

# Finding the Words:

The IIEA Handbook of Irish  
Security and Defence Terminology



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# Introduction

Ireland potentially finds itself in the most rapidly changing and most complex security landscape in its history. Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine has returned large-scale kinetic conflict to Europe, while non-conventional and non-kinetic threats, such as cyber attacks, continue to threaten the economic prosperity of the State and the security of its citizens.

At the time of writing, Ireland has begun to engage in a more comprehensive and broader conversation about how the State should pursue its security and defence policies. In June 2023, the Government hosted the National Consultative Forum on International Security Policy which discussed the complex and challenging security picture which has increasingly come to characterise the 21st century.

As the security landscape becomes more kaleidoscope and dynamic, the frameworks, vocabulary and instruments for understanding it have become denser and more opaque for many. This handbook is an exercise in clarifying the terminology surrounding Ireland's security policy, making the complexities of Irish security and defence more accessible to the public, and providing a usable glossary of terms for those wishing to participate in the ongoing national discussion about the future of Ireland's security and defence policies.

**Opening the  
Conversation:  
How to Talk  
about Defence  
and the role of  
the Defence  
Forces in  
Ireland**

## Air Corps

The role of the Air Corps under the Defence Act is to contribute to the security of the State by providing for the Military Air Defence of its airspace.<sup>1</sup>

## Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)/ Aid to the Civil Authority (ATCA)

One of the core functions of the Defence Forces, Aid to the Civil Power/Aid to the Civil Authority entails the defence forces providing assistance to An Garda Síochána, who have primary responsibility for law and order in the State including the protection of the internal security of the State, when requested by Government.<sup>2</sup>

## Army

The Army is a standing force which provides the primary capabilities for joint military operations at home and combined military Peace Support Operations abroad. The army's primary domain of operations is land, but it is not limited to this domain and can operate in other strategic domains when required to do so by Government.<sup>3</sup>

## Assistant Chief of Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff represents the Defence Forces General Staff. Responsibilities also include - but are not limited to - organisational transformation, capability development, risk management, corporate governance, and industrial relations.<sup>4</sup>

## Battlespace

The Battlespace concept provides a means of conceptualising conflict in time and space which includes integrating the Sea, Air, and Land domains in conjunction with Space and Cyber, while also incorporating non-kinetic factors such as influence operations, psychological operations<sup>5</sup> and other measure which fall short of war.

## CBRN

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear

1. Military.ie *Air Corps*. Available at <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/air-corps/>

2. Military.ie *Aid to the Civil Power*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/what-we-do/#anchor-2>

3. Military.ie *Army*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/army/>

4. Military.ie. *Assistant Chief of Staff*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/defence-forces-board/assistant-chief-of-staff/>

5. Jahara Matisek 2022 *The New Battlespace is Here*. US Army War College. Available at: <https://war-room.armywarcollege.edu/articles/new-battlespace/>

## Chief of Staff/Chief of Defence(CHOD)

A Chief of Defence has the authority to command and control the armed forces and is typically the principle military advisor to the Minister of Defence. The Chief of Defence is normally responsible for the general conduct of the Armed Forces and the efficient, effective, and economical management of its activities and resources. In the Irish context, the Chief of Staff remains the principal advisor to the Minister of Defence. However, s/he does not command responsibilities that are not part of his/her assigned duties from the Minister, though legislative changes are being discussed to invest command powers with the Chief of Staff.<sup>6</sup> See Figure 1 in Appendix.

## CIS

CIS refers to Communications and Information Services. The CIS Corps in the Defence Forces is responsible for the development and operation of Information Technology systems in support of Defence Forces tasks.<sup>7</sup>

## Commissioned Officer

Commissioned officers in the Defence Forces are the leaders, decision makers and managers in the Defence Forces who lead frontline troops. Commissioned Officers will have attended the Defence Forces Cadet School.<sup>8</sup>

## Deputy Chief of Staff (Ops)

The Deputy Chief of Staff (Ops) supports the Chief of Staff. He is the General Staff's liaison with the Defence Forces operational units including infantry brigades, cavalry, artillery, engineering, intelligence, CIS and others.<sup>9</sup> See Figure 1 in Appendix.

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6. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

7. Military.ie *Communications and Information Services Corps*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/army/army-corps/cis-corps/>

8. Military.ie *What is an Army Officer*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/careers/army-careers/what-is-an-army-officer-cadet/>

9. Military.ie *DCOS Operations*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/defence-forces-board/dcos-operations/>

## Deputy Chief of Staff (Sp)

The Deputy Chief of Staff (Support) supports the Chief of Staff. They are responsible for managing personnel, logistics, infrastructure, finance, legal, and other combat service support functions for the Defence Forces.<sup>10</sup> See Figure 1 in Appendix.

## Deterrence

Deterrence is the threat of force in order to discourage a potential aggressor from taking unwelcome action.<sup>11</sup> It is largely conceptualised to operate through two forms; deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Deterrence works to discourage hostile action by changing the cost-benefit calculus for would-be aggressors.

## Deterrence by denial

Deterrence by denial strategies seek to deter an action by making it infeasible or unlikely to succeed, thus denying a potential aggressor confidence in attaining its objectives.<sup>12</sup>

## Deterrence by Punishment

Deterrence by punishment refers the threat of severe penalties such as the use of force should an attack occur. The focus of deterrence by punishment is not direct defence of the contested area, but rather threats of wider punishment that would raise the cost of an attack.<sup>13</sup>

## Flag Officer

The Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Service sits outside of the General Staff. They are responsible for the operations of the Naval Service.<sup>14</sup> See Figure 1 in Appendix.

## GOC Air Corps

The General Officer Command the Air Corps sits outside of the General Staff. They are responsible for the Operations of the Air Corp.<sup>15</sup> See Figure 1 in Appendix.

10. Military.ie *DCOS Support*. Available at: [DCOS Support - Defence Forces \(military.ie\)](https://www.military.ie/DCOS-Support-Defence-Forces)

11. Mazarr M 2018 *Understanding Deterrence*. Rand. Available at: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND\\_PE295.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf)

12. Mazarr M 2018 *Understanding Deterrence*. Rand. Available at: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND\\_PE295.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf)

13. Mazarr M 2018 *Understanding Deterrence*. Rand. Available at: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND\\_PE295.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf)

14. Military.ie *Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/naval-service/foc-naval-service/>

15. Military.ie *GOC Air Corps*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/air-corps/goc-air-corps/>

## Intelligence

The activities (Secret and Open) – targeting, collection, analysis, dissemination and action – intended to enhance security and/or maintain power relative to competitors by forewarning of threats and opportunities.<sup>16</sup>

## Intelligence Cycle

The Intelligence Cycle is the process of developing raw information into finished intelligence for policymakers to use in decision making and action. The intelligence cycle is comprised of five stages: planning and direction, collection, analysis, dissemination, and feedback.

## Irish Defence Forces

The Irish Defence Forces or Oglagh na hEireann are the armed forces of Ireland. They are comprised of the Army, which organises and trains ground forces; the Air Corps which is responsible for the training and organising airborne units; the Naval Service which is responsible for monitoring Ireland's maritime areas and the Reserve Defence Forces, which is comprised of an Army and Naval Reserve.

The Defence Forces' primary tasks are:

- Defend the State against Armed Aggression
- Aid to the Civil Power
- Multinational Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Relief
- Maritime Security and Fishery Protection
- Performing Ceremonial Functions<sup>17</sup>

## ISTAR

ISTAR refer to Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

## Marsur

MARSUR refers to a long-running Maritime Surveillance project undertaken by the European Defence Agency. It provides dialogue between European maritime information systems and aims

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16. Gill P. & Phythian M. 2016 *What Is Intelligence Studies?*, The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs, 18:1, 5-19

17. Military.ie *What We Do*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/what-we-do/#anchor-1>



to improve the common Recognised Maritime Picture by facilitating exchange of operational maritime information and services.<sup>18</sup>

## Military Domains

Military Domains are a broad means of categorising the areas where military operations are conducted. At present, most militaries conceptualise there to be five military domains which can be contested: the three traditional domains of Air, Land and Sea; as well as the new and emergent domains of Space and Cyber.<sup>19</sup>

## Naval Service

The Naval Service is the State's principal seagoing agency with a general responsibility to meet the State's maritime security and defence requirements. It is tasked with a variety of defence and other roles. Defence roles include defending territorial seas, deterring intrusive or aggressive acts, conducting maritime surveillance, maintaining an armed naval presence, ensuring right of passage, protecting marine assets, and countering a blockade if required. The Naval Service must also be capable of supporting Army operations by sea lift and close naval support.<sup>20</sup>

## Non-Commissioned Officer

Non-commissioned officers are military officers who do not hold a commission. Non-commissioned officers serve many roles, amongst them is to oversee and train enlisted soldiers and advise the commissioned officer corps. Typically, enlisted soldiers become non-commissioned officers through promotion.<sup>21</sup>

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18. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

19. Heftye E. 2017 *Multi-Domain Confusion: All domains are not created equal*. The Strategy Bridge. Available at: <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/5/26/multi-domain-confusion-all-domains-are-not-created-equal>

20. Military.ie *The Naval Service*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/naval-service/>

21. Britannica 2023 *NonCommissioned Officer*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/noncommissioned-officer>; and NATO 2021 *General Ruggiero Highlights NATO Adaption and the Future of Warfighting as NATO Non-Commissioned Officers Gather to Discuss Troop Readiness Towards 2030 and Beyond*. Available at: <https://www.act.nato.int/article/general-ruggiero-highlights-nato-adaptation-and-the-future-of-warfighting-as-nato-non-commissioned-officers-gather-to-discuss-troop-readiness-towards-2030-and-beyond/>

## RAP

A Recognised Air Picture is a complete listing of all aircraft in flight within a particular airspace. This picture is usually made up of both civilian and military radar inputs so all aircraft, including those without active transponders, are detected, identified, and tracked.<sup>22</sup>

## Reserve Forces

The Defence Forces Reserve is a part-time component of the Defence Forces comprising of volunteers who participate in the Defence Forces in their spare time. The Defence Forces Reserve support the work of the Permanent Defence Forces in their primary tasks.

## RMP

A Recognised Maritime Picture is a complete listing of all vessels within a particular area of the sea. Navies can achieve a Recognised Maritime Picture through patrols with both vessels and aircraft, utilising drone and satellite technologies as well as employing coastal radar systems.<sup>23</sup>

## R&T

Research and Technology

## Special Forces (Army Ranger Wing)

The Army Ranger Wing is Ireland's Special Operations Force and conducts military tasks which go beyond the area of responsibility of the conventional armed forces. This can include conducting offensive operations behind enemy lines such as raids, ambushes, sabotage and intelligence gathering to supporting An Garda Síochána with counterterrorism operations.<sup>24</sup> In line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Defence Forces, The Army Ranger Wing will be renamed to IRE SOF.<sup>25</sup>

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22. NATO 2021 *NATO Agency Begins Project to upgrade recognised air picture exchange*. Available at: <https://www.ncia.nato.int/about-us/newsroom/nato-agency-begins-project-to-upgrade-recognized-air-picture-exchange.html>

23. EDA *Maritime Surveillance (MARSUR)*. Available at: [https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/maritime-surveillance-\(marsur\)](https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/maritime-surveillance-(marsur))

24. Military.ie *Army Ranger Wing*. Available at: <https://www.military.ie/en/who-we-are/army/arw/>

25. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

## Standoff Capabilities

Standoff capabilities are usually missiles or bombs which are capable of striking a distant target. Cruise missile and other short-range ballistic missiles would fall into this category.<sup>26</sup>

## Strategic Airlift Capacity

A Strategic Airlift Capacity enables modern militaries to transport people, equipment and supplies over large distances usually from the home country or an alternate friendly country, located outside of the theatre of operations, into the theatre of operations.

## Tactical Airlift Capacity

The deployment of military resources, personnel and equipment into a specific operational location with high precision.

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26. Itamar Lifshitz and Ayal Meents 2020 *The Paradox of Precision: Nonstate Actors and Precision Guided Weapons. War on the Rocks*. Available at: <https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/the-paradox-of-precision-nonstate-actors-and-precision-guided-weapons/>

**The Blurred  
Lines between  
Green and Blue:  
How to talk  
about National  
Security**

## An Garda Siochana

An Garda Siochana are the national police service of Ireland.

## Disinformation and Misinformation

Disinformation refers to the intentional spreading of inaccurate information with the intent to deceive and potentially to cause harm.<sup>27</sup>

## Emerging Disruptive Technology

Emerging Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) refer to technologies which have the potential to cause significant changes to not only modern life, but also to modern conflict. These technologies can include artificial intelligence, autonomous weapon systems and quantum computing.<sup>28</sup>

## Emergency Response Unit

An Garda Siochana's Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is a specialist armed support unit within the police service.<sup>29</sup>

## Exclusive Economic Zone

An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is an area of an ocean which extends up to 200 nautical miles or 370km immediately offshore from a country's land coast.<sup>30</sup> Countries maintain exclusive rights to the exploration and exploitation of natural resources in their EEZs (except where these rights are pooled within a supranational organisation, for example fisheries in the European Union).

## Grey Zone

The Grey Zone refers to inter-state conflict or competition which occurs in the space between peace and war, and below the threshold of violence. Misinformation, election interference, cyber-attacks and intimidation in the form of military exercises and threats are employed incrementally to undermine the integrity and potency of a target state. More information on the Grey Zone can be found on the IIEA's website [here](#).

27. UN *Countering Disinformation*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/countering-disinformation#:~:text=What%20is%20disinformation%3F%20While%20misinformation%20refers%20to%20the.can%20be%20spread%20by%20state%20or%20non-state%20actors>.

28. NATO 2023 *Emerging and Disruptive Technologies*. NATO. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_184303.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_184303.htm?selectedLocale=en)

29. Garda.ie *Special Tactics and Operations Command*. Available at: <https://garda.ie/en/about-us/our-departments/garda-national-crime-security-intelligence-service1/special-tactics-operations-command/>

30. UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Available at: [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/parts.htm](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/parts.htm)

## Hybrid Warfare

Hybrid warfare can be defined as a strategic level effort to shape the governance and geostrategic orientation of a target state which includes all actions, up to and including the use of conventional military forces.<sup>31</sup> These efforts can range from the use of military force to the employment of disruptive cyberattacks, espionage as well as the use of disinformation.

## National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

The Irish National Cyber Security Centre was founded in 2011. It is part of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and is responsible for advising and informing Government IT and Critical National Infrastructure providers of current threats and vulnerabilities associated with cyber.<sup>32</sup>

## National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC)

The National Security Analysis Centre appraises intelligence from An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces, as well as from other organisations, and advises the Government on National Security matters. It is a part of the Department of An Taoiseach.<sup>33</sup>

## Risk

Risks can be defined as the probability and severity of loss linked to hazards. A risk is a scenario followed by a policy proposal for how to prevent this scenario from becoming real,<sup>34</sup> and can loosely be described as a threat which has not become realised but could be under specific conditions and in a certain context.

## Threat

A threat is a specific danger which can be precisely identified and measured on the basis of the capabilities an opponent has to realise its hostile intent.<sup>35</sup>

31. Clark 2020 *Russian Hybrid Warfare*. Institute for the Study of War. Available at: <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/russian-hybrid-warfare>

32. NCSC *The National Cyber Security Centre*. Available at: <https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/>

33. Conor Lally 2019 *Former Justice Official Heads State Security Threat Agency*. Irish Times. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/former-justice-official-heads-state-security-threat-agency-1.3949615>

34. Rasmussen M.V. 2006 *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge University Press.

35. Rasmussen M.V. 2006 *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge University Press.

**Accounting for  
the Specific  
Character:  
How to discuss  
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and Defence  
Policy**

## Commission on the Defence Forces

The Commission on the Future of the Defence Forces is the largest defence review in the State's history. The Commission was comprised of experts drawn from both within Ireland and abroad. Their report was published in February 2022 and recommended a choice between three levels of ambition which the government could use to benchmark Defence Force Capability. More information on the Commission on the Defence Forces is available on the IIEA's Website [here](#).

## High Level Action Plan (HLAP)

The High Level Action Plan is the governments response to the Commission on the Future of the Defence Forces report outlining which recommendations it chose to accept and its plan for implementing the accepted recommendations. More information about the High Level Action Plan is available on the IIEA's website [here](#).

## Irish Neutrality and the Irish Constitution

The Irish Constitution does not specifically mention Neutrality. However, Article 29 (4) (9) does stipulate that the State cannot participate in common defence arrangements, as opposed to mutual assistance, in line with Article 42 of the Treaty of the European Union (see below). This rules out Irish participation in a common EU defence agreement.

## Level of Ambition One (LOA1)

Level of Ambition One (LOA1) Level of Ambition One involves striving to maintain the current capabilities of the Defence Forces in order to uphold the State's sovereign rights and serving on peace support operations to the same extent as present. The Commission noted that at this level of ambition, the Army would be unable to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a sustained act of aggression from a conventional military force. This would involve spending €1.032 billion annually on defence.<sup>36</sup>

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36. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>



## Level of Ambition Two (LOA2)

Level of Ambition Two refers to building on current levels of capability to address specific priority gaps and to serve in higher intensity peacekeeping missions. This would involve purchasing radar systems to maintain a Recognised Air Picture and significantly strengthening military intelligence and cyber defence capabilities including the creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command. This would involve increasing the annual defence budget to €1.5 billion annually.<sup>37</sup>

## Level of Ambition Three (LOA3)

Level of Ambition Three refers to significantly strengthening the defence capabilities of the State to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe. This would include the improvements from LOA2 and include the purchasing of Jet Combat Aircraft, a large joint cyber defence command and greater funding for the Army Ranger Wing.<sup>38</sup>

## National Consultative Forum on International Security

The National Consultative Forum on International Security Policy was a public Forum held over four days in June 2023. The Forum was intended to engage citizens on Ireland's security policy and involved participation from civilian and military experts and practitioners. It was Chaired by Professor Louise Richardson who wrote a report on the proceedings.<sup>39</sup>

## Permanent Defence Forces Representative Association (PDFORRA)

The Permanent Defence Forces Representative Association represents Defence Forces enlisted personnel in matters of pay and conditions of service.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

38. Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

39. Government of Ireland. *Consultative Forum on International Security Policy*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/e2a6b-consultative-forum-on-international-security-policy/>

40. PDFORRA. *About*. Available at: <https://pdforra.ie/about/>

## Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO)

## Reserve Defence Force Representative Association (RDFRA)

## Triple Lock

The Representative Association of Commissioned Officers Ireland represents commissioned officers within the Defence Forces in matters of pay and conditions of service.<sup>41</sup>

The Reserve Defence Forces Representation Association represents members of the Reserve Defence Forces of all ranks in matters related to pay and conditions of service.<sup>42</sup>

The Triple Lock refers to an amendment made to the Defence Act which governs how and in what context the state can deploy members of the Defence Forces abroad. In situations which are not crisis management missions, training, or representation or where the Defence Forces wishes to deploy more than 12 members of the Defence Forces on a mission, three conditions will have to be met.<sup>43</sup>

They are:

- Government decision
- The assent of Dail Eireann which does not include the Seanad.
- The presence of a UN Mandate.

In November 2023, the Irish Government announced a review of the Triple Lock which could remove the requirement of a UN mandate before deploying forces.<sup>44</sup>

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41. RACO *About*. Available at: <https://www.raco.ie/>

42. RDFRA *About*. Available at: <https://www.rdfra.ie/>

43. Irish Statute Book. *Defence (Amendment) Act 2006*. Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/act/20/enacted/en/html>

44. Conor Gallagher and Sarah Burns 22 November 2023 *Ireland to scrap Triple Lock preventing Irish troops from deployment without UN approval - Tánaiste*. The Irish Times. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/oireachtas/2023/11/22/ireland-to-scrap-triple-lock-preventing-irish-troops-from-deployment-without-un-approval-tanaiste/>

**Cooperating  
with Others:  
How to discuss  
European Union  
Security and  
Defence Policy**

## Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union

## Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD)

## EU Battlegroup

## EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union is the EU's mutual assistance clause. Once activated by an attacked Member State, all other Member States have to provide assistance in response. The legally binding Irish Lisbon Treaty Protocol stipulates that it is "for Member States – including Ireland, acting in a spirit of solidarity and without prejudice to its traditional policy of military neutrality – to determine the nature of aid or assistance to be provided."<sup>45</sup> Assistance can range from diplomatic support and medical assistance to civilian or military aid.<sup>46</sup> Article 42.7 has only been activated once, by France, following the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015.

The Coordinated Annual Review of Defence is an EU-wide annual review of defence by EU Member States. It is used to inform the work carried out by the European Defence Agency and to identify opportunities for collaboration.<sup>47</sup>

The EU Battlegroups are military units operating as a part of EU CSDP. Each battlegroup consists of a battalion sized force of 1500 troops and are comprised of contributions from EU Member States.<sup>48</sup> Though originally formed in 2007, and on standby since, they have yet to be deployed operationally.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy is the agreed foreign policy of the EU. Major decisions for CFSP require a unanimous vote amongst Member States, however Member States have the option to constructively abstain to prevent blocking policy development. EU CFSP is chaired by the EU's High Representative and is carried out by the European External Action Service.<sup>49</sup>

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45. European Parliament. *Treaty of the European Union*. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses\\_/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_en.pdf)

46. EEAS 2022. *Article 42(7) TEU – The EU's Mutual Assistance Clause*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/article-427-teu-eus-mutual-assistance-clause\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/article-427-teu-eus-mutual-assistance-clause_en)

47. European Defence Agency *Coordinated Annual Review on Defence*. Available at: <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-card>

48. EEAS *EU Battlegroups Factsheet*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_battlegroups.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_battlegroups.pdf)

49. *EU European Foreign and Security Policy*. Available at: [https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/actions-topic/foreign-and-security-policy\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/actions-topic/foreign-and-security-policy_en)

## EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy is an integral part of the CFSP. Drawing on civilian and military assets provided by the Member States, it gives the EU an operational capacity for missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, crisis management and conflict prevention in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.<sup>50</sup>

## European Defence Agency

The European Defence Agency was established in 2004 in order to improve European Defence Capabilities. Its mandate includes supporting military cooperation among Member States, stimulating defence research and technology while strengthening the European defence industry and acting as a military interface for EU policies.<sup>51</sup>

## European Defence Fund

The European Defence Fund is an EU-wide initiative to support research and technology for military capability in the EU. It is intended to incentivise cross-border initiatives while defragmenting defence spending in the EU.<sup>52</sup>

## European External Action Agency

The European External Action Service is the EU's diplomatic service. It is led by the EU's high representative.<sup>53</sup>

## EU Intelligence and Situation Centre

The EU intelligence and situation centre (EU IntCen) is the EU civilian intelligence agency. It is part of the European External Action Agency and provides strategic analysis based on input from the intelligence services of the Member States.<sup>54</sup>

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50. European Parliament. Common Security and Defence Policy. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/erpl-app-public/factsheets/pdf/en/FTU\\_5.1.2.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/erpl-app-public/factsheets/pdf/en/FTU_5.1.2.pdf)

51. European Defence Agency *Who We Are*. Available at: <https://eda.europa.eu/who-we-are/Mission-andfunctions>

52. EEAS 2021 *The European Defence Fund Factsheet*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DEFIS%20%20EDF%20Factsheet%20%2030%20June%202021\\_o.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DEFIS%20%20EDF%20Factsheet%20%2030%20June%202021_o.pdf)

53. EEAS 2021 *About the European External Action Service*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service_en)

54. EU Intelligence and Situation Centre *About*. Available at: <https://euintelligence.com/europe-an-union-intelligence-and-situation-centre-eu-intcen/>

## **EU Military Committee**

The EU Military Committee is comprised of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States and is part of the European Council. It directs the EU's military activities and gives military advice to the EU's Political and Security Committee.<sup>55</sup>

## **EU Military Planning and Conduct Capability**

The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) is a permanent operational headquarters for EU executive military operations and is part of the EU Military Staff. It is comprised of military officers drawn from EU Member State armed forces.

## **EU Military Staff**

The EU Military Staff (EUMS) provides military expertise and advice within the European External Action Service. It is comprised of military officers drawn from the armed forces of EU Member States.

## **European Peace Facility**

The European Peace Facility is a fund which finances all Common Foreign and Security Policy actions in military and defence areas. The EU has utilised this instrument to provide military assistance to Ukraine and to the African Union.<sup>56</sup>

## **EU Political and Security Committee**

The EU's Political and Security Committee is responsible for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy.<sup>57</sup> It is tasked with monitoring the international context, recommends strategic approach and policy options to the European Council and ensures political control and strategic direction for crisis management operations. It is comprised of Ambassadors drawn from the foreign ministries of the EU member states.

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55. Council of the European Union *European Union Military Committee*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/european-union-military-committee/>

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57. European Council *Political and Security Committee*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/political-security-committee/>

## EU Rapid Deployment Capability

The EU Rapid Deployment Capability builds upon the EU Battlegroup concept. The EU Rapid Deployment Capability forms part of the recommendations made under the 2022 Strategic Compass which would provide the EU with a 5000 strong deployable force for Crisis Management missions.<sup>58</sup>

## EU Satellite Centre

The EU's Satellite Centre (EU SatCen) provides EU decision-makers with intelligence and early warning of potential crises through the use of space-based intelligence collection assets.<sup>59</sup>

## EU Training Mission/ Military Assistance Missions

EU Training Missions and Military Assistance Missions refer to missions undertaken by EU Member States to provide training to the armed forces of partner non-EU Member States at their request. This can include providing training to the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali), where the Malian Armed Forces were trained to combat terrorism in their country, to the EU's Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine, where the EU provides training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. More information about the EU's Military Assistance Mission can be found on the IIEA's website [here](#).

## PESCO

PESCO refers to Permanent Structured Cooperation. It provides a means for EU Member states to engage in cooperation in specific defence projects on shared interests on a voluntary opt-in basis.<sup>60</sup>

## Strategic Compass

The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence is the EU's Security Strategy. Published in 2022, it identified pathways through which the EU can enhance the Union's security. More information about the strategic compass can be found on the IIEA's website [here](#).

58. Council of the European Union 2022 *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

59. European Union Satellite Centre *Our Mission*. Available at: <https://www.satcen.europa.eu/Who%20owe%20are/our-mission>

60. PESCO *Permanent Structure Cooperation*. Available at: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/>

**Coordinating  
with Partners:  
How to Discuss  
the North  
Atlantic Treaty  
Organisation  
and Ireland's  
Relationship  
with it**



## Article V of the Washington Treaty

Article V of the Washington Treaty refers to the mutual defence clause underpinning NATO. Article V outlines that an armed attack against one of more member state shall be considered an attack against all and agree that if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective defence recognised by Article 51 of the UN Charter will take such measures individually and in concert as it deems necessary.<sup>61</sup>

## Joint Expeditionary Forces

The Joint Expeditionary Force is a UK led high-readiness expeditionary force comprised of Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway. Nine of the members are also NATO members, however NATO Membership is not a requirement for membership.<sup>62</sup>

## Partnership for Peace

The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme for bilateral cooperation between NATO and Non-NATO Euro-Atlantic countries.<sup>63</sup> Non-NATO partners can choose priorities for cooperation on a voluntary basis ranging from cooperation in shared areas of interest such as protecting undersea infrastructure to specialised military training. This includes the development of interoperability between forces which is critical for the safe and effective participation of Irish contingents in UN mandated multinational peace support missions. Ireland has been a member of Partnership for Peace since 1999.

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61. NATO 2023. *Collective Defence and Article 5*. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm)

62. UK Strategic Command 2021 *Ready to Respond: What is the JEF?* Available at: <https://stratcommand.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/11/ready-to-respond-what-is-the-jef/#:~:text=JEF%20stands%20for%20the%20Joint%20Expeditionary%20Force.%20It%E2%80%99s,Iceland%2C%20Latvia%2C%20Lithuania%2C%20the%20Netherlands%2C%20Norway%2C%20and%20Sweden.>

63. NATO 2023 *Partnership for Peace Programme*. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50349.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm)

## **North Atlantic Council**

## **NATO Enhance Forward Presence**

## **NATO Standardisation Agreement (StanAg)**

The North Atlantic Council is the primary decision-making body of NATO. It consists of permanent representatives from NATO Member Countries.<sup>64</sup>

The Enhanced Forward Presence is a NATO forward deployed defence and deterrence military force in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. Following Russia's 2014 Invasion of Ukraine, NATO Member State's agreed to deploy forces to areas most likely to be attacked. At present and following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, 8 Multinational Battlegroups drawn from NATO Member State armed forces are part of the Enhance Forward Presence.<sup>65</sup>

NATO Standardisation Agreement is an agreed set of shared standards for the military to enable interoperability amongst NATO Members. Covering areas ranging from processes and procedures to armour, ammunition and rail gauges to the words troops use to communicate with one another, NATO StanAgs provide a common frame of reference for Western Armed Forces.<sup>66</sup> As such, NATO StanAgs also serve as the primary frame of reference for the Irish Defence Forces.

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64. NATO *North Atlantic Council*. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/who\\_is\\_who.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/who_is_who.htm)

65. NATO 2016. *NATO Boosts its Defence and Deterrence Posture*. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_127834.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_127834.htm)

66. NATO 2022 *Standardisation*. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_69269.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69269.htm)

**Ireland's  
Responsibilities  
to the World:  
How to Discuss  
the UN and  
Ireland's Role in  
the Rules-Based  
Multilateral  
Order**

## Article 51 UN Charter

Article 51 of the UN Charter refers to the right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations.<sup>67</sup>

## Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty)

The INF Treaty was an arms control treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union which also applied to the Russian Federation. First agreed in 1987, the INF banned the two nations' nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometres (this did not apply to air or sea launched missiles). In 2019, the agreement collapsed following the United States' withdrawal citing Russian non-compliance.<sup>68</sup>

## New Start Treaty

The New Start Treaty is a 2010 agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation which limits the number of strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550. The treaty also limits the number of intercontinental ballistic missile launchers, submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and heavy bombers which can carry nuclear armaments to 800.

In 2023, Russia suspended its participation in New Start.<sup>69</sup>

## Strategic Nuclear Weapons

Strategic nuclear weapons refers to nuclear weapons with large yields starting from 100 kilotons and which can range into the low megatons (1000's of kilotons). Their intended use is against strategic targets beyond the battlefield such as infrastructure, transport and communications systems and other targets.<sup>70</sup>

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67. United Nations *UN Charter*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-7>

68. Arms Control Association. *The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty at a Glance*. Available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>

69. Arms Control Association *New START at a Glance*. Available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART>

70. Josh Smith 2022 *Explainer: What are 'tactical' nuclear weapons*. Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-makes-nuclear-weapon-tactical-2022-10-12/>

## **Tactical Nuclear Weapons**

Tactical nuclear weapons are of a lower explosive yield to Strategic Nuclear Weapons and are designed for use on the battlefield as part of an attack and possibly near friendly conventional forces. Tactical nuclear weapons typically are of explosive yields ranging from 1 and 50 kilotons.<sup>71</sup>

## **United Nations Disengagement Observation Force (UNDOF)**

The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force is a UN Peacekeeping Mission which is tasked with maintaining the ceasefire between Israel and Syria following the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.<sup>72</sup>

## **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)**

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon established in 1978 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon. In 2006, the Missions mandate was expanded to monitor the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon following the 2006 war.<sup>73</sup>

## **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)**

The MINUSMA Mission was established in 2013 to support the Malian transitional authorities in the stabilisation of the country and in supporting political dialogue, rebuilding the security sector and protecting civilians.<sup>74</sup>

## **UN Peacekeeping**

UN Peacekeeping Missions are deployed to areas of conflict to create the conditions for peace. UN Peacekeepers provide security and peacebuilding to support the conditions for peace. UN Peacekeeping Missions are normally created by the UN Security Council and are guided by three principles: Consent of the parties of the conflict; Impartiality; Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mission mandate. There are at present 12 active UN Peacekeeping Operations around the world.<sup>75</sup>

71. Josh Smith 2022 *Explainer: What are 'tactical' nuclear weapons*. Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-makes-nuclear-weapon-tactical-2022-10-12/>

72. UNDOF *Background*. Available at: <https://undof.unmissions.org/background>

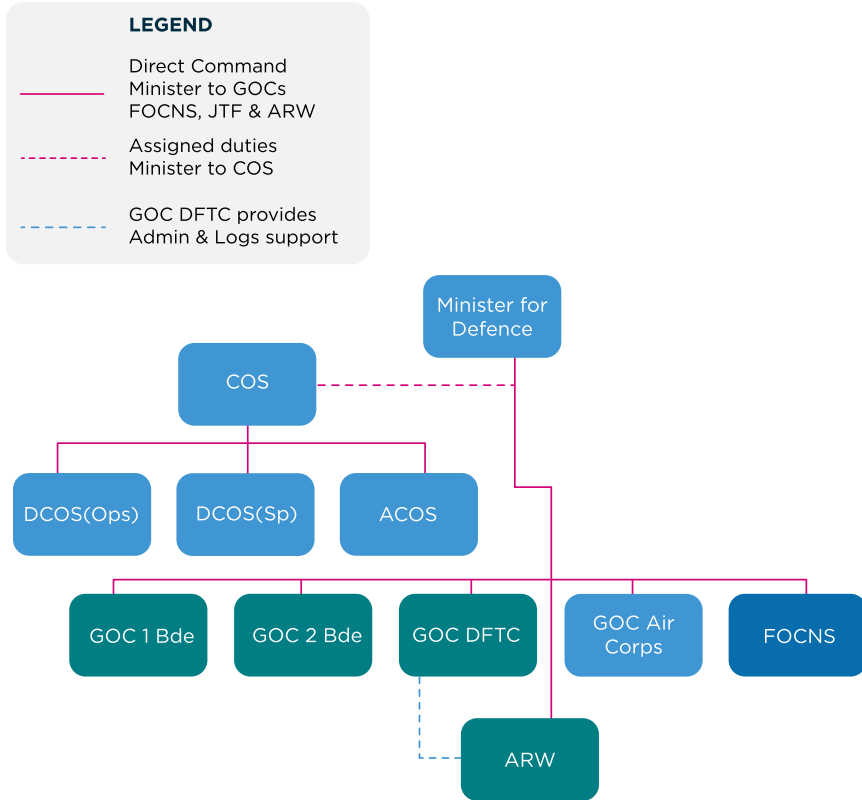
73. UNIFIL *Background*. Available at: <https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-background>

74. MINUSMA *About*. Available at: <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/history>

75. UN Peacekeeping *What is Peacekeeping*. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>

# Appendix

**Figure 1. Organisation of the Defence Forces Command Structure<sup>76</sup>**



- COS:** Chief of Staff
- DCOS (Ops):** Deputy Chief of Staff Operations
- DCOS (SP):** Deputy Chief of Staff Support
- ACOS:** Assistant Chief of Staff
- GOC 1 & 2 Bde:** General Officer Commanding One of the Two Army Brigades
- GOC DFTC:** General Officer Commanding Defence Forces Training Centre
- GOC Air Corps:** General Officer Commanding the Air Corps
- FOCNS:** Flag Officer of the Naval Service
- ARW:** Arm Ranger Wing

76. Based on a graph provided in Commission on the Defence Forces 2022. *Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/eb4co-report-of-the-commission-on-defence-forces/>

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