



SENATOR
VINCENT P. MARTIN

Green Party spokesperson for Foreign Affairs & Defence with responsibility for Brexit



International Security Policy Section,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
80 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.
D02 VY53

28th June 2023

Consultative Forum on International Security Policy

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the above. Enclosed herewith is a copy of my submission.

Kind regards,


Vincent P. Martin

Seanad Éireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

☎ 01 618 3681 ✉ Vincentp.martin@oireachtas.ie 📘 Vincent P Martin
🐦 @vincentpmartin1 🌐 www.vincentpmartin.ie 🌐 @vincentpmartin1



*SUBMISSION BY
SENATOR VINCENT P. MARTIN
GREEN PARTY SPOKESPERSON ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
DEFENCE.*

The Green Party, based on its founding principles, is committed to “active military neutrality” as a continued expression of the State’s independent foreign policy and as a key element of our wider Constitutional commitment to the pacific settlement of international disputes. Moreover, the Party views Irish neutrality as an essential platform for our deployment of “soft power”, and for our credible support for multilateralism and the rule of law in a more just and sustainable world.

With a view to clarifying the legal mechanism and enhancing the State’s independence and latitude in the deployment of Irish Defence personnel abroad, the Party supports an amendment of the “double lock” as described in the amended Defence Act (2006) to allow Irish troops to be deployed overseas on multilateral missions, providing that the proposed deployment: (a) is approved by Dáil Eireann, (b) has been reviewed by Seanad Eireann, and (c) is either supported by a UN (Security Council or General Assembly) resolution or, failing such resolution, by a decision of a regional organisation and / or regional arrangements authorised under Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, as set out specifically in articles 52, 53 and 54.

The Party supports the State’s continued involvement in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy subject to our “special status”, including participation in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), and the Partnership for Peace (PFP). However, the Green Party is opposed to and will resist any activities not compatible with the State’s non-aligned and peacekeeping defence tradition.

The Green Party reaffirms its opposition to joining NATO, as doing so would be inconsistent with our commitment to active military neutrality and our support for enabling conditions for the pacific settlement of conflict.

Recognizing that practically all wars result from the failure of statecraft and building on our own experience of colonialism, and our more recent capabilities developed during the course of the Anglo-Irish peace process, the Green Party re-commits to active neutrality through expanded funding – commensurate with our defence budget – for domestic and international capabilities, with the purpose of non-violent conflict resolution, international justice and peacebuilding.

In the event of any proposed change to our Neutrality status or suggested bilateral defence arrangement, the Party would call for a Citizens Assembly and a Children and Young People’s Assembly to fully consider Ireland’s future strategic contribution to a just and sustainable world on the basis of a foreign policy based on principled neutrality in support of international cooperation and constructive multilateralism, and informed by principles of non-violent conflict resolution, solidarity, equality and regenerative economies.

The Green Party believes that it should be kept under scrupulously review the State’s multiple defence commitments and collaborative arrangements to guard against any *de facto* compromise in our commitment to active military neutrality.

The Green Party believes it is important to guard against policy drift and the opening of any gap between Government policy and popular support for Ireland’s neutrality, including support for our Article 29 (Bunreacht na hÉireann) commitment to “peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality...and the pacific settlement of international disputes...”

UN Security Council (UNSC)

Given the increasingly non-representative nature of the Security Council and the increasing likelihood of bad faith vetoes it is proposed that for Ireland to reassert its independence, and broaden the democratic legitimacy of decision making, regarding the deployment of Irish Defence Force personnel abroad, that we modify the current “TripleLock” actors to include the approval of Dáil Éireann and review by Seanad Éireann, based on compliance with the relevant articles in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

The Green Party proposes to substitute either a mandate from the Security Council or General Assembly (which is the present law), or else a multilateral mission organised by another regional organisation recognised by the United Nations, consistent with the principles and guidelines of UN peacekeeping. These principles are expressed in detail in the document “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines¹”. The specific section of the UN Charter that covers such operations is Chapter VIII, consisting of Articles 52 – 54.

This would resolve the problems caused by our present law which ties Ireland’s defence policy to two UN bodies - one of which (the General Assembly) does not in practice mandate peacekeeping missions, and the other (the Security Council) is effectively handcuffed by bad faith actions on the part of its permanent members. We have described above instances where such bad faith actions have obstructed UN peacekeeping or Irish involvement in it (see in particular the North Macedonia incident).

The Green Party believes that Ireland’s peacekeeping activities should support the high principles on which the UN was founded, and the UN Charter already gives us a solution to our problem: Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter (Ch VIII, Article 52 1) states that: “Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United

Nations” and in (Ch VIII, Article 52 3) “...the Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council.”

The European Union is an important regional organisation that has organised many peacekeeping missions that Ireland has taken part in, and in future is likely to be the most important multilateral body for Irish peacekeeping. However, it is not the only one, and the Chapter VIII approach leaves open the question of which multilateral missions’ Irish peacekeepers can take part in: the simplest and most flexible answer is that it can be any that is consistent with the above chapter of the UN Charter. Along with the EU, another important example is the African Union.

Leaving open the question of which multilateral body may organise the mission, the Green Party instead places the emphasis on the principles and doctrine underlying any proposed operation, and on the fact that a multilateral mission organised by a relevant regional organisation is already provided for in the UN Charter. Our proposed wording allows our troops to take part in any multilateral force, providing it is upholding the UN’s principles. And as we state, it confers no obligation to take part in any such operation: full control is left in the hands of our own Oireachtas, regulated by law as our constitution provides.

The Green Party recognises the vital role that up-to-date training and interoperability play in allowing our Defence Forces to defend our territory and foster peace worldwide and in this context consents to continued participation in PESCO and PfP while keeping participation under review and will resist any activities not compatible with the State’s non-aligned and peacekeeping defence tradition.

NATO & Other Bilateral Military Arrangements

Joining NATO would undermine Ireland’s hard won status as a trusted and independent contributor to the United Nations and other multilateral fora. Ireland enjoys trust among the majority of smaller states in the United Nations,

many of whom have or continue to struggle with legacies of empire and colonialism, including subjection to the hegemonic ambitions of destabilising power blocks seeking to exert regional influence. As a small neutral country, we punch above our weight in terms of our “soft power”, as recognised in *The Economist* magazine, which has described Ireland as one of the world’s most diplomatically powerful countries. Membership of NATO would lead to a sacrifice of our neutrality and relative invisibility with a profound loss of influence.

Soft Power

Irish Ambassadors often observe that most UN member states are small states, many of them former colonies. These states identify with Ireland’s size and history, and with Ireland’s commitment to the rule of law, equality, justice and multilateralism and the country’s interventions and voting positions on decolonisation and disarmament at the United Nations. Ireland has used its position on the UN Security Council to advance consideration of the transition from peace keeping to peace building.

The country’s soft power has been constructed on this honourable history and is an extremely valuable – cost effective – geopolitical asset that must be protected and developed to secure and deepen global peace and sustainable prosperity in an era marked by the failure of conventional militarist and geopolitical interventions and stand-offs.

One of the positives of being perceived to as a militarily neutral non-NATO country is the opportunity to act as an honest broker. When we added to that our colonial past, our experience with the Northern Ireland Peace Process, our Defence Forces peacekeeping tradition stretching back to Jadotville and our new found commitment to concrete climate action it is not surprising that Ireland rates highly in any soft power ranking. The Green Party believes that energy security is of paramount importance to protect and safeguard society. The Green Party believes climate change and biodiversity loss is the greatest challenge facing humanity yet the global response has been very poor and Ireland can hopefully use its status of soft power to help influence positively the tackling of this issue.

In conclusion the Green Party's seven founding principles as listed below have the potential to be an important sign post to world peace and stability and if adhered to would leave the world less in peril of the huge challenges which it faces.

1. The impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive.
2. All political, social and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level.
3. As caretakers of the Earth, we have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state.
4. Society should be guided by self-reliance and co-operation at all levels.
5. Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society.
6. The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests.
7. The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources.

Dated: 28th June 2023