussions and analyses may require a second read.

Lina Grip's chapter on the financial assistance of the EU is perhaps the one to be most affected by Brexit. The EU is a major contributor to the IAEA and also funds the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization. Won't those contributions be diminished with Britain's exit? To analyze the answer, one must understand the EU's output and outcomes in this area. Grip's chapter explains that the EU has taken the lead in voluntary contributions to the IAEA verification efforts. Several non-financial EU initiatives are also discussed including assistance to "third countries" and

adoption of a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) nonproliferation clause. Assistance to third countries takes the form of financial, technical and economic cooperation. For example, the EU has established centers of excellence to address WMD risks and initiated efforts to counter nuclear trafficking with a budget of about 266 million Euros for the years 2007 - 2013. The adoption of a WMD clause created an EU policy to include nonproliferation agreements in broader cooperation arrangements with third countries. There have been some successes here (South Africa and South Korea), and some failures (India). This nonproliferation clause is *not* fully essential in EU agreements. It was first used in 2005 in a broad contract with developing states in Africa, the Caribbean, and Pacific island states. Grip's chapter is supported by summary tables that are helpful in grasping the EU's scope of worldwide financial involvement in curbing the spread of WMD. This is a fairly deep analysis although still readable. One supposes that a reader can more readily understand the expenditure of money than say the epistemic networks in the EU's governance (Chapter 12), although what one finds interesting and therefore more comprehensible is best left to the reader's taste.

As mentioned earlier, the text needs a chapter on the organization of the EU and how the various components interact. Unfamiliar readers will grapple with the distinct identities of the European Union, European Council, and the Eu-



ropean Commission. As is, the reader must learn the basic function of the EU in the course of reading the chapters. This diminishes the book somewhat especially for American readers. There is a seven-page index and a useful list of acronyms. Two appendices, one on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and another on the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, help to support the preceding chapters, albeit minimally. The concluding chapter summarizing the contributors' assessments of the EU is much more useful.

Will the effects Brexit may have on EU nonproliferation activities make *The EU and the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons* old before its time? In the final analysis, I don't think so. There is value in knowing how impactful the EU has been until now. Brexit in fact, may have imbued this book (unknowingly to its editors) with a new mission. It is an analytical review, albeit couched in somewhat heavy wording, of the EU's historical performance as a worldwide nonproliferation player. That performance can be stated here (without revealing much of

the book's insight), as not being insignificant. When considering that in order to learn from mistakes, one must study history and understand the motivations of those that make it lest that history be repeated, one realizes that this book has achieved — perhaps by events outside the efforts of its contributors — new relevance. If Brexit does indeed diminish the role of the EU in the nonproliferation regime, a means to quantify that loss will be needed. *The EU and the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons* can serve as a basis for that future comparison.