



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

IRLJP-01

MILITARY DOCTRINE FOR THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

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STRENGTHEN
THE NATION

“

Óglaigh Na hÉireann will be a joint, agile and fit-for-purpose military force, postured to defend our sovereignty, protect Irish citizens, and secure Ireland's interests

Defence Forces Vision 2030

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FOREWORD BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL SÉAN CLANCY, CHIEF OF STAFF, ÓGLAIGH NA HÉIREANN



Joint Publication (IRLJP) 01 - Military Doctrine for the Irish Defence Forces is an articulation of Defence Forces' philosophical approach to the conduct of military operations. It is the capstone doctrinal publication which exists at the pinnacle of the Defence Forces' hierarchy of doctrinal publications.

Our capstone-level doctrine signifies an evolution in our military thinking, representing a framework to achieve the roles assigned to the Defence Forces by Government. IRLJP-01 Military Doctrine for the Irish Defence Forces focuses primarily on the doctrinal components of Ireland's military activity, and outlines our approach to generating fighting power and conducting military operations. Familiar doctrinal tenets: the manoeuvrist approach and the comprehensive approach, codify a century of operational experience and learning both at home and overseas. The addition of the behaviour-centric approach as a third core tenet acknowledges that people and their interactions are central to understanding and influencing the operating environment. This doctrine also outlines the roles of the Irish Defence Forces and underlines the concepts and functional components of joint operations.

This publication serves as an intellectual handrail as our organisation navigates the journey to becoming a joint, agile and fit for purpose military force. It should be read and understood by all Defence Forces leaders, particularly those operating at the strategic and operational levels. It is also relevant to people employed in Defence, across the wider public service agencies that work alongside the Defence Forces and to our international partners on peacekeeping and peace support operations. It forms an essential foundation for professional military education at all levels to promote and explain the wider functions of the military instrument in defending Irish sovereignty, protecting Irish citizens and securing Irish interests in support of Irish society, the Irish economy, our collective well-being and our territorial integrity.

I encourage you to engage with, understand and practise this doctrine.

S. CLANCY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL
CHIEF OF STAFF, ÓGLAIGH NA HÉIREANN
OCTOBER 2024



PREFACE

Scope

The Irish Defence Forces has a unique culture that is underpinned by the shared values of respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity. This military ethos is the foundation from which the Defence Forces builds an organisation that is professionally trained, competent, appropriately equipped, and capable of meeting the requirements of the Irish Government and confronting the security challenges of the future. It also provides the foundation for the Defence Force's approach to the conduct of military operations domestically and when deployed outside of Ireland.

Purpose

The Defence Forces articulates its philosophical approach to the conduct of joint military operations through military doctrine. Military Doctrine for the Irish Defence Forces is the capstone-level doctrinal publication meaning it sits at the pinnacle of our hierarchy of doctrine publications. It introduces the philosophical concept of military doctrine and its application by the Defence Forces. This doctrine focuses primarily on the doctrinal components of Ireland's military strategy, but it also describes the Irish approach to conducting military activity at all levels. It is formulated and based on our own experience of conducting military operations at home and overseas.

Application

This publication is relevant to all people employed in Defence, across the wider public service agencies that work alongside the Defence Forces and to international partners that operate alongside the Defence Forces on peacekeeping and peace support operations. The doctrine forms an essential foundation of professional military education at all levels to promote and explain the wider functions of the military instrument.

Doctrine

Doctrine is defined as the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. ¹It interprets ideas about operating by combining validated conceptual ideas, and insights and lessons from training and operations into functional contemporary guidance for action. As such, it provides the Irish Defence Forces and its partners with a coherent philosophy, language and framework, essential to support planning and operations. Doctrine provides a foundation of professional knowledge; it does not, and should never, replace the skill, experience, creativity and judgement of military commanders. In short, doctrine is authoritative advice but requires judgement in application.

Structure

IRLJP-01 - Military Doctrine for the Irish Defence Forces is organised into five chapters.

Chapter One – The Strategic Context considers the enduring structure and evolving character of modern conflict. It outlines, in general terms, the changing international security environment and the mechanisms that play a role in mitigating the opposing interests of myriad actors. Finally, this chapter discusses the instruments of power at a state's disposal.

Chapter Two – The Military as an Instrument of National Power addresses the framework within which defence strategy is generated encompassing legal, policy and technological factors. It outlines how the Irish Defence Forces can be employed across the engagement space, highlighting the value of integrating the military instrument with other instruments of national power.

Chapter Three – Understanding the Military Instrument identifies and explains the fundamental characteristics of the Irish Defence Forces, underpinned by the sum of three components of fighting power: the conceptual component, the moral component and the physical component. It describes the factors that influence the process of generating and developing military capabilities.

Chapter Four – The Irish Defence Forces' Approach to Operations outlines the underlying conceptual elements of Defence Forces' military doctrine. These essential elements, defined as the enduring principles of military operations and our doctrinal tenets are fundamental in defining the Defence Forces approach to, and conduct of joint military operations. The chapter outlines how such principles and tenets may be applied by military commanders and their staffs.

Chapter Five – The Utility of the Irish Defence Forces describes the functional components underlying the Irish Defence Forces' vision to become a joint, agile and fit-for-purpose military force. The roles of the Defence Forces are categorised, as they appear in the most recent Defence Policy Review (DPR). The chapter then outlines core principles and factors associated with the conduct and command of joint operations.

¹ NATO Standardization Office (2018), AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.

Linkages

Being sited at the capstone level, this joint publication connects to policy, strategy and operating concepts. While it must be consistent with, and refer to, these documents, they are not covered in detail. Linkages to other doctrine and concepts, where appropriate, will be signposted throughout the text. Figure 0.1 provides an illustrative framework in which the principal doctrinal publications are placed. The illustrative framework is not exhaustive and may be amended according to doctrinal publications sanctioned by the Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations). This doctrine will be reviewed and revised as the strategic context evolves and the transformation of the Irish Defence Forces continues.

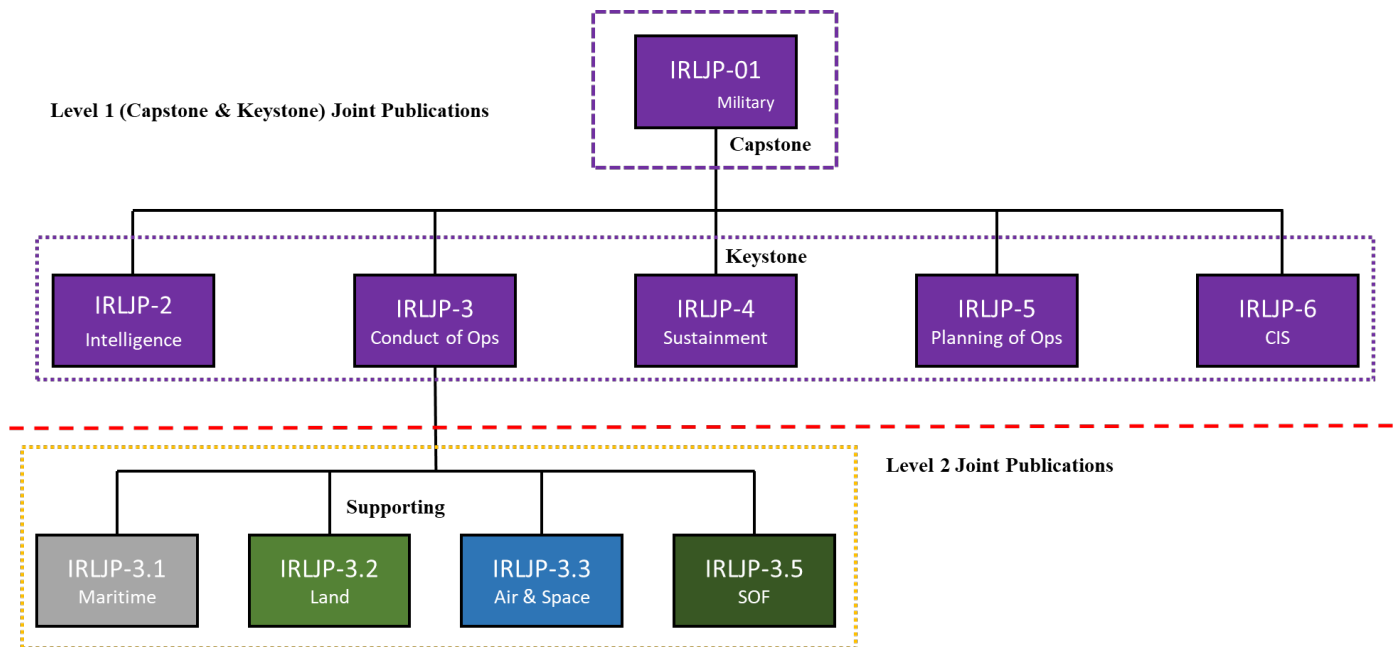


Figure 0.1: The Irish Defence Forces Joint Doctrine Architecture

Acknowledgements

The Defence White Paper (2015) acknowledges the importance of engagement in the international defence and military sphere, to contribute to and benefit from interaction with like-minded partners. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been recognised as the standard-setting organisation for modern military forces. The Irish Defence Forces acknowledges its intellectual debt in preparing this publication to several national publications and external military doctrinal publications.

- AJP-01(Ev1) Allied Joint Doctrine, December 2017, NATO, Brussels, Belgium.
- JDP 0-01 – U.K. Defence Doctrine, 6th Edition, November 2022, Ministry of Defence, London, United Kingdom
- NZDDP-D – New Zealand Defence Doctrine, 4th Edition, November 2017, Wellington, New Zealand
- A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 2022, European External Action Service, Brussels, Belgium
- Defence White Paper 2015 (updated 2019), Department of Defence, Dublin, Ireland
- Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces 2022, Dublin, Ireland
- National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks 2023, Department of the Taoiseach, Dublin, Ireland
- Defence Policy Review 2024, Department of Defence, Dublin, Ireland

The doctrinal team wishes to acknowledge the support and advice from the external review group consisting of Brigadier General (Ret'd) David Dignam, Captain (NS Ret'd) David Barry and Dr. Brendan Flynn (University of Galway). This publication could not have been produced without the continued support of Defence Forces Printing Press and Photographic Section, 105 Sn, Air Corps.



CHAPTER 1

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Chapter one considers the enduring structure and evolving character of modern conflict. It outlines, in general terms, the changing international security environment and the mechanisms that play a role in mitigating the opposing interests of myriad actors. Finally, this chapter discusses the instruments of power at a state's disposal.

Section 1 – Nature and Character of Conflict

Section 2 – The International Context

Section 3 – Instruments of National Power

“

There is deceit and cunning, and from these wars arise.

Confucius

SECTION 1 - THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF CONFLICT

Nature of Conflict

1.1 The fundamental catalyst for conflict and violence is the presence of an exploitable weakness in another party or a perceived imbalance of power. War represents a violent contention of interests between entities. The intrinsic nature of war remains constant—it embodies the confrontation of opposing wills, characterised by “violence, chance, and rationality.” War is considered the ultimate measure for addressing irreconcilable political disputes, and the primary function of national armed forces is to engage in warfighting.²

1.2 The essence of armed conflict, akin to war, is enduring. It fundamentally entails the collision and interaction of opposing human wills, generating a violent dynamic that yields unpredictable environments and results. Unlike a formally declared state of war, there are no definitive criteria for the level of violence required to classify a situation as an ‘armed conflict.’ This determination depends on specific circumstances, but the essential criterion is that the conflict must be extensive in either duration or intensity. Given the axiom that humans are at the centre of all national engagements, it is equally apparent that war, and conflict in a broader sense, is inherently a human activity.

1.3 Conflict involves the interaction of physical, moral, and conceptual forces³, that are often coercive or violent. The physical characteristics of conflict are generally easily seen, understood, and measured by factors, for example, equipment, force ratios and physical objectives seized. In contrast, moral forces are less tangible, challenging to comprehend, and impossible to measure. Forces such as national and military resolve, national or individual conscience, emotion, fear, courage, morale, leadership, and esprit de corps are not easily quantified. Conceptual forces encompass the ability to understand complex battlefield situations, make effective estimates, calculations, and decisions, devise tactics and strategies, and develop plans. While physical forces are more readily quantified, moral and conceptual forces have a greater impact on the nature and outcome of war.⁴

1.4 Understanding the drivers of conflict and violence and motives of actors improves the response of the international community in protecting the most vulnerable and achieving successful outcomes in the long term. The cultivation of a positive military ethos and moral qualities, particularly those related to command, leadership, and ethics remains of paramount importance within the Irish Defence Forces.

Character of Conflict

1.5 War and warfare are not synonymous, neither are conflict and its conduct. Armed conflict, primarily but not exclusively through military means, has a changing character. It is shaped by technological, economic, cultural, and societal changes. Evolutions in the character of conflict can be broadly categorised into four themes:

a. Human dimension.

Given that conflict is a confrontation between opposing human wills, the human dimension is fundamental. It is this human dimension that imparts conflict with its intangible moral factors. Each conflict is shaped by human nature and is influenced by the complexities, inconsistencies, and peculiarities characteristic of human behaviour. As armed conflict is an act of violence stemming from irreconcilable disagreement, it inevitably incites and is shaped by human emotions.⁵ Conflict represents an extreme test of moral and physical endurance and strength. Thus, any comprehensive understanding of the nature of war and armed conflict must consider the effects of danger, fear, exhaustion, and deprivation on those engaged in combat. However, these effects can vary significantly from one situation to another - an action that might break the will of one adversary may instead strengthen the resolve of another. Human will, instilled through leadership, is the driving force behind all actions in conflict. No level of technological advancement or scientific calculation will diminish the significance of the human dimension in warfare.



Figure 1.1 - Conflict is influenced by the complexities, inconsistencies, and peculiarities of human behaviour. (Source: Reuters 2024)

² Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

³ The term ‘moral’ as used here is not restricted to ethics, although ethics are certainly included, but pertains to those forces of a cognitive and virtual rather than tangible nature, as described by Basil Liddel-Hart.

⁴ Napoleon is often quoted as assigning an actual ratio: “In war, the moral is to the material as three to one.”

⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz (1959), *Man, The State, and War*, Columbia University Press.

b. Actions and Reactions

Conflict unfolds as a continuous series of actions, reactions, fleeting opportunities and unforeseen events. Each episode is a temporary outcome of various circumstances, presenting a unique set of challenges that demand an original solution. However, no single episode can be viewed in isolation. Instead, each is intertwined with those preceding and succeeding it -shaped by the former and influencing the latter's conditions. Since conflict is a fluid phenomenon, its conduct necessitates flexibility of thought. Success largely depends on the ability to adapt—to proactively shape evolving events to our advantage and to respond swiftly to constantly changing conditions.

c. Friction

Friction is a collective term for the myriad factors that turn the apparently easy into the difficult and the difficult into the seemingly impossible.⁶ When coupled with the hostile actions of opponents seeking to impose their will, friction complicates military operations making the conduct of war and armed conflict extremely difficult. Friction may also be self-induced, caused by such factors as lack of a clearly defined goal, lack of coordination, unclear or complicated objectives, complex organisations or command relationships, or insufficient capabilities. Whatever form it takes, because conflict is a human enterprise, friction will always have a moral and conceptual, as well as a physical impact.

d. Disorder

Conflict does not unfold in a predictable manner. Unlike historical battlefields, the contemporary operating environment cannot be conceptualised in linear terms. The increased range and lethality of modern weapons have led to greater dispersion of fighting groups and units. Despite advancements in communication technology, this dispersion challenges the limits of effective control. It is unrealistic to expect precise, positive control over events. The most feasible approach is to

establish a general framework of order within the disorder, influencing the overall flow of action rather than attempting to control each specific event. Efforts to fully centralise military operations and exert complete control by rigid hierarchical structures are incompatible with modern conflict characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA).

Continuum of Competition

1.6 Conflict and peace can be viewed as different means to achieve similar ends, rather than inherently opposing forces. It is unlikely for any conflict to unfold solely at a singular point in time. The prevalence, scale, and intensity of conflict may range from inter- and intra-state conflicts, marked by instability and chaos to full-scale war. It may further extend to activities aimed at fostering stability and peace. This continuum shows how competition can vary in degrees and contexts, from the tumultuous to the constructive.

1.7 The concept of a rules-based international order (RBIO) represents a dynamic and evolving set of norms reformed over time by various international actors and events. The RBIO is not a universally accepted or agreed-upon concept, but rather a contested and debated one that reflects different perspectives and interests. In the contemporary security environment, the RBIO has become increasingly challenged by rising authoritarian powers, regionalism and multi-polarity, and the impacts of climate change and global pandemics. These factors expose both global interdependencies and rivalries.



COUNTRIES HAVE NO FRIENDS OR ENEMIES—ONLY INTERESTS.

Thucydides was a mid-ranking officer in the early years of the Peloponnesian War (5th century BCE). He is considered by some to be the first true historian and theorist of international relations. Thucydides viewed history as a platform from which to derive judgment and strategic insight. He was especially interested in the immediate and ultimate causes of war.

His *History of the Peloponnesian War* addresses causality and uses the lens of history to describe universal truths about the world and human nature. In his framework, the factors of mistrust, projection and interest were crucial to understanding the competitive behaviour of states. He illustrates this in the Melian dialogue.

Melios, a small colony of Sparta that refused to join the Athenian empire, engaged in negotiations with the Athenians confident that Sparta would intervene to rescue its subjects. The Athenians derided the Melians' concerns asserting that "right, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." The dialogue concludes with the Melians' refusal to concede, resulting in their total defeat by the Athenians.

The concept serves as a reminder to small states of the risks associated with geopolitical competition and highlights the necessity for strategic foresight and proactive efforts to establish a more harmonious global balance of power.

Thucydides, Landmark Thucydides, ed. Robert B Strassler, 352

6 *Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret.*

1.8 The nature and characteristics of competition undergo shifts, sometimes significant, across different periods and geographical contexts. The methods of competing are virtually limitless. The extent of competition at any given time influences the position of a relationship on the continuum that spans from cooperation, through rivalry and confrontation, to the potential for armed conflict. The boundaries between these phases are intricate, dynamic, and often overlapping. The ‘continuum of competition,’ as illustrated in Figure 1.2, delineates these relationships, providing insight into the dynamic context in which instruments of national power are employed.⁷

a. **Cooperation:**

Cooperation signifies a state where both states and non-state actors collaborate to achieve shared objectives. This alignment often arises when attitudes, priorities, and interests converge. Although cooperation provides an ideal foundation for lasting stability, it may still involve some degree of discord, such as economic competition between actors.

b. **Rivalry:**

Rivalry characterises a state of peace wherein entities have conflicting goals. In international relations, rivalry is commonplace, with most states engaging in competition within the framework of the RBIO. While rivalry is not inherently negative, some states may strategically create rivalry to undermine the status or interests of their opponents. This can include, but is not limited to, applying diplomatic, economic and military pressures on weaker states and regional groupings of states or non-state actors.

c. **Confrontation:**

Confrontation arises when unresolved differences lead adversaries to oppose each other with hostile intent or behaviour, resulting in a state of crisis. Sometimes stemming from misperception or miscalculation, confrontation may also escalate to armed conflict due to intentional obscuring of each adversary’s threshold for escalation.

d. **Armed Conflict:**

Armed conflict occurs when escalation leads to the use of armed force between states or prolonged armed violence between governmental authorities and organised armed groups within a state. The determination of whether a particular intervention crosses the threshold to become an armed conflict depends on the surrounding circumstances.

e. **Grey Zone Activities:**

Grey zone activities are state operations for strategic advantage below the threshold of armed conflict. The image of ‘grey zone’ conveys the ambiguous and gradual nature of the space in the intermediate conflict spectrum between peaceful cooperation and armed conflict. Grey zone activities can undermine political systems, spread discontent, and damage the economy and reputation of a state. These activities, outside the traditional concepts of conventional force, are destabilising and damaging, but also limit the ability of the target state to respond effectively and lawfully.

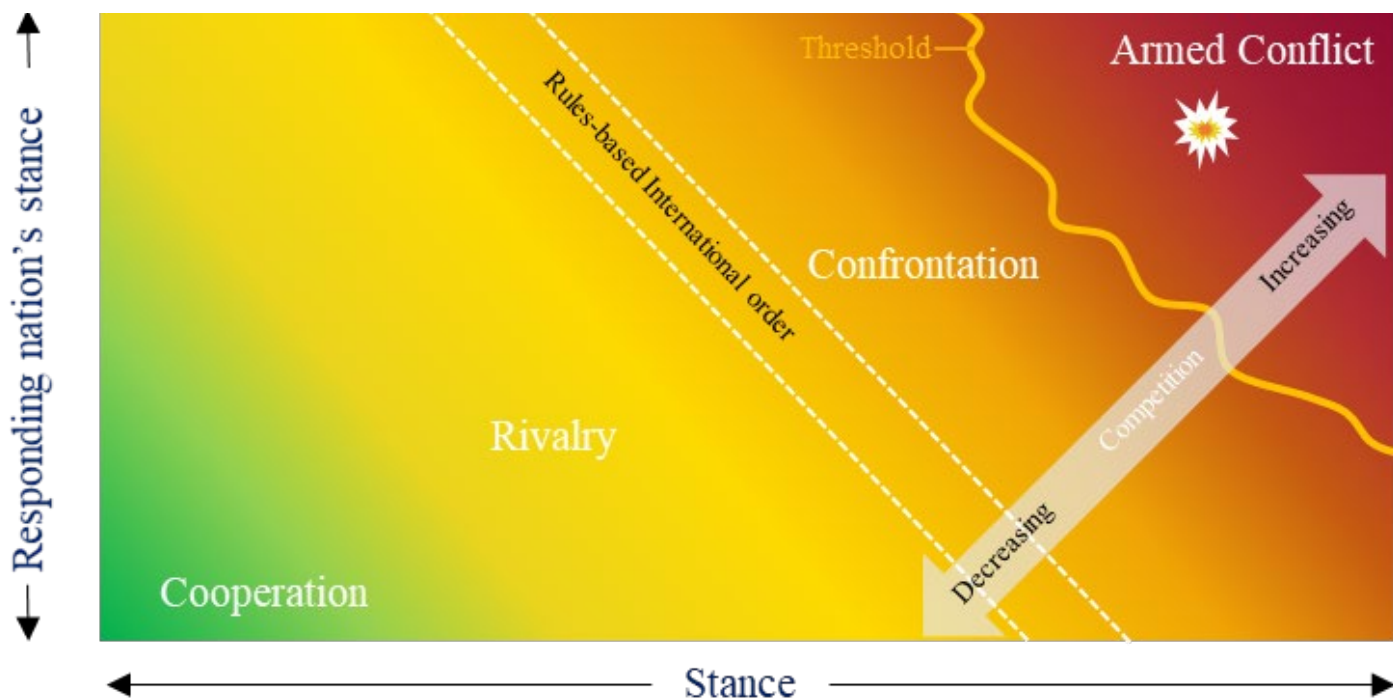


Figure 1.2 - The Continuum of Competition.

7 US Armed Forces (2019), JDN 1/19 - Competition Continuum.

SECTION 2 - INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND TRENDS

1.9 The nature and intensity of competition, at any given time and in any area, reflect the characteristics of the societies involved. This is influenced by the political, military, economic, social, cultural, and technological dynamics of the actors and relationships they share with one another. Traditional distinctions between public and private, foreign and domestic, state and non-state, and virtual and physical realms are increasingly blurred in the contemporary security environment. The continuum of competition highlights that the strategic environment is a complex blend of cooperation, confrontation, and conflict between states, groups within states, and various state and non-state actors. Significant deterioration in relations can initiate a crisis, highlighting the complex, dynamic, and competitive strategic context in which Ireland exists.

International Order in Transition

1.10 As a proactive European Union (EU) member-state, Ireland is a determined supporter of effective multilateralism. The EU's vision is for an open RBIO, based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, universal values and international law. However, systemic competition between major global powers is challenging existing norms and rules. Revisionist powers seek to alter the current international order to reflect their own interests, ideologies and values, advocating for alternative international governance models through adversarial and non-complying behaviours. The return of war in Europe, with Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in 2022, as well as major geopolitical shifts are challenging the EU's ability to promote its vision of multilateralism and defend its interests. The war in Europe has "made it even clearer that we live in a world shaped by raw power politics, where everything is weaponised and where we face a fierce battle of narratives."⁸

1.11 Major nations, as well as actors from Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific may re-assess their own alignment strategies, increasing the relevance of non-aligned states in regional spheres of influence. Thus, the absence of credible and collective international cooperation is likely to exacerbate disruptive effects of the unfolding global challenges. Governments need to understand their role in a changing world order and how to accommodate emerging powers. Failing to adapt risks a polarised, less-stable world with a higher likelihood of conflict. As the economic power of Asia increases, the political and military power of China, and to an extent India, will grow, potentially rivalling that of the United States of America. While Russia and Europe will remain important political actors, their economic and diplomatic influence is likely to reduce. This will make it more difficult for Ireland to operate, co-operate and co-ordinate internationally to bring about our defined economic, political and social goals.⁹

Climate and Resources

1.12 The impact of climate change, driven by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, is reshaping living conditions on the planet and poses existential threats. Rising global surface temperatures, due to increased greenhouse gas emissions, can lead to the increased frequency and volatility of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and resource scarcity.¹⁰



Figure 1.3 - We can expect increased migrant flows from areas where climate change is more severe

1.13 The demand for a coordinated global campaign to address climate change will grow as acute effects are felt from an increasingly volatile climate and concerns develop about an approaching ecological 'tipping point'. A growing world population and increased life expectancy for many are increasing demand on all resources, including food and water, energy and critical raw materials. As climate change accelerates, it is anticipated that regions which are less impacted by climate change or are more resilient to its impacts, can expect increased migration flows from areas where climate damage is more severe.¹¹

8 European External Action Service (EEAS) (2022), *EU Strategic Compass, Forward by HR/VP Josep Borrell*, 4.

9 Department of the Taoiseach (2023), *National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks*. 10

10 NATO Strategic Foresight 2023

11 Department of the Taoiseach (2023), *National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks*. 20

Migration

1.14 Rates of migration are likely to increase as transport becomes easier and cheaper to use and populations in many parts of the global south increase. If managed effectively, migration has the potential to boost the economies of both the host and origin country. However, if badly managed, a lack of integration could lead to fragmented societies and social tension. “Recent increases in the number of migrants; with large numbers of people fleeing the war in Europe and availing of temporary protection, as well as growing numbers of international protection applicants, alongside growing numbers of non-Irish citizens employed in Ireland, underlines the importance of social cohesion and integration efforts.”¹²

Human Security

1.15 Human security will be enhanced as more people escape absolute poverty and have access to education and health care. Technology will lead to medical advances, resulting in fewer people dying from infectious diseases, although the number of people suffering from non-communicable diseases, such as obesity and dementia, are likely to continue increasing. An ageing population is likely to be a key issue in Europe as current models of employment, health/social care and retirement may become unsustainable. Ageing populations will demand increased spending on health care and welfare, stressing national budgets.

1.16 Human empowerment will increase, with unprecedented numbers of people having access to almost limitless information, and more people having the means to define their own identities and maintain relationships with people from outside their immediate community. However, inequalities worsen during periods of crisis and conflict, and if unaddressed, may persist post-conflict. Gender perspectives are integral to Ireland’s analysis of contemporary security, recognising the need for equal participation of men and women for comprehensive and enduring conflict resolution. Ireland remains dedicated to fully implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), both nationally and internationally. The way individuals and communities interact with, and influence, the world around them is evolving, but this may come at the price of more fragmented societies.

Terrorism

1.17 Terrorism remains a significant threat to the internal security of the EU¹³. Like other countries, Ireland and its citizens could be negatively affected by terrorist incidents. Terrorism can have several different motivations and causes, including ideological or religious extremism, and terrorist events can take different forms. The risks arising from terrorist incidents and armed conflicts have “become considerably more relevant in the context of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the threat that this poses to European security and prosperity.”¹⁴ These concerns are also applicable to the increasingly fragile situation in the Middle East through 2023 and 2024.

1.18 Threats to strategic infrastructure, including telecommunications and energy transmission infrastructure from acts of sabotage, have become more pressing. The presence of significant communication and cloud infrastructure in Ireland exposes our country to an additional degree of risk from both state and non-state actors. Across Europe, international cooperation and information sharing channels are well established and continue to be enhanced.¹⁵ The risks to Ireland posed by terrorism and hybrid attacks are “potentially compounded by our having one of the lowest levels of investment in military and defence capabilities within Europe.”¹⁶

1.19 On the island of Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement has delivered a stable peace process that commands overwhelming community support. Nonetheless, certain groups, albeit with very limited levels of community support, remain intent on disrupting the significant progress which has been achieved.

” WOMEN, PEACE & SECURITY

Women’s role in peacebuilding is a crucial one, and has been throughout the ages. At the multilateral level, the absolute importance of the role of women in the prevention of conflict, the building of peace and the transformation of post-conflict societies has been enshrined by the United Nations in a landmark resolution, UNSCR 1325. A watershed moment when the international community recognised the particular impact of conflict on women and girls, this resolution acknowledges that the full participation of women in peace processes is critical to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

Since then, nine further resolutions on the issue have been adopted by the UN Security Council and together form the WPS Agenda. This Agenda recognises both the particularly adverse effect of conflict on women and girls, as well as their critical role in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, mediation, and governance.

President M.D. Higgins 17 February 2022

12 *Ibid*, 20.

13 *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023*

14 *Department of the Taoiseach (2023), National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks. 11*

15 *Department of Defence (2023), National Risk Assessment for Ireland 2023*

16 *Department of the Taoiseach (2023), National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks. 12*

Social Cohesion

1.20 Globalisation brings about contested legal authority between sovereign and non-state bodies, fostering complex networks connecting diasporas and communities of interest. This increases the likelihood of interconnected confrontations involving various state and non-state actors. Changes in the exercise of state sovereignty may occur, leading to greater interdependence between states and non-state bodies and corporations. State authorities may struggle to cope with the rate of change, level of uncertainty and the growing demands of certain cohorts of the population. A lack of transparent governance in areas affected by demographic and environmental change, and potential weaponised narratives could intensify grievances, provoke extremism, and impact social cohesion.

1.21 The spread of mis- and disinformation, including via social media and other digital platforms, has the potential to undermine the state, the integrity of elections, social cohesion, and the functioning of the economy. A lack of trust in Government and in institutions brought about by mis/disinformation, anti-establishment sentiments or social divides, has the potential to undermine national security - as witnessed in the 2021 Capitol Riots in the US. Furthermore, low levels of trust or social cohesion may undermine the ability of Government to navigate certain situations, undermining the effective management of crises and conflicts. Ireland, as a democratic state, is not immune from this trend.¹⁷

Emerging Disruptive Technologies (EDT)

1.22 Technology is evolving at an exponential rate, driving civilian and military transformation. The change to a significantly more automated world involving a range of new technologies that are fusing and impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, is likely to happen faster than previous transitions. Processing power, the volume and variety of data and connectivity will continue to grow exponentially, driving the development of artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing and the ability to solve problems of increasing complexity and difficulty. Ireland, as an outward looking country with an open economy based on international trade, buoyed by the information technology and pharmaceutical sectors¹⁸, has created critical interdependencies, both regional and global, which make Ireland vulnerable to current and emerging global threats.¹⁹

Centrality of Information

1.23 Digitisation is fundamentally changing how people interact, leading to a shift in value away from physical goods to the underlying processes and services. As an increasing number of people spend more time conducting an ever-widening range of activities in cyberspace, information will become ever more central to humanity, and conflict. Social media may cause an ‘echo chamber’ effect polarising populations, eroding trust in institutions, creating uncertainty, and fuelling grievances.

1.24 Ireland will face an increasingly congested and confused information environment due to the abundance of narratives, AI, and automation, making attribution much more complicated. Entry to national information networks can be both easy and inexpensive, allowing “non-state actors and small states [to] play significant [and damaging] roles at low levels of cost”.²⁰ This incentivises constant probing where strategic advantage can be achieved clandestinely and without affecting the continuum of competition. Cognitive ability will play a critical role in shaping public perception and decision-making.

Hybrid Threats

1.25 Hybrid threats emerge when conventional, irregular, and asymmetric threats combine at the same time and space, operating both above and below the established threshold of war. Hybrid threats aim to exploit vulnerabilities in our systems, technologies and societies, and are utilised, not to compel an adversary to submit by force, but to undermine and strategically weaken without the use of force. The peace, security and military strength of existing European security architectures have, heretofore, compelled potential adversaries to pursue their goals through threshold stretching, gradualism, and fait accompli behaviour. Such actors do not feel bound by a RBIO and perceive little obligation or reluctance to carry out offensive grey zone activities outside of accepted norms.

Hybrid Threats

“Hybrid threats are harmful activities that are planned and carried out with malign intent. They aim to undermine a target, such as a state or an institution, through a variety of means, often combined. Such means include information manipulation, cyberattacks, economic influence or coercion, covert political manoeuvring, coercive diplomacy, or threats of military force. Hybrid threats describe a wide array of harmful activities with different goals, ranging from influence operations and interference all the way to hybrid warfare.”

- Hybrid COE (2024)

¹⁷ Department of Defence (2024), *Defence Policy Review 2024*. 21

¹⁸ Department of Defence (2023), *National Risk Assessment for Ireland 2023*

¹⁹ Department of Defence (2024), *Defence Policy Review 2024*. 04

²⁰ Nye, J. S. (2011). *Nuclear Lessons for Cyber Security? Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 5(4), 20.



Figure 1.4 - Foreign Naval Activity in Ireland's EEZ 2022.

1.26 Ireland remains susceptible to hybrid threats from many and varied vectors. The potential implications for Ireland from hybrid threats range from fostering distrust in government bodies, to election interference, malicious cyber operations, subversion, espionage and social unrest/radicalisation.²¹ The 2022 Russian naval activity in Ireland's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) demonstrates overt hybrid means employed by state actors. States can mitigate hybrid threats through the application of various levers of national power in a whole-of-society approach. Emphasis on cooperation with partners and institutions also serves to ensure the primacy of multilateralism and the RBIO.

Strategic Shocks

1.27 Strategic shocks represent unforeseen events that deviate significantly from established norms. These events, characterised by their rarity and unpredictability, can have profound implications due to their potential to cause severe disruptions. The global interconnectedness of today's world amplifies the impact of these shocks, leading to far-reaching consequences. Strategic shocks can induce rapid alterations in the balance of power and may be seized upon by opportunistic adversaries. Frequent risk assessments aid in forecasting potential shocks and empower decision-makers with the necessary insights to make informed strategic choices, thereby bolstering national security. The proactive leveraging of risk assessments enhances our national resilience enabling the state to effectively navigate future risks and threats.²²

i **ESTONIAN CYBER ATTACK 2007**

The cyber-attack launched against Estonia's public and private sectors in April 2007 by Russian-based attackers is an example. This event, characterised by a series of denial-of-service attacks, served as a strategic notification for other EU and NATO countries and prompted them to bolster their national resilience and agility in response to future risks and threats across various domains.



21 Department of Defence (2024), *Defence Policy Review 2024*. 17.

22 David Omand (2023), *How to Survive a Crisis - Lessons in Resilience and Avoiding Disaster*. Penguin.

SECTION 3 - INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

1.29 National power can be defined as the sum of all resources available to a nation in the pursuit of national objectives. National power stems from various elements, also called instruments. Nations normally achieve their national and sectoral aims through the coordinated use of four instruments of power, which play a crucial role in both international interactions and supporting internal stability, cohesion, and resilience. These four instruments are: Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic. Advantage lies, not necessarily in excelling in each instrument individually, but in managing them synergistically.

Diplomatic Instrument

1.30 The success of diplomatic engagement hinges on negotiation, brokering agreements, and managing relationships through both soft and hard power. It is instrumental in shaping the collective interpretation of the RBIO, at times through legal instruments and litigation. The employment of diplomacy requires an actor to understand others' views of competition, sense strategic techniques employed by them, and reinforce the state's reputation for delivering actions that reflect its words through the other instruments of power. The diplomatic instrument is strongly influenced by the relative advantage of the other instruments of power.

Information Instrument

1.31 In an environment marked by exponential growth in information processing and digital connectivity, the information instrument operates as a discrete instrument of power - recognising the centrality of key audiences, influencing public perception and decision-makers. Narratives play a pivotal role providing meaning and context to the content audiences are presented. Narratives also align state actions across all instruments of power. Credible narratives, supported by coherent actions, are crucial for persuasion and advantage during competition.

Military Instrument

1.32 The state derives advantage through the military instrument by the generation and application of fighting power across operational domains. The priority of any national strategy is the defence of sovereignty and national territory. The ultimate form of arbitration between adversaries within the continuum of competition is compulsion through armed conflict, in which antagonists primarily rely on the military instrument. A capable military instrument is, therefore, key to successfully deter potential adversaries. The military instrument is often employed in a supporting role below the armed conflict threshold, ensuring potential competitors prefer cooperation over coercive interactions. It can provide relative advantage to other instruments of power where there is no requirement to use force, such as crisis response and defence diplomacy.

Economic Instrument

1.33 The economic instrument is an influential hard and soft power tool, especially when used below the threshold of armed conflict. In an increasingly interconnected world, states may be attracted to economic alliances and trading blocs to gain an economic advantage. Inferring economic advantage on a competitor may attract support through beneficial concessions or investment of capital, aid and trade to support prosperity. Conversely, economic disadvantage can be inferred on a competitor through measures such as sanctions, closing markets and withdrawing investment. Economic engagements can foster dependence, which could be used to compel or deter. Such engagements could also be used to enable all participants to make progress towards prosperity, and thus stability.

Non-state capabilities

1.34 Non-state capabilities mirror instruments of power but are not under national authority. Regulated by domestic and international laws, these capabilities, represented by institutions, groups, organisations, private companies, or non-state entities, can either strengthen, degrade, or weaken a state's instruments of power depending on complementary or contradictory efforts. Depending on the context, these capabilities can be significant and even though non-state actors may not work as a homogeneous group, their collective or individual capabilities may have greater influence and effect than a state.

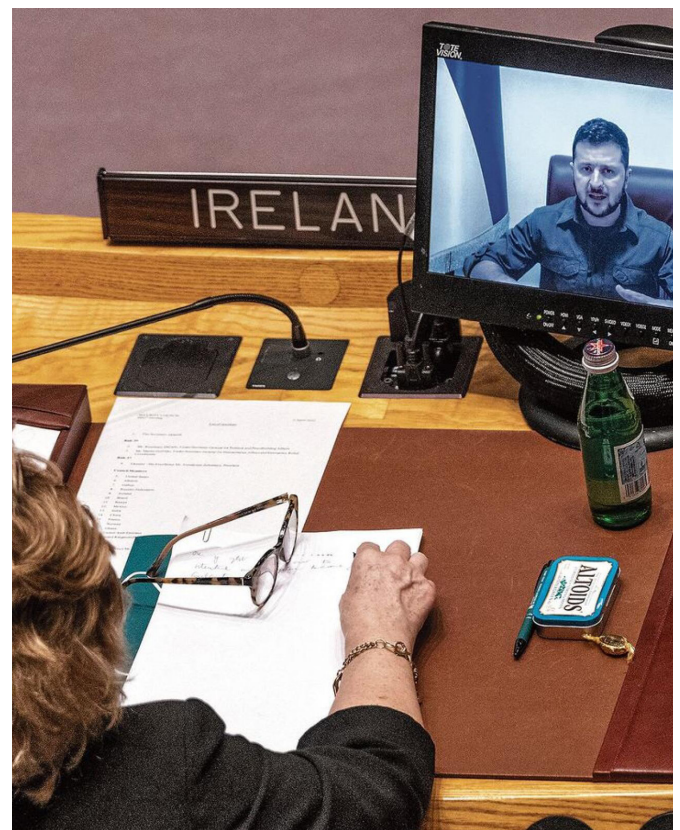


Figure 1.5 - Diplomacy requires actors to understand others' views of competition.

CHAPTER KEY POINTS

The essence of armed conflict is enduring. It fundamentally entails the collision and interaction of opposing human wills, generating a violent dynamic that yields unpredictable environments and results.

Armed conflict has a changing character. It is shaped by technological, economic, cultural, and societal changes.

The prevalence, scale, and intensity of conflict exists on a spectrum, known as the continuum of competition. This continuum spans cooperation, through rivalry and confrontation, to armed conflict.

Ireland's security environment is characterised by increased contestation and volatility. The return of war in Europe, in addition to broader global and geopolitical shifts are challenging the RBIO.

Malign actors will continue to threaten our way of life using a variety of sophisticated means employed below the threshold of armed conflict.

National power is the sum of diplomatic, information, military and economic instruments available to a nation in the pursuit of national objectives.



CHAPTER 2

THE MILITARY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POWER

Chapter two addresses the framework within which defence strategy is generated encompassing legal, policy and technological factors. It outlines how the Irish Defence Forces can be employed across the engagement space, highlighting the value of integrating the military instrument with other instruments of national power.

Section 1 – The Strategic Framework

Section 2 – Levels of Operating

Section 3 – The Engagement Space

Section 4 – Integrating the Military Instrument

“

Strategy is the bridge that relates military power to political purpose.

Colin Gray, Modern Strategy

SECTION 1 - STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 Ireland's Defence Forces, referred to as Óglaigh na hÉireann, derive legitimacy from the Irish Constitution, Bunreacht Na hÉireann which sets out that "the right to raise and maintain military or armed forces" is vested in the national parliament.²³ The Defence Forces are subject to government control through several legislative instruments, primarily the Defence Act 1954 (as amended). The Act states that "The Defence Forces shall consist of; a defence force to be called and known as an Buan Óglaigh or (in English) the Permanent Defence Force (PDF), comprising army, naval and air components, and; a reserve defence force to be called and known as na hÓglaigh Cúlta or (in English) the Reserve Defence Force (RDF), comprising army, naval components."

Policy

2.2 National policy serves as a comprehensive statement of intent or commitment to action, providing the overarching direction for the country. It sets the tone for how a nation engages with the world and pursues its interests, while subsets like security and foreign policy offer more specific guidance in their respective domains. For instance, Ireland's foreign policy promotes a commitment to human rights, the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation, and a commitment to multilateralism through peacekeeping.²⁴

2.3 Defence policy shapes the structures and capabilities of Defence's contribution to national security objectives and establishes the 'ends' of military strategy. These must be articulated clearly to provide the baseline for decision-makers. In the absence of a published national security strategy, government white papers represent defence policy and guide military strategy-making in Ireland. The 'white paper' publications set out the key roles assigned to the Defence Forces by Government which are defending the State from armed aggression, contributing to global and regional security, providing domestic security support and assisting in times of emergencies or national crises.²⁵

2.4 Policy is subject to ongoing evaluation in response to shifts in the geopolitical landscape. However, it can acquire a lasting nature influenced by less dynamic aspects of the political landscape, such as the institutionalisation of certain values and beliefs.²⁶ Ireland's defence policy is shaped by "Ireland's longstanding policy of military neutrality, coupled with active and principled membership of the EU, the UN and other international fora."²⁷ This position is "characterised by non-membership of military alliances, or common or mutual defence arrangements."²⁸

Strategy

2.5 In the broadest sense, the term 'strategy' can be understood as the efforts to gain more from a situation than the initial 'balance of power' would suggest.²⁹ National strategy serves as the guiding force for devising a plan and allocating resources in a way that enhances the likelihood of accomplishing policy objectives cohesively. While the political outcomes and objectives are articulated in policy, a strategy is a high-level plan concerned with creating and orchestrating the instruments of power in support of those long-term policy outcomes or objectives.

A key goal of policy is that Ireland retains credible military capabilities to meet anticipated future threats to the State's security and to ensure that these capabilities are flexible and responsive to a changing environment

White Paper on Defence 2015

2.6 The EU Strategic Compass is an ambitious strategy aimed at strengthening the Union's security and defence policy by 2030. In response to a more hostile security environment, described in chapter one, the Strategic Compass outlines concrete proposals across four pillars: act, invest, partner, and secure. The objective is to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider, contributing positively to global and transatlantic security.³⁰ Ireland, as a world class economy and mature democracy is obliged to play its part in supporting this objective.

2.7 In a military context, strategy is defined as "the theory and practice of the use, and threat of use, of organised force for political purposes."³¹ This can be understood as a comprehensive continuum that aims to balance ends, ways, means and risk.

- Ends are objectives that, if accomplished, create or contribute to the *achievement* of the desired end state at the level of strategy being analysed.
- Ways consider *how* the ends are to be accomplished through the generation of concepts and employment of resources.
- Means explain *what* specific resources are to be used in applying the concepts to accomplish the objectives.
- Risk represents the *gap* between what is to be achieved and the concepts and resources available to achieve the objective.

23 Article 15.6.1 of Bunreacht Na hÉireann.

24 Department of Foreign Affairs (2018), *Global Ireland 2025*.

25 Department of Defence (2015), *White Paper 2015, Chapter 3*.

26 Ken Booth, 'Concept of strategic culture affirmed' in Carl Jacobsen (ed.) *Strategic power: USA/USSR* (Macmillan, 1990).

27 Department of Defence (2024), *Defence Policy Review 2024. 04*.

28 Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Neutrality' (online).

29 Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2013), x.

30 European External Action Service (2022), *EU Strategic Compass*.

31 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.

”
Ireland welcomes the Strategic Compass as a means of setting out our shared Strategic vision for the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy and of enhancing the EU’s role in international peace and security over the next 5-10 years. I am pleased that the document reflects the core values that underpin our approach to CSPD, including the commitment to effective multilateralism and the rules-based international order, notably through our partnership with the UN
Minister for Defence- Simon Coveney March 2022



Figure 2.1 - The relationship between policy, strategy and doctrine is close.

2.8 Military strategy ensures coherent and effective strategic planning when the military instrument is employed by government. It is inherently multi-domain (discussed below). It sits above the interests of single services, fusing military capabilities to deliver effects which are rooted in a clear understanding of the policy ends. It also has a role to play in developing policy through professional military advice delivered by the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Defence.

Strategic Level of Ambition for Defence

2.9 The Government’s overarching strategic level of ambition for defence is:

“to defend Irish sovereignty, protect Irish citizens and secure Irish interests in support of Irish society, the Irish economy, our collective well-being and our territorial integrity. In pursuit of this strategic level of ambition for defence, Ireland will continue to support the multilateral system and to act as a trusted and reliable security partner to like-minded states.”³²

Relationship

2.10 While the relationship between policy, strategy, and doctrine is not symbiotic, it is close. Policy development is (or should be) a politically led discourse leading to a vision of what government activity in pursuit of national or international objectives should deliver. Strategy, meanwhile, is (or should be) a practice focused expression of what this activity looks like and how it will come together to deliver the policy vision. Good policy should determine the ends of a strategy, while the strategy itself determines the ways and the means to achieve them and how the activities will be orchestrated to achieve the policy objective. Military doctrine provides a framework for understanding how military forces operate and informs both policy and strategy.

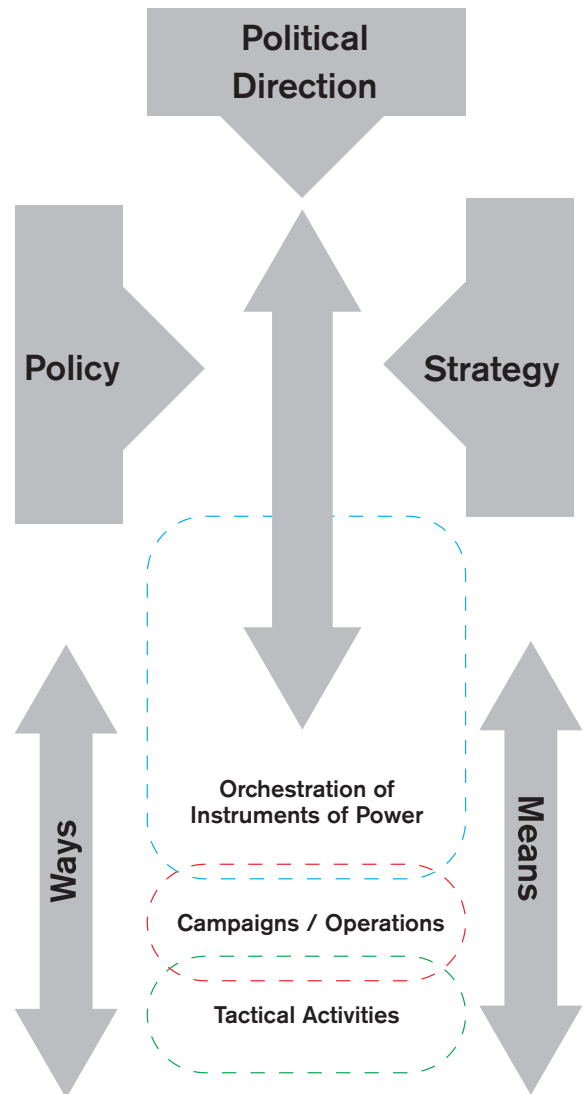


Figure 2.2: Relationship between policy strategy and military activity (Source: RCDS 2023)

SECTION 2 – LEVELS OF OPERATING

2.11 The military instrument’s strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operations provide a framework to rationalise and organise military activity to achieve strategic objectives. The strategic, operational and tactical levels are defined, not by the echelon of involvement, but by the relative objectives envisaged at each level. They provide a general framework for the command and control of operations and a useful tool for the analysis of political-military activity before, during, and after the conduct of military operations.

2.12 Although military action and operations may be conducted simultaneously at all three levels, each level has its own objectives, characteristics and means of application. The levels were developed with war in mind, although they can apply to all forms of military operation, from warfighting to humanitarian aid operations. In some operations, for example peace support operations and the management of complex confrontations, action taken at the lowest tactical level may need to be responsive to strategic decision making, with the tactical outcome having immediate strategic significance.

Strategic level

2.13 The strategic level of operations is the level at which national resources are allocated to achieve political goals. Achieving these goals usually requires a combination of military force, diplomacy, economic and informational measures, as well as collaboration with other governments, military forces, international organisations, and agencies. It is divided into the grand strategic level and the military strategic level.

a. **The Grand Strategic Level**

Grand strategy entails the full range of issues associated with the maintenance of political independence, territorial integrity and the pursuit of wider national interests. Grand strategy is the collective responsibility of the government.

b. **The Military Strategic Level**

Military strategy is the art of employing the military instrument to achieve grand strategic objectives. Military Strategy identifies the military objectives of an operation, assigns forces, provides resources and defines the conditions of the employment of these capabilities. Military strategy is developed by the Chief of Staff under the direction of the Minister for Defence.

Operational level

2.14 The operational level is defined by its role, which is to link and resource tactical-level activities to strategic objectives. It is the essential gearing between the strategic and the tactical levels, where campaigns and major joint operations are planned, and actions are integrated and sequenced to achieve strategic objectives. In the context of military operations, actions are described as ‘the process of doing something to create an effect on a system within an engagement space.’³³ At the operational level, a sequence of coordinated actions are grouped into operations. Capabilities that are required by multiple tactical commands are often controlled at the operational level to enable them to be allocated, when required. The scale of the operational level is not pre-defined; it should assume a size and shape commensurate with the requirements of the campaign. Notwithstanding the size and shape of the operational level, the headquarters is generally inter-agency, multinational and joint.

Tactical level

2.15 The tactical level of operations is the level at which actions and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical formations and units. The tactical level uses the echelons of command to further integrate, prioritise and coordinate tactical actions. Actions are expressed as tasks or assignments and are imposed by an appropriate authority or derived during military planning processes. Examples of actions are securing defined areas and conducting civil-military cooperation.³⁴ These actions create a range of effects that, together, contribute to successful operations. In a joint operation, the tactical level normally involves component or service-level commanders reporting directly to the Joint Force Commander (JFC), although some actions and planning will overlap with the operational level.

Synthesis

2.16 In the contemporary security environment, there may be considerable overlap between the levels, as military operations involve a variety of dynamic situations and conditions. Understanding the activities associated with each level assists in the development of the doctrine and capabilities is necessary to successfully undertake operations.

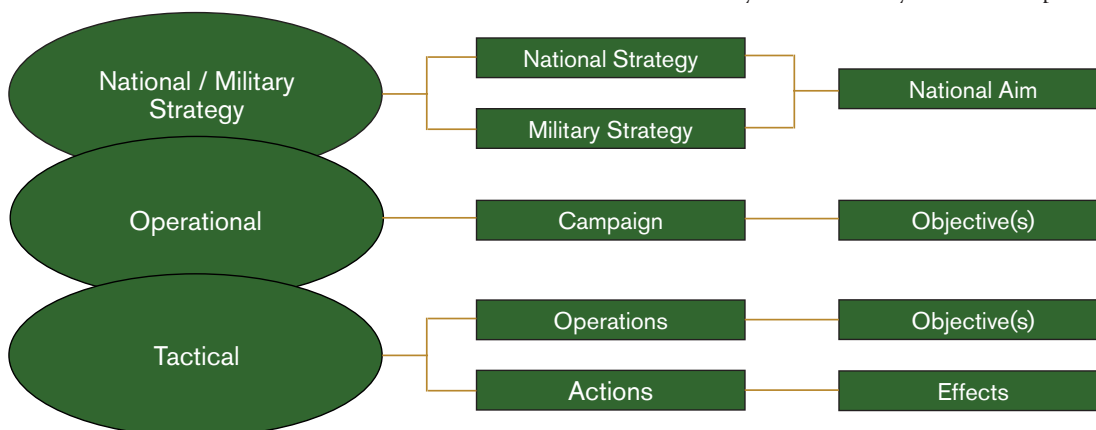


Figure 2-3: Levels of Operating and Associated Military Activities

33 NATO AJP-01, Allied Joint Doctrine, Edition F Version 1, 148.

34 Ibid

SECTION 3 - THE ENGAGEMENT SPACE

2.17 Operational domains represent five specific spheres of military operational activity and provide a framework for organising the military instrument. The five operational domains are maritime, land, air, space, and cyberspace, and it is through these that military and non-military organisations integrate their capabilities. An engagement space is part of the operating environment where actions and activities are planned and conducted.³⁵ It provides a structural framework to group and analyse capabilities that are unprejudiced by considerations of nations, political, military services or civilian ownership. Engagement space is often broader than one operational domain due to interconnectivity of effect dimensions and the unbounded nature of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Land domain

2.18 The land domain comprises capabilities and activities primarily related to operating on and directly above the Earth's land mass, ending at the high-water mark and overlapping with the maritime domain in the landward segment of the littorals. For the Defence Forces, the land domain represents a wide array of environments for which the Army must maintain a level of preparedness. For instance, Irish soldiers are typically deployed in peace support operations in complex situations varying from urban terrain, to jungle, to desert, often in remote locations. Additionally, since Ireland shares a border with the UK, this terrain necessitates extensive coordination and cooperation for certain on-island operations.

Maritime domain

2.19 The maritime domain comprises capabilities and activities, primarily related to operating below, on and above the surface of the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas and at the high-water mark, overlapping with the land domain in the landward segment of the littorals. Ireland's maritime area of responsibility is a space of approximately 880,000km² including the EEZ which extends 200 nautical miles into the Atlantic Ocean. Under the obligations of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Ireland is the legal owner and custodian of this domain.³⁶ Therefore, Ireland's interest in the marine environment must be enforced, guaranteed and protected to ensure our economic performance, secure future energy resources and protect our marine ecological heritage.

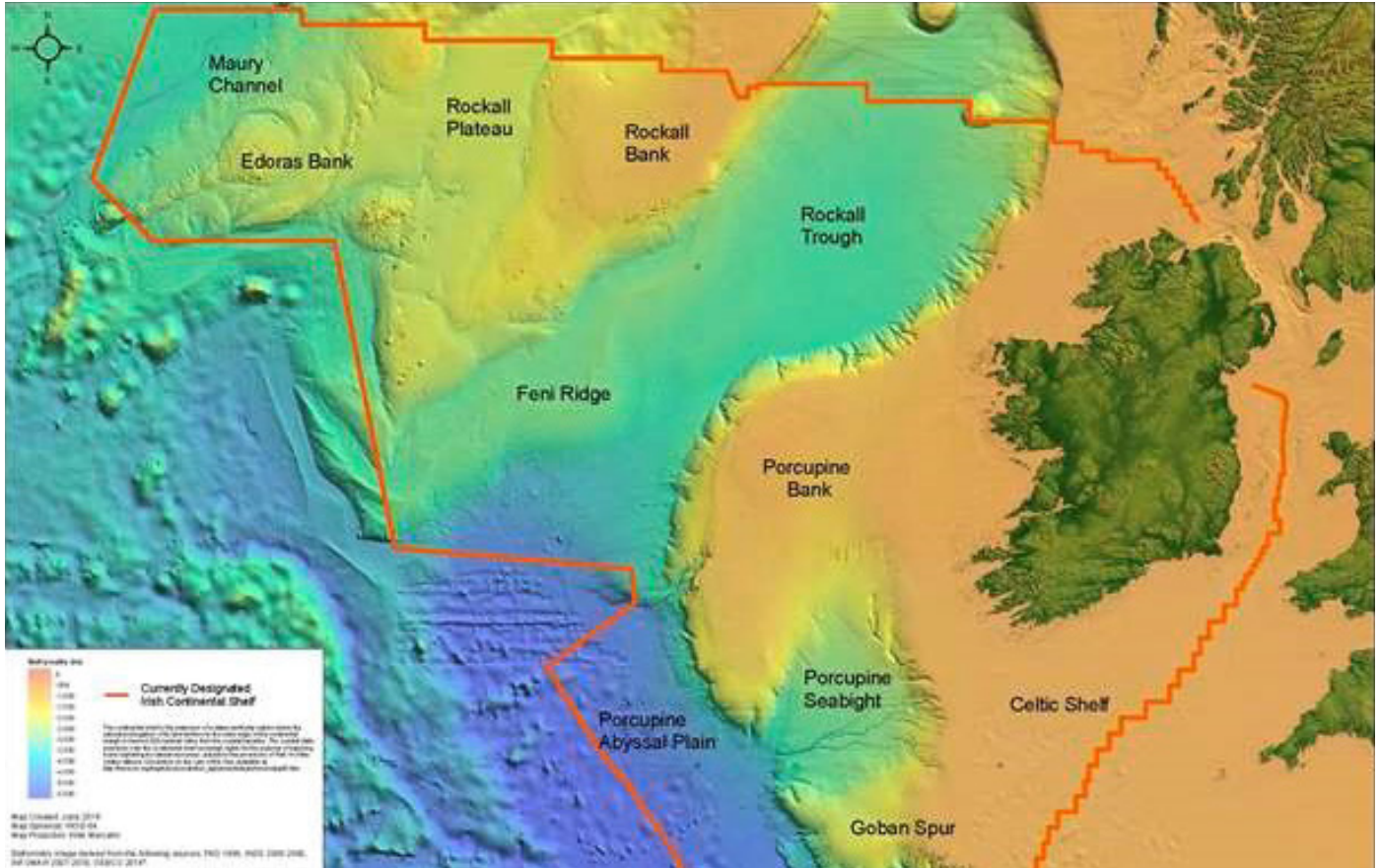


Figure 2.4 - The Real Map of Ireland (Source: Irish Marine Institute 2024)

35 *Ibid*

36 *United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*

Air domain

2.20 The air domain comprises capabilities and activities primarily related to operating in the airspace that begins at the Earth's surface (overlapping with the maritime and land domains) and extending generally to the altitude where atmospheric effects on airborne objects become negligible.³⁷ Irish-controlled airspace is a national asset and extends beyond traditional borders to airspace of undetermined sovereignty where air traffic services are provided on the basis of regional air navigation agreements. It is surrounded to the east by UK-controlled airspace, which is policed in cooperation with and to NATO standards. To the west, it extends extensively into the Western Atlantic where Ireland provides air navigation services. The safe and efficient utilisation of our airspace is critical to both the Irish economy and our national defence.

Space domain

2.21 The space domain comprises activities and capabilities primarily related to operating in space, where atmospheric effects on airborne objects become negligible. Space technology has developed more quickly than the regulation of the use of Space. Over the last sixty years, approximately 10,000 satellites have been placed into Earth orbit without any regulatory framework and that number is expected to exponentially increase considering the advances in launch capabilities and craft design.³⁸ The growing number of institutional and commercial actors capable of accessing and exploiting Space makes this domain the focus of increasing competition. Ireland has a National Space Strategy for Enterprise 2019-2025 which aims to strategically invest in space through the development of a novel Space Technologies Programme.

Cyberspace domain

2.22 Cyberspace is defined as a “global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent networks of information technology infrastructures and resident data, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.”³⁹ Cyberspace is a complex and dynamic domain, interdependent with the electromagnetic spectrum, and is key to all military operations on land, sea, and in the air and in space. It is far more than just the Internet. Cyberspace is pervasive and all-encompassing, incorporating, for example, aircraft flight control systems, medical life-support systems, physical device controllers and national electricity distribution systems. Cyberspace is less geographically constrained than other environments, so distance and reach must be viewed differently to traditional environments when considering cyberspace operations.⁴⁰ Data is a critical enabler for Ireland's economy and society. Our use of data is underpinned by the absolute necessity for secure and reliable digital infrastructure to facilitate data storage, access, processing and transfers.⁴¹



Figure 2.5 - The Defence Forces can expect to operate in diverse and extreme climates in future.

37 Due to its nature, the distribution of atmosphere is not uniform, therefore, an agreed datum at which this domain begins and ends does not exist. US Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, July 2017, 10.

38 The latest figures related to space debris, provided by ESA's Space Debris Office at ESOC, Darmstadt, Germany.

39 US Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 48, as of June 2024.

40 New Zealand, NZDDP-D, *New Zealand Defence Doctrine*, 4th Edition, 38

41 Department of the Taoiseach (2023), *National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks*. 30

SECTION 4 - INTEGRATING THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT

2.23 Competition presents many strategic challenges that the military instrument, or nation states alone, cannot solve in isolation. The EU, as a security community, engages in a practical and principled way to manage crises and promote peaceful cooperation, concentrating efforts in its immediate neighbourhood, while considering engagement further afield on a case-by-case basis. The EU fosters human security through an ‘integrated approach’.⁴² When crises emerge, the EU’s shared interests are threatened. Implementing an integrated approach to conflicts and crises at the strategic level involves the coherent use of all levers of power and policies at the EU’s disposal. The EU aims to influence all stages of a conflict lifecycle, acting promptly on prevention, responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilisation, and avoiding premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts.⁴³ Similarly, NATO defines its comprehensive approach as ‘combining all available political, military and civilian capabilities, in a concerted effort to attain the end state.’⁴⁴

2.24 The concept of multi-domain operations (MDO) is an evolution of joint operations. The transition to MDO began when NATO recognised the additional domains of space and cyberspace, in much the same way that the introduction of air power ushered the development of joint

operations. At its core, MDO refers to the efforts by NATO to orchestrate military activities with other levers of national power across the engagement space. This approach coordinates complementary actions by actors who are not part of the force but are contributing toward an agreed end state or common narrative. Therefore, the comprehensive approach facilitates the integration and coordination of the full spectrum of political, military and civilian actions to enable concentration and economy of effort in the creation of desired effects to attain the agreed end state.⁴⁵

2.25 Integration occurs when states join-up policy, processes, people, information and promote integrated capabilities.⁴⁶ The military instrument contributes to integration by posturing military capabilities in concert with other instruments of national power across the five operational domains. Advantage arises when the military instrument comprehensively coordinates, plans and communicates with civilian agencies, other government departments, and regional and international partners through established mechanisms. Integrating the military instrument will be enabled by a joint military structure, as envisioned in the 2022 Commission on the Defence Forces (CODF) Report.

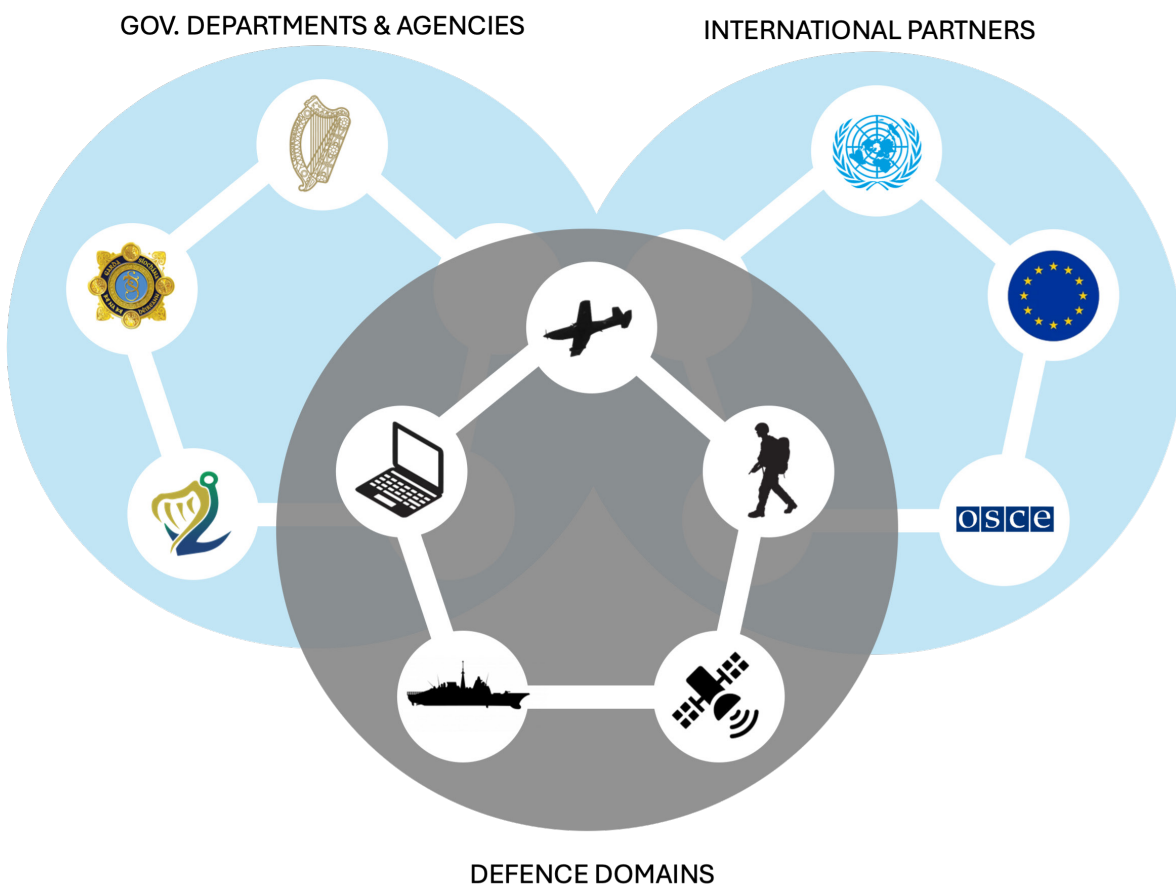


Figure 2-6 - Integrating Ireland's Military Instrument

42 European External Action Service (EEAS) (2022), *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*.

43 EEAS, *A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016.

44 NATO Standardization Office (2018), *AAP 06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*.

45 NATO AJP-01 *Allied Joint Doctrine Edition F V1*, 93.

46 *Integration concepts have been considered in UK's Integrated Action and the US' and NATO's Multi-Domain Operations*.

CHAPTER KEY POINTS

National strategy serves as the guiding force for devising a plan and allocating resources in a way that enhances the likelihood of accomplishing policy objectives cohesively.

Military strategy must balance the application of ways and means to create a roadmap between the present condition and a desired political end-state, using military power. It is inherently multi-domain.

Military doctrine influences and informs policy and strategy. It provides a framework for understanding how the military instrument operates and contributes to national objectives.

The strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operations provide a general framework to rationalise and organise military activity to achieve strategic objectives.

There may be overlap between the three levels, as military operations involve a variety of dynamic situations and conditions. Nonetheless, each level has distinct characteristics, objectives and means of applying the military instrument.

Integration concepts such as the EU's integrated approach and NATO's comprehensive approach involve the integration and coordination of political, military and civilian actions to enable concentration and economy of effort in the creation of desired effects.



CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT

Chapter three identifies and explains the fundamental principle of fighting power which is the military's ability to shape, contest and fight. Fighting power consists of conceptual, moral and physical components which overlap and are reinforced by the force multipliers of interoperability and adaptability. The chapter describes each factor, and outlines how the Defence Forces develops military capabilities to generate fighting power.

Section 1 – The Conceptual Component

Section 2 – The Moral Component

Section 3 – The Physical Component

Section 4 – Generating Fighting Power

“

With uncertainty in one scale, courage and self-confidence must be thrown into the other to correct the balance.

Clausewitz, On War

SECTION 1 – THE CONCEPTUAL COMPONENT

3.2 The conceptual component provides a framework for thinking, within which military personnel can develop an understanding about both their profession and the activities that they may have to undertake. The conceptual component reflects accumulated experience, improvements to existing practice (gained through lessons learned and trials) and analysis of the future security environment. It is the distilled experience of many years of conducting operations at home and overseas. Conceptual thought is articulated through a variety of means, including publications and through professional military education (PME). The conceptual component comprises strategic analysis and assessment, concept innovation, and doctrine.

Strategic assessment

3.3 Strategic assessment is the analysis of current and future trends and plausible outcomes to provide the context for long-term decision-making. It informs and supports the development of Defence policy and capability. It is conducted through three interconnected activities:

- a. developing understanding of the strategic context for defence;
- b. supporting policy and strategy through professional military advice;
- c. challenging the assumptions that underpin policy and strategy.

Concept innovation

3.4 Concepts propose solutions to challenges and opportunities for which no doctrine exists, or for which existing doctrine is inadequate. They contain informed judgement underpinned by available evidence, and must be developed through experimentation designed to discover new information, test a hypothesis, or validate a solution or choice. Operational concepts are concerned with innovation and ideas for developing future capabilities and better ways of operating in an ever evolving and complex operating environment. The development of concepts for future operations is vital for both force and doctrine development.

3.6 Without conceptual thinking, the Irish Defence Forces cannot maintain military capabilities. Such concepts can be initiated from across a broad spectrum of activity including operational lessons; technological advances; policy and strategy changes; academic research; and horizon-scanning. Capability Development Branch will initially validate concepts, before considering the need to develop supporting doctrine.

Doctrine

3.5 As the speed and scope of operations increases, the need for a structure to support decision-making must grow in tandem. Doctrine is not dogma and is used as a means of enabling initiative on operations. It facilitates initiative by providing a framework in which commanders and staff can exercise choice.



Figure 3.1 - Doctrine provides a Framework for Military Activity.

3.6 Doctrine may be classified as follows:

- a. **Capstone Doctrine.** This publication is the Defence Forces' capstone-level doctrine and exists at the top of the Defence Forces hierarchy of doctrine. It links other Defence Forces doctrinal publications with strategic guidance.
- b. **Keystone Doctrine.** In the Defence Forces, the principal doctrinal publication of each of the three components (Army, Naval Service and Air Corps) and the principal doctrinal publication from each of the joint staff functions (Human Resources, Intelligence, Conduct and Planning of Operations, etc.) are considered Keystone Doctrine.
- c. **Subordinate Doctrine.** Under Keystone Doctrine, several supporting doctrinal publications are normally promulgated. These may be joint or single service. Examples of these include DFDM-L2 Land Tactics Manual, the Manual of the Infantry Battalion and the Manual of Infantry Platoon and Section Tactics. In the maritime domain, DFDM-M3 Multinational Maritime Tactical Instructions is subordinate to the Naval Service's keystone doctrine DFDM-M1 Maritime Doctrine. The Air Corps have adopted a similar construct for doctrine relevant to the air domain.
- d. **Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs).** These publications are generally very prescriptive in nature. They are largely, but not exclusively, single service oriented. Examples of these include Tactical Aide Memoires, Tactical Standard Operating Procedures, etc.

SECTION 2 – THE MORAL COMPONENT

3.7 Ultimately, fighting power depends on people. Ireland has a highly skilled volunteer Defence Forces with a proud history of excellence. The strengths and expert skills of the Defence Forces (both Permanent and Reserve) require time, effort, and resources to be developed, maintained, and employed by decision makers. The moral component of fighting power is about creating and sustaining our people’s will to engage in operations and succeed. This is contingent on a positive military ethos, effective leadership, and recognised legitimacy.

Motivation

3.8 Motivation implies a determination for getting things done. It derives from a personal commitment to an idea, a sense of purpose, and a feeling of belonging. A means of generating motivation in the military is to ensure that Defence Forces personnel believe in what they are doing.

3.9 Morale is both the will to fight and the confidence of success, which enables a military unit to fight and overcome uncertainty and friction. As Napoleon attested, the importance of morale to operational success significantly outweighs physical qualities. The will to engage in combat is substantially reinforced and sustained by the belief that the cause is just, and personnel are self-assured as to their combat training, readiness and confidence in equipment.

3.10 Moral cohesion underpins all professional military cultures. Cohesion occurs when individuals work together, share tasks and rewards, and achieve a common goal. Moral cohesion is built on shared experiences, a common sense of worth, discipline, collective identity and trust among colleagues. It is sustained by shared common values and standards.

Leadership

3.11 Every member of the Irish Defence Forces, regardless of rank or appointment, is a leader. The professional identity and credibility of the Defence Forces has been, and continues to be, built on the quality of its leaders. This foundation is based on leaders of character and competence, with an ethos underpinned by values.

3.12 Leaders in the Defence Forces are entrusted with great responsibility. A comprehensive leadership framework has been established to provide a structure for Defence Forces’ leadership doctrine. This framework is a values-based leadership doctrine, centred on a mission command philosophy, detailing the principles by which leaders care for their people, develop the organisation, and achieve mission success.⁴⁷

3.13 The framework can be interpreted by understanding that leaders at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, who embrace the organisational values depicted on the outer perimeter, require character and competence to influence, develop and evaluate their personnel, units and the Defence Forces, towards achieving mission success.

”

Leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation; developing and evaluating the individual, unit and organisation; while achieving the mission.

DFDM – J2 DF Leadership Doctrine

Defence Forces Ethos

3.14 A ‘volunteer ethos’ captures the essential spirit, strengths and values of the Irish Defence Forces. It recognises the heritage, customs and achievements of the organisation and it guides the behaviour of our members. The Defence Forces must uphold the highest standards of behaviour, in addition to international and military law. Leaders must be conscious of their responsibility to uphold our ethos.⁴⁸

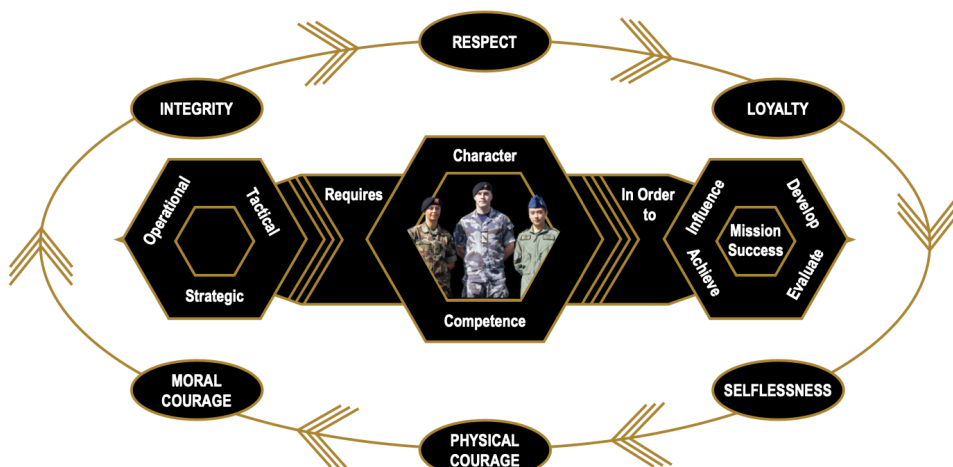


Figure 3.2 – Defence Forces’ Leadership Framework

47 For more information, refer to Leadership Doctrine DFDM – J2.

48 For further information, refer to the Irish Defence Forces’ Dignity Charter.

Defence Forces Values

3.15 Since its inception, the Defence Forces have developed a strong ethos and a set of values that have ensured a continuous and exemplary level of professionalism at home and abroad. The Defence Forces ethos of volunteer service to the state, and the values of respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity form the bedrock of our force and are central to its effectiveness. They are fundamental to sustaining the Defence Forces as a steadfast pillar of the Irish State.

3.16 Manifestation of these values is demonstrated by the personnel of the Irish Defence Forces in their everyday professionalism and dedication to service to the State. By exhibiting 'values in action' in all operations and activities, our personnel 'Strengthen the Nation' by providing inspiring pride amongst the people we serve.

Culture

3.17 Culture refers to the environment of the Defence Forces as an institution of the state and the major elements within it. Defence Forces' culture mirrors the pervading culture and values of Irish society. Culture can be defined as the values shared by the organisation's members and the tacit assumptions or unspoken rules which may only be evident to those who are serving in the organisation. Numerous sub-cultures may exist within an organisational culture including at formation, service, corps or unit levels. Organisational culture and service sub-cultures permeate throughout all the organisation's activities and shape how leaders lead. Defence Forces' culture is intrinsically linked to our values-in-action and military ethos. The Irish Defence Forces is committed to ensuring that it promotes an environment that is safe, enriching and rewarding for all who serve, and that the pervading culture in the workplace is underpinned by the principles of dignity, equality, mutual respect and duty of care.⁴⁹

Legitimacy

3.18 Legitimacy encompasses the legal, moral, political, diplomatic and ethical propriety of the conduct of military forces at both an organisational and individual level. Legitimacy is based on subjective perceptions, such as the values, beliefs and opinions of a variety of audiences, and is also demonstrable, objective legality. Audience perceptions of legitimacy are unlikely to be universal or unequivocal; they will vary with each operation and may be shaped by many factors, including the media. It follows, therefore, that the authority for military action, both legal and political, should be articulated clearly to members of the Defence Forces, the public and international audiences.

3.19 Ethical and moral considerations are crucial in operational decision-making and military conduct to ensure legitimacy. Commanders are accountable for their actions and the actions of those under their command. Commanders are duty-bound to ensure that the highest moral and ethical standards are maintained by their subordinates, and they can achieve this through a robust ethos, personal example, and training and education.

3.20 Maintaining legitimacy is crucial to military authority when conducting operations at home and overseas. It builds morale and promotes cohesion, both within a force and between multinational partners. It also confers the freedom to act and constraints on military activity. The Defence Forces is committed to acting lawfully according to National Law, Law of Armed Conflict and International Human Rights Law.

3.21 The Defence Forces is committed to fully implementing UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, and Defence Forces/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council's Policy on WPS, in all its assigned roles and activities. The Defence Forces has integrated gender mainstreaming to deliver consistency of actions in support of the strategic and institutional ethos.



Figure 3.3 - Manifestation of our values is demonstrated by the actions of our people

SECTION 3 – THE PHYSICAL COMPONENT

3.22 The physical component of fighting power is the physical means to fight. It has five elements: personnel, equipment, integrated performance, readiness, and sustainability.

Personnel

3.23 The service personnel that comprise the Irish Defence Forces are highly trained and skilled military professionals, dedicated reservists and key civilian enablers. Our military personnel undergo appropriate professional development that provides them the skills and education necessary for modern operations. Irish soldiers, sailors and aircrew are highly regarded internationally. Nevertheless, their skills need to be nurtured, developed, and retained. The ability to attract, recruit and retain the right personnel at the right time is critical to the capability of the Defence Forces.

Equipment

3.24 It is essential that equipment is procured and maintained to the highest possible operational standard. This has added significance because of the tempo of modern operations and the need to sustain operations in challenging conditions, over long distances and extended time periods. Military procurement should ensure correct investment in the appropriate military technology necessary to meet best standards and achieve interoperability with our international partners. Ideally, those in defence-related industries should have a clear understanding of the Irish approach to military operations in order that they can better anticipate Ireland's military equipment needs.

Integrated Performance

3.25 Weapon systems, doctrine and tactics constantly evolve to meet modern requirements. The primary focus of the Defence Forces, when not engaged on operations, is education, training and preparation. The objective is to develop and maintain an appropriate level of defence capability, bearing in mind the legitimacy of, and the necessity for, a military response to certain situations. This response must have regard to the current and prospective defence and security environment. In this context, the identification of capability requirements and the associated development and maintenance of capabilities is an iterative process with periodic adjustments as required.

Readiness

3.26 By their nature, crises often occur unexpectedly and can evolve rapidly. Maintaining force elements at a persistent state of preparedness to respond to crises is expensive and resource-intensive in terms of personnel, equipment, maintenance and infrastructure. Therefore, readiness concerns the availability of force elements to deploy for a designated mission, within a given time frame. Readiness states are determined by risk assessments at the strategic level. Factors influencing this assessment include initial warnings and notifications of an impending crisis, decision-making at the strategic and operational levels, training/administration/preparation, and tactical deployment.



Figure 3.4 - The DF invests in appropriate military technology to meet standards and achieve interoperability

Sustainability

3.27 Sustaining military forces, when deployed at home or overseas, is as vital a function as their ability to deliver operational effect. As soon as an operation begins, events will generate further demands on the force. It cannot be assumed that a plan will survive the first kinetic event.

Force Multipliers

3.28 Defence Forces' fighting power is enhanced by two force multipliers: interoperability and responsiveness. These factors are of strategic importance when considering the development and maintenance of fighting power.

Interoperability

3.29 Interoperability is the ability of the Defence Forces, other political departments, agencies, and when appropriate, forces of partner nations to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives. This is achieved through standardisation agreements, which define processes, procedures and terms and conditions for common military or technical procedures and equipment. This can be through a combination of technical, procedural and human interoperability.

- a. Technical interoperability concerns systems and equipment, such as communication and information systems, and their ability to operate together.
- b. Procedural interoperability is based on measures such as common doctrine, procedures and terminology.
- c. Human interoperability concerns mutual trust and understanding achieved by strengthening relationships in training and on operations.

3.30 The level of interoperability required for each relationship and capability varies according to context. Interoperability must be considered from the strategic to tactical levels, and within all the capability frameworks, to ensure Defence Forces' ability to conduct operations quickly and effectively. Levels of interoperability are increased through standardisation, education, training, exercises and evaluation, lessons learned, cooperative programmes, trials and tests.

Adaptability

3.31 The scope and role of future Defence Forces operations are likely to change significantly as new threats emerge. Technology can also multiply the effectiveness of existing forces or render existing equipment, platforms and doctrine obsolete. In this context, there is a balance to be struck between being overly prescriptive regarding future capability requirements and having sufficient detail to act. Responsiveness is the ability to react quickly and positively, which is increasingly important in this VUCA world.

3.32 The Irish Defence Forces must maintain sufficient military resilience to anticipate, deter, mitigate, adapt and overcome disruptive events, while continuing with core roles. To do so, the broad experience and expertise that exists within the reserve components of each Service will be utilised. This requires identifying and harnessing the key public and private skills that exist in the RDF to train, operate and deploy in support of PDF operations.

“Readiness and interoperability are crucial elements of our response to threats and strategic competition”

EU Strategic Compass 2022



Figure 3.5 - Responsiveness is the ability to react quickly and positively (ARW personnel in ECAT Kabul Airport)

SECTION 4 - GENERATING FIGHTING POWER

3.33 Fighting power is generated through the development and acquisition of a range of military capabilities. Military capability can be defined as the ability to attain operational success for a given mission/task/scenario, while achieving the desired effects under specified standards and conditions, through a combination of ‘ways and means’. The ‘ways and means’ utilised to create that effect is achieved through the employment of various lines of defence capability development, categorised as DOTMLPFI.⁵⁰

3.34 Capability Development (CAPDEV) is concerned with the management of current capability and the identification of future capability needs. The aim is to acquire and maintain the most operationally effective and cost-efficient mix of capabilities to achieve the strategic level of ambition for defence. Effective CAPDEV promotes a defence investment strategy based on defined capability priorities, as identified through a comprehensive planning process across the short, medium and longer term.

3.35 The Government’s strategic level of ambition for defence represents ‘enhanced capability’ as outlined in the CODF Report. It seeks to build on our current capabilities and to address priority gaps in our ability to deter assaults on Irish sovereignty, while continuing to deploy on higher intensity peace support, crisis management, and humanitarian relief operations overseas. Achieving conventional capability involves developing full-spectrum defence capabilities to protect the State in a manner comparable to similar-sized European states. It is acknowledged that this can only be considered in the context of achieving enhanced capability and following a comprehensive review of Ireland’s defence policy.⁵¹

3.36 Achieving the most effective mix of capabilities within the resources available requires prioritisation across all services against identified risks and threats.⁵² Through the goals laid down in the Strategic Compass, the EU commits to intensifying cooperation on capability development, particularly through Permanent Structured Cooperation.⁵³ This will be an underlying feature of Ireland’s development of military capabilities, and one which will enhance our knowledge, improve interoperability and exploit efficiencies in defence spending.



Figure 3.8 - Military Capability Framework

50 CSDP defence capabilities development, EU Policy Department for External Relations (2020).

51 Department of Defence (2022), High-level Action Plan for the Report of the CODF.

52 Department of Defence (2024), Defence Policy Review 2024, 59.

53 EEAS (2022), A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence.

CHAPTER KEY POINTS

The term fighting power refers to a military force's ability to shape, contest and fight.

The conceptual component of fighting power provides a framework of thinking, within which military personnel can develop an understanding about both their profession and the activities that they may have to undertake. It reflects accumulated experience, improvements to existing practice and analysis of the future security environment.

The moral component of fighting power is based on our people's will to engage in operations and succeed. This is contingent on a positive military ethos, effective leadership, and recognised legitimacy.

The physical component of fighting power is the physical means to fight. The effective combination of personnel, equipment, performance, readiness and sustainability is essential for the Irish Defence Forces to achieve the tasks assigned by government.

Fighting power is enhanced by interoperability and adaptability. These enabling factors ensure that the Defence Forces can operate seamlessly with partners and agencies at short notice to achieve stated objectives.

Fighting power is generated through the development and acquisition of military capabilities, which ensure the military's ability to achieve desired effects in specific operating environments.



CHAPTER 4

THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES' APPROACH TO OPERATIONS

Chapter Four outlines the underlying conceptual elements of Irish Defence Forces' military doctrine. These essential elements, defined as the enduring principles of military operations and our doctrinal tenets codify the Defence Forces approach to, and conduct of joint military operations.

Section 1 – Principles and Considerations of Joint and Multinational Operations

Section 2 – Doctrinal Tenets

Section 3 – Applying Principles and Key Tenets

“

*Our uniform does not make us less people.
It is a cloak of our service, a curtailer of our
weakness, an amplifier of our strengths.*

General Richard Mulcahy

SECTION 1 – PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS OF JOINT AND MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS⁵⁴

4.1 From a broader understanding of the nature and types of conflict, it is possible to derive certain basic principles about the conduct of armed conflict. The principles of joint and multinational operations are not rigid laws but provide guidance for the conduct of military activity. Their application in the planning and conduct of joint operations requires judgement, common sense and intelligent interpretation. The principles are enduring, however, the relative importance of each may vary according to context and the means available to commanders and their staff.

4.2 Principles need not be set rules and must be supported by education and experience to inform the degree by which each is applied. To be of any relevance, their true nature must be understood.

Unity of effort

4.3 Unity of effort emphasises the requirement to ensure all means are directed to a common goal. Military forces achieve this principally through unity of command. As part of a comprehensive approach, unity of effort binds all the parts of a joint force together whilst retaining the benefit of diverse perspectives and approaches. It enables the integration and convergence of effects horizontally across the Defence Forces and partners, and vertically, through the strategic, operational and tactical levels of operations. To achieve unity of effort, it is essential to plan, communicate and coordinate. This requires a flexible approach towards establishing shared objectives with all stakeholders.

Definition of objectives

4.4 Operations must be focused towards clearly defined and commonly understood objectives that contribute to attaining the end state. Understanding is central to providing insight and foresight to define effective objectives. Objectives must maintain the legal and moral legitimacy of a campaign and the force. To ensure strategic coherence, the military instrument must be used proportionately and discriminately in relation to other instruments of power, with an understanding that all actions can have strategic effects. By correctly selecting and defining objectives, it focuses the force on what is achievable and decisive, thereby supporting the other principles.



Figure 4.1 - Operations must be focused toward clearly defined and commonly understood objectives

Maintenance of morale

4.5 All forms of competition are human activity, with psychology being key to success and failure. Maintenance of morale provides the will to fight. High morale is characterised by steadfastness, courage, confidence, and sustained hope. Morale manifests itself as will and resolve, which will drive the force to successfully achieve its objectives. It requires confidence in the superiority of information and equipment, inspiring leadership and cohesion, while sustained by the belief that the nation supports the force. It demands freedom of action, taking and retaining the initiative, and controlling the narrative.

Initiative

4.6 Achieving objectives demands dictating the course of events in a competitive situation. To hold the initiative is the ability to set or dictate the terms of action throughout a military operation. Maintaining the initiative results in relentless cognitive pressure on the adversary, degrading their morale and decision-making. It forces the adversary to respond in a reactive manner. Gaining the initiative requires relentless determination to succeed and an ability to impose one's will on the adversary, to do the unexpected and achieve surprise and delegate the freedom of action for subordinates to exploit opportunities.



Figure 4.2 - Maintaining Morale demands freedom of action, taking and retaining the initiative, and controlling the narrative.

Freedom of action

4.7 Freedom of action is minimising restrictions to enable a subordinate to use their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity and judgement to achieve their objectives. Freedom of action requires a disciplined offensive spirit and it enables the flexibility for subordinate commanders to make timely decisions within the context of their higher commander's intent. Rather than constantly awaiting further orders, freedom of action is a precondition for successfully maintaining and exploiting the initiative. Freedom of action across all levels of command allows the joint force more readily adapt to changes in the engagement space, and deal with unforeseen problems that are inherent in operations. Mutual trust and understanding, simple plans, concise orders and training facilitate freedom of action.

Offensive spirit

4.8 Offensive spirit delivers the benefits arising from purposeful action rather than inaction. Offensive spirit implies an incisive approach, with a willingness to understand and accept political and military risk, to seize, maintain and exploit the initiative in line with one's freedom of action. Critically, offensive spirit does not preclude defensive action. The maintenance of morale and definition of objectives are central to offensive spirit.

Concentration

4.9 It is increasingly difficult to maintain security and survival in an ever more transparent and lethal engagement space. Concentration is, therefore, not simply synonymous with the physical massing of forces for a decisive action, but concentration of effects created from a dispersed joint force. Integrating and coordinating actions across operational domains, in concert with multinational partners, will achieve mass. Through concentration of actions and effects, it is possible to affect an opposing actor's capacity for decision-making through imposing multiple dilemmas, gaining the initiative and achieving objectives, whilst also maximising economy of effort.



Figure 4.3 - Integrating and coordinating actions across domains will achieve mass and gain the initiative

Economy of effort

4.10 Concentration must be delivered economically and precisely on the right objects in the right space at the right time with the appropriate resources. Of all the principles, it is the most difficult to apply due to its interdependence with the ever-changing conditions of the engagement space. Precision in the definition of objectives, surprise and security prevents wasted resource and effort by concentrating effort on decisive objectives.

Security

4.11 Security limits vulnerability to hostile activities, threats and surprise. It is a shield that can help conserve fighting power and affords the initiative and freedom of action to achieve objectives. It requires unity of effort, understanding points of influence, vulnerabilities, risk management and resilience. Security contributes to preparedness but does not demand overcommitting resources to guard against every threat or possibility, thereby diminishing relative fighting power. Lack of security, or a false interpretation of the principle of security, leads directly to being surprised and loss of initiative.

Surprise

4.12 Surprise, achieved through unexpected actions, achieves a cognitive effect – a feeling of relative confusion, or perhaps shock – that can undermine an opposing actor's cohesion and morale. Using surprise is a significant way of seizing the initiative and may be a critical pre-condition for success. It is transient and must be exploited rapidly. Deception is closely related to surprise and requires deliberate measures to mislead targeted decision-makers into behaving in a manner advantageous to the achievement of one's objective. Surprise is also dependent on security.

Flexibility

4.13 A flexible force is one that can be highly responsive to changing circumstances. Plans and procedures should be sufficiently flexible to respond to the unexpected and they should empower commanders with maximum freedom of action. This allows the joint force to adapt to a situation and learn lessons more quickly than a rival, thereby gaining the initiative. Flexibility is enabled by a clear definition of objectives, freedom of action and sustainability.

Sustainability

4.14 Operations are demanding, placing extreme physical and psychological demands on personnel and requiring the constant care of people and equipment. A force that lacks sustainability and resilience is rarely successful. Personnel, equipment, systems and effects must be sustained and maintained to prevent culmination and to maintain resilience. The ability to generate and re-generate, avoiding shortages and waste, maintains a commander's flexibility and freedom of action to maintain the initiative, while also inspiring confidence and enhancing morale.

SECTION 2 – DOCTRINAL TENETS

4.15 All components of the Irish Defence Forces, in harmony with other instruments of national power, offer a range of ways and means of achieving specific strategic aims. Each Service makes its unique contribution to the joint force whilst retaining its individual service ethos. Our Army, Naval Service and Air Corps have different, but complementary, attributes that are amplified in their respective single-Service doctrine. The Defence Forces' doctrinal tenets have evolved and developed over a century of Defence Forces' operational experience.⁵⁵ Collectively, the doctrinal tenets provide a conceptual and theoretical framework within which doctrine and subsequent military activity is nested.

The Behaviour-Centric Approach⁵⁶

4.16 People are at the heart of competition. In a period of strategic competition, in which pervasive information is communicated to multiple audiences globally through a wide variety of means, the Irish Defence Forces is required to take account of a much broader audience than simply adversaries, or its own people. Therefore, Defence Forces' activities must be designed and conducted accordingly. The behaviour-centric approach is the primary tenet that guides commanders and planners on the achievement of defined objectives. It

focuses planning and execution of military activity across the engagement space and from all levels of operating to influence the attitudes and behaviours of selected audiences to attain the desired end-state.

4.17 People are grouped into audiences according to their attitude and behaviour towards the attainment of the end state. There are many types of state and non-state audiences, including but not limited to (host) nations, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, interest groups, irregular groups and individual people. Audiences' objectives will vary, they may be shared but often they will be different and complex. The sectoral nature of the continuum of competition means that an audience could concurrently be classified as an adversary in one sector and a partner in another. Audiences can be segmented into three general categories – public, stakeholders and actors - depending on their ability to affect our politically-agreed end state. These segments can be further subdivided according to need. Analysis is required to understand points of influence that may change or reinforce audiences' attitudes and behaviours. Changes to behaviours may be long-term, owing to persistent engagement and persuasion, or short-term, perhaps through coercion.



Russia's Invasion of Ukraine (2022)

In modern conflicts, shaping the narrative and influencing public opinion can be as crucial as physical combat. It involves a fierce struggle over the leaders' will and public opinion. In the context of Ukraine, this included the people of Ukraine, Russia, and the international community.

Key Elements:

- **Strategic Communication:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was at the forefront of this effort on the eve of the invasion, regularly addressing both the Ukrainian people and international audiences. His speeches and social media presence were pivotal in rallying support and conveying the resilience and determination of the Ukrainian people. Effective narratives are those that resonate with the audience.
- **Countering Disinformation:** Ukraine actively countered Russian disinformation campaigns. For instance, when Russia falsely claimed to be withdrawing troops from the Ukrainian border, satellite imagery was circulated to debunk this narrative. Similarly, Ukraine exposed and countered deep-fake videos and other forms of digital misinformation designed to demoralise and delegitimise the Ukrainian defence.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Social media platforms have been used extensively to share stories of heroism, resilience, and the impact of the war on civilians. These platforms have also been used to and share real-time updates of the tactical situation and mobilise resources from the international community such as crowdsourcing.

Outcome: By focusing on these behaviour-centric strategies, Ukraine has been able to maintain a strong narrative, influence international opinion, and sustain the morale of its citizens, which are all critical components of their overall defence strategy since the invasion. In this cognitive battlespace, narrative is a significant factor shaping the war's likely outcome. The Irish Defence Forces must consider the importance of strategic communications, countering false narratives and leveraging technology across the engagement space.



⁵⁵ Each tenet has been adapted from NATO doctrine to ensure consistency and alignment with contemporary military thought and concepts.

⁵⁶ The recent Defence Forces adoption of the behaviour-centric approach as a core tenet in line with NATO best practice acknowledges that people and their interactions are central to understanding and influencing our operating environment.

4.18 Every action creates an informational effect and, that effect could influence multiple audiences, be they global, national or within an operating environment. The information that audiences receive is often cluttered, so they use narratives to give meaning to actions and facts. A narrative will often compete with other narratives to give information its meaning. If the information is not irrefutable, it is often the credibility of the narrative that is decisive in influencing the perception of different audiences. Therefore, to effectively influence audiences, it requires consistency of actions, images and words; this consistent message is the narrative and is supported by narrative-led execution.

4.19 Narrative-led execution sets a unifying strategic intent at all levels of command delivering centralised intent and enabling decentralised execution through mission command (below). The Irish Defence Forces employs narratives to explain how the organisation arrived at the current situation, defines that situation and expresses a desired end state or outcome. It employs institutional, strategic and micro narratives that are appropriately aligned to the organisational narrative.⁵⁷ It follows that all activities conducted by the Defence Forces should be conducted accordingly.



Figure 4.4 - Every action creates an informational effect and, that effect could influence multiple audiences.

The Manoeuvrist Approach

4.20 The manoeuvrist approach provides the mindset required to achieve behaviour centric outcomes by exploiting the inherent friction, uncertainty and human fallibilities found within competition. It represents an indirect approach that seeks to out-think and out-manoeuve unsupportive or hostile actors or discourage actors from becoming unsupportive or hostile within the engagement space. The manoeuvrist approach seeks to shape understanding, avoid strengths and selectively target and exploit critical vulnerabilities and other points of influence to disrupt cohesion and to seize, maintain and exploit the initiative. Such an approach offers the prospect of achieving rapid gains or results that are disproportionately greater than the resources applied.

4.21 The manoeuvrist approach contrasts with other direct approaches, such as attrition or annihilation. Whereas an attritional approach seeks to achieve an incremental reduction of the hostile actor's means and endurance, an annihilation approach demands the complete destruction of the actor's means. These direct approaches can easily become stalemated, time-consuming and indecisive unless there is a significant advantage in combat power. Whilst the manoeuvrist approach often involves an element of attrition and annihilation (armed conflict is inherently violent with physical destruction), this is not its primary focus.

4.22 Central to the manoeuvrist approach is the requirement to seize, hold and exploit the initiative to gain a position of cognitive advantage. This advantage is achieved by forcing the hostile actor to react or a stakeholder not to act, creating confusion and overwhelming their ability to make decisions and act coherently. Seizing and maintaining the initiative requires pre-emption, surprise tempo and exploitation. Maintaining the initiative allows the commander to dictate the course of events and maintain relentless pressure on the unsupportive audience.

4.23 The manoeuvrist approach seeks to influence an audience's perceptions and understanding and, in doing so, shape their attitude towards a given situation. Understanding shapes an audience's attitude by influencing how they think, feel and respond to information or events, and ultimately the actor's will to continue contesting a situation. Therefore, reducing an audience's ability to understand the situation serves to weaken their moral component. An unsupportive actor's moral component is also weakened by the erosion of will and cohesion.

4.24 Will is the determination to persist in the face of adversity and comprises two aspects - intent and resolve - both of which can be influenced, attacked and undermined. The unsupportive actor's intent is thwarted when a belief emerges that their aim is no longer achievable. Resolve, meanwhile, is the will of an actor to continue. Whilst eroding the resolve and intent of an unsupportive actor, we must simultaneously seek to protect our own resolve from their actions.

4.25 If essential capabilities are lost or threatened, both the moral and physical cohesion of the actor are reduced, while the freedom of action and initiative of our own forces are enhanced. While seemingly attritional in nature, dislocation or disruption of physical and virtual elements are, therefore, advocated by the manoeuvrist approach to undermine the will and cohesion of an unsupportive actor.



Operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA (2008-2009)

In 2008, the European Union launched Operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA to stabilise the region of eastern Chad and northeastern Central African Republic (CAR), which was affected by the spillover from the Darfur conflict. The Irish Defence Forces played a significant role in this mission, contributing the second largest contingent, after France.

Key Elements:

- **Rapid Deployment and Mobility:** The Irish Infantry Battalion was among the first to be deployed, demonstrating an ability to quickly mobilise and adapt to the challenging environment. Mechanised infantry groups patrolled vast areas, ensuring the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- **Indirect Approach:** Instead of engaging directly with hostile forces, the Irish contingent focused on securing key areas and supply routes, thereby disrupting the movements and logistics of armed groups. This indirect approach helped to stabilise the region without extensive direct combat.
- **Coordination and Flexibility:** The Defence Forces worked closely with other EUFOR contingents and local authorities, adapting their operations based on real-time intelligence and changing conditions on the ground. This flexibility was crucial in maintaining the initiative and achieving mission objectives.



Outcome: The operation successfully improved security in the region, allowing humanitarian aid to reach those in need and contributing to the overall stabilisation efforts. The manoeuvrist approach, with its emphasis on rapid deployment, mobility, and indirect engagement, was instrumental in the success of the mission.

The Comprehensive Approach

4.26 Competition presents many strategic challenges that the military instrument cannot solve alone. The comprehensive approach provides for how the commander, with partners, coordinates military activity, with political and civilian actions, through all levels of operations, to influence audiences and attain a unified end state. As outlined in chapter two, the comprehensive approach combines all available political, military and civilian capabilities, in a concerted effort to attain the defined end state.

4.27 The comprehensive approach seeks to ensure cooperation and coordination across the political, diplomatic, security, economic, development, rule of law, human rights, and humanitarian dimensions in operations and missions, so that the balanced application of multiple instruments might be achieved.

4.28 While it is unlikely that complete integration will be achieved between political, military and civilian capabilities, the comprehensive approach strives to optimise the synchronisation of capabilities. All actors (be they military or civilian) are required to commit to a shared understanding, as well as becoming involved in the planning at a practical level from the outset. Levels of engagement will vary among different actors depending on their mandate and the operational environment itself. Likewise, the lead agency and the responsibility for coordination and synchronisation can also vary. However, there is a critical necessity for comprehensive planning, management and evaluation to inform and respond to political direction.



Figure 4.5 - The Comprehensive Approach

4.29 Effectiveness within the comprehensive approach depends on achieving coherence in the understanding and application of the instruments committed. Within the comprehensive approach, the military instrument may be authorised to apply fighting power in a variety of ways. This application will often involve a joint military force and will be sequenced as appropriate.

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4.31 Developing a culture of collaboration requires nurturing, flexibility and building on successes. The coordination of actors with different organisational cultures can make this challenging. Pragmatic and effective mechanisms should be enacted to ensure co-ordination. Mission accomplishment can be best achieved through agreed objectives, ensuring unity of purpose and convergence of effort. The requirement for internal and external co-ordination prioritises the necessity for the widest possible engagement with other actors and elements, including regional stakeholders. This implies planning and coordination for a comprehensive approach at all levels of military operations.

4.32 The Irish Defence Forces has provided military capabilities in support of government objectives since the foundation of the state. This has been conducted overseas and at home including maritime security, Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP) and Aid to the Civil Authority (ATCA). This experience has given the force a deep grounding in interagency activity and in support of other lead actors. The understanding gained in domestic support to national security and resilience has been strengthened by our engagement in UN Peace Support Operations (PSO) for nearly 60 years. These experiences give the Defence Forces a distinct advantage, as the underlying modus operandi within these activities is essentially at the heart of any comprehensive approach. While traditional peacekeeping has served its purpose, the nature of conflict in the twenty-first century requires complex operational approaches that address the crisis in a more holistic fashion, as described in Chapter Two.



Operation FORTITUDE (2020)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Irish Defence Forces launched Operation Fortitude to support the national response to the crisis. This operation exemplifies the comprehensive approach, integrating various elements of the Defence Forces and collaborating with civilian agencies.

Key Elements:

- **Interagency Collaboration:** The Defence Forces worked closely with the Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána, and other government departments. This collaboration ensured a coordinated and effective response to the pandemic.
- **Multifaceted Support:** The operation involved a wide range of activities, including setting up and managing testing centres, providing logistical support for the distribution of medical supplies, and assisting in the construction of temporary healthcare facilities.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** The Defence Forces demonstrated flexibility by rapidly adapting to the evolving situation. They deployed personnel with diverse skills, from medical professionals to engineers, to meet the needs of the crisis. The establishment of a Joint Task Force (JTF) ensured that decisions could be made rapidly and in the context of the evolving situation.

Outcome: Operation Fortitude significantly bolstered Ireland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The comprehensive approach, characterised by interagency collaboration, multifaceted support, and adaptability, ensured that the Irish Defence Forces could effectively contribute to national efforts to manage and mitigate the crisis.



SECTION 3 – APPLYING PRINCIPLES AND KEY TENETS

4.32 When considered alongside the principles of joint and multinational operations, the behaviour-centric, manoeuvrist and comprehensive approaches form the foundation of orchestration by better understanding the ways and means to be applied to attain the end state. Understanding starts with analysing the operating environment, after which the commander and their staff determine the role of the military force to achieve higher-level objectives. The next step seeks to identify the objectives, decisive conditions and desired effects required of the military force. Military commanders and their staffs will develop and maintain situational awareness, balance ends and means, and determine ways using conceptual frameworks.

Analytical framework

4.33 Considering the end state, a thorough understanding of the operating environment's 'system of systems' allows the commander to frame the problem, allocate appropriate resources across the levels of operations, understand the effects of actions and anticipate potential outcomes. The understanding and assessment of the operating environment is supported by analytical frameworks to guide the decision-making process.

Operations framework

4.34 Military planners use the operations framework to synchronise their forces' activities in time and space according to the objective. It enables a clear view of relationships between the effects and objectives, and enhances the forces' focus on the end state. The framework describes tactical operations as shaping, decisive or supporting, and links them to the commander's plan. Concepts for tactical operations stemming from the operations framework are best described in relation to the decisive conditions/supporting effects and lines/grouping of operations. Several shaping and decisive operations may be needed to realise decisive conditions along a line of operations.

Geographic Framework

4.35 The geographic framework describes the 'where and when' of employing actions. In this framework, operations are defined by the operational engagement space around a joint force. Conceptual geography in the operating environment is important because it describes where intended operations take place. Even in a non-linear engagement space, the concepts of deep, close and rear operations, and a sense of range and proximity, aid understanding. When used in combination with other frameworks, they provide a powerful method to help visualise, organise and integrate activity across operational domains.



Figure 4.6 - The commander and staff determine the role of the military force to achieve a defined end state.

Joint function framework⁵⁸

4.36 The joint function framework assists commanders to integrate political, military and civilian actions through the operational domains. The joint functions describe the detailed capabilities of the force. In any operation these joint functions are to be considered, although the individual functions' contributions, significance and demands will vary. The joint function framework uses a combination of manoeuvre, fires, information and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) to affect an audience's attitude and behaviour. It is 'informed and directed' by the joint functions of command and control and intelligence, and 'supported' by the joint functions of sustainment and force protection.

Operational Design

4.37 Operational design employs conceptual frameworks to develop an approach that gives a comprehensive logic to the campaign or operation, while synchronising effects with the objectives. It also refines a commander's ideas – the commander's vision of how the operation will unfold – to provide detailed plans. Operations design continues throughout an operation, adapting to changing circumstances, understanding and guidance. While the planned and intended relationship between tactical actions, operational effects created from such actions, and ultimately decisive conditions achieved is an important one, it is not fixed. Continuous review and refinement are critical aspects of operations design.

Operational Art

4.38 Operational Art is the “employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organisation, integration and conduct of campaigns, major operations, or battles.”⁵⁹ Operational art is referred to as an 'art' because it entails linking together and realising, often abstract, strategic aims by means of physical activities. The term 'art' is used because it is about managing the military instrument in a range of different temporal and spatial dimensions where there are few quantifiable values or set answers.

4.39 Operational art embraces a military commander's ability to take a complex and often unstructured problem and provide sufficient clarity and logic (some of which is intuitive) to enable detailed planning, create effects and achieve objectives to attain the desired end-state. They gain an understanding of the context through analysis of the situation, including both the overt symptoms and underlying causes of conflict. Thereafter, awareness of a situation, and a feel for how it is being changed by military activity and other influences, is cultivated and maintained by continual assessment. Operational art is regarded as a key aspect of command during joint operations.

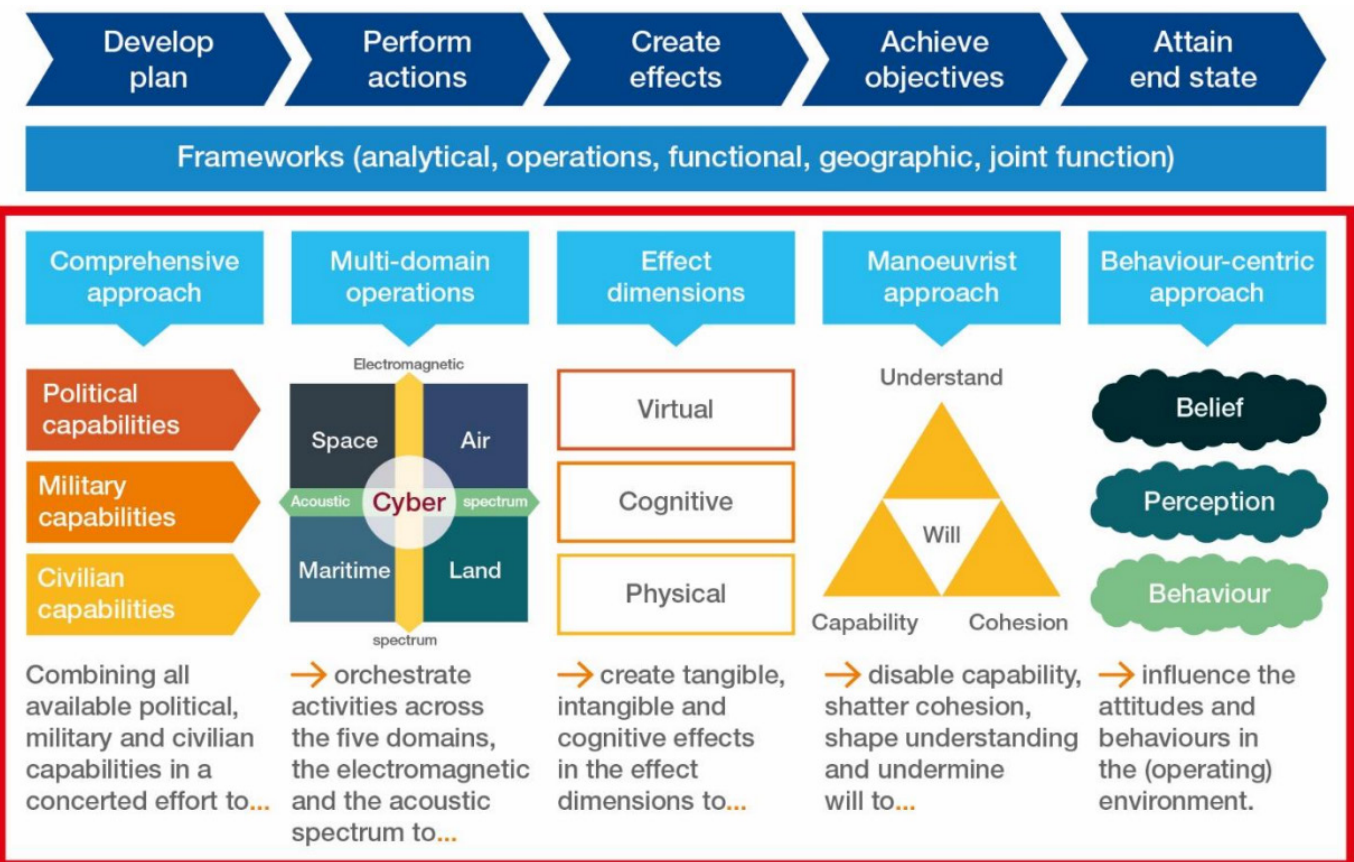


Figure 4.7 - Framework for Applying Principles and Key Tenets (Source: NATO AJP-01)

⁵⁸ For more detailed description of the joint functions, consult IRLJP-3 Conduct of Joint Operations
⁵⁹ UK Army Doctrine Publication AC71940 – Land Operations, 8-10

CHAPTER KEY POINTS

Principles and Doctrinal Tenets are not rigid laws but provide guidance for the conduct of military activity. Judgement is required in their consideration and application.

Our doctrinal tenets have evolved and developed over a century of Defence Forces' operational experience. Collectively, they provide a conceptual and theoretical framework within which doctrine and subsequent military activity is nested.

The behaviour-centric approach focuses planning and execution of military activity across the engagement space and from all levels of operating to influence the attitudes and behaviours of selected audiences.

The manoeuvrist approach seeks to shape understanding, avoid strengths and selectively target and exploit critical vulnerabilities and other points of influence to disrupt cohesion and to seize, maintain and exploit initiative where present.

The comprehensive approach seeks to ensure cooperation and coordination across the political, diplomatic, informational, military and economic dimensions in operations, so that the balanced application of multiple instruments might achieve desired end-states.

Effective conduct of joint operations is contingent on understanding the relative strengths and weaknesses of the military or non-military components of the force, and applying key principles and tenets outlined in doctrine.



CHAPTER 5

THE UTILITY OF THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

Chapter five deals with joint operations, describing the functional components underlying our vision to become a joint, agile and fit-for-purpose military force. The roles of the Defence Forces are categorised, as they appear in the most recent Defence Policy Review. The chapter then outlines core principles and factors associated with the conduct and command of joint operations.

Section 1 – Roles of the Irish Defence Forces

Section 2 – Joint Operations

Section 3 – Command and Control of Joint Operations



We will achieve our vision by transforming our culture, modernising our force to have the capability to deter threats across multi-domain operational environments; Valuing and respecting our people's dignity, empowering them to 'Be More', and delivering exciting and fulfilling careers for all who serve.

DF Vision 2030

SECTION 1 – ROLES OF THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

5.1 The roles of the Irish Defence Forces are outlined in the 2015 White Paper on Defence as directed by the Minister for Defence and categorised as follows in the 2024 DPR.

- To provide for the Military Defence of the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- To contribute to regional and international peace and security operations.
- To contribute to national resilience and whole-of-government security objectives.
- To fulfil any other tasks that Government may assign from time to time, including the roles of the RDF.

Military Defence of the State's Sovereignty & Territorial Integrity

5.2 Ireland's geographic position, economic and political stability and non-aligned status have generally contributed to a low threat perception regarding territorial defence. This has resulted in a force which is largely staffed and resourced for constabulary and overseas tasks, rather than for a conventional territorial defence, despite the necessity to 'act alone' should an attack on Irish territory occur.⁶⁰

Ireland's position has long been considered that the State, "must adopt a posture of preparedness, and in the event of attack, must be prepared to act alone until the United Nations Security Council has taken appropriate measures."

White Paper on Defence 2015

5.3 However, the evolving security environment and an appreciation of the dynamic nature of competition have renewed focus on military deterrence and defence of the state from armed aggression, across multiple domains. Deterrence requires, inter alia, the maintenance of a credible military capability to convince potential aggressors that the consequences of hostile activity targeted against Irish sovereignty and territorial integrity would outweigh any potential gains.⁶¹ This doctrine recognises that it is militarily preferable to be postured for conventional military capability enabling the transition to other core roles and discretionary tasks, as necessary. Fundamental to enhancing deterrent capability is a balanced but credible force. The credibility of the Irish Defence Forces to defend the State, our citizens and territory "relies on our collective security arrangements through engagements with international partners and organisations."⁶²

5.4 Enhancing our situational awareness means improving our ability to perceive threats and integrate information to improve understanding of our operational environment. The

development of a 'common operating picture (COP)' enabled through modern technology is fundamental to this. The Defence Forces must integrate data from a wide range of sources and generate coherent understanding to enable effective command at all levels. The COP reduces the fog of uncertainty and empowers decision-makers to effectively orchestrate fighting power across all domains.

5.5 Our audiences must understand our capability and credibility to act. Actors with hostile or unfriendly intent must be dissuaded from following through with actions. Narrative-led execution means aligning Defence Forces' actions, be they tactical training, regional exercises or operations with effective strategic communication.



Monitoring of Russian Fleet Exercise 2022



On 20 Jan 2022, the Irish Aviation Authority was informed that the Russian Navy planned

to conduct a live firing exercise involving naval artillery and rockets in an area approximately 120 nautical miles southwest of the Irish coast, within our EEZ. The notice for the exercises covered the period from 03 to 08 February. On 29 January, the Russian Military HQ announced that the exercise was to relocate to a non-defined area outside the EEZ. The Russian Navy vessels participating in the exercise navigated outside our EEZ towards the new exercise area, their exact composition and destination was NOT known. There remained the possibility that Russian aircraft would participate in the firing exercise and enter our EEZ. The announcement of this exercise came at a time of heightened political tensions regarding Russian relations with Ukraine. The Defence Forces deployed Maritime and Air assets from 301200JAN22 until 101200FEB22 to maintain situational awareness through a COP of foreign military and fishing fleet activity within our EEZ. The presence of Defence Forces assets in the area demonstrated a level of deterrence to the actors concerned and proved a critical risk management function for fisheries and other sovereign activities in the area.

⁶⁰ Government of Ireland, *Defence White Paper 2015*, 25.

⁶¹ NATO Standardization Office (2018), *AAP 06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*.

⁶² Department of Defence (2024), *Defence Policy Review 2024*, 27.

Contribute to Regional and International Peace and Security Operations

5.6 It is increasingly acknowledged that Defence Forces participation in overseas operations is one of a range of policy instruments through which Ireland's commitment to multilateralism and human security can be realised. A fundamental pillar of Ireland's Foreign and Defence Policy is the Defence Forces' record of continuous service on peace support operations with the UN and OSCE, and crisis response operations led by the EU and NATO since 1958.⁶³

5.7 The 2022 CODF Report stated however that the Defence Forces participation in overseas operations "represents an exceptionally high level of commitment by international standards..."⁶⁴ Current UN-mandated peacekeeping deployments involve approximately 10% of total Army personnel and draw in the region of 20% annually. High commitment levels have also been experienced by Naval Service and Air Corps personnel during operational deployments.

5.8 The changing nature of peace support and crisis management operations, and particularly the role that EU member states play in supporting the UN, has led to a demand for multinational peacekeeping forces that are fully integrated in accordance with recognised international standards for interoperability. Participation in such operations in accordance with Government direction and legislative provision will require an integrated approach consisting of the Defence Forces, the Department of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, among other stakeholders.

5.9 Balancing discretionary and non-discretionary tasks with the maintenance of high levels of commitment to regional and international peace and security operations has significant implications for military planners. This is contingent on future levels of ambition for the Defence Forces. The increasingly demanding and extreme operating environments within which these missions are undertaken, points to the requirement for enhanced capabilities across the span of joint functions.



Figure 5.1 - Operation Fág an Bealach 2024

Contribute to National Resilience and Whole-of-Government Security Objectives

5.10 Resilience in a NATO context refers to the capacity, at national and collective level to prepare for, resist, respond to, and quickly recover from strategic shocks and disruptions, across the full spectrum of threats.⁶⁵ National resilience tasks are generally considered to encompass the military provision of ATCP, ATCA and security tasks in the maritime and air domains beyond the scope of conventional military defence.

Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)⁶⁶

5.11 Ireland's police force - An Garda Síochána (AGS) - have primary responsibility for national law and order, including the protection of the internal security of the State. The Defence Forces' contribution to internal security includes a responsibility to aid AGS, as required. In recent years, AGS has enhanced its own-armed response capability through its regional Armed Support Units (ASU) and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). Considerable interoperability remains mandated between AGS specialist intervention units and the Defence Forces Special Operations Forces (SOF) in response to current and emerging threats. Defence Forces Special Operations personnel additionally provide bespoke capabilities to other State agencies in an ATCP role.

5.12 Several unique capabilities of the Defence Forces in areas such as Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) response, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), Naval Diving Operations and the Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) are recognised by AGS as critically important for domestic security, as well as overseas operations.

5.13 The unpredictability of the security environment means that no definitive assumption can be made that the level of ATCP support currently required of the Defence Forces will continue in the medium to long term. While the scale of ATCP tasks has declined generally, there remains an imperative for military planners and policy makers to continually reassess the threat landscape and subsequent, potential ATCP tasks.

5.14 The comprehensive approach promotes collaboration across Services and government agencies to mitigate risks and threats as they present themselves. Similarly, specialist planning and liaison is required on a consistent basis between Defence Forces SOF and AGS in relation to interoperability and the response to security events requiring a joint response. This planning, exercises and exchange are a well-defined element of the current security paradigm between state security and specialist military intervention units, underpinned by inter agency policy formulation and cross-departmental co-operation.

63 Department of Foreign Affairs (2021), *An introduction to Ireland's candidature for the United Nations Security Council 2021–2022*, 3.

64 Commission on the Defence Forces Report (2022), 19.

65 NATO Standardization Office (2018), *AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*.

66 For more detail refer to the DF's 2024 ATCP Doctrine.



GASU

Arising from an SLA for the provision of aviation services by the Irish Air Corps for An Garda



Siochána, 304 Squadron (known as GASU), is the specialised sub-unit within No. 3 Operations Wing. While aviation tasks in support of An Garda Siochána are many and varied, GASU is generally tasked to high priority missions involving risk to life or serious crime. Typical tasks include searches for high risk missing persons, where there is a serious concern for their well-being, as well as injured persons. GASU will also be tasked to assist in searching for suspects, managing vehicle pursuits from the air and assisting specialist Garda units, such as the provision of top cover to armed support units during searches, scenes of crime with photography and occasionally to provide rapid transport for negotiators or for the dog unit. The high output of GASU since its inception in 1997, speaks to both the efficacy of the partnership between AGS and the Air Corps and the proficiency of both Services.

Provide Specified Defence Aid to the Civil Authority (ATCA)⁶⁷

5.15 The role of the Irish Defence Forces in supporting principal response agencies (PRAs) to respond to major emergencies is laid out in the national Framework for Major Emergency Management.⁶⁸ Defence Forces capabilities can be employed across a wide spectrum of activity to support PRAs when requested and available. As these capabilities are primarily deployed in a military role at home and overseas, their deployment in a major emergency is contingent on the exigencies of other tasks and may require a lead time to facilitate redeployment. The provision of Defence Forces capabilities is ideally on prior agreed arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Service Level Agreements (SLA) between the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces and relevant government departments. ATCA Tasks can be categorised as follows:

- a. Emergency Management and support to the PRAs (not covered by an SLA/ MOU)
- b. Tasks arising from MOUs and SLAs
- c. Maintenance of essential services
- d. Miscellaneous taskings

5.16 ATCA tasks provide an opportunity for the Defence Forces to demonstrate its capabilities in delivering practical and helpful operational outputs to citizens in difficult circumstances. Some of these capabilities are unique, at least in their scale, among public agencies in this country and are dual-use, in that they have both military and civil applications, which underpins the case for investment in the relevant capability areas. The importance and value to the State and its citizens of ATCA outputs by the Defence Forces is therefore greater than might be immediately obvious when considering the role of a military force.

5.17 With regarding to planning and coordination, The Irish Defence Forces participate in the Government Task Force (GTF) on Emergency Planning which provides strategic direction and co-ordination of emergency planning. The Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) is a joint civil-military office within the Department of Defence, established to support the work of the GTF on Emergency Planning. When an emergency or crisis occurs, the lead government department (LGD) may convene a separate National Emergency Coordination Group, chaired by the Minister responsible for that Department or a senior official, to ensure a 'whole of government' approach is brought to the national response.

⁶⁷ For more detail, refer to the DF's 2023 ATCA Doctrine.

⁶⁸ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *A Framework for Major Emergency Management (MEM)*, 2021.

Other ways the Defence Forces contributes to National Resilience and Whole-of-Government Security Objectives

5.18 From time to time, the Irish Defence Forces will provide a range of other supports to the state in line with MOUs and SLAs agreed by government e.g. ministerial air transport service (MATS) and air ambulance services. To support Ireland's economic well-being, the Defence Forces through appropriate fora will engage with industry, research and development and job initiatives, in support of government policy. The RDF offers additional capacity to augment the permanent forces in crisis situations or when specialist gaps are identified in current capabilities, nationally and internationally.

Maritime and Air Security

5.19 Due to our location as an island off the west coast of Europe, Ireland has an exceptionally large and important maritime and air area of responsibility. This is reflected, inter alia, in the size of our EEZ, the scale of fishing activity in our waters, the number of aircraft crossing Irish controlled airspace, our growing sea-based energy infrastructure, and the number of sub-sea communications cables and sea lines passing close to our coastline. Some of these features have been cast into sharper relief by the impacts of BREXIT and increased grey-zone activity in the maritime domain.

5.20 Our island location, therefore, has an important influence on aspects of our national security – both positive and negative. It also means that neighbouring countries in Europe have a keen interest in our capacity to police our air and maritime areas of responsibility, including in the politically sensitive area of fisheries, and to protect our national security from external incursion by sea or air. In this context, the report of the Commission on the Defence Forces recommends that Ireland deepen its engagement with actions under the EU's Maritime Security Strategy and develop a National Maritime Security Strategy and a National Aviation Security Strategy.

5.21 In the key area of fisheries, the Naval Service is responsible for operating the State's Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) and fishery protection outputs of the Naval Service and the Air Corps are coordinated by the FMC. Naval Service members are authorised to act as Sea Fishery Protection Officers under relevant legislation.

5.22 The Naval Service also provides support, shares intelligence and works closely with the Lisbon-based Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and this proactive engagement has highlighted the substantial quantities of narcotics entering the EU, including Ireland. The Naval Service is also authorised to engage in drug interdiction operations and, along with An Garda Síochána and the Revenue Commissioners, forms the Joint Task Force (JTF) on Drug Interdiction.

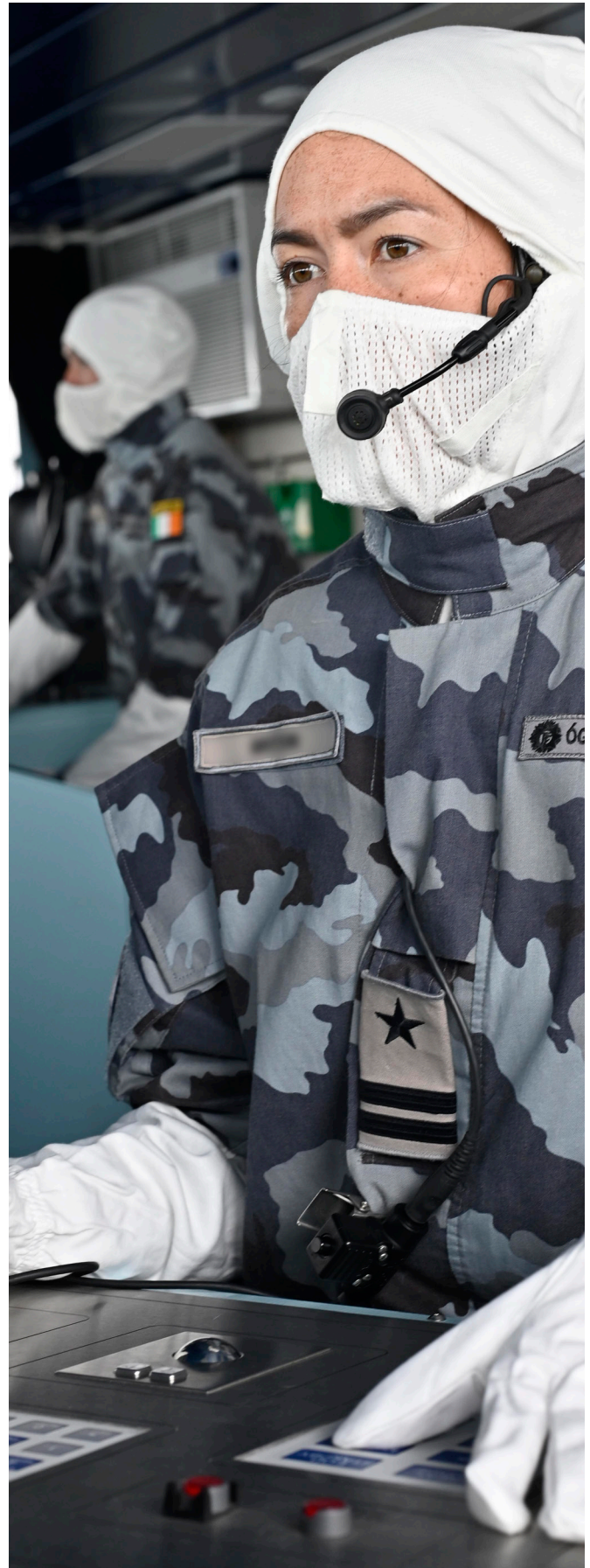


Fig 5.2 - The Navy contributes to and protects a shared common maritime operational picture.

SECTION 2 – JOINT OPERATIONS

5.23 Military success relies on the joint effect, involving components and other force elements brought together under a unified command structure. Few contemporary operations are conducted by a single component. Successful joint campaigns and operations require a comprehensive approach to maximise the overall effectiveness of the joint force ensuring efficient use of the complete range of capabilities. The capabilities required for joint operations at home and overseas are selected based on national capabilities and other specific agreements to provide forces.

5.24 As the Irish Defence Forces transforms to fulfil the Government’s strategic level of ambition, the establishment of agile and appropriately resourced joint command structures will be central to our strategic force design process.

Conduct of Joint Operations

5.25 Generally, there are several stages involved in the planning and conduct of joint operations. These stages can exist continuously or concurrently throughout an operation. Analysis of the environment and framing the problem is a constant and iterative cycle which is undertaken by planners at all levels. Once an operational plan has been developed, force generation and preparation (including the build-up of medical support) is critical. Training and validation take place prior to deployment and execution of operations during which mission termination and transition are always anticipated. Finally,

redeployment of forces and identifying lessons is a crucial step in ensuring continuous learning and improvement.

5.26 Planning joint operations demands a way of thinking and specific processes that, together, enable the effective use of military capabilities (as part of the contribution to a comprehensive approach) to achieve objectives and to attain the desired end state. The preparation and execution of joint operations, which are described in detail in IRLJP-3 and IRLJP-5, are contingent on the range of joint functions which are organised by the joint operational headquarters.⁶⁹ Individual functions will normally be associated with a particular staff element or be taken care of by a particular process within the joint operational headquarters.

Joint Operations

Joint Operations are coordinated military actions involving forces from different branches or nations working together towards a common objective.

AJP01 (Allied Joint Doctrine)

”



Operation PIANO 2023

The Joint Task Force (JTF) on drug interdiction was established in 1993 as a Government measure to combat the illegal importation of drugs. The JTF consisted of members of An Garda Síochána, the Customs & Excise Service of the Revenue Commissioners and the Naval Service. The JTF co-operates closely with the Maritime Analysis Operational Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N), an international initiative by six EU member states and the UK founded in 2007 with the express mission of facilitating multilateral co-operation in the fight against Drug Trafficking in the Atlantic and Mediterranean maritime and aerial domains.

As part of Operation CAISLEÁN, the L.E. W.B. YEATS was tasked to conduct surveillance of and prepare to carry out a Maritime Interdiction Operation on a merchant vessel off the South Coast of Ireland on the 26th of Sept 2023. Due to the inclement weather conditions on scene, OC L.E. W. B YEATS recommended a special operations force (SOF) interdiction. The Naval Service Fleet Operations Officer, who is the Naval Service member on the JTF, requested through DCOS Ops for the deployment of SOF.

This initiated Operation PIANO a Joint Operation involving SOF, the Air Corp and the Naval Service where SOF were delivered on board the suspect vessels by helicopter and took control of the vessel. Naval Service personnel and the Law Enforcement Detachment of An Garda Síochána and Customs & Excise later boarded, searched and diverted the vessel to Cork Harbour bring to end a successful Joint and Multi Agency Operation. Operation PIANO is to date the largest Cocaine seizure ever in the state with over 2.2 tonnes of Cocaine seized.

The Defence Forces have prepared for such scenarios through training exercises such as Exercise POSEIDON - a Joint training exercises including the Naval Service, Air Corps and SOF held on the East Coast of Ireland utilising merchant vessels as the vessel of interest.



Organisation of a Joint Military Force

5.27 A joint operational force does not exist in and of itself. It is organised on independent components with their own service branch delegated to the Joint Force Commander (JFC). A component can also consist of elements and units from more than one service branch brought together to form a functional element. The special operations component is an example of such an element. All components, whether single-service or functional, are combined in such a way to maximise the joint effect in their respective domains. A joint operational force can also be organised with directly subordinate units in which the different elements and units are directly subordinate to the JFC. With this form of organisation, the requirement for individual component commanders below the JFC is negated.

5.28 Best international practice suggests that it is typical for a joint operational force to be organised with a combination of components and directly subordinate units. Where the emphasis between these two principles is placed depends on the competence and capacity of the headquarters, the total number of subordinate units and the magnitude and complexity of the operation concerned.

5.29 A common understanding of the degree of delegated authority is a prerequisite for effective planning and preparation. Thus, agreed definitions of the command relationship enables seamless and flexible assignment of components to the joint commander to meet the operational requirements. Command relationships such as Operational Command (OPCOM⁷⁰), Operational Control (OPCON⁷¹), Tactical Command (TACOM⁷²) and Tactical Control (TACON⁷³) are detailed in IRLJP-5 - Planning for Joint Operations.

The Irish Defence Forces as a Joint Military Force

5.30 Acknowledging best international practice, the CODF developed a high-level command and control (C2) structure for the Defence Forces, as shown in Figure 5.2. The proposed model seeks to provide a structure that has unity of command and unity of purpose, and broadly conforms to modern structures used in other countries.

5.31 The government’s stated level of ambition provides for the creation of a Chief of Defence (CHOD) with the authority and appropriate C2 of the Defence Forces at the military strategic level, including the ability to delegate command. In this framework, the CHOD will be supported by three Service Chiefs and a JFC, who will also be the Vice CHOD.

5.32 Under the CHOD, the Service Chiefs should be responsible for commanding their own services, and the JFC should be accountable for the following three areas:

- a. **Operations** - Planning and execution of operations.
- b. **Joint Enablers** - Special Operations Command, Military Intelligence Service, Joint Cyber Defence Command, Office of Defence Services and Facilities Management, Joint Health Command and Joint Logistics Command.
- c. **Joint Training and Education Command** - National Defence Academy, Officer Training Centre, National Induction/Recruitment Centres, Apprentice School, and Doctrine and Concepts Centre

5.33 The proposed framework ensures a clear delineated chain of command which will enhance operational capability and provide a coherent level of authority throughout the Defence Forces. The framework will also promote synergies across joint capability development, thereby enhancing organisational efficiencies and effectiveness.

5.34 As outlined in chapter one, change is a constant feature and Defence Forces structures should be kept under review to ensure that the organisation remains modern, agile, and responsive to changes in the strategic environment.

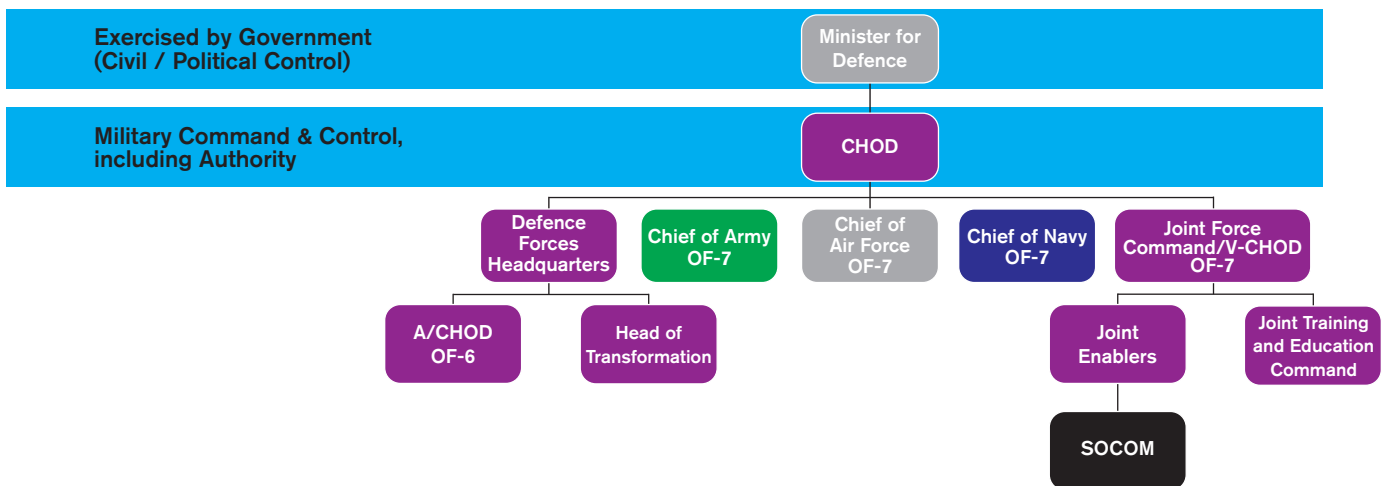


Figure 5.2: Proposed Future High-Level C2 Structure of Defence Forces (Source: CODF 2022)

70 OPCOM - The authority granted to a commander to specify missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy and reassign force elements, and to retain or delegate OPCON, TACOM, and/or TACON, as may be deemed necessary. It does not of itself include responsibility for administration or logistics.

71 OPCON - The authority delegated to a commander to direct assigned force elements so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location; deploy force elements concerned; and retain or delegate tactical control of those elements. It does not include authority to allocate separate employment of components of the force elements concerned. Neither does it, of itself, include administrative or logistic control.

72 TACOM - The authority delegated to a commander to specify tasks to force elements under his/her command for the accomplishment of the mission specified by higher authority.

73 TACON - The detailed and usually local direction and control of movements or manoeuvres necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned

SECTION 3 – COMMAND AND CONTROL OF JOINT OPERATIONS

Command and Control Terminology

5.35 The terms command and control are not synonymous, although they share a close relationship. The terms are often merged (C2) which results in a statement that typically includes command, authority, direction and assigned forces.

a. **Command** Command is the military authority and responsibility of an officer to issue orders to subordinates, pertaining to the command vested in him or her, covering every aspect of military operations and administration.⁷⁴ Command authority is allocated formally to a commander through position, orders and directives and has a specific individual component vested in personal credibility. Presently, military command in the Irish Defence Forces flows from the Minister of Defence to the formation commander.⁷⁵

b. **Control** Control is “the authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisations not normally under their command, encompassing the responsibility for implementing orders or directives.”⁷⁶ Control is to manage and direct forces/functions consistent with a commander’s authority to accomplish certain missions or tasks which are limited by function, time or location.

Mission Command

5.36 Command is an intrinsically forceful, human activity involving authority as well as leadership. Trust is earned and cannot be demanded. It requires a vision of the desired outcome(s), understanding concepts, mission priorities and allocating resources, an ability to assess people and risks, and involves a continual process of re-evaluating the situation. A commander determines a course of action and leads the command.

5.37 Commanders decide the extent of delegation based upon the specific context, judgement and competence of their subordinates. A commander must understand which subordinate commands and non-military assets will thrive and excel with fewer constraints, and which will require more direction and control. This is likely to inform the kind of tasks different subordinate commanders and units will receive.

5.38 Mission Command, the leadership philosophy of the Irish Defence Forces is a form of decentralised decision-making promoting initiative and the ability to dictate tempo, but which is responsive to superior direction.⁷⁷ It is founded on the clear expression of intent by commanders and the freedom of staff and subordinate commanders to act to achieve that intent, within given parameters. It requires a style of leadership that recognises five supporting elements: Unity of Effort, Trust, Mutual Understanding, Timely and Effective Decision Making and Decentralised Execution.

5.39 There is a responsibility to fulfil the higher commander’s intent based on clear understanding of common doctrine, obedience to orders and the initiative to act within freedom of action given, or purposefully in the absence of further orders. Trust is a prerequisite of mission command. Trust can only be developed through shared experience and training.

Principles of Joint & Multinational Command⁷⁸

5.40 **Unity of Command** At the military strategic, operational and tactical levels of command, a fundamental element of C2 is the organisation of forces under a single designated commander, which provides the necessary cohesion for the planning and execution of operations. It requires the requisite authority to direct all forces in pursuit of the agreed objectives. Command relationships, by which commanders derive this authority, will be determined when a JTF is established. These relationships will acknowledge the constraints that are placed on the use of force contributions and supporting national assets, and the extent of activities of other authorities in a designated joint operations area.

5.41 **Chain of Command** The C2 structure is a hierarchical system and should be defined and understood, with all its command responsibilities, by all levels of command. A clear chain of command strengthens integration between components. Where necessary and appropriate, direction and orders to a subordinate or service-level commander may include tasks for specific force elements, or capabilities. It is usual for the planning of joint operations to consider the total number of subordinate units, span of control management and the complexity of the operation concerned when determining the requirements of the HQ structure.

5.42 **Continuity of Command** Command should be continuous throughout an operation. During an operation, further enhancement of unity of command is desirable through continuity of command. In principle, ‘the commander who plans should execute’; however, circumstances may not permit this. The higher command authority, in consultation with the operational level commander, should arrange a succession of command and, in turn, an operational-level commander should arrange an alternate headquarters to meet operational contingencies.

5.43 **Integration of Command** The command structure should ensure that the capabilities of any service or nation, or those of several nations, are directed to achieve the operational objectives in the most effective way. Component commands, to which national contingents contribute, are normally environmental or functional, but the specific task organisation will reflect the higher commander’s specific requirements. An

74 NATO defines command as “The authority vested in a member of the armed forces for the direction, coordination, and control of military forces.” NATO Standardization Office (2018), AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definition

75 Military command of the Defence Forces is provided for in Section 17 of the Defence Act 1954-2015.

76 NATO Standardization Office (2018), AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.

77 Many of the guiding principles of personal leadership are contained in the Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine.

78 Adapted from NATO AJP-01 Joint Doctrine

efficient and comprehensive liaison structure, linking the JTF HQ, all force elements and other non-military organisations is an essential element of the C2 structure.

C2 and the Comprehensive Approach

5.44 Traditionally, military forces operating according to the principles of joint and multinational command assume some level of control and authority over components. However, as part of the comprehensive approach, this is not routinely achievable. Depending on the nature of the partners or neutral actors, varying C2 approaches will be required – ranging from directing to engaging to working under the mission command philosophy – to drive or influence internal and external organisations, with the intent of shaping the engagement space. The approach taken will largely be context specific and based on the organisational needs and capabilities. For example, at the tactical level, where external relationships are reduced and linear hierarchies are likely to dominate, command will be largely directive in nature. However, at higher levels, where partners and other actors will be more numerous, engaging to influence will become increasingly important and the use of a direct style will be less prevalent and effective.

5.45 The following fundamentals are required to sustain cooperation between actors in an engagement space.

- a. **Coherence** - Through unity in direction and guidance it is possible to achieve agreement and synergy of effects. Effective communication underpins coherence. Regardless of C2 relationship, communication and liaison enables the military to provide security advice and deconflict efforts and movements with other actors.
- b. **Cooperation** - To achieve effectiveness and efficiency, the levels of cooperation may range from de-confliction to collaboration, to integration. Information is exchanged to prevent fragmentation or mutual benefit. Integration provides harmonisation across all actions, sharing of responsibilities and the utilisation of available capabilities to greatest effect.
- c. **Coordination** - The process of bringing together different elements of a complex activity or organisation into an efficient relationship. Organisations share information and frequent communication occurs. Some shared decision-making will take place, fostered by shared objectives. The military and other agencies might help each other undertake their tasks. For example, the provision of transportation to help deliver the humanitarian aid organised by an NGO.
- d. **Consistency** - An understood and consistent approach with all actors facilitates clear and unambiguous understanding. It also mitigates the risk of mistrust and negative bias in areas of external engagement.



OPERATIONAL COMMAND – OPERATION EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

“The capacity for being distracted by the multifaceted influences of stakeholders was immense. These included twenty seven Troop Contributing Countries, (three of whom were non-EU countries), the Host Nations, Transit Nations, the EU, UN, AU and over seventy NGOs in theatre. Many of the stakeholders would have held conflicting views as to the role, participation and indeed need for such a Force.

From the outset, as EUFOR Commander I needed to have a clear personal vision of the way forward. Being fully conversant with enabling instruments such as UN Resolutions, Mandate, Mission and any special directives was crucial. I endeavoured to establish my sphere of influence, understand the totality of the strategic dimension that pertained to the Operation and assume responsibility. While being conscious of Political and Diplomatic responsibilities, I also needed to quickly identify a spectrum of leverage sources and their possible use as the Operation progressed.

Espousing the *raison d'être* of the Force, the vision for the future, setting goals and having a strategy to achieve results and communicating a message of positivity to all, is important. By achieving incremental goals the organisation gains credibility, its relevance in international circles is accepted and the opportunity to be decisive is presented.

My experience within EUFOR re-affirmed the need to manage the flow of information in any major organisation or force. It is not the volume that matters but the quality. Insistence on collaboration at every staff level, being dogmatic about having precise and concise briefing papers and reports, which when properly verified, allow the commander to make sound decisions. It also affords the commander time to devote to leadership responsibilities such as, meeting, briefing and listening to all who have an interest in the success of the Force. Personal interaction by the commander at every level and displaying appreciation, where warranted, leads to self esteem, awareness and ultimately pride in the Force by all personnel. In an international force my experience told me that respecting the opinions and work practices of all nationalities was paramount and as a result it enabled me to influence and motivate all those under my command and achieve mission success.”



Lt Gen Pat Nash, Operational Commander, TCHAD 2007 - 2009

CHAPTER KEY POINTS

The roles of the Irish Defence Forces are:

- » To provide for the Military Defence of the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- » To contribute to regional and international peace and security operations.
- » To contribute to national resilience and whole-of-government security objectives.
- » To fulfil any other tasks that Government may assign from time to time.

Irish Defence Forces participation in overseas operations is one of a range of policy instruments through which Ireland's commitment to multilateralism and human security can be realised.

The increasingly complex and demanding operating environment within which the Defence Forces operate requires enhanced capabilities in range of military functional areas.

Joint operations demand a way of thinking and specific processes that, together, enable the effective use of military and non-military capabilities to achieve objectives and to attain the desired end state.

Effective understanding applied in the planning and execution of operations allows the Irish Defence Forces to achieve military objectives out of proportion to the resources applied.



GLOSSARY

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| AI | Artificial intelligence |
| AGS | An Gardai Siochana |
| AJP | Allied Joint Publication (NATO) |
| ASU | Armed Support Unit |
| ATCA | Aid to Civil Authority |
| ATCP | Aid to Civil Power |
| C2 | Command and Control |
| CBRN | Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear |
| CHOD | Chief of Defence (See COS) |
| CIMIC | Civil-military cooperation |
| CIS | Communication and Information Systems |
| COA | Course of Action |
| CODF | Commission on the Defence Forces |
| COPD | Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive |
| COS | Chief of Staff |
| DF | The Irish Defence Forces |
| DIME | Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic |
| DOD | Department of Defence |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| EOD | Explosive Ordnance Disposal |
| ERU | Emergency Response Unit |
| EU | European Union |
| EUMS | European Union Military Staff |
| FMC | Fisheries Monitoring Centre |
| GASU | Garda Air Support Unit |
| GTF | Government Task Force |
| JDP | Joint Doctrine Publication |

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| JFC | Joint Force Command(er) |
| MAOC-N | Maritime Analysis Operational Centre - Narcotics |
| MDI | Multi-domain Integration |
| MDO | Multi-domain operations |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| OEP | Office of Emergency Planning |
| OPCOM | Operational Command |
| OPCON | Operational Control |
| OPP | Operations Planning Process |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PDF | Permanent Defence Forces |
| PME | Professional Military Education |
| PRA | Principal Response Agency |
| PSO | Peace Support Operations |
| RDF | Reserve Defence Forces |
| RBIO | Rules-based international order |
| SHAPE | Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| TACOM | Tactical command |
| TACON | Tactical Control |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCLOS | United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea |
| UNSCR | United Nations Security Council Resolution |
| WPS | Women, Peace and Security |
| VUCA | Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguity |

Terms and Definitions

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| Actor | An individual, group or entity whose actions are affecting the attainment of the end state. (NATO Agreed) |
| Adversary | An individual, group or entity whose intentions or interests are opposed to those of friendly parties and against which legal coercive political, military or civilian actions may be envisaged and conducted. (NATO Agreed) |
| Armed Conflict - | Occurs when escalation leads to the use of armed force between states or prolonged armed violence between governmental authorities and organised armed groups within a state. |
| Audience | An individual, group or entity whose interpretation of events and subsequent behaviour may affect the attainment of the end state. Note: The audience may consist of publics, stakeholders and actors. (NATO Agreed) |
| Campaign | A set of military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective. (NATO Agreed) |
| Command | Command is the military authority and responsibility of an officer to issue orders to subordinates, pertaining to the command vested in him or her, covering every aspect of military operations and administration. |
| Command and Control | The authority, responsibilities and activities of military commanders in the direction and coordination of military forces as well as the implementation of orders related to the execution of operations. (NATO Agreed) |
| Comprehensive Approach - | Combining all available political, military and civilian capabilities, in a concerted effort, to attain the desired end state. (NATO Agreed) |
| Confrontation | Arises when unresolved differences lead adversaries to oppose each other with hostile intent or behaviour, resulting in a state of crisis. |
| Concept | An agreed notion or idea, normally set out in a document, that provides guidance for different working domains and which may lead to the development of a policy. (NATO Agreed) |
| Control | The authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisations not normally under their command, encompassing the responsibility for implementing orders or directives. (NATO Agreed) |
| Cooperation | A state where both states and non-state actors collaborate to achieve shared objectives. |
| Counterterrorism | All preventive, defensive and offensive measures taken to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property against terrorist threats and/or acts, and to respond to terrorist acts. Note: In the frame of the NATO Comprehensive Approach, these measures can be combined with or followed by measures enabling recovery after terrorist acts. (NATO Agreed) |
| Cyberspace | The global domain consisting of all interconnected communication, information technology and other electronic systems, networks and their data, including those which are separated or independent, which process, store or transmit data. (NATO Agreed) |
| Defence Strategic Communication | Advancing national interests by using Defence as a means of communication to influence the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of audiences. (UK JDP 0-01.1) |
| Deterrence | The convincing of a potential aggressor that the consequences of coercion or armed conflict would outweigh the potential gains. This requires the maintenance of a credible military capability and strategy with the clear political will to act. (NATO Agreed) |
| Doctrine | Fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application. (NATO Agreed) |
| Domains (NATO Agreed) | The land domain comprises capabilities and activities primarily related to operating on and directly above the Earth's land mass, ending at the high-water mark and overlapping with the maritime domain in the landward segment of the littorals. |
| | The maritime domain comprises capabilities and activities, primarily related to operating below, on and above the surface of the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas and at the high-water mark, overlapping with the land domain in the landward segment of the littorals. |
| | The air domain comprises capabilities and activities primarily related to operating in the airspace that begins at the Earth's surface (overlapping with the maritime and land domains) and extending generally to the altitude where atmospheric effects on airborne objects become negligible |
| | The space domain comprises activities and capabilities primarily related to operating in space, where atmospheric effects on airborne objects become negligible. |
| | Cyberspace is global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent networks of information technology infrastructures and resident data, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers. |

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| Effect Dimensions | An analytical construct that translates actions in the engagement space into the physical, virtual and cognitive consequences that these actions may have. (NATO Agreed) |
| Engagement Space | The part of the operating environment where actions and activities are planned and conducted. (NATO Agreed) |
| Fighting Power | The ability of the armed forces to shape, contest, and fight Note: It represents three interrelated components: the moral, conceptual and physical. (NATO Agreed) |
| Gender | The social attributes associated with being male and female, learned through socialisation, that determine a person's position and value in a given context, including in the relationship between women and men and girls and boys, as well as in the relations between women and those between men. Note: Gender issues do not equate to an exclusive focus on women. (NATO Agreed) |
| Grey zone activities | State operations for strategic advantage below the threshold of armed conflict. Grey zone activities can undermine political systems, spread discontent, and damage the economy and reputation of a state. |
| Hybrid threats | Harmful activities that are planned and carried out with malign intent. They aim to undermine a target, such as a state or an institution, through a variety of means, often combined. Such means include information manipulation, cyberattacks, economic influence or coercion, covert political manoeuvring, coercive diplomacy, or threats of military force. (Hybrid COE) |
| Information Activities | Activities performed by any capability or means, focused on creating cognitive effects. (NATO Agreed) |
| Joint Operations | Operations are coordinated military actions involving forces from different branches or nations working together towards a common objective. |
| Military Capability | The ability to attain operational success for a given mission/task/scenario, while achieving the desired effects under specified standards and conditions, through a combination of 'ways and means'. |
| Narrative | A spoken or written account of events and information arranged in a logical sequence to influence the behaviour of a target audience. (NATO Agreed) |
| National power - | The sum of all resources available to a nation in the pursuit of national objectives. National power stems from various elements, also called instruments. These four instruments are: Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic. |
| Operational Art | The employment of forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles. (NATO Agreed) |
| Operational Domain | A specified sphere of capabilities and activities that can be applied within an engagement space. Note: There are five operational domains: maritime, land, air, space and cyberspace, each conditioned by the characteristics of their operating environment. (NATO Agreed) |
| Public | An individual, group or entity who is aware of activities that may affect the attainment of the end state. (NATO Agreed) |
| Rivalry | A state of peace wherein entities have conflicting goals. |
| Situational Awareness | The knowledge of the elements in the battlespace necessary to make well-informed decisions. (NATO Agreed) |
| Stakeholder | An individual, group or entity who can affect or is affected by the attainment of the end state. (NATO Agreed) |
| Strategic Communications | In the NATO military context, the integration of communication capabilities and information staff function with other military activities, in order to understand and shape the information environment, in support of strategic aims and objectives. (NATO Agreed) |
| Sustainability | The ability of a force to maintain the necessary level of combat power for the duration required to achieve its objectives. (NATO Agreed) |
| Terrorism | The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives. (NATO Agreed) |