The Irish Case:
The Europeanisation of Priorities and Policy Issues?*

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Resumo

A Europeização de Prioridades e Temas Políticos: o Caso Irlandês

O fim da Guerra Fria veio alterar as concepções de segurança do mesmo modo que os acontecimentos do 11 de Setembro de 2001 vieram condicionar o sentido de mudança. Simultaneamente, levaram a maior parte, se não todos os Estados, a reavaliar as suas prioridades de segurança e defesa e, na maioria dos casos, a adaptar as suas parcerias e capacidades, de maneira a poder responder às novas ou recém-avaliadas ameaças de segurança. Esta alteração teve um impacto óbvio nos assuntos militares nacionais. Como Edmunds afirma, "o fim da Guerra Fria removeu a lente estratégica dominante, através da qual as forças armadas se tinham desenvolvido e entendido". São menos claras, porém, as implicações para os pequenos Estados europeus, de que a República da Irlanda é um exemplo. Este artigo avalia os desafios políticos no quadro das políticas de segurança e defesa irlandesas na sequência destas mudanças no ambiente de segurança internacional. A relação irlandesa com a ONU, NATO e mesmo com a UE teve de se adaptar tendo em conta a nova situação, desenvolvendo-se novas políticas. Este artigo analisa as mudanças políticas e suas potenciais explicações, como a crescente europeização. O objectivo é demonstrar a sua evolução no âmbito do contexto irlandês.

Abstract

The end of the Cold War changed our conception of security. The events of 11 September 2001 amplified that sense of change. Cumulatively, this has caused most, if not all, states to reassess their security and defence priorities and in most cases to adapt their associated policies and capacities to meet a range of new and re-evaluated security threats. This has had an obvious impact on national militaries. As Edmunds argues "The end of the Cold War removed the dominant strategic lens through which armed forces were developed and understood." But it is less clear precisely what are the implications of this for smaller European States such as the Republic of Ireland. This article evaluates the policy challenges that arose for Irish security and defence policy due to these changes of the security environment. The Irish relationship with the UN, NATO as well as the European Union had to adapted to the new situation and new policies were developed. This article puts policy changes and their potential explanations like increasing Europeanization in perspective. The aim is to show how things have evolved in the Irish context.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War changed our conception of security (Mearsheimer 1994, Salmon et al. 2003, Edmunds 2006). The events of 11 September 2001 amplified that sense of change (Rasmussen, 2002; Leffler 2003). Cumulatively, this has caused most, if not all, states to reassess their security and defence priorities and in most cases to adapt their associated policies and capacities to meet a range of new and re-evaluated security threats. This has had an obvious impact on national militaries (Edmunds 2006). The Armed Forces are still a key actor in dealing with insecurities, but since these insecurities are seen to have changed, the role of the military has changed with it and it is questionable whether they are ideally equipped – in terms of strategy, in terms of culture or in terms of material equipment, to meet them. These changes have been particularly felt in Europe as the disappearance of a specific and direct military threat has forced a basic reorientation of national militaries and an associated reassessment of alliances such as that of NATO.

For its part, the European Union and its Member States has sought to address this new security environment in a variety of ways. Enlargement was clearly one well-defined strategy designed to deliver stability and security to the European continent at a point of major transitional change. Similarly, the proximate crises of the Balkans led to significant policy changes and the development of both the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as well as its nascent European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). For Adrian Treacher "it was the transformation of the international system with the end of the Cold War that proved the key determinant" while it "...would take the successive crises (...) to provide the crucial impetus" (2004:50) to react to the changed security structure. According to Treacher, without these exogenous shocks the development of CFSP and ESDP would not have occurred (id.).

But these changes to the European security environment had other significant consequences particular to Europe. John Clarke has noted that: "Military and other armed security forces in the 21st century face an array of requirements quite unlike those of the past" (2005:v). Since it would appear that sovereignty and territorial integrity in Europe are no longer under immediate threat – although that assertion is contested vigorously as one moves eastwards across the continent – old forms of defence do seem to be increasingly outdated. As Edmunds (2006:1062) argues "The end of the Cold War removed the dominant strategic lens through which armed forces were developed and understood." But it is less clear precisely what are the implications of this for smaller European States such as the Republic of Ireland.

Irish Security and Defence Policy

Security and Defence policy in Ireland has been a function of several inter-related pressures: the need to secure the state from internal subversion, a commitment to multilateral security, the representation of Irish independence and – definitively in last place – the ability to defend the State's borders. The first cannot be overstated in its significance. For much of the latter half of the Twentieth Century, the Irish Defence Forces have operated largely in the capacity of 'Aid to the Civilian Power'. The threat to internal stability that derived from the IRA and its various offshoots was a real one and one which consumed the largest part of the Defence Force's capacity. The second has a longer pedigree and is rooted in the dedication of the Irish State to the United Nations and the goal of effective collective security. Participation in UN peacekeeping operations has always been both a popular and, for a time, profitable endeavour of the Irish Defence Forces and one which has generated widespread and genuine public pride in a State with no martial tradition. Third, there has certainly been a significant role for the Defence Forces in illustrating the reality of Irish independence – even when (or especially when) Ireland's socio-economic *dependence* on the United Kingdom was so all-embracing and profound. Irish military neutrality has to be seen as part of this, as a national struggle first to assert Irish independence (during World War Two) and then to distinguish that independent Irish State from its too near neighbour, Great Britain (in its refusal to join NATO). Finally, it must be acknowledged that amidst the foregoing pressures, the capacity of the Irish Defence Forces to defend the borders of the Irish State against external aggression has simply never been seriously tested. In sum, Irish security and defence policy can best be characterised as being exceptional and differentiated from that of almost all other small European States (Keatinge 1984; Salmon 1989; Doherty 2002).

The foundations of Irish security policy are defined by the Government's 1996 White Paper as being:

- a policy of military neutrality, embodied by non-participation in military alliances;
- the promotion of the rule of international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes;
- the promotion of greater equity and justice in international affairs through efforts to eliminate the causes of conflict and to protect human rights;
- a commitment to collective security through the development of international organisations, especially the United Nations;

- a willingness to participate in peace-keeping and humanitarian operations throughout the world;
- participation in the construction of the European Union as a way of overcoming age-old rivalries in Europe;
- the promotion of an active policy of disarmament and arms control;
- a commitment to regional co-operation, especially in Europe, through the promotion of, and participation in, regional security organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OECD, and the Council of Europe.

In support of that policy, the Government's 2000 White Paper on defence provided for a three-brigade structure of just over 10,500 troops to meet the full range of tasks arising from its threat assessment. The Defence Forces, comprising the Permanent Defence Force – the Army, the Air Corps, the Naval Service – as well as the Reserve Defence Force, are specifically tasked with participation in peace support missions abroad in the cause of international peace, as well as meeting the requirements of domestic security which continue to be defined as providing "military personnel in an operational role in an aid to the civil power (ATCP) capacity" (Defence 2000). According to the Defence White Paper, [t]he external security environment does not contain any specific threats to the overall security of the State" with Ireland therefore facing "a generally benign security environment." Since the 2001 attacks on the United States that assessment has been revised to conclude that, according to the Minister of Defence in 2003, while there is "no credible threat to this country" (Dáil 561:1312) immediately arising from international terrorism, the fight against it is one in which, according to Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Ireland "will continue to play its part to the fullest in tackling" (Dáil 541:94).

Internationally, the Defence Forces have a nearly 50-year record of peacekeeping and peace support in overseas operations, ranging across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In 2007 more than 850 troops were dedicated – through several multilateral mechanisms (UN, NATO and EU) – for assignment to overseas missions. Significantly, the participation of Irish troops in such operations is highly valued at both official and public levels. These missions are also popular with the Defence forces themselves – with some estimates calculating that more than 70 percent of Irish troops have served overseas in one or another capacity (MacDonald 1997).

As outlined above, and since the end of the Cold War and after the 2001 attacks on the United States, Irish security and defence policy has come under renewed scrutiny.

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The State is understood to be seeking to adapt itself to a new security environment that, it is argued, is based less on national or even collective defence and much more upon mechanisms designed to deliver collective security. In amidst this changing environment, the international security architecture is also seen to be evolving with the UN, NATO and European Union all facing new challenges. While the UN is said to remain the central multilateral focus for an Irish contribution to international security, there are claims that regional actors such as NATO, OSCE and the EU have their own roles to play and that Ireland must ensure that it is centrally placed in this new security architecture if it is to maximise its influence and participation therein.

For some, any such analysis must entail a critical, root and branch review of Irish security and defence policy and that this will result in a full commitment to regional security structures, even at the expense of Ireland's 'traditional' neutrality. For advocates of this position, "We must accept the fact that neutrality, as we have known it, is no longer a necessary mark of Irish independence" and that "what was appropriate for the emerging Republic of Ireland in the middle of the last century may not be the best way forward for our modern, confident state" (Seanad 173:1285). In even stronger terms a former Minister of State for European Affairs argues that the "farcical eulogising of 'neutrality'" must end and that the "pretence of Ireland's neutrality should give way to a debate on the form and content of a European common defence that includes Ireland" (Mitchell 2005).

Others, however, insist that neutrality as currently conceived and expressed (non-membership of military alliances and therefore of NATO and any common EU defence) is entirely consistent with a full and whole-hearted engagement in international and regional security structures. According to Minister of State for European Affairs, Dick Roche, TD "Ireland's policy of military neutrality remains viable in the context of the new security challenges… [and] fully relevant in circumstances where the emerging challenges have moved from traditional defence towards crisis management." (Seanad 173:1310).

Policy Challenges: UN, NATO and EU

In facing what is argued to be a new security environment and an evolving security architecture, a number of challenges have arisen to confront Irish policy makers, commentators and the broader public.

The first such challenge is making an appropriate response to changes in the ways in which the UN pursues multilateral security – and, in particular, the use of military forces in peace support missions. As noted above, for nearly fifty years Ireland has been centrally engaged in UN peacekeeping operations. This has entailed an Irish commitment to more than 40 UN-commanded missions, involving 39,836 tours of duty – four times the total size of the Irish Defence Forces – and resulting in the deaths of 82 Defence Force personnel (Defence Forces 2005).

However, the UN has been presented with what are argued to be its own new realities arising from its post Cold War experience. In 1992 the UN's 'Agenda for Peace' foresaw a more robust and interventionist role for UN military missions, and no longer assumed that UN forces would have to operate with the consent of parties to a dispute (Boutros-Boutros Ghali 1992). The deaths of more than 40 UN peacekeepers in Somalia in 1993 paid tribute to that ambition. The UN's subsequent failures in the former Yugoslavia 1992-1995 – and in particular the July 1995 massacre of approximately 8,000 men and boys at Srebrenica – further underscored the limitations of traditional UN commanded operations. In 2000, the UN published a critical analysis of its own peacekeeping operations conducted by a 12-member expert panel under the Chairmanship of former Algerian Foreign Minister, Lakhdar Brahimi (Brahimi 2000). This report argued, *inter alia*, that the traditional UN peacekeeping model was inadequate to address the tasks being presented to the UN. A major evolution in UN peacekeeping practice subsequently resulted, with the UN shifting its focus to regional security organisations as being the agents to carry out UN mandated missions. Moreover, those missions were more complex and now relied upon a more robust force structure – giving them the capacity to intervene forcibly in support of UN mission goals.

The Irish State responded by opting into these newly emerging structures. Some 50 Irish military police, for example, were contributed to the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) in July 1997. This was a UN-mandated operation in support of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement but it was commanded and operated through NATO. This raised a number of queries not least of which was how could an Irish Government "countenance the sending of Irish troops to serve under NATO command in Bosnia and still claim that Ireland has not abandoned its renowned policy of active neutrality" (Dáil 476:1089). The response from the Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined the emerging dilemmas for traditional UN contributors in that the SFOR operation was "an important expression of the new mutually reinforcing and co-operative security architecture that is developing in Europe" and that as a long-standing "advocate of co-operative approaches

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to security", Irish participation would "be a concrete example of our commitment to inclusive co-operative security in Europe" and would "enable Ireland to experience directly the new approach to European peacekeeping" (Dáil 476:1090).

Critics insisted, however, that by buying into this 'new' model of peacekeeping "the UN's role has been usurped by NATO" and that effective international peacekeeping could only be properly assured by strengthening the UN rather than participating in ad hoc mechanisms which had the effect of marginalising the UN system (Dáil 507:865). Instead, it was argued, the Irish priority should be given to the UN's own Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS) to which the Irish Government had committed a potential maximum of 850 troops and also to SHIRBRIG – the Danish-sponsored UN Standing High-Readiness Brigade, to which Ireland was an observer.

As the UN moved towards using regional security and defence organisations as the subcontractors for some of its peacekeeping and peace 'making' operations, a second challenge for Irish foreign policy quickly arose. This was how Ireland could and should relate to the core transatlantic and European security and defence organisation, NATO.

By 1961 the Minister for Foreign Affairs viewed Ireland's non-membership of NATO as a "contribution which Ireland can make in international affairs" by playing its part, free from alliances, in "reducing tensions between States, and in forwarding constructive solutions for the sources of such tensions" (Dáil 189:461). This also facilitated the sending of Irish troops on UN peacekeeping missions to locations where "combat troops of nations belonging to NATO and other military blocs are not acceptable" (Dáil 189:462). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, questions on the prospects for NATO membership were dismissed on the basis that a decision had been reached in 1949 and that the Government had no intention to revisit the issue. By 1988, the Government no longer relied upon that earlier decision nor did it invoke partition as any part of its explanation. Instead, the Minister for Foreign Affairs now noted that "Ireland's policy of military neutrality necessarily implies non-membership of military alliances such as NATO" (Dáil 382:1028).

In its own evolution following the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Alliance first revised its strategic concept in 1991 and then in 1992 offered itself as a means for multilateral peacekeeping missions first under the auspices of the OSCE and later for the UN. At the same time, NATO's relationship with former Warsaw Pact adversaries was changing, as membership demands from states in Central and Eastern Europe multiplied. NATO began now to straddle the line between being a structure for the collective defence of its members and taking on many of the attributes of a regional collective security actor.

In 1994, with the launch of its 'Partnership for Peace' initiative, the Alliance sought to square that particular circle in what was characterised by one US Ambassador to NATO as a 'two-for-one' deal: offering both an antechamber to full membership for those that sought it as well as a structure designed to facilitate confidence-building measures and collective security among NATO members and non-members in Europe.

For Irish policy makers, this evolution posed something of a dilemma. Non-membership of military alliances – and specifically of NATO – had become, over time, the very definition of Irish neutrality. Now, NATO was taking on tasks and characteristics of a collective security organisation, working with both the OSCE and UN in a new European security environment.

Initially, NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative was characterised by the Irish Government simply as a "new form of co-operation" in the evolution of Europe's security architecture (Dáil 437:2094). On the publication of the 1996 foreign policy White Paper, however, the Government sought consideration of whether or not Ireland should participate in "this co-operative initiative which the vast majority of OSCE member states have already joined" and which had already "assumed an important role in European security co-operation, particularly in such areas as training for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations" (Dáil 463:1284). Opposition to the 'NATO-sponsored' and 'ill-named' organisation centred upon the view that it represented a kind of "second hand membership of NATO" (Dáil 436:1294-1296). A future Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, went so far as to insist that such was the gravity of any proposed link to NATO that Irish participation in the Partnership for Peace could only be legitimately secured by a consultative referendum. Anything else he insisted would be "a serious breach of faith and fundamentally undemocratic" (Dáil 436:1322).

While Irish troops served under NATO command in the Balkan SFOR operation – which was itself denounced by Green MEP Patricia McKenna as "an attempt to get us into Partnership for Peace by the back door" (*The Irish Times* 23 January 1997) – the Government was nonetheless unable to secure agreement from all parties within its own governing coalition to pursue participation. The Minister for Foreign Affairs underscored his own support for the Partnership and insisted in early 1997 that the issue was being kept under constant review (Dáil 474:961). With the General Election of 1997 and subsequent change of Government to a Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrat coalition, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs (Fianna Fáil's Ray Burke, TD) assessed Partnership for Peace as he had when in Opposition, as representing a second class membership of NATO which would fundamentally compromise Ireland's military neutrality (Dáil 480:899).

This analysis changed within weeks with the appointment of a new Fianna Fáil Minister for Foreign Affairs (David Andrews TD) just weeks later. His position soon shifted from one in which Irish participation was "not a tenable proposition" (Dáil 480:1504) to one where he looked forward "to an open and well informed debate on Partnership for Peace in the House in due course" (Dáil 487:974). This provoked vigorous political exchanges not only on the principle of joining the NATO-sponsored security framework but also the means by which such a decision was to be made, i.e. with or without a consultative referendum. Following a preliminary Dáil debate in January 1999, publication by the Government of an explanatory guide and the June 1999 European Parliamentary elections, the Government decided in favour of joining. By resolution of the Dáil on 9 November 1999 Irish participation in the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was agreed.

While Irish participation in NATO-specific operations – whether under a UN or OSCE framework – has been problematic, similar challenges have emerged in the 2000's as NATO and the European Union have developed bilateral agreements, procedures and even institutional links so as to coordinate between them on the use of military forces. Such links have been justified officially on the basis that the EU "…is likely to remain dependent on NATO infrastructure and transport capacity, as the UN-mandated operations such as SFOR and KFOR have shown" (Dáil 533:998). These links have, in the eyes of at least some critics, created a situation in which the Union has become a subset of NATO and that the Union's own foreign and security policy agenda is indistinguishable from that of the Atlantic Alliance. This has the obvious implication for Irish security and defence policy that participation in EU structures and operations is seen to draw Ireland closer towards the NATO alliance and is argued to further erode Irish neutrality.

This then is the third policy challenge – the construction and development of a European Security and Defence Policy within the European Union.

While the original European Community treaties contained no reference to defence – or indeed to foreign policy – it has been noted earlier that considerable effort was made in the early 1960s by the Irish Government and the Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, to underline Ireland's political commitment to the European project while at the same time making it clear that membership of the Communities had no immediate impact upon neutrality. According to the Minister for External Affairs, Patrick Hillary, speaking in 1970, "there is no question of making any military commitments at any place. We have not been requested to do so. There is no question of our doing so." But, nonetheless, he went on, from the point at which a common European defence might emerge in the

future "we would defend Europe if the defence of Europe became necessary" (Dáil 246:1373).

That formulation gave rise to considerable and ongoing scepticism, particularly since, by the time EC membership negotiations actually opened, the member states of the then European Communities had established a process of foreign policy cooperation which came to be titled European Political Cooperation (EPC). According to future President (but then Senator) Mary Robinson in 1972, these informal political commitments were "evolving an external policy for the Community so that Europe will speak with one voice" (Seanad 72:570). Such an eventuality, according to the Minister for External Affairs was "an ideal to which the Government fully subscribe and for which I believe—in fact, we are certain—there is a ready response in the Irish nation as a whole" (Dáil 247:2068). Others were not so sure.

For Senator and Professor John A. Murphy, "membership (of a military alliance) is inevitable and implicit in our continued participation in the European Political Cooperation talks and in the harmonisation of foreign policy which is an increasing tendency in the Community". Such concerns were also evident in a 1981 parliamentary debate during which a newly installed Fine Gael-Labour coalition Government took issue with its immediate Fianna Fáil predecessor as to how much ground had been lost in defending neutrality within EPC. For the incoming Taoiseach, Garret FitzGerald, the former Foreign Minister, Brian Lenihan, had "put this country's position (on neutrality) at risk… which has required considerable efforts by this Government to retrieve" (Dáil 330:310).

The proposed formalisation of EPC as Title III of the Single European Act in 1986 gave rise to further political debate, as it was alleged that the treaty potentially represented "a serious erosion of Irish neutrality" (Dáil 365:2173) and one which could "certainly be interpreted as posing a challenge to our neutrality" (Dáil 370:1922). For the Fine Gael Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter Barry, however, the Treaty's provisions posed "no threat to this country's sovereignty, neutrality or ability to take independent decisions on foreign policy matters" (Dáil 365:2174). Despite its parliamentary passage as an international treaty, a court challenge was launched and, following defeat at the High Court, the plaintiff won on appeal before the Supreme Court. There it was held that Title III purported to "qualify, curtail or inhibit the existing sovereign power to formulate and to pursue such foreign policies" and that it was "not within the power of the Government itself to do so" (Supreme Court 1986 No. 12036P). The Government was thus forced to present the Single Act before the electorate as an amendment to the constitution.

Subsequent European Treaty changes were equally contentious in the area of security and defence policy. The 1993 Maastricht Treaty established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and gave a treaty base to its associated decision making structures. For its part, the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty provided for the progressive framing of a Common Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) that, it was argued, could deliver humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking – the so-called Petersberg Tasks. The 2003 Nice Treaty added little of substance to either CFSP or ESDP but it did provide a treaty base to the new Political and Security Committee (COPS) whose role was to offer policy recommendations and to manage CFSP/ESDP on a day-to-day basis on behalf of EU ministers in the General Affairs and External Relations Council.

For some, these treaties – individually and collectively – threatened the bases and substance of Irish neutrality. They represented the culmination of "a sustained effort to transfer decisions on foreign and security policy to Europe" (Worker's Party 2005) as "Irish neutrality has been progressively and systematically eroded by successive EU treaties" (Dáil 553:1014). Indeed, the referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty alone was deemed to be "our last chance to avoid the complete abandonment of Irish neutrality" according to Patricia McKenna MEP (*The Irish Times* 8 July 1997). For others, however, these treaties were a pragmatic response to Europe's new security challenges and were fully consistent with the tradition and practice of Irish security and defence policy to date. Additional safeguards – such as the 2002 constitutional amendment precluding Irish participation in a European common defence – was designed to underline that fact.

Of particular concern over time has been the evolution of a relationship between ESDP and NATO. The involvement of NATO in ESDP is understood to be rooted in the fact that in fulfilment of its own security agenda (the Petersberg Tasks above) the Union is likely to have to rely upon the transportation, intelligence and communications infrastructure of the North Atlantic Alliance – unless it is either to act without such infrastructure or is to attempt to obtain its own. Detailed arrangements, under the so-called 'Berlin Plus' framework have been put into place so as to allow for the use of NATO assets by the EU. These arrangements include a coordinating role for the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, on the allocation of NATO resources for a specific EU-commanded operation and the creation of links between NATO and EU military planning units. For critics "the Irish Government is steadily being sucked into the NATOfying of the EU under the guise of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions...Ireland's neutrality is on a crash course with Fortress Europe" (Fox 1996). For

the government, these arrangements are seen as "a necessary dimension of ESDP" but they are also governed by the principles of "non-discrimination between member states and [the] autonomy of decision-making by both organisations" (Dáil 533:998).

The European Union's Rapid Reaction Force (EURRF) is the military framework that gives substance to the ambitions behind the ESDP. Initiated at the 1999 EU Helsinki Summit, it was declared to be partially operational in October 2004. The initial aim was to have available a full force complement of up to 60,000 soldiers which could be deployed to theatre within 60 days and sustained there for up to one year. That target was subsequently adjusted to the creation of up to 13 battlegroups, each of which would comprise about 1,500 troops, and which would include combat and service supports. These battlegroups are said to be designed to be deployed within 15 days and sustained in the field for at least 30 days. Since 2004 EU-commanded military forces have been engaged in a number of significant operations. These include those in Macedonia (Operation Concordia), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Operation Artemis) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Operation Althea). The last of these represented a transfer of command from NATO's SFOR operation to the EU (Althea-EUFOR) of the 7,000 multilateral troops deployed in support of the Dayton Peace Process. Irish Defence Force personnel participated in two of these operations – but were precluded from participation in Operation Concordia since this operation did not have formal UN Security Council authorization.

This necessity for UN authorization arises from the so-called 'triple lock' on Irish peacekeeping. This requires a Government decision, Dáil authorisation and a UN Security Council mandate for the participation of more than 12 armed Defence Forces personnel in international peace support operations. The Defence (Amendment, No. 2) Act 1960, which provided for the deployment of Irish troops overseas, was drafted at a time when UN peacekeeping missions were of a specifically 'police' nature and when it was assumed that the UN would raise such forces on its own behalf. The Act was amended in 1993 deleting a reference to "the performance of duties of a police character" so as to enable Irish forces to participate in the UN's military mission to Somalia (UNOSOM II). The 1960 Defence Acts still require, however, that such missions are "authorised or established by" the UN. As a result of a 1999 Chinese veto in the UN Security Council, such authorisation was not forthcoming and the UN was able only to indicate its 'strong support' for the EU's mission in Macedonia. This was judged to be insufficient by the Attorney General in providing for Irish participation.

In July 2006, the Dáil passed the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2006 which provided for further legislative changes to facilitate Irish participation in EU Battlegroups and

particularly for training 'under arms' overseas. The Government had earlier indicated its willingness to join the proposed Nordic Battlegroup, led by Sweden. In November 2006, the Swedish Government extended an invitation to Ireland to contribute with 80-100 troops alongside Sweden, Norway, Finland and Estonia. It is proposed that these forces will comprise an EOD/IEDD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal) contingent with its own security detail, together with staff posts at the Battlegroup's Operational and Force Headquarters in Northwood, UK. The Irish Government subsequently signed a memorandum of understanding and Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) with its partners and the UK. Irish troops began training in the Autumn of 2007 in preparation for the Nordic Battlegroup going 'on-call' for six months from January 2008. The Irish Government insists that the 'triple lock' does apply to Irish participation in any Nordic Battlegroup operation.

Europeanisation?

There is a well-established academic literature that claims that the collective policy making machinery of the EU exerts a profound influence over the content and policy making structures of the Member States – to the extent that this influence has been characterised by the name 'Europeanisation'. This term has become increasingly popular and is widely used in the study of the European Union today. Radaelli (2006) traces the concept back to the 1970s and 1980s. An early definition was provided by Ladrech (1994) who considered it to be a process that shapes politics to degree that European dynamics become a part of national politics and policy-making. One important aspect of Europeanisation is that it assumes that the process of European integration exists and therefore the questions that scholars ask with regard to Europeanisation are different from those in the European integration literature. As Radaelli notes Europeanisation is therefore "post-ontological" (2006:58). Questions about how and why member states are involved in European integration are not being addressed, instead Europeanisation "...is all about bringing domestic politics back into our understanding of European integration..." (id.). Green-Cowles and Curtis (2004a) argue similarly in their overview over theoretical approaches to the European Union. They maintain that research is currently in a phase in which the existence of the EU is taken for granted and the major focus is no longer how or why it came into existence. Instead research has moved from concentrating on EU policies

and processes to "boundaries, identity and meaning of the Euro-polity" (id.:301). Therefore, Radaelli argues that "Europeanisation provides a theoretical lens on the effects of integration on domestic political structures".

With regards to security and defence, however, there would appear to be a gap in the literature. In this area of research not much work has been done. One exception is the study by Bastien Irondelle, who shows that even without clear EU policies French military policy has changed along EU lines (2003). According to him "(...) the question of the Europeanisation of military policy evokes a paradoxs." (id.:209), not just because this area is the least integrated but also because defense is directly linked to national sovereignty. Irondelle points out that most specialists in the areas of Europeanisation as well as military policy would consider any attempts to show a connection between the two as 'irrelevant' (ibid.). In his opinion, however, "(...) the European dimension is one of the key factors taken into account by the member states when defining their military policy" (ibid.).

Irondelle insists that Europeanisation is relevant for research dealing with national military policy. He argues that links between Europeanisation and integration exist and that they are more dialectical than unidirectional. The Europeanisation of security and defence policy is thus possible through two different channels: "the impact of general political integration and that of progressive sectoral integration" (ibid.: 211). According to him it is necessary to analyse the framing of normative structures in the domestic context in order to find any signs of Europeanisation. Through this "(...) 'framing', Europeanisation follows a cognitive logic by changing the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors" (ibid.:212). Therefore, despite the lack of institutionalisation of military policy within the EU framework, a Europeanisation effect can still take place and its most likely path is to change the norms and beliefs of main actors in the field.

Based on the above empirical outline, the scope for Europeanisation in the Irish case is arguably limited. A security and defence policy that resisted the alignment pressures of the Cold War and which continues to be exercised by the nuances of the NATOness of the Partnership for Peace is clearly not a policy that bends to conventional winds of change. At the same time however, the twin impacts that Irondelle has identified offer considerable scope for a more profound analysis – one that looks towards both the general impact of EU membership as well as the very precise and highly significant impact of sectoral integration. In this latter category we are looking at the aspirations, interests and ambitions of Irish Defence personnel, those of officials within the Defence

and Foreign Affairs Departments. More especially we are considering the values and norms of behaviour which set the parameters for daily policy discussions and debate and which – it may be argued – are increasingly framed within a European – and specifically an EU context.

The academic literature suggests that there is a lively debate in the field of European Foreign and Security Policy as well as on the concept of Europeanisation. Meanwhile, the European Union has extended its formal competencies in many policy areas outside of the economic field in the past fifty years. It has also created an organizational structure whose main goal is to coordinate foreign policy responses of member states and to create a comprehensive position of the EU towards the outside world. The development of a European military arm would have been unthinkable a few decades ago.

But the changes in the security environment and the emergence of new types of threats has made this cooperation possible – even arguably inevitable. It has taken some Member States a long time to realize that their old defence structures were not well equipped for the new situation and some still seem to have difficulties with this reality.

However, since the enemy has changed, the military forces that are responsible for defence and security cannot remain the same. Whether or not military change is always visible, it has taken place in most European countries and it is certainly evidenced in the Irish case. The missions and requirements that the Irish Defence Forces face have been transformed and in order to keep up they have had to undergo their own painful transformation. The question is whether these changes have been influenced by the changed security environment, national political pressure and/or whether other aspects like EU membership and future developments of the Union have played a role in this as well.

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