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Title	Security, Defence and Neutrality: The Irish Dilemma
Authors(s)	Tonra, Ben
Publication date	2012-04
Publication information	Tonra, Ben. "Security, Defence and Neutrality: The Irish Dilemma." Gill and MacMillan, April 2012.
Publisher	Gill and MacMillan
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7631

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Chapter 14

Security, defence and neutrality: The Irish dilemma

Ben Tonra

Introduction (A Head)

Security and defence has been a somewhat neglected area of study within Irish foreign policy. Only neutrality has gathered significant attention. The aim of this chapter is to place security and defence policy within the broader context of Irish foreign policy, to assess its roots and its character and to identify the challenges that it faces. In doing so, it will also look at Irish neutrality and how debates surrounding this concept have impacted the conduct of security and defence policy. Finally, it will illustrate how Irish policy has made a lasting and significant impact upon international security in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Context (A Head)

There are perhaps four dimensions to the shape of Irish security and defence; Ireland's geopolitical position, the absence of a strong martial tradition, a commitment to collective security and international law and a tradition of military non-alignment or neutrality.

In terms of its geopolitics, Ireland has been both cursed and blessed. For many centuries, the island of Ireland was seen to be strategically significant to the security of its neighbouring island. For both English and later British policy makers, this made the control of Ireland and its seas critical to their own security. Conversely, of course, for those that struggled for Irish independence, alliance with England's enemies became part of a powerful strategic culture; the enemy of my enemy being my friend. To that end, Irish history is punctuated by alliances (sometimes quixotic) with France, Spain and Germany, set against determined English efforts to secure its western flank and the Atlantic approaches. Even as late as the 1980s, strategic consideration on all sides was given to the potential use of Irish airspace and territory by NATO or Warsaw Pact forces in the event of heightened Cold War tensions or conflict.

Following the end of the Cold War, the curse of Irish geography has given way to a blessing. In both European and international contexts, Ireland is comparatively far removed from sources of potential conflict. That does not mean that Ireland is immune from the consequences of conflict and insecurity. In an interdependent world this can rarely be the case. But it does mean that in core traditional military security terms Ireland enjoys, perhaps for the first time in its history, an almost wholly benign local security environment.

Perhaps perversely, in view of the many centuries when the island of Ireland featured strongly in the security calculations of other powers, the modern Irish state has not developed a strong military tradition of its own. The aesthetic of military tradition holds little sway over the public imagination. Ireland's military successes, in terms of its own independence, were also secured by non-traditional military violence. It was achieved through the creation of an underground guerrilla army where success was defined by the acts of small armed groups or individuals rather than by a grand national army. Significantly, the process by which Irish political independence was secured is as often referred to as 'the armed struggle' as it is by the more formal term; 'war of independence'.

Following independence, one might have thought that the development of a strong martial tradition would have been a priority for the new state. That it did not is at least in part a function of the bitter civil war which followed independence and the contested legitimacy of the new Irish State which followed for some decades. There was also the question of the capacity of the state to maintain and effectively to deploy conventional armed forces. During the 'the Emergency' of the Second World War there was an expectation that Ireland's new, formalized military structures could not successfully defend the state's borders even in the short term.

The Irish state has relied heavily upon the force of law, rather than the law of force, to secure its own security interests. This may be the result of pragmatism as well as principle, but it has become an abiding approach in Irish foreign and security policy. Early independence efforts frequently focused on winning international legal recognition (most notably – and unsuccessfully – at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference) and Irish policy makers have since repeatedly committed themselves to multilateral structures. Whether in the British Commonwealth, the League of Nations, the United Nations, the Council of Europe or the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), analysts have pointed to an abiding Irish profile in the development of formal, legal institutions and precedent as the means by which Irish policy makers seek to embed their security in a wider multilateral framework.

For example, Eamon de Valera, the architect of wartime neutrality, faced down significant domestic political opposition in order to support the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations against Mussolini's Italy and Franco's Spain in the period 1936-1939. It was only the League's failure to bring either states back into line which is seen by many as having determined Ireland's path to war time neutrality. Indeed, even after the war, when de Valera assessed the potential of United Nations membership for the Irish State, he sombrely noted that the implication of the United Nations Charter included the prospect of going to war at the bidding of the Security Council. This made formal neutrality impossible, but was a price he argued that should be paid since 'It would be fatal for the small nations, including ourselves, who have any hope of collective security, to think that they can in the end dodge their obligations' (Dáil 102:1466).

Even as Ireland made its commitment to United Nations membership, and all that this implied in terms of security and defence, neutrality remained a powerful concept underpinning Irish policy. The enduring place of neutrality is again perhaps a function of both pragmatism and principle. In practical terms Irish wartime neutrality had worked. Whether this was due to the forbearance of the belligerents or an adverse cost/benefit analysis of a potential occupation it is difficult to say. Nonetheless, and unlike so many wartime European neutrals of the period, Ireland emerged from the maelstrom comparatively unscathed. In addition, neutrality is deeply rooted within a particular historical narrative. Neutrality can be traced from Wolf Tone's 18th century jeremiad against the Spanish war, through the anti-conscription campaign of the First World War, neutrality in the Second World War and the Irish government's rejection of the prospect of NATO membership in 1949. Neutrality can thus be painted as a long-standing facet of Irish engagement in the world.

Others have presented neutrality as being a function of pragmatic necessity and as a means to differentiate the state from its nearest neighbour. This argument would highlight the selective nature of Irish neutrality in the Second World War, Ireland's political and ideological commitment to the 'West' throughout the Cold War and Ireland's early membership of the European Communities (now European Union). This argument also tends to highlight the particular way in which Irish neutrality has been practiced. This debate between principle and pragmatism is effectively summarised in the 1996 White Paper on Irish foreign policy where it was argued that neutrality 'has taken on a significance for Irish people over and above the essentially practical considerations on which it was originally based.'

Neutrality Debates

Debates surrounding neutrality; both during and after the end of the Cold War, have been marked by a basic confusion of concepts and the determination of many protagonists to define neutrality in such a way as best suits their policy ends. One starting point is the extent to which Ireland adheres to the requirements of the 1907 Hague Conventions on the rights and duties of neutral states in time of war. The conventions define these duties in narrow and specific terms, related centrally to the treatment of belligerent and neutral forces, and the movement of troops, munitions and war supplies across the territory and seas of those states that have declared themselves to be neutral in any particular armed conflict. While the practice and laws of some permanently neutral states have extended these requirements to ensure that *in the event of conflict* they have sufficient military, economic and strategic capacity to enforce such requirements, Ireland has only once declared its neutrality during war time and has never declared itself to be a permanent neutral, instead describing itself as having a 'traditional policy of military neutrality'.

In an Irish context, neutrality has also been closely associated with United Nations membership. Here, arguments are raised that the effectiveness of Ireland's participation in United Nations peacekeeping and its profile within the United Nations has been linked to its neutrality, most especially during the Cold War. Thus, outside the framework of the two Cold War military alliances of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Irish peacekeeping troops and Irish diplomats had greater latitude to act as 'honest brokers' than those from states which were militarily aligned. This allowed for a distinctive and constructive Irish contribution on peace and security issues. Of course, this does not take account of the fact that as regards the formal neutrality defined by the Hague Conventions, United Nations membership itself is problematic. The United Nations, under Chapter VII of the Charter, reserves the right to demand that all member states make available to a United Nations military operation its '...armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage' necessary for the purpose of '...maintaining international peace and security'. In the event of such a request, of course, neutrality within the United Nations is simply impossible.

However, as a concept within Irish debates on security and defence, neutrality's greatest resonance with the wider public is undoubtedly as the sum total of a set of norms which define Ireland's approach to the wider world. These are frequently said to centre upon; the peaceful resolution of disputes, human rights, nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, the rights of small nations and global socio-economic development. Historically, it was also linked to campaigns against the introduction of military conscription to the British military and more recently it has been linked to a variety of pacifist and 'anti-militarist' campaigns. Neutrality, and the values which are ascribed to it, is thus widely understood as representing the profile of a good international citizen, dedicated to the pursuit of a positive and engaged foreign policy. The fact that 'neutrality' in terms of international law has no such normative content is almost immaterial. Neutrality is clearly understood as being and 'doing good' in the world.

With so many different and indeed contradictory understandings of neutrality in Irish debates, it can come as little surprise then that Irish governments have sought to define contemporary Irish neutrality in quite specific and tangible terms. Ireland's 'traditional policy of military neutrality' is thus defined by government as being a non-member of a military alliance. Here again, the definition of neutrality in an Irish context has little or nothing to do with the legal concept. While non-membership of a military alliance may be a necessary condition for neutral status, it is certainly not a sufficient criterion. What this definition has done, of course, is to set the bar for breaching Ireland's 'traditional neutrality' at an exceptionally high level i.e. the point at which the State would undertake the obligations of a mutual defence agreement, such as exists under Article V of NATO's 1949 Washington Treaty or which might be proposed under a 'common defence' as provided under Article 28A of the Treaty of European Union. Thus, almost any Irish engagement with security and defence issues within multilateral institutions, and

even bilaterally with defence alliances, can be presented as being consistent with Ireland's 'traditional neutrality'.

If the participants to a debate do not agree on definitions of their basic concept, it results in their talking past one another rather than engaging in discussion of policy options and choices. This is certainly the case in the debates surrounding neutrality which have arisen in connection with NATO's Partnership for Peace and especially over the course of Ireland's EU membership, centring upon consecutive proposals for treaty change. For their part, Irish governments have found themselves defensively insisting that nothing agreed within the EU or agreed with NATO, the OSCE or the United Nations has compromised their narrowly framed definition of 'traditional neutrality'. Meanwhile, for some activists and political parties, almost any multilateral engagement on foreign, security and defence issues can threaten their normatively framed understanding of a progressive and positive 'neutrality'. It is in this somewhat confused context that any discussion of Irish security and defence policy must commence.

The Content of Security and Defence Policy (A Head)

Defence of the State (B Head)

The primary function of a state's security and defence policy is to provide for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. According to the Defence White Paper published in 2000, 'The external security environment does not contain any specific threats to the overall security of the State' and Ireland therefore faces 'a generally benign security environment.' The White Paper goes on to note that '...there is at present virtually no risk of externally instigated conflict (and) any change in this position is likely to be preceded by a significant warning time of some years.' Under this heading, the Defence Forces are therefore committed to what is termed 'contingency planning' and preparation for a wide variety of potential security emergencies.

Domestic Security (B Head)

Defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state has, however, been complicated by the partition of the island of Ireland between two states; Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Over time, and to varying degrees, this has given rise to bilateral tensions between the Republic and the United Kingdom and to armed violence between and within the two national communities in Northern Ireland. Indeed, in the very earliest phases of the Northern Ireland 'troubles', serious consideration was given to sending the Irish Army across the border into Northern Ireland.

It is from this conflict that the primary challenge to state sovereignty since the Second War has arisen. Between 1969 and 1999, a substantial proportion of the state's political, diplomatic and security

resources (Gardaí and Defence Forces) were directed towards that security threat and against armed militants operating in or from the state. This also entailed, to varying degrees and at different times, cooperation with security forces in the neighbouring jurisdiction. In terms of the Defence Forces, this ‘aid to the civil power’ (i.e. to the Gardaí) has gradually lessened as the 1994 peace process has progressed and as the associated threat level has diminished. All major paramilitary groups have since ‘decommissioned’ their weapons under third party supervision and have committed themselves to the pursuit of peaceful political and constitutional change. While the threat and the use of armed violence continues from smaller splinter groups, it does so at a much reduced threat level. Cooperation between the security services in the state thus continues, including in aerial reconnaissance, bomb disposal, the armed protection of cash movements in the state and a range of State and security installations.

In the context of the 2001 attacks on the United States, however, a new strand in ‘aid to the civil power’ has emerged. The generally benign external security environment has been significantly qualified by an ongoing assessment of, and response to, threats posed to the Irish state by international terrorism. This threat is assessed as being the potential for direct attacks against the state and its citizens or the use of the state as base from which attacks might be planned or executed against other states and the citizens thereof. As a result, much greater focus in recent years has been given to institutionalised coordination of intelligence and joint, intelligence-led operations between the security services at home and their cooperation, bilateral and multilateral, with overseas security agencies .

Security is, of course, broader than simply military security. Attention has always been given to other security tasks such the interdiction of narcotics, combating human trafficking, fisheries protection, search and rescue operations, civil emergencies and natural disasters. For the Defence Forces, this ‘aid to the civil authority’ has entailed the generation of formal agreements with a variety of state agencies from the Gardaí, government departments, local government authorities and other agencies.

International Security (B Head)

The Irish approach to international security might usefully be described as holistic. Irish governments have traditionally seen it in its broadest terms; ranging from development aid (see Connolly this volume) , through human rights’ protection (see Higgins and Dewhurst this volume) and into the realms of disarmament and non-proliferation (see below) as well as the more traditional security triumvirate of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Internationally, Ireland has over a 50-year record of peacekeeping and peace support operations overseas under a United Nations Mandate, ranging across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East (see Murphy this Volume). To that end, the Government has committed to providing up to 850 troops – through several multilateral mechanisms (EU, NATO/PfP and United Nations) – for assignment on

overseas missions, In addition, dozens of Gardaí, diplomats, officials of the courts and prison services and other civilian advisors have worked within a variety of United Nations, EU, OSCE, NATO and other multilateral missions to promote ‘rule of law’ and other security-related operations in places such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo and the Palestinian Territories. Ireland’s diplomatic profile and engagement on these issues is also high within institutions such as the United Nations and the OSCE. Ireland has served for a total of 5 years in periods on the United Nations Security Council, being elected to such a seat in 1962, 1981 and again in 2001. Ireland also chaired the OSCE in 2012. As far as the deployment of Defence Forces are concerned, their contribution to military missions is subject to the so-called ‘triple lock’ of government decision, parliamentary ratification and United Nations authorisation. The participation of Irish troops in such operations is highly valued at both official and public levels and lends substance to Ireland’s profile as a contributor to collective multilateral security. Such operations have also been described by governments as being a matter of justified public pride and an integral element of how Ireland sees itself in the world.

In 2011, Ireland deployed 440 troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This Irish contribution to a joint Finnish/Irish battalion re-established an Irish United Nations presence in Lebanon which dates from the United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) in 1958, and where a full battalion had been maintained continuously from 1978 to 2001. In addition, 150 Defence Forces personnel were assigned to the EU’s Swedish-led Nordic Battlegroup which was on active standby for the first six months of 2011 as part of the European Union’s readily deployable military forces available for crisis intervention. A further 130 troops were similarly assigned to an Austrian/German Battlegroup on standby in the latter half of 2012. Other contemporary international security operations to which there has been an Irish contribution include; the EU-led ALTHEA operation in Bosnia Herzegovina, the NATO-led international security mission in Kosovo (KFOR), the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and smaller contributions to various observer and advisory missions of both the United Nations, the EU, OSCE and NATO.

Insert table of Irish military overseas engagements here (see below)

Ireland’s engagement with the United Nations as a security actor dates from its membership in the mid 1950s . Since then Ireland has developed a profile in traditional United Nations peace support operations, mandated and directed by the United Nations. This has amounted to Irish participation in more than 40 United Nations-commanded missions, involving over 55,000 tours of duty – six times the total size of the Irish Defence Forces. That commitment has also resulted in the deaths of 86 members of the Defence Force personnel while engaged in United Nations duties.

However, this traditional model of United Nations peacekeeping operations came under pressure in the post Cold War world. In 1992 the United Nations' 'Agenda for Peace' foresaw a more robust and interventionist role for United Nations military missions, and no longer assumed that United Nations forces would have to operate with the consent of parties to a dispute. That ambition, however, was swiftly tempered by the United Nations' bitter and tragic experience in Somalia in 1993 and in the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995. In 2000, the United Nations published a highly critical analysis of its own peacekeeping record and capacity. It argued that the traditional United Nations peacekeeping model was inadequate to address the tasks being faced by the United Nations and that a basic reorientation was required. This entailed the United Nations maintaining and strengthening its traditional 'blue hat' peacekeeping capacity, but now also turning to regional security organisations, such as the African Union, the EU, ASEAN and NATO, to name but a few, and even ad hoc coalitions of states willing to provide the means for more rapidly deployed, high-intensity intervention when and where required.

This reorientation posed something of a dilemma for Irish policy makers: should they remain exclusively committed to a diminishing set of traditional United Nations missions or expand Irish security capacity so as to have the option to participate in new forms of multilateral security missions? Policy makers opted for the latter, balancing resources so as to contribute to both traditional United Nations operations whilst also contributing to the new forms of multilateral security missions. Some 50 Irish military police, for example, were contributed to the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) in July 1997. This was a United Nations-mandated mission supporting the 1995 Dayton peace agreement, but it was commanded by NATO. Irish participation in this mission was later described as '...a concrete example of our commitment to inclusive co-operative security in Europe' which would 'enable Ireland to experience directly the new approach to European peacekeeping.' (Dáil 476:1090) Ireland also contributed to NATO's 1999 operation in Kosovo (KFOR), with a truck cargo support company, an infantry company and staff officers. Since 2002 initially and thereafter, with In 2007, Ireland commanded one of the four NATO Commands in Kosovo, a first for the Defence Forces in a non-traditional United Nations blue-hat operation. In 2008, also for the first time, Ireland took command of the largest EU operation launched to date under the then European Security and Defence Policy, when an Irish General was appointed Operational Commander of the EU mission in Chad and the Central African Republic. Ireland also contributed over 440 troops to the mission as part of a joint Irish/Dutch Battalion which on completion of the EU mission, was reconfigured as an Irish/Finnish Battalion for the follow-on United Nations mission. In 2011 Ireland took command of a further EU mission (EUTM Somalia), to contribute to the development of the Somali security sector through the provision of military training to the Somali National Security Forces. , Irish staff officers and non-commissioned officers have also served as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Part of this new approach to peacekeeping has been secured through Irish participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP). The Partnership itself was originally designed to serve as both a framework for post Cold War security cooperation and, for some European states, also as a pathway towards NATO membership. NATO is also effectively the international standards organisation for military forces which is key to achieving interoperability among forces from many States participating in peacekeeping and crisis management operations. The Irish Government's decision in 1999 to join PfP was controversial as was the decision in 2001 to participate in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) mechanism, designed to promote inter-operability between Irish and NATO forces within multi-national military operations. Today, Ireland's bilateral partnership programme with NATO is centred on capability development and interoperability, international peacekeeping, humanitarian operations, search and rescue, environmental protection and marine cooperation. It provides for training courses, joint exercises, seminars and workshops designed to develop and enhance specialised skills. In addition, through the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI), based at the Curragh military camp in County Kildare, the Defence Forces offer military education and training programmes for peacekeeping operations to other military forces. Ireland has also contributed to voluntary PfP programmes for the destruction of mines, small arms and other light weapons in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the Ukraine.

Arguably, the greatest focus of attention in recent years for Irish security and defence policy has been its relationship with the European Union. The establishment on 1 December 2009 of the European Union's 'Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)' under the Lisbon Treaty, which follows on from the previous 'European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)' introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty, has created a framework from which the EU member states aspire to provide the Union with an operational capacity to undertake a wide range of peacekeeping and crisis management operations around the world. Ireland's engagement with this process has provoked some domestic opposition and remains sensitive for policy makers .

Irish policy makers frame their participation in the CSDP squarely within a commitment to the primacy of the United Nations. This is exemplified by the 'triple lock' on participation in overseas military operations, which includes the legislative requirement (broadened by the 2006 Defence Amendment Act) that such an operation must be '...established, mandated, authorised, endorsed, supported, approved or otherwise sanctioned by a resolution of the Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations.' In previous years this had proven to be problematic. While the definition of what constitutes United Nations authorisation was extended in 2006, it remains the case that any permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can veto Security Council authorisation and thus forestall Irish participation in an operation that has widespread, if not even near

unanimous international support within the United Nations system. Opponents of the ‘triple lock’ point to the example of the EU’s 2003 peacekeeping mission to Macedonia at the invitation of the Macedonian Government (Operation Concordia), to which Ireland did not contribute. It is generally understood that Security Council authorisation of this mission was only vetoed in the United Nations by China due to Macedonia’s diplomatic recognition of Taiwan rather than anything related to the mission. The wording of the Irish Defence Acts which, as a result of the veto, were seen as making an Irish contribution to that operation problematic was subsequently addressed through the 2006 Defence (Amendment) Act.

The nature of Irish participation in CSDP is also underlined by the National Declarations, Solemn Declarations, treaty protocols and even a constitutional amendment, all related to security and defence, which have been necessitated to secure Irish ratification of the last two EU reform treaties. In the case of the 2002 Nice Treaty, this required a National Declaration spelling out Irish policy towards overseas military engagement (and specifying the nature of the ‘triple lock’) as well as an EU Council Declaration acknowledging the nature of Irish military neutrality. These ‘Seville Declarations’ were then reinforced in the second referendum to ratify the Nice Treaty by a parallel amendment of the Irish constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann). Article 29.4.9 now provides that ‘The State shall not adopt a decision taken by the European Council to establish a common defence...where that common defence would include the State.’

In the case of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, another National Declaration was made by the Irish Government, reaffirming that ‘participation in the European Union’s common foreign and security policy does not prejudice its traditional policy of military neutrality’ and noting that participation in the European Defence Agency was subject to national decision making. Similarly, a European Council Decision was agreed which, among other items, set out again that Irish participation in CSDP did not ‘affect or prejudice Ireland’s traditional policy of military neutrality.’ It was further agreed that this Decision would become a legally-binding protocol to the treaties at their subsequent revision to provide for the accession of the next member state to Union.

With the all of the aforementioned, it is perhaps surprising that Ireland’s actual engagement with the CSDP has been so wholehearted and wide ranging. As noted above, Ireland agreed to the allocation of up to 150 troops to the Nordic EU Battlegroup and to the Austrian/German EU Battlegroup. To date, there has been Irish participation in nearly 60 percent of all EU security operations – both military and civilian. In military operations alone, there has been a 75 percent participation rate and in terms of its overall contribution relative to the size of its defence forces, Ireland is a well above-average contributor to EU military operations. Ireland’s commitment included the aforementioned battalion sized deployment to the EU mission in Chad in 2008-9. In 2011, the profile of Irish engagement with the European Defence Agency (EDA) was also raised with the formal participation of the Defence Forces in two major EDA

projects; in maritime surveillance and in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection. Ireland's active engagement in EU security and defence policy is also reflected in the high profile of the Irish contribution at operational and staff levels within the EU. The 2007 appointment of Lt General Pat Nash as operational commander of the EUFOR mission in Chad was emblematic as is the active engagement of Irish staff officers within the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the appointment of an Irish Officer to command the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia.

A significant diplomatic objective of Irish foreign policy over recent years has been to maximise EU and United Nations cooperation. This has the obvious benefit of squaring the circle of the 'triple-lock' so as to reduce the chances that the EU might undertake military missions that did not already have some form of United Nations sanction. It also, of course, plays to strengths within the Defence Forces in terms of their traditional contribution to crisis management.

Security and Defence Capacity (B Head)

The declared mission of the Defence Forces is to provide for the defence of the State, contribute to national and international peace and security and to fulfil all other roles assigned by Government. In support of those goals, the 2000 White Paper on defence, reviewed in 2007, provided for a three-brigade structure of 10,500 Defence Forces personnel. This has also entailed what have been called 'profound paradigm shifts in organisational, strategic and tactical doctrine' driven at least in part by external pressures centred on Irish military engagement with the United Nations, EU and NATO's Partnership for Peace but also on the evolution of more complex and more robust international peacekeeping and crisis management operations under United Nations mandates, including Chapter 7 peace enforcement operations.

As part of a 2009 reduction in public sector employment, the overall size of the Permanent Defence Force has been further reduced to approximately 9,600 in the period 2011-2014. The Defence Forces, comprising the Permanent Defence Force (the Army, the Air Corps, the Naval Service), are tasked with participation in overseas missions in the cause of international peace, as well as meeting the requirements of domestic security which are defined as providing 'military personnel in an operational role in an aid to the civil power (ATCP) capacity'. A defence modernisation programme has also been in place since 2000 which has been directed towards the redeployment and reinvestment of resources to provide for the development of critical defence assets and a major equipment replacement and modernisation programme for the Defence Forces.

Insert multiannual table on defence expenditure and PDF establishment here (see below)

The Defence Forces are structured as a conventional military force. The Permanent Defence Force (PDF) is a standing, professional force whose function is to carry out core domestic and international military operations. The Reserve Defence Force (RDF) provides an additional contingent military force to assist the PDF when required. In turn, the RDF consists of a First Line Reserve comprising former members of the Permanent Defence Force and a Second Line Reserve of part-time personnel.

Within the PDF, the Army provides the core deployable capacity in support of overseas peace operations. Each of its three brigades has a territorial area of responsibility and consists of combat, combat support and combat service support elements which are divided into nine corps; infantry, artillery, cavalry, engineers, ordnance, medical, transport, military police and communication/information. For its part, the infantry is equipped with assault rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, and anti-tank weapons, most of which follow NATO military and interoperability standards. The Army is also supplied with armoured personnel and reconnaissance vehicles with machine gun, grenade and surveillance capacity. The Defence Forces also has a range of mortar and artillery capacity of up to 120mm mortars and 105 mm howitzers. The Air Corps has a single operational base and consists of a HQ staff, two operational wings and two support wings. These are equipped with two maritime patrol aircraft, six utility transport helicopters with machine gun capacity, seven turboprop light attack/trainer aircraft, two light utility helicopters and two small executive-type jets. Following concerns about post 11 September 2001 air defence and security, the Defence Forces relied on RBS70 surface to air missiles, newly acquired Bofors 40mm L-70 anti-aircraft guns and the option of requesting external assistance. In 2011 air defences were strengthened with the announced purchase of high-explosive tracer ammunition for existing anti-aircraft guns. The Naval Service also has a single operational base and command with HQ and support staff and a flotilla of eight vessels. These vessels, some of which were commissioned as early as 1978, were designed as offshore patrol vessels armed with General Purpose Machine Guns, 20mm cannon and light and medium calibre naval guns. In 2010, it was announced that with several vessels approaching or beyond their designed life span, the Defence Forces would purchase new multi-purpose vessels, capable of offshore patrol and interdiction as well as military transport for overseas peacekeeping deployment. Two such vessels have been ordered for commissioning in 2014-15 with an option for a third.

While being a relatively major contributor to international peace support operations, in terms of overall defence expenditure, Ireland is close to the bottom of the comparative European table, spending 0.6 percent of GDP on defence, representing a per capita annual expenditure of just €221.

Challenges (A Head)

In the absence of any substantial local security threat to the state, most attention regarding Irish security and defence policy is directed towards making a contribution to international security. There is certainly

no doubt that there exists a broad domestic consensus in favour of Ireland making a substantial input to international security through political, diplomatic and even military efforts. As we have seen, there is also a strong Irish track record of multilateral engagement upon which policy makers can build. At the same time there remains substantial division within certain circles over the choices to be made about the appropriate institutional framework through which Ireland might make that contribution. However, even among those opposed to the Defence Forces participation in NATO and, to a lesser extent, EU-led operations, this opposition is differentiated. It is manifested more strongly in relation to Ireland's participation in ISAF as opposed to participation in Chad, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Undoubtedly, there is a clear commitment to placing the United Nations at the centre of the security matrix. This is based upon a deeply pragmatic assessment that the interests of smaller and less powerful states are best defended within legitimate, strong, credible and effective multilateral institutions. There is also recognition of the United Nations system's flaws and support for its reform. In the end, a debate ensues; what added-value can be brought to the table of effective multilateralism by institutions (regional or thematic) other than the United Nations? More significantly still, to what extent can one look to such institutions in the event that the United Nations is unable, unwilling or unsuited to address particular security crises? Is it legitimate for the Irish state to contribute to multilateral security operations other than those of the United Nations; such as those of the OSCE, the EU, NATO or even ad-hoc coalitions of states? Can such operations be deemed consistent with the United Nations charter, international law and broader political considerations of ethics and justice – even in the absence of formal United Nations authorisation?

These choices are framed by a paradox, in that, the values that are seen to define Irish foreign policy have been defined in the context of a single security and defence policy, that of military neutrality. While other comparable states – such as Norway – have managed to reconcile their memberships of a military alliance with the possession of a progressive, engaged and internationalist foreign policy, Ireland has maintained a different path. There is legitimate doubt as to whether Ireland's existing profile in United Nations peacekeeping and its pursuit of disarmament and nuclear non proliferation would exist had Ireland been an unambitious, small and peripheral member of NATO. The question is whether that path continues to serve the values it is designed to pursue.

Irish security and defence policy is also under pressure as a result of its European engagement. Over the history of EU membership, Irish policy makers have repeatedly offered assurances – buttressed now by treaty provisions and formal political and legal declarations from EU partners – that Ireland's traditional military neutrality is in no way threatened by its EU membership. At the same time, the Union proceeds on a declared trajectory towards the creation of a common defence policy and a common defence. This may give rise in the future to a fork in the road. If the Union pursues the creation of a truly

common defence, does Ireland attempt to veto such a development, participate therein on its own terms or simply opt out?

In truth, the prospect of an EU common defence is a function of wider strategic considerations than Irish policy preferences. These include the degree of United States commitment to European security, the future of NATO and the Atlantic Alliance and the depth and nature of the threats that the Union may face in the medium to longer term. At the same time, Irish policy makers can hardly wish to leave themselves hostage to events and the choices of others. Even now, in the absence of an EU common defence, Ireland is something of an outlier in European terms. Is this trajectory to be maintained, even to the point of a Danish-style opt out? What might be the costs/benefits of such disengagement, if any, to wider Irish interests in Europe and to the credibility of Ireland as an international actor? On the other hand, is there any actual benefit – either to Ireland or to the European Union – by the integration of Ireland within a common defence of the European Union? Indeed, might there be a net loss in terms of a security agenda defined by peace, disarmament and non proliferation?

Clearly, none of the above questions are unique to Ireland and it would be wrong to characterise such a debate as being peculiarly Irish. Comparable debates exist in other European Union member states that are not members of NATO and, indeed, even within some NATO member states. It is probably true to say, however, that the Irish debate is one which has deep historical roots and one which has not been noted for its clarity.

Case Study: Ireland and non-proliferation and disarmament (A Head)

Non proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament have been longstanding security goals of Irish foreign policy. Indeed, Ireland can justifiably lay claim to a unique place within the history of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, and to a continuing international profile on the issue which has reinforced Irish efforts in the broader area of security and disarmament. Ireland's declared policy aspires to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, measures to forestall the proliferation of nuclear weapons capacity, a universal ban on the use of cluster munitions, limitations on the international trade of light weapons and small arms, and stronger treaties to ban the production, storage, use and transfer of chemical and biological weapons.

The Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (B Head)

In 1958 the Minister for External Relations, Frank Aiken, devoted his speech at the United Nations general debate to the issue of disarmament, with a focus on nuclear weapons and the capacity of those weapons to annihilate the world. He argued that in order to limit the potential of war, it was necessary to limit the number of states in possession of nuclear weapons, even as the international community strove to eliminate them in their entirety. Despite negative commentary on the feasibility or even desirability of these ideas, the Irish United Nations delegation submitted a draft resolution along these lines in October 1958. In committee, Aiken ultimately withdrew his resolution, but only after securing a vote on the resolution's second paragraph, which set out the case against nuclear proliferation. This had the important effect, he later argued, to put the inherent dangers of nuclear weapons' proliferation on the United Nations record.

With greater forward planning and the support of co-sponsors, a second resolution was proposed in 1959, and Aiken again devoted his speech at the General Assembly to this topic. Resolution 1380, requesting the United Nations Disarmament Committee to consider the feasibility of an agreement to limit the dissemination of nuclear weapons was passed by 66 votes with only 13 abstentions. Further Irish efforts, at political and diplomatic level, culminated in 1961 with the adoption, without a vote, of the so-called 'Irish Resolution', setting out the broad parameters for what ultimately emerged as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ireland's pioneering role in this project was acknowledged when Frank Aiken was invited to be the first signatory to the treaty in Moscow on 1 July 1968 and Ireland was the first state to deposit its instrument of ratification in Washington, London and Moscow just hours later.

Irish ministers and diplomats have worked at each of the subsequent 5-yearly NPT review conferences to strengthen the NPT process and to refocus attention on the core goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. Significantly, while Ireland has worked with its EU partners to coordinate their

respective foreign policy positions within the United Nations conferences, Ireland has maintained its own specific profile, working from 1981 with the Vienna Group of Ten (VG10) countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden,) and, from 1998, also with the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden) to strengthen the NPT regime. Ireland was also among those states that from an early stage supported the indefinite extension of the NPT regime at the 1995 review conference, rather than make the treaty's extension conditional on specific steps being fulfilled and reviewed .

Ireland's interest in the NPT was again illustrated at the 2010 NPT Review Conference in New York. There, the Irish delegation – in concert with its VG10 and NAC colleagues – had to overcome a number of roadblocks to a successful conference conclusion. One of the most bitter differences surrounded the proposed establishment of an 'effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems'. While that resolution had passed at the 1995 NPT review conference, the absence of Israel (as a non NPT member) made the implementation of such a resolution a sensitive matter. Little progress had been made over the previous 15 years, giving rise to immense frustration in much of the Arab world.

Ireland was asked to use its good offices to negotiate a way forward on this politically complex issue and a senior Irish diplomat was asked to undertake the chair of these negotiations. After difficult and sometimes tense discussions, agreement was secured and practical steps towards the implementation of that resolution were set out. These included a 2012 regional conference and the appointment of a dedicated facilitator to support implementation. The NPT Review Conference Final Document was accepted by consensus, a remarkable outcome considering that many delegations had arrived in New York with few positive expectations.

Cluster Munitions (B Head)

Ireland has leveraged its profile in the area of security to support a variety of other disarmament initiatives. In Oslo in early 2007, Ireland joined other like-minded states, United Nations agencies, NGOs and humanitarian organisations to discuss how best to address the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. The participating states committed themselves to the creation of a legally binding international instrument that would prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions and to establish a framework for cooperation and assistance in support of the care and rehabilitation of survivors of clusters munitions, the clearance of contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiles of these weapons. Subsequently, 'Oslo Process' meetings were held in Peru (May 2007), Austria (December 2007), and New Zealand (February 2008).

Cluster bombs had been deployed in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kosovo, Laos, Lebanon and Vietnam and elsewhere. Made up of a larger container, the bomb opens in mid-air, dropping hundreds of smaller individual sub-munitions, or ‘bomblets’, across a wide area. These are designed to explode on impact. While it is claimed that such munitions are highly effective in a combat situation, their use in areas of population settlement creates a deadly legacy for civilians. In particular, humanitarian groups have pointed to the effects of unexploded ordinance on children, particularly where these munitions – for operational reasons – are highly coloured and visible. This has resulted in claims that children represent up to one in four casualties resulting from these devices when they fail to explode and who will much later pick up and play with the deadly canisters.

Over 10 days in May 2008, Ireland hosted 111 participating states, 21 observer states and up to 300 NGO participants gathered to discuss a draft convention on the elimination of cluster munitions. The Irish Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva chaired the negotiations on behalf of the Irish Government and led a team of officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Army. The negotiations were not straightforward, with several major United Nations member states opposed to the principle and/or detail of the proposed convention. Others insisted that while the objectives were laudable, the practical realities of the conflicts within which they were engaged, or might potentially be engaged, meant such a convention was not realistic in its present form. The most difficult issues were those related to joint military operations (inter-operability) with countries that remained outside the proposed treaty; the definition of a cluster bomb, calls for various types of exceptions from the ban and the length and nature of any transition period where states could continue to use existing stocks of the weapons as they were gradually phased out.

The conference was characterised as having had ‘a smooth procedural start, a very positive tone and mood, and a highly efficient and interactive approach to the deliberations’. In the end, the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions adopted a comprehensive new treaty banning cluster munitions; only the seventh time that a weapon has been prohibited outright. In addition to agreeing to an unconditional ban, the states ratifying the convention undertook never to use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer such weapons in the future, or to assist another party in doing so. No exceptions were provided and no transition period existed. The treaty was opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008, was signed by 94 countries and came into operation on 1 August 2010. Even though the states primarily responsible for using Cluster bombs have not signed the Treaty, it created a strong international norm against their use, which may restrict their use in practice even by non-signatory states by raising the diplomatic cost of using such weapons.

Arms Trade Treaty (B Head)

In recent years the United Nations has pursued a multilateral Arms Trade Treaty with a view to agreeing a range of measures by which the international trade in conventional arms might be regulated. Ireland has also strongly supported these efforts and has sought such a treaty as a means to agree common standards for the import, export and transfer of arms across borders. In response to a 2006 request from the United Nations Secretary General, Ireland made a submission calling for an international, legally binding treaty. Within such a treaty, the Irish government argued for the widest possible inclusion of categories of weapons, including language to cover future technical developments. It also sought broad coverage of the kinds of transactions in which arms might cross borders, including import, export, re-export, transfer, transshipment, brokerage arrangements and technology transfer. In October 2008 Ireland co-sponsored a United Nations General Assembly resolution to establish a working group to look at the potential shape of an arms trade treaty and Irish officials played an active role in subsequent meetings of that group.

In 2009 the United Nations General Assembly agreed a resolution to establish a United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty to meet in 2012. In advance of that conference, a number of preparatory meetings were held and Irish officials continued to promote the broadest coverage of the treaty, reaffirming, for example, a demand that all munitions would be included which, in addition to ammunition, would include land mines, grenades and other categories of small arms.

Conclusion (B Head)

There is no doubt that the dedication of Irish foreign policy to the issues of disarmament and non proliferation has been longstanding, substantive and serious. Irish governments, ministers and diplomats have devoted exceptionally scarce diplomatic resources to these public goods. It would certainly be unfair to characterise this track record as being one which has aspired to any kind of political or diplomatic grandstanding, not least because there has been no visible instance in which such efforts have reaped any kind of domestic political rewards - either to the Ministers and officials involved or even indeed to the Department as whole.

Instead it is probably true to say that these efforts are reflective of a strong national self image and the self interests of a state with little capacity to vindicate its security through the force of arms. It is also perhaps useful to note the synergies between this international diplomatic engagement and the state's military engagements in support of international security. These mutually reinforcing policy pillars contribute substantially to both the profile and the credibility of the state as an international actor.

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Defence Forces Overseas Service¹

Operation	Date of Irish military contribution	Command	Region/ Location	Operation Type	Irish Commitment (cumulative missions)
UNOGIL	1958	United Nations	Middle East	Peacekeeping Operation (P.O.) (Observer)	50
UNTSO	1958-date	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Observer)	14
ONUC	1960-1964	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Troops)	6,191
UNTEA	1962	United Nations	Asia	P.O. (Observer)	2
UNFICYP	1964-2005	United Nations	Europe	P.O. (Troops)	9,655
UNIPOM	1965-1966	United Nations	Asia	P.O. (Observer)	14
UNEF II	1973-1974	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Troops)	573
UNIFIL	1978-date	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Troops)	32,458
UNNY	1978-date	United Nations	UNHQ	Secondment	66
UNIT	1984-date	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Observer)	9
UNRWA	1988-1992	United Nations	Middle East	Secondment	2
UNIIMOG	1988-1991	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Observer)	177
UNGOMAP	1988-1990	United Nations	Asia	P.O. (Observer)	8
ONUCA	1989-1992	United Nations	Central America	P.O. (Observer)	57
UNTAG	1989-1990	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Observer)	20
UNAVEM II	1991-1993	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Observer)	18
UNAMIC/UNTA C	1991-1993	United Nations	Asia	P.O. (Observer)	38
UNIKOM	1991-2002	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Observer)	69
MINURSO	1991-date	United Nations	Africa		177
UNPROFOR & UNMLO	1992-1996	United Nations	Europe	P.O. (Observer)	36
UNHCR(Y)	1992-1993	United Nations	Europe	Secondment	2
ONUSAL	1992-1994	United Nations	Central America	P.O. (Observer)	6

¹ Data collated from Defence Forces Ireland, <http://www.military.ie/en/overseas>, last accessed 23 September 2011.

UNOSOMII	1993-1995	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Troops)	177
OSGA	1994-1996	United Nations	Asia	Secondment	2
UNMIH	1994-1996	United Nations	Central America	P.O. (Observer)	6
UNSCOM & UNMOVIK	1996-2003	United Nations	Middle East	P.O. (Observer)	5
UNMOP	1996-1999	United Nations	Europe	P.O. (Observer)	10
UNPREDEP	1996-1999	United Nations	Europe	P.O.(Observer)	8
UNSMA	1996-1999	United Nations	Asia	Secondment	2
UNTAES	1996-1998	United Nations	Europe	P.O.(Observer)	10
EUFOR/SFOR	1997-date	NATO/EU	Europe	EU Crisis Management	50
UNMIK	1999-2010	United Nations	Europe	P.O.(Observer)	4
UNAMET	1999-2004	United Nations	Asia	P.O.(Observer and Troops)	318
KFOR	1999-date	NATO	Europe	Peace Support Operation	12
UNMEE	2001-2003	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Troops)	630
MONUC	2001-date	United Nations	Africa	P.O.(Observer)	3
ISAF	2001-date	NATO	Asia	Peace Support Operation	7
ARTEMIS	2003	EU	Africa	EU Crisis Management	2
MINUCI/UNOCI	2003-2004	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Observer)	2
UNMIL	2003-2007	United Nations	Africa	P.O. (Troops)	2,745
EUFOR Chad/CAR MINURCAT	2009-2010	EU/United Nations	Africa	EU Crisis Management and Peace Enforcement Operation (PEO)	2,800
EUTM	2010-date	EU	Africa	Training Mission	5

Irish Defence Spending and Personnel²

Year	Defence Spending Million Euro	Defence Spending as Percentage GDP	(Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) Total
1988	322	1.2	13,000
1989	344	1.1	13,000
1990	463	1.3	13,000
1991	473	1.3	13,000
1992	490	1.2	13,000
1993	503	1.2	13,000
1994	538	1.2	13,000
1995	556	1.2	13,000
1996	596	1.0	13,000
1997	641	1.0	13,000
1998	662	0.9	12,000
1999	696	0.8	12,000
2000	754	0.8	12,000
2001	858	0.7	11,000
2002	862	0.7	11,000
2003	855	0.7	11,000
2004	887	0.6	10,500
2005	921	0.6	10,500
2006	949	0.6	10,500
2007	1,003	0.5	10,500
2008	1,081	0.5	10,000
2009	1,019	0.6	10,000
2010	965	0.6	9,500
2011	935	0.6	9,500

² Data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) <http://www.sipri.org/> last accessed 23 September 2011 and Department of Defence