



Submission on National Security Strategy



ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

SUBMISSION

NATIONAL SECURITY ANALYSIS CENTRE

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND

1. **Introduction.** The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) welcomes the Government's decision to develop the inaugural National Security Strategy. As part of the national consultative process, albeit with a restricted timeframe of 25 days within the festive season, ARCO acknowledges the opportunity, of advancing the constructive views of its membership for due consideration by the Department of An Taoiseach.

2. **Line of Departure.** ARCO, whose membership reflects a considerable reservoir of expertise and experience within the realm of defence, and national and international strategic issues, previously submitted comprehensive papers concerning the White Paper on Defence, and the White Paper on Foreign Policy and External Relations. In the context of this particular consultation process, ARCO submission is primarily focused on its understanding of strategy, and the Defence Forces posture within the domain of the National Security Strategy.

3. **National Security Strategy**

- a. The key objectives of national security are to maintain the freedom and territorial integrity of Ireland, coupled with Ireland's ability to pursue legitimate interests at home and overseas. As a nation state, one of the principle functions of the State is the protection of Irish citizens, its territory, institutions and infrastructure against any perceived threat, or potential risk.
- b. Whereas Ireland's National Security Strategy is a national responsibility, the State's strategy should be informed by, and complement the European Union's Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (2016), and its associated strategies covering areas such as Internal Security, Energy Security and Maritime Security.
- c. From a strategic perspective, a National Security Strategy provides for the Government's usage of all instruments of power, including economic, diplomatic, informational, justice and military, in order to secure national security objectives. These instruments are complementary. Universally, nations employ them in



varying combinations as components within National Security Strategies.

- d. One such instrument - military power, provides the Government with options in delivering national security objectives based on the policy objectives of the political leadership. Accordingly, politicians and senior Government officials should fully understand the application and modalities of military strategy, doctrine, force structure, capabilities, operations and limitations.
- e. ARCO envisages that Ireland's National Security Strategy will derive from an analysis of the contemporary operating environment, will identify strategic objectives based on Ireland's values and interests, and subsequently provide for the means to achieve these objectives from the optimum instruments of power.
- f. ARCO contends that National Military Strategy is subordinate to National Security Strategy. In this context, National Military Strategy outlines the application of the Defence Forces to achieve national security objectives. Both should outline the Government's strategic posture on security and defence.

4. National Cyber Security Strategy – December 2019

- a. Ireland's first National Cyber Security Strategy was approved by Government and published in July 2015. ARCO notes that the Minister for Communications launched the second National Cyber Security Strategy on 27 December, 2019.
- b. The process included the establishment of sector specific engagements groups, and an extensive 3-month public consultation process which concluded on 01 May, 2019.
- c. The comprehensive strategy identifies, inter alia, strategic risks, hybrid threats, objectives and systematic measures to protect Ireland and to further develop the cyber security sector.
- d. While the promulgation of the strategy is to be welcomed, from a doctrinal perspective, one would imagine that the National Cyber Security Strategy should derive from a National Security Strategy.

5. Format of ARCO's Submission

- a. Whereas a wide range of security issues falling under the domain of defence are discussed in this submission, the format follows the order of the four questions circulated by the National Security Analysis Centre on 05 December:
 - Principle Threats (Risks) to Ireland's National Security,



- National Security Strategic Goals (Objectives),
- Relevance of Traditional National Security Policies and Approaches, and
- Required Strategic Capabilities Approaches (Means).

b. Referenced documents are attached as Annex A.

Principal Threats to Ireland's National Security

6. **Threats.** ARCO, based on its members' experiences and expertise, advances some realistic threats arising from the prevailing security and defence environment, and for strategic purposes moving beyond the assigned timeframe of 2020 - 2025. Threats to the European Union, to European interests, and to the wider security environment, are also threats to Ireland. For the purpose of the National Security Strategy, these threats will require shortlisting. In some texts on strategy, the preferred term "risk" is used.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activists' turbulence and destructive power• Asymmetric threat across land, sea, air, cyber and space domains• Chemical pollution• Chemical or biological incident, or assault, in a civilian environment• Climate change and biodiversity• Competition for scarce natural resources• Cyber space security• Departure of UK from EU• Disruption to trade: sea lines of communication• Environmental degradation• Emergencies and national disasters• Energy security• Environmental Warfare (Long Term)• Espionage• Extremism• Focused cultures• Food shortages, contamination, sabotage• Future direction and stability of EU• Global warming• Globalisation• Hybrid warfare, including election interference, disinformation, media manipulation, cyber activities and radicalisation of the vulnerable in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instability in Northern Ireland• Invasion (Remote)• Lethal violence by nonconformists• Major pandemics• Migration and integration• Narcotic operations• Nuclear contamination• Organised crime• Poverty• Proliferation of weapons• Rebalancing of global power• Regional conflict• Security of offshore infrastructure• Severe weather effects• Subversive endeavours and activities• Sustained economic downturn• Strategic power projection• Terrorism• Transnational criminal organisations• Undermining international and regional institutions• Unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) as a platform for offensive actions• Weak governance in third countries
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7. **Cyber Warfare.** Within the national and international environments, hostile attacks on digital technology, critical infrastructure, data centres, networks, electoral systems, information systems, digital economy and public sector data, are increasing the need



for collective security, regional cooperation and crisis management, availing of military and police capabilities. Within Ireland's National Security Strategy, cyber enabled attacks compromising, disrupting or destroying this environment, must be identified as a major elevated risk (threat) to the State's security and economy.

8. **Acts of Terrorism.** Domestic and international terrorism remains a security challenge. Acts of terrorism are becoming more asymmetric, extreme, international and autonomous, with access to increasingly sophisticated instruments and weaponry, thus requiring effective intelligence, international cooperation and deployable military and police capabilities. ISIS is likely to re-emerge in the short to medium term. Acts of terrorism must be identified within Ireland's National Security Strategy as a key risk (threat).
9. **Lines of Communication.** In evaluating threats (risks), consideration must be afforded to the fact that the State is a three-dimensional entity, with land, sea and air dimensions to its sovereignty. The trans American – European sea and air lanes are in close proximity to Ireland. As an island state, with an open trading economy, Ireland's national security must take cognisance of the State's Lines of Communications. Ireland is highly dependent on external trade and its reliance on the unimpeded movement of trade and goods. Maritime based transportation accounts for 95% of the value of imported and exported goods. Ireland's significant reliance on sea Lines of Communications and limited port infrastructure, presents a potential risk to the State that has been amplified by the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union on 31 January 2020. The risk could be compounded by a variety of events such as industrial disputes, physical attacks on port infrastructure or shipping, and cyber-attacks against port logistics, navigation aids, and maritime ICT systems.

National Security Strategic Goals

10. Values and Interests

- a. National Security Strategic Goals should derive from Ireland's intrinsic and enduring values and interests.
- b. Values includes domestic order, equality and justice, way of life, welfare of our citizens and national security.
- c. Ireland advances its national interests in order to maintain the nation's survival, to attain an acceptable degree of security and influence, to promote its international status, and to develop its economic wealth.
- d. The State's freedom of action to pursue and promote its national and international interests must be safeguarded.



11. **Terminology.** Within the context of the National Security Strategy, the term “objective” rather than the term “goals” is the preferred designation. ARCO’s recommended objectives are offered below.

12. **National Environment**

- a. The protection of Irish sovereignty, its territorial, political, economic and cultural integrity, and the preservation of the freedom, security, well-being, and welfare of its citizens.
- b. The maintenance of peace, security and stability throughout the island of Ireland, coupled with the successful implementation of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement and the associated sustained peace, and enhanced reconciliation process.

13. **International Environment**

- a. International peace, stability and world order, as promoted by the United Nations Charter and the European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy.
- b. International relations founded on international justice and morality, democracy, the pacific settlement of disputes by international arbitration or judicial democracy, and the application of international law.

14. **Regional Environment.** A favourable European environment based on common political, economic, security, heritage and cultural interests, and the maintenance of regional co-operation and stability, through the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme.

15. **International and Regional Elements.** Ireland’s support for:

- a. Arms control, disarmament, convention on cluster munitions, non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons,
- b. Human rights, eradication of hunger and poverty, promotion of trade, tourism and investment,
- c. The ethos of confidence building and cooperative security, the settlement of conflict by peaceful means, and a willingness to participate in military and civilian Peace Support Operations.



16. **National Commitment.** Ireland's commitment to national sovereignty, national defence, national security, international security and regional security.
17. **Defence Commitment.** Demonstrate Ireland's willingness and its capability to deter aggression, and to defend Ireland's territorial, political, economic and cultural integrity, with a credible all-arms conventional military force as an instrument of Government Policy.

Relevance of Traditional National Security Policies & Approaches for 2020 – 2030

18. Defence Policy

- a. In the context of international norms, Defence Policy provides political control, strategic direction, consistency, assign priorities, prescribes military capabilities and resources, and justifies the efficient and effective employment of military and civil defence capabilities to fulfil the responsibilities assigned by Government.
- b. Whereas the Government has produced two White Papers on Defence (2000 and 2015), the next iteration of this process should be the promulgation of a formal National Defence Policy.
- c. Defence is a core responsibility of a nation state. Informed by sound and structured military advice, Defence Policy is an expression of the nation's intention to defend its sovereignty. Defence Policy involves all Government policy falling under the remit of the defensive aspects of national security. Some overlap exists between the policies of other Government Departments such as Justice, and Foreign Affairs and Trade. The overall objective of Defence Policy is to ensure the defence of the State, the safeguarding of its national interests and values, and the implementation of Ireland's international security commitments under the UN Charter and the EU's Treaties.

19. International and Regional Organisations

- a. Engagement in international and regional organisations shape Ireland's National Security Strategy.
- b. Implementing a vast range of international obligations, Ireland remains a valued and influential member of the United Nations Organisation, a proactive Member State of the European Union, a significant member of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and an active participant in the Europe-Atlantic Partnership Council (NATO's Partnership for Peace).



- c. Reinforcing Ireland's commitment to international peace and security, currently 595 Defence Forces personnel are deployed overseas in 13 countries, on 14 missions authorised by the United Nations Security Council, serving under the auspices of either the United Nations, the European Union, NATO's (PfP), or OSCE.
- d. Reinforcing its commitment to collective security, Ireland participates in the regional defence and security environment in areas such as:
 - European Union's Permanent Political and Military Structures, Defence Agency, Permanent Structured Cooperation, Battlegroups, and the Satellite Agency,
 - OSCE's High Level Planning Group in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and
 - NATO's Connected Forces Initiative, Partnership Goals, Planning and Review Process, Operational Capabilities Concept, and Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

20. **Partnerships**

- a. Through dialogue, balanced support, special arrangements, and effective framework agreements, Ireland should continue to work with core partners, including our closest neighbours, to enhance the ability to monitor air and maritime space, participate in EU battlegroups, and to counter common threats such as terrorism, cyber enabled attacks, hybrid warfare, cross border crime, smuggling, and human trafficking.
- b. Such partnerships have the potential of enhancing cooperation and fostering common understanding within the defence and security domains.

21. **Defence Posture**. Ireland's Defence Posture should reflect a commitment to collective security, coupled with a combination of deterrence and defence.

- a. Whereas independent of a military alliance continues to prevail, this Defence Posture is supportive of international and regional security cooperation, in accordance with national and international law, and the provisions of the United Nations Charter and European Union Treaties.
- b. This Defence Posture requires a substantial increase in the historic financial investment in defence capabilities, which is currently the lowest in the European



Union at 0.3% of GDP.

- c. Within the European Union, Estonia is the highest with 2.4%, Greece, 2.0%, UK 1.8%, France 1.8%, Cyprus 1.5%. EU average is 1.3%. NATO's target is 2.0% of GDP.

22. EU Common Defence

- a. Ireland will not adopt any decision to move to a common defence, or ratify any future Treaty which would involve a departure from the traditional policy of "military neutrality", unless it has first been approved by the Irish people in a referendum.
- b. Nevertheless, Ireland is obliged to have an appropriate moral commitment to collective security within the European Union, especially in the areas of cyber security, terrorism and hybrid warfare.

23. Military Neutrality. It is unlikely that in the short to medium term Ireland will become a full member of NATO.

- a. The retention of the term "military neutrality" is not a prerequisite for advancing Ireland's core security values and interests such as arms control, disarmament, human rights, rule of law, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, confidence-building settlement of disputes by peaceful means and a willingness to participate in UN authorised Peace Support Operations.
- b. Nevertheless, the concept of "military neutrality" is limited, flawed and outdated.
- c. As experienced in recent years, cyber enabled attacks and hybrid warfare do not respect Ireland's "military neutrality" posture.
- d. Defence Forces capabilities have been used, and will be continued to be used, in defence of terrorism and cyber enabled attacks, including the sharing of information with the European Union.
- e. Accordingly, it is prudent to re-examine the concept of "military neutrality" within the domain of National Security Strategy, thus providing the optimum defence posture for peacetime, conflict and war.
- f. In order to reflect on the diplomatic, security and defence changes that have taken place both internationally and regionally, and in particular the evolving nature of risks and threats, Ireland should now move away from the outdated concept of



“military neutrality” towards:

- In peacetime a posture of non-alliance and collective security with full commitment to the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and NATO’s Partnership for Peace, and
- Falling back on articles 28.3.1 and 28.3.2 of the Irish Constitution in times of war.

24. **Overseas Deployments – Triple Lock Mechanism.** Overseas deployments conducted by the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána and Irish Aid, are a key element of the State’s foreign, defence and security policy.

- a. Participation in Peace Support Operations should remain a sovereign decision. However, the associated timeframe for rapid deployable operations, such as the evacuation of Irish or EU citizens, may not facilitate United Nations authorisation.
- b. Likewise, any permanent member of the United Nations Security Council can veto a Peace Support Operation.
- c. Accordingly, the advantages to Ireland in retaining the Triple Lock Mechanism, in particular in ensuring the international legitimacy of contemporary Peace Support Operations, do not merit the retention of the present clause pertaining to United Nations authorisation.
- d. This clause should be deleted from the mechanism, or alternatively modified to incorporate United Nations or European Union authorisation.

Required Strategic Capabilities

25. **Terminology.** Within the context of the National Security Strategy, the technical term “means” rather than the term “capabilities” is the preferred designation. The “ways” are prescribed in subordinate strategies such as the National Military Strategy. ARCO’s recommended “means” are offered below.

26. **Readiness to Respond.** The greatest risk to Ireland is that the national or regional security and defence environment will change faster than the Government can obtain the capacity and capabilities associated with its political, diplomatic, economic, justice and military instruments of power, to address a threat to the nation’s



sovereignty, territorial integrity, values and interests, or to address environmental and humanitarian emergencies.

27. **Deterrence**

- a. Deterrence is both a physical process and a matter of perception.
- b. The aim of deterrence is to preserve the “Steady State” (peacetime) by facing a potential adversary with a clear risk that the repercussions of a threat of aggression would outweigh any conceivable gain, and that the use of offensive action by the adversary is not a rational course of action.
- c. Deterrence is relevant in times of peace, conflict and war. For example, in peacetime, European nations, including Ireland, are now experiencing cyber-attacks and hybrid warfare.
- d. Successful deterrence will depend on international recognition of Ireland’s current policy of “military neutrality”, its association with the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, coupled with the possession of readily available, credible and expandable Defence Forces.
- e. From an Irish perspective of non-membership of a military alliance, the maintenance of sufficient military force to offer an effective modern deterrence is financially inconceivable, especially in the absence of an immediate conventional threat.
- f. Nevertheless, other threats prevail – an issue for strategic risk assessment within the context of preparing a National Security Strategy.

28. **Bottom Line Up Front.** Prudent financial investment and strategic understanding is required in competencies and capabilities areas such as:

- a. Capability development, command, control and communications, strategic and operational planning, early warning systems, strategic analysis, effective intelligence resources including exchange of data,
- b. Military advice, robust decision-making procedures, Force protection, survivability, mobility, interoperability,
- c. Security cooperation, operational readiness, evaluation of security and aid resources, deployable military and security assets, sustainable operational lift, supplies at appropriate readiness to deploy, and efficient logistics.



29. **Command and Control.** Power to delegate command and authority is exercised by Government, and from time to time, through and by the appropriate Minister.
- a. In recent times, Ireland’s national security architecture was radically expanded.
 - b. Components include:
 - Council of Defence (1924, last convened in August 1985),
 - National Security Committee (1974), National Civil Aviation Security Committee (1974),
 - Government Task Force on Emergency Planning (2001), National Emergency Coordination Centre (2002),
 - National Cyber Security Centre (2011), Computer Security and Incidence Response Team (2015),
 - Cabinet Committee F - National Security (2017), Interdepartmental Group on Security of Ireland’s Electoral Process and Disinformation (2017), and
 - National Security Analysis Centre (2019).
 - c. With the proliferation of these “security components”, clear lines of command, control, governance, management and responsibilities are necessary, coupled with cross-cutting efficiency, economy of effort, synergy and synchronisation among various Government Departments.
 - d. Mutual support should be reflected in doctrine, strategies, concepts and procedures, catering for both policy and operational roles.
30. **Collective Defence - NATO.** It is envisaged that Ireland will continue to depend on the umbrella of NATO’s collective defence, including the active participation by the United States of America in this alliance, to shield against any strategic threat to the State.
31. **Collective Defence – European Union.** As a Member State of the European Union, Ireland must have the necessary capabilities to defend itself, and abide by its commitments, if requested, for mutual assistance and solidarity as prescribed in the Treaties. Ireland continues to be actively engaged in the European Common Security and Defence Policy.



32. Strategic Defence Capability

- a. As a sovereign, independent and democratic state, Ireland has an obligation to maintain credible Defence Forces as a national institution, for the security and defence of the State, the safeguarding of its national interests and values, and maintaining international obligations.
- b. The lack of a credible military force has the potential of undermining the nation's standing in international affairs, and its ability to encourage external trade and investment.
- c. Within the framework of National Security Strategy, the use of a military resource as an instrument of Government Policy has many applications.
- d. The Defence Forces fulfil a unique role by providing the Government with policy options in the provision of a range of military capabilities and resources for deployment both at home and overseas. Currently, these roles are prescribed in the White Paper on Defence (2015).
- e. In order to demonstrate its determination to defend its sovereignty and safeguard its national interests, Ireland must retain a core military capability on a contingent basis, in order to fulfil these obligations through the medium of regional security cooperation, deterrence and defence.
- f. As an all-arms conventional land, air and maritime defence capability, the Defence Forces must be maintained and sustained, at the appropriate critical mass and operational readiness, and capable of expansion, if and when required.
- g. Force design should balance the mix of capabilities required by all three components – Army, Naval Service and Air Corps.
- h. In addition to the provision of an all-arms contingent capability, the Defence Forces contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, to collective security, and continue to provide Aid to the Civil Power, Aid to the Civil Authority, and support to Government Departments, Agencies and Local Authorities.
- i. For overseas deployment, in support of Government policy, the Defence Forces must retain the required capability development, and operational readiness, especially in the areas of leadership, interoperability, protection, firepower, mobility, communications, survivability, equipment, training,



education and sustainability.

- j. The Reserve Defence Forces should be retained with both Army and Naval Service personnel, with full integration with Permanent Defence Force units. Favourable consideration should be afforded to the establishment of an Air Corps Reserve.

33. **Maritime and Air Space Control.** Monitoring and controlling Ireland's maritime and air space for deterrence, defence and economic purposes, thus denying its use to unauthorised intruders, requiring appropriate detection and interception capabilities.

34. **Key Strategic Requirements (Sample)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agile and Credible Defence Forces• Air & Maritime Surveillance, Deterrence & Policing• Air Defence• Combat Radicalisation & Recruitment• Command and Control• Counter Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear• Counter Cyber Enabled Attacks• Counter WMD Proliferation Measures• Counter Terrorism Measures• Digital Capabilities to Secure Data, Networks and Infrastructure• Identify and Prioritise Risks• Information Operations (Awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intelligence Functions• Interceptor Aircraft• Long Range Primary Radar System• Maritime Deterrent & Patrol Flotilla• Maritime Mine and Counter IED Measures• Multipurpose Jet Transportation• Planetary Security• Protection of Data and Intellectual Property• Special Operations• Strategic Planning• Strategic Lift• Transportation Security
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Annex A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Documents sourced during the preparation of this submission, included those listed below:

- ARCO's Submission: White Paper on Defence Policy, October 2013
- ARCO's Submission: Foreign Policy and External Relations, February 2014
- White Paper on Defence, August 2015
- A Global Strategy for EU's Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016
- United States National Security Strategy, December 2017
- Department of Defence and Defence Forces Strategy Statement 2017 – 2020, January 2018
- Department of Defence's Risk Assessment for Ireland, July 2018
- UK's Third Annual Report, National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence, July 2019.
- National Risk Assessment, An Overview of Strategic Risks, July 2019
- White Paper on Defence Update, December 2019
- National Cyber Security Strategy 2019 - 2024, December 2019