



Cumann na nIAR-Oifigeach Coimisiúnca

Association of Retired Commissioned Officers

28 December, 2019

National Security Analysis Centre

Department of An Taoiseach

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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 have derived from a National Security Strategy.

5. Format of 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 to the actual submission.

6. **Publication of Submission**. ARCO has no reservation regarding the publication of this submission and accrediting the Association as the author. This covering letter and the submission will be posted on the Association's website, in due course.

Should you require further clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd)

President

The Association of Retired Commissioned Officers



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