

## **Civilian and Military Responses to Domestic Security Threats: A Cross-Case Analysis of Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom**

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**Abstract :** The domestic security environment in Europe has changed dramatically in recent years. Since January 2015, a significant number of domestic security threats that emerged in Europe were located in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom. While some threats were detected in the planning phase, many also resulted in terrorist attacks. Authorities in all three countries instituted special or emergency measures to provide additional security to their populations. Each country combined an additional policing presence with a specific military operation to contribute to a comprehensive security response to domestic threats. This study presents a cross-case analysis of three countries' civilian and military responses to domestic security threats in Europe. Each case study features a unique approach to combining civilian and military capabilities in similar domestic security operations during the same time period and threat environment. The research design focuses on five variables relevant to the relationship between civilian and military roles in each security response. These are the distinction between policing and military roles, the legal framework for the domestic deployment of military forces, prior experience in civil-military coordination, the institutional framework for threat assessments, and the level of public support for the domestic use of military forces. These variables examine the influence of domestic social, political, and legal factors on the design of combined civil-military operations in response to domestic security threats. Each case study focuses on a specific operation: Operation Vigilant Guard in Belgium, Operation Sentinel in France, and Operation Temperer in the United Kingdom. The results demonstrate that the level of distinction between policing and military roles and the existence of a clear and robust legal framework for the domestic use of force by military personnel significantly influence the design and implementation of civilian and military roles in domestic security operations. The findings of this study indicate that Belgium, France and the United Kingdom experienced different design and implementation challenges for their domestic security operations. Belgium and France initially had less-developed legal frameworks for deploying the military in domestic security operations than the United Kingdom. This was offset by public support for enacting emergency measures and the strength of existing civil-military coordination mechanisms. The United Kingdom had a well-developed legal framework for integrating civilian and military capabilities in domestic security operations. However, its experiences in Ireland also made the government more sensitive to public perceptions regarding the domestic deployment of military forces.

**Keywords :** counter-terrorism, democracy, homeland security, intelligence, militarization, policing

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