3000 character(s) maximum

This area has been severely lacking and needs urgent action as an Island nation.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

If Russia wants to attack NATO, the most logical first step would be an attack on a smaller, weaker, non NATO country like us in order to test NATO's resolve and how in step their leaders are. Our "neutrality" is a buzz word, fit for WW2. We're on a side, we may as well have the protection of it's military.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia. China. They're already set up. I've no doubt they could cut the cables in an hour if the order were given

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should either join NATO or sign separate security agreements with other European countries to make sure that all of it is protected but, obviously, undersea cables and pipelines should take priority

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

If we aren't going to bulk up our navy in a massive way, we need outside help. See above

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Only where necessary and on a tender basis. We don't need another bloated Irish water handing out nonsense consultancy fees, etc.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

It should play a huge role, is the best option, and is really the only logical option

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Join NATO

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

If we believe that neutrality will be sufficient to keep us safe in the modern world we are being naive. NATO doesn't require that you join in any attack, only defense. We should've joined it decades ago. It's time.

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Foreign nations intercepting, damaging, terrorist threats .

Drug importation

Over fishing from foreign trawlers

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Over fishing

Drug importation

Internet cables.

Increased technology to aid Navy, An Garda Siochana, Air Corps, Coast Guard to further detect, deter and prosecute those who breach laws

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Obviously North West to South West Coast is primarily targeted by people. But we have seen south east coast being utilized before.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Radar

Survey surveillance planes

Surveillance technology

Shared information with UK authorities including Navy/Military

Investment in rapid intercepting ships that require small crews but capable of traversing Atlantic Seas in all weather

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Difficulty in this, Coast Guard could be outsourced in places. Surveys could be outsourced as well as surveillance technology to monitor under and over water activity

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Highly focused on international cooperation to assist in curling drug activity and over fishing

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes

Action plan should detail how Navy, Military, Coast Guard and An Garda Siochana work together in certain circumstances each with a detailed plan of action

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Numerous times I have seen boats traversing our seas without correct laws being adhered to. No inspections of vessels in and out of small harbours. Not compliant with basic requirements such as Marine Radio, AIS or lighting or flagging

Radar, listening devices for underwater activity, action plans to curl illegal boats passing, non compliant with laws, drug importation

Contact

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Questions

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The first threat to our waters, and indeed to all our lives, is climate change. It is not a remote threat. It will and already does affect every ocean and every region of the earth, and Europe is on the front line.
According to a 2024 report by the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service, Europe is the continent with the fastest-rising temperatures on Earth, having warmed twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s.
On Thursday 3 July 2025, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights affirmed the right to a stable climate and underscored the duty of nations to act to protect it and address the worsening planetary emergency. The Court held that states must take all measures to reduce the risks arising, on the one hand, from the degradation of the climate system and, on the other hand, from exposure and vulnerability to the effects of such degradation.
That is where the greatest efforts of the Irish state should be concentrated, and yet it is unable to do so because, as all other EU members, it is committed to an economic system that demands continuous economic growth, even in the face of the devastation such a system brings.
This is a system based on the ever-increasing extraction of natural resources, including planet warming fossil fuels, on unbridled consumption and on the consequent pollution and waste which extraction, production and consumption generate.
This brings me to what I consider to be the second biggest threat we face, the destruction of our natural environment and particularly the degradation of our rivers, seas and oceans.
Climate change is not its only cause but there is a link between climate change and environmental degradation.
In May 2024, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea found in an advisory opinion that greenhouse gas emissions are marine pollution under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and that signatories to the accord "have the specific obligation to adopt laws and regulations to prevent, reduce, and control" them.
Ireland has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea but, according to the EPA, while Ireland's target is to reduce its Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 51% in 2030 compared to 2018 levels, in 2024 GHG emissions were only 12% below 2018 levels.
Ireland is also missing EU agreed targets for reducing GHG emissions and in March 2025 RTE reported that the country could face having to pay between €8 billion and €26bn to other European Union member states if climate action was not stepped up swiftly.
We cannot blame the warming of our waters on Ireland only. It is a global problem and Ireland only plays a small part, but it does have a part to play and the Irish public is well aware of the need to protect our waters.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

In a Dail debate on Tuesday, 3 October 2023, Deputy Alan Dillon asked the then Tánaiste and Minister for Defense, Michael Martin, to provide an update on Ireland's submarine cables; if they had been put at risk in recent months by hostile countries traveling through Irish waters; and if he would make a statement on the matter.
In his answer, all the Minister was able to say on this point was that the Defense Forces were aware of a number of foreign military ships which had passed through the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in recent months. He said that the Defense Forces routinely monitor these foreign vessels with both Naval Service assets and Air Corps maritime patrol aircraft as well as remote monitoring in the Naval Operations Command Centre but did not mention any instance of undersea cables having been put at risk.
However, he did mention all sorts of options the government envisaged for protecting this infrastructure which, he then acknowledged, was not under attack.
He mentioned the fact that Ireland held observer status on a number of EU initiatives in development focused on the protection of critical offshore infrastructure, including a new Critical Seabed Infrastructure Protection (CSIP) project within the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework.
He mentioned that, separately, NATO has established a Critical Undersea Infrastructure Coordination Cell (CUIC) which is also expected to be open to non-NATO members, such as Ireland, as well as industry, and civilian stakeholders and that Ireland's participation was under active consideration.
Ireland joined the European Economic Community, not a military alliance but the EU is becoming more and more involved in war rather than peace projects.
The EU has decided to rearm against what it perceives as the Russian threat and even neutral EU countries like Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta are being invited to join various groupings aimed at boosting Europe's defense.
Certain projects are actually established by NATO and Ireland is already taking part.
For instance, Ireland takes part in operation "Locked Shields", organised by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) aimed at protecting the state against risks in the cyber domain.
It seems to me that we are being conditioned to accept the inevitability of a war with Russia in which infrastructure which NATO relies on but which lies in our waters could become a target and we are expected to train and equip our defense forces so that they would be able to operate with NATO forces in case of such an attack.
The risk of losing our neutral status therefore seems to be the biggest emerging threat for Ireland.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe that Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) should be a particular concern of our maritime security strategy, but that the missions of the NS should cover all of Ireland's maritime domain.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland has committed to designate 30% of its waters as an MPA. Unfortunately, an MPA bill first promised in 2023 still has not been published.
However, it seems obvious that, whenever the MPAs finally get a legislative basis, and as they are extended to meet Ireland's commitments, the NS should be involved in their monitoring and protection as is the case in other countries, and this will require the use of modern technology not presently available to our NS.
This is the kind of expense the government is quite willing to undertake. For instance, the government has recently signed a multi-million euro deal with the French company Thales for a sonar for the NS. But that is in the context of equipping the NS with the ability to detect submerged submarines and help to protect sub-sea cables.
It is hard not to feel that, whatever the outcome of this survey, it has already been preempted and the government has already decided on its priorities and its defense strategy.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

As then Tánaiste and Minister for Defense Michael Martin stated in his answer to Dail questions on 3 October 2023, while it is the responsibility of each Government Department to foster links and work closely with the semi-state and private sector operators of critical infrastructure, in their respective policy areas, to enhance the protection of critical infrastructure from a wide variety of threats, the primary responsibility for safeguarding critical infrastructure rests with its commercial owner or operator.
Undersea cables can be damaged in various ways, and the NS has a responsibility to patrol and protect our seas and the critical infrastructure they host, but, with the excuse that the Irish NS currently struggles to staff the small number of vessels available for such duties, some experts say Ireland should enter into an agreement with other nations to cover security for the cables.
That is quite a leap.
Surely, the solution is to improve our own capabilities, so that we do not have to rely on others to carry out our NS's missions.
Although we know that trillions of euros of financial transactions move through the undersea cables in the Irish maritime area, we should not expect the private sector who owns or uses this critical maritime infrastructure to finance its protection, as this would certainly influence the shape that protection would take and force the NS into contracts and alliances which may be contrary to our policy of neutrality.
One thing these private firms could do, given their vast financial resources, would be to progressively replace the undersea cables they use with smart cables, of the type developed by the Trinity College researchers involved in the "Sea-Scan" project.
"The Sea-Scan project uses Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS) and State of Polarisation (SoP) technologies to turn existing fibre optic infrastructure into a vast underwater sensor network. This enables the detection and classification of vessels that operate without active transponders—commonly referred to as 'dark vessels.' Beyond vessel tracking, the system can identify potential threats to the cables themselves, such as anchor drops, fishing trawlers, or deliberate interference. Advanced AI algorithms process the sensor data to distinguish genuine threats from background noise, significantly reducing false alarms." (Trinity College News, 30 May 2025)

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should always collaborate with other nations to promote peace and respect for international law.
At the moment, disregard for international law and in particular for humanitarian international law puts the whole world at risk. This disregard is evidenced in the words and actions of countries which we are used to consider as friends and with which you suggest we should collaborate.
We are already committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the responsibility of all nations to uphold the inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, that it enshrines for all peoples.
I therefore suggest that we should consider joining the Hague Group which was launched last January with a mission to pursue “collective action through coordinated legal and diplomatic measures at both national and international levels” in pursuit of accountability for Israel’s grave violations of international law against the Palestinian people.
In its inaugural joint statement, on 31 January 2025, the group declared its intention, among other measures, to prevent the docking of vessels at any port, if applicable, within our territorial jurisdiction, in all cases where there is a clear risk of the vessel being used to carry military fuel and weaponry to Israel, which might be used to commit or facilitate violations of humanitarian law, of international human rights law, and of the prohibition on genocide in Palestine, in keeping with states’ peremptory legal obligation to cooperate towards preventing genocide and other violations of peremptory norms by all legal measures at their disposal.
I feel that this is the kind of action that the Irish people would endorse and that NS personnel would feel proud to be involved in.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

We of course need an action plan.
In the context of what I consider to be the biggest actual and present threats facing us, I see the task of the NS as being threefold.
The first task would be to prevent or at least mitigate the effects of climate change and environmental collapse on our waters. That involves in particular the monitoring and protection of our MPAs.
The second task would be to help people weather the effects of climate change and environmental collapse. Ireland, like other countries, will increasingly be faced with a variety of catastrophic climate events which will put many lives at risk and the NS are likely to be more and more frequently involved in rescue operations.
The third task will be to contribute to the country’s adaptation to a future which, according to scientific forecasts, is likely to be very bleak, in particular for the approximately 80% of the country’s population living in coastal counties. Irish people too could, like others already, become climate migrants and the NS could play a role in coordinating the movement of people so that they could migrate in dignity and not be left at the mercy of people traffickers.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

My answer to question 7 presupposes that the warmongers of the world have not in the meantime launched major conflicts, possibly involving the use of nuclear weapons, from which no one could emerge unscathed. As a neutral country, it is our duty, together with other like-minded countries, to do everything in our power to prevent such an outcome by diplomatic, not military means.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Under Sea Cable International Lines transiting thro' or near Irish controlled Sea's.
Climate change, Coastal erosion & preventable catastrophes'.
Drug Interdiction.
Uncontrolled & illegal Migration thro our un-monitored Seas & Coastal lines.
Observation Reporting & Overwatch on our Seas.
Fishery Protection.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Climate Change.
Migration
Defence of our Shores & surrounding Seas.
Protection of our Natural Resources at Sea.
Properly financed, Manned, technologically enabled Naval Service, Coast Guard & Reserve Naval Services, especially Ireland's Air / Sea Aer Force capabilities, Custom Service.
Creating a powerful co- ordinated financed & permanently manned Joint Co- ordination Centre, eith regular joint training exercises " & Show the flag & might of our Response resources".

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

In conjunction with EU Policies & allocation of AORs, Areas of Responsibility, to match our resource capabilities with the allocated AOR.
In other words match our capabilities to allocated Area - otherwise let some other entity / Country who have the resources - Do so.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Manpower
Technical Staffing
Education at maritime Colleges (more resources to train more people), with proper financial incentives to take up a maritime career.
At leat two & probably 3 dedicated Marine Technological Universities.
Invest in most up to date Comms, appropriate Ships to tasks, with helicopter landing facility.
Invest in a dedicated & manned Joint Co- ordination centre.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, as long as it is not politically motivated to give
“ jobs , contracts to friendly political Companies.
Use best infrastructure if its available in private Sector as long as it is Cost effective , Value for Money VFM.
Expertise, training, education & briefings, & if necessary awarding public based contracts for essential Services.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Absolutely necessary, with EU & other democratic entities. NATO under PFP,
Sharing of information, inter operability, regular Annual Exercises
Irelands joint co- ordination Centre should seemlessly feed into our Partnerships, sharing of Info / Intelligence.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes
It should be " war gamed , SWOT Analysed, with priorities listed Top down.
A Team of qualified people could draft the priorities & Actions needed to formulate the National Action Plan.
Inputs from all identiified stakeholders, including International Actors, EU, NATO etc

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

What We have now is appalling, un co ordinated, hap hazard & too many hostages to fortune that can go badly wrong.
Ireland needs to build best practice Marine capabilities, & investment on long term based on Irelands GDP, with predictable annual expenditures. & Multi Annual Budget management.
Value for money must be prioritized, audited,& monitored to open source checks.
The Heads & Team leading the joint co- ordination Centre is vital to be the best that can be.
Leadership, & full Government support will be vital to success or failure.
The Citizen needs to see where money is spent.
Is it well spent
& is there pay back for our investment.

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Attack and sabotage of Ireland's ports, sub sea cables, off shore wind turbines and other maritime infrastructure such as energy or fuel storage by Russian or other state or non state actors.

Also there is near total vulnerability along our coastline to drug, weapon or people smuggling owing to the near zero maritime / coastal security and defence capability in the state.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

As per the stated current threats as stated above plus the future threats of emerging autonomous sea, sub sea and air drone technology that could be released from foreign vessels , submarines or aircraft that could attack critical maritime infrastructure or shut down marine or aviation traffic movements.

This emerging technological threat also allows aggressors to cause significant damage to our infrastructure , damage our economy by causing uncertainty , embarrass the Government and the EU while maintaining plausible deniability

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The Irish Sea and East Coast would appear to be the most critical as it is here that the maximum amount of freight and passenger traffic transits through.

The Irish sea is where a lot of communication, energy interconnectors and gas pipelines from the UK connect Ireland to the EU energy grid. In addition the first off shore wind farms will be located on the various banks located down along the East coast.

The increase in maritime defence capabilities should track the development of offshore wind farms and sub sea cables

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

With respect to the Naval Service Reserve (NSR) in particular, I would advocate the following:

Increase in the size and geographical spread of the NSR to go beyond the recommendations of LOA 2 as set out in the Commission on the Defence Forces. With a proposed size of the Naval Service of 2,000 personnel as part of LOA 3, it would be reasonable to set a NSR size at between 800- 1,000 personnel, i.e. 50% the size of the NS.

The NSR should be located in 9 different locations Louth, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, the South West, Limerick, Galway and the North West. This would establish a geographical presence around the coastline.

This spread would aid the NSR in its long establish role of being a recruitment gateway to the NS. It would also raise the visible presence of the NS throughout the country and opposed to its current four positions.

The NSR based in Dublin and Galway could play a significant role in operating and securing the proposed Naval Bases in Dun Laoghaire and Galway , but only if employment protection and sufficient resources are actually granted to the NSR.

Each unit could be equipped with small craft capable of been armed with weaponry capable of detecting, intercepting and stopping / destroying suspect air, sea and subsea drones. These NSR vessels would be primarily intelligence gathering platforms for the state and would also provide a clear visible state / DF presence in ports harbours and along the coast thereby sending a clear message to smugglers / bad actors that the state is taking control of its coastal/ littoral sea areas.

The origins of the NSR comes from the Maritime Inscription and from port control during times of war. This should remain the same and the NSR should be equipped, trained and exercised in taking military control of the country's ports in the event of wartime or a national major emergency.

In addition NSR units could be trained and equipped to operate UAVs to carry out aerial ISTAR in order to build up the littoral maritime intelligence picture.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. But under the overall umbrella of the national security agencies of the state.
the priorities of the private sector may not always align with the interests of the state.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

While maintaining neutrality, we should significantly increase our co-ordinated training and operational activities with the UK , EU and NATO countries

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. A detailed action plan that is fully costed , with clearly defined deadlines for completion is essential . The actual development of capabilities that can be verified by various exercises should be key elements of the action plan.

However, I note that the Commission on the Defence Forces also had an implementation plan . This plan has not been actioned by the Government/ DoD with nearly every target date been missed or not even commenced. This was similar to what happened to the 2016 White Paper on Defence. Therefore what ever action plan comes from this Strategy should be jointly monitored and reported on by the EU , not just the Irish Government. Otherwise nothing will be actioned.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Actual action on our maritime defence and security is desperately needed. This strategy cannot just be another wish list which gets put on a shelf and forgotten about.

Ireland needs to enter into a SLA with the EU to monitor, defend and secure our own maritime area. Failure to build that domestic maritime security capability and continue to freeload from the UK/ EU/ NATO should lead to financial fines for the Irish Government. Otherwise absolutely nothing will change.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Illegal Fishing and attacks on sub sea cables. Also call me paranoid but if there ever was another large scale war in the European theatre I think we are very poorly defended from attack on our Atlantic seaboard, and while as a neutral country I think this is not a likely scenario I balance that with the thought that Ireland would make an excellent staging point from which to launch air attacks on UK

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Illegal exploitation of our maritime resources:
I would develop small maritime drones/ buoys specifically for the purpose of observation. I would make them cheep and mass produce them so they could be deployed in their 100's. Monitoring of such drones could be done by a very small land based staff and conventional forces could then be deployed more effectively.

protection of undersea cables:
Again remote monitoring drones or buoys but placed specifically over important undersea cables

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think the strategy I'm proposing could be used cost effectively to cover the entire area of economic interest

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Develop our own technology. We have the skills, why pay other courtiers. I would like to see the government foster start-ups in this area. I think this would create employment, nurture a culture of entrepreneurialism and ultimately create products and expertise we could export.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Only if there is genuine competition, too often contracts are awarded to insides. This is too important to play games with.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe there should be co-operation and consultation, but we should remain resolutely neutral. I believe in a Swiss style of neutrality. Yes we are Neutral but we are also armed to the teeth and well able to defend ourselves

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Create a new department within the navy responsible for drone deployment and monitoring
Seek proposals from private industry to develop the tech. Accept more than one proposal, Let multiple companies be formed and flourish. Let them compete on an ongoing basis.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Please do this right, If you are going to spend my tax money on this I would like it to be done in an efficient manner. I do not want to see another tribunal in 20 years time to find out how Denis O'Brian got a multi billion euro contract for making paper boats. Please I'm begging you, no more

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

none

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

there is no threat.
Threats are easily invented

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

no

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

radar,
surveillance (only) planes

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

none

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

no alliance.
assistance if required.
we do not need to spend money on attacking material

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

no.
the people trying to implement this do not have the ability to successfully plan.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

the cables in the irish sea are for the benefit of others as much as ourselves.
let them use the force.

Contact

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The most significant threat to Ireland's maritime security is arguably the lack of a comprehensive, whole-of-government assessment of Ireland's maritime domain – one which aligns strategic goals with the security measures required to safeguard them and provides a clear articulation organisational mandate and their legal footing. In 2022, the Commission on the Defence Forces recommended the development of a National Maritime Security Strategy to bring such clarity. Three years on, it is hoped that the current consultation results in a detailed and timely strategy document, urgently needed to address significant weaknesses in Ireland's maritime domain. It is regrettable that the National Security Strategy, commenced by the National Security Analysis Centre in 2019, is still unpublished as ideally this would reinforce the National Maritime Security Strategy by position maritime security in the context of wider state security.

At present, Ireland exhibits a lack of situational awareness in its maritime domain which affords malicious actors freedom of movement in Irish controls waters. Irish maritime security has received very public criticism, with derisory maritime patrol and the lack of sonar/subsurface capabilities used to support the argument that Ireland are effectively blind to adversarial activity conducted in Ireland's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). From a mission-based counterintelligence planning perspective, designed to "capitalize on what [an adversary] is not doing well or is not doing at all [by targeting] weaknesses before they are fixed" (Sims, "Twenty-first-Century Counterintelligence", 2009) Ireland's lack of maritime situational awareness affords malicious actors advantage through an increased freedom of movement and a greater chance of operational success in their objectives, be those activities; foreign or domestic Terrorism, Espionage, Sabotage, Subversion, or Organised Crime.

This observation stands in stark contrast to the fact that as Ireland's centrality in western transnational supply chains grows, so too does its profile as a target. Weaknesses within state security represents not only a vulnerability to Ireland but also to allied nations. In the consultation's supporting material, the Department of Defence neatly summarise potential maritime dependent targets including fishing, air traffic, critical national infrastructure (CNI), and energy supply. The impact of malicious activity conducted against such targets will be felt beyond Irish boarders. It is also worthy of note that the DoD list reflects only resources that Ireland currently know of. It is likely that resources exist within Ireland's EEZ which are unknown to Ireland, but may be presently known to, and exploited by, states with superior subsurface capabilities - and these also warrant protecting.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

One of the greatest threats to Ireland's maritime security, and state security in general, is the lack of an objective, nuanced, and shared understanding of the challenges that Ireland face amongst decision makers. Maritime threats are ever evolving, with the EU Maritime Security Strategy (2016) recognising that "no single actor can guarantee maritime security on their own". Despite this, open, constructive discussion on allied collaboration is at constant risk of being derailed by the negative influence of neutrality, leaving decision makers with fewer options to redress maritime security weaknesses.

Establishing a shared understanding is a prerequisite for invoking meaningful change, yet entrenched political polarisation continues to hamper important debate. Examples include the planning of the 2023 Consultative Forum on International Security Policy and a May 2024 Dáil debate - scheduled to discuss amending Ireland's

triple lock approval process which descended into name calling and suspension. In his contribution to the Joint Committee on European Affairs on 15 May 2025, Professor Ben Tonra observed that too often conversations on Irish security and defence which encompass neutrality result in people “shouting at one another using definitions they do not share.” Similarly, in their 2023 book, ‘The EU, Irish Defence Forces and Contemporary Security’ editors Carroll, O’Neill and Williams conclude by stressing the importance of “decoupl[ing] debates surrounding Irish defence and defence spending from the often-contentious issue of neutrality.”

There is a demonstratable growing awareness amongst Irish decision makers that 1) Ireland face a threat from adversarial Foreign Intelligence Services and 2) that change is needed to address weaknesses and safeguard against exploit. Since invading Ukraine in 2022, Russia has adopted an increasingly confrontational posture toward NATO. Whilst Ireland is not a member of NATO, instead participating in NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Individually Tailored Partnership Programmes (ITPP), the countries strategic and geographic position makes it an attractive target for anyone seeking to exploit European transnational interdependence. This, Eoin McNamara argues, places Ireland at risk of hybrid interference. (Ireland, NATO and "the Return of Geopolitics” in Europe, 2023). Ireland’s lack of situational awareness in the maritime domain, leaves Ireland uniquely vulnerable to such hybrid and liminal threats with multiple reports of Russian surface and subsurface vessel incursions into Irish controlled waters in recent years. If decision makers wish to combat this threat, they will need to demonstrate a commitment to change by engaging in open, constructive, public debate. From a mission-based counterintelligence planning perspective, the longer it takes decision makers to act, the longer adversarial actors will benefit from Ireland’s lack of situational awareness in the maritime domain.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

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A geographic approach is critical for understanding, managing, and mitigating threats to Ireland’s maritime security. Location provides vital context to the vulnerabilities faced, the threats which seek to exploit these vulnerabilities, and the feasibility of any potential mitigations - it is insufficient to view each in isolation. It is the interrelationship between vulnerability, threat vector, and mitigation which facilitate an assessment of risk, and this can only be fully understood through a geographic lens.
An adversary seeking to target subsea cables within Irish controlled waters will need to operate in proximity to these cables. An analysis of cable use and redundancy will help determine high profile targets, indicating where vulnerabilities lie. An ability to detect and track surface/subsurface vessels provides an understanding of where a threat exists yet, vulnerability and threat in isolation are of lower concern than where they are geographically coincident. Adopting a geographic approach allows this spatial relationship to be monitored. Finally, knowing the location of Coastguard, Naval Service vessel, or Air Corps airframe, allows for an assessment of the time to intercept. This example illustrates the importance of comprehensive, geographically based, maritime situational awareness and it is hoped that the NMSS consultation will result in the prioritisation of a complete Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP) which utilises a range of active and passive sensors. McCabe and Flynn credit the Naval Service with establishing an “increasingly [evolved] [RMP] which combines a fusion of data points from AIS, VMS and radio traffic and intelligence analysis, as well as incidental or planned Air Corps observation reports and radar tracks.” (Under the radar: Ireland, maritime security capacity, and the governance of subsea infrastructure, 2024) - describing a RMP heavily dependent on passive collection.

With finite resources and a myriad of vulnerabilities and threat vectors, Ireland’s maritime security strategy has no choice but prioritise its focus. With location recognised as fundamental to understanding the risk posed to Irish interests through the interrelationship between vulnerability, threat vector and mitigation, a decision to prioritise on a geographical basis is logical. However, the geographical area of focus will vary depending on the risk selected to safeguarded against. The risk posed by illegal immigration will require targeting of a different geographical area to that of illegal fishing, and the risk to Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) posed by fishing will require a different geographical focus to the risk posed to the same infrastructure by an adversarial Foreign

Intelligence Service. It is hoped that the NMSS includes a clear assessment and prioritisation of the risks identified for safeguarding against, with an articulation of the vulnerabilities and threat vectors identified, as well as the mitigations required.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland is responsible for securing one of the largest EEZs in the EU yet, despite the addition of two C295 maritime patrol aircraft since 2023, Ireland struggles to credibly protect its maritime domain. The 2024 'Defence Forces: Analysing Ireland's Naval Service Naval Service' report identified a Naval operating strength of just 66%, significantly impacted the number of patrol days achievable. The reduced presence of Naval Service vessels in Irish controlled waters heightens Ireland's challenge of maintaining a complete Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP).

Lacking a domestic national reconnaissance capability, Ireland will need to leverage intelligence sharing and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) collection, in particular commercial satellite operators. Commerical satellite imaging affords Ireland an opportunity to establish a cost effective, spaced-based ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) capability to plug the gaps in, and compliment the capabilities of, existing state ISR tooling. Ireland's RMP could be informed by active and passive sensors to detect and track "dark" vessels operating without broadcasting an AIS signal, detect water surface anomalies like oil spills or vessel wake using synthetic aperture radar (SAR), as well as through access to imagery archives enabling review of historical imagery in the run up to an unanticipated maritime event.

Whilst use of commercial satellite imagery offers significant capability benefits for Ireland's ISR capabilities, if unmanaged it also represents a counterintelligence risk. Commercial satellite imagery pricing commonly operates on a pay-as-you-go model where a customer pays only for the geographic area they want to access. This information provides the commercial provider, and potentially the state they operate from, insight into the mission, priorities, and tasking of the customer. Both products ordered, and products not availed of, facilitate an assessment of the customers covert collection capabilities.

Beyond commercial satellite imagery, Ireland's academic and private sectors have the potential to drive innovation and make available to the state knowledge, capabilities, and skillsets that are greatly needed to achieve state security goals. The question "What strategic investment should be prioritised" is perhaps the wrong one to be asking. Instead, "What mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the Irish state stays current with technology, infrastructure and capability advancements" better demonstrates what is needed. The answer to the latter is closer collaboration between public, academic, and private sectors. The NMSS should facilitate the establishment of formal mechanisms whereby all sectors can collaborate in the search for technical solutions to Ireland's most pressing maritime security challenges. These discussions should drive innovation projects designed to help the state take to advantage of emerging capabilities faster than they can in isolation.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.

As commented in response to Q1, Ireland's centrality in western transnational supply chains makes Irish CNI an attractive target for adversarial states. Ireland is a low risk target for an adversarial state seeking to attack

NATO by proxy. Worse still, challenges in maintaining a complete Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP) and the lack of National Security Strategy and National Maritime Security Strategy make critical maritime infrastructure an easy target.

Private sector organisations who own and operate Ireland's maritime CNI are an invaluable source of knowledge, able to support accurate assessment of potential weaknesses and the feasibility of proposed mitigations. Such organisations could also contribute significantly to Indicator and Warning analysis, helping to identify and monitor indicators and follow agreed paths of escalation when necessary.

As a minimum, Ireland's maritime security is dependent on these operators adhering to the state defined Protective Security measures - ensuring Physical Security of their assets and implementing strong Information Security (INFOSEC). Guidance for such Protective Security is already in place through the National Cyber Security Strategy but could be tailored more specifically to safeguarding maritime CNI through the National Maritime Security Strategy.

While there are significant benefits to be gained from public sector involvement in national security matters, there are two significant challenges which hamper Ireland's ability to avail of these - 1) The lack of an agreed information classification standard (INFOSEC), and 2) the amorphous vetting process used to conduct personnel security (PERSEC) checks, particularly for non-government personnel. For Ireland's closes allies, both are clearly defined. Within the EU, European Union classified information (EUCI) is categorised into four levels; EU Restricted, EU Confidential, EU SECRET, and EU TOP SECRET, with a requirement that the responsible state organisation (National Security Agency) conduct personnel security clearance procedures 'designed to determine whether an individual, taking into account his [sic] loyalty, trustworthiness and reliability, may be authorised to access EUCI." (Article 7, Council Decisions of 23 September 2013 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information.) In the United Kingdom, the UK Security Vetting (UKSV) clearly define INFOSEC clearance levels, map these clearance levels to the level of PERSEC vetting required to access information, and detail the checks involved in achieving each level of security clearance. This approach provides a simple to follow guide to ensure national Protective Security requirements are met. Whilst establishing similar likely falls beyond the power of the NMSS, the NMSS should acknowledge the need for it, and encourage publication of the long awaited National Security Strategy – where Irish Protective Security arrangements should be explored.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation should form an integral component of Ireland's NMSS with the strategy clearly outlining Ireland's ambition for contributing to international cooperation, as well as providing an overview of the support structures that Ireland anticipate they will need. Threats are numerous and resources are finite, yet the impact of failing to secure Irish controlled waters will be felt far beyond Ireland's borders. While the EU Maritime Security Strategy (2016) recognises that "no single actor can guarantee maritime security on their own", this requires a fine balance if Ireland are to avoid reinforcing perceptions of dependence on international support to secure their maritime domain. Such perceptions have historically contributed to frustrations. Media attention has been given to Ireland's reliance on the EU's European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) to provide Fishery Protection following patrol gaps caused by Naval Service personnel shortages. Similar frustrations where voiced in June 2024 when Ireland required the assistance of anti-submarine aircraft from the UK, France and Norway, with The Telegraph stating "Ireland should step up from its – sorry – considerably lower level [defence spending], and invest in the ability to protect the sea environment it needs simply to survive […] Not doing so is

simply using freeloading as a strategy" (Sharpe, "Putin's subs have exposed Ireland's shameless hypocrisy" The Telegraph. 04/06/2024).

Whilst Ireland face challenges in securing their maritime domain, these same challenges represent a unique opportunity to develop an asymmetric capability which addresses the problem whilst bolstering the value of Ireland contributions to international cooperation. Retention and recruitment challenges in the Defence Forces are an objective fact, as is the observation that staff shortages in the Naval Service impact the number of patrol days achievable, however these facts do not support the conclusion that gaps in situational awareness and an incomplete RMP are unavoidable. By leveraging academia and the private sector to augment native State security capabilities, covert collection could be enhanced by leveraging Uncrewed Air Systems (UAS), Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USV), commercial satellite imaging platforms, and IoT networks. Information processing time could be reduced through secure and scalable cloud based solutions with opportunities for advanced imagery optimisation techniques. A Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centre leveraging public, academic and private sectors could be established to conduct advanced all-source analysis and dissemination of intelligence assessments to authorised recipients. Ireland could become a centre of excellence for protecting large maritime domains with a small navy, establishing a capability that can be utilised at home or overseas in support of any selected international partnership.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.

The high level action plan created for the Report of the Commission of the Defence Forces has been greatly beneficial and the NMSS should seek to adopt a similar approach outlining key objectives with associated delivery timelines.

Ideally the NMSS would include a strategy hierarchy diagram which demonstrate the relationship between the NMSS, and the awaited National Security Strategy, and National Aviation Security Strategy.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

As an island nation located on the western periphery of Europe facing the North Atlantic, with an EEZ seven times its land mass presents a number of opportunities as well as a number of complex threats, risks and challenges. To my knowledge, the most significant among them include:

- state-backed grey zone activity (physical/ CEMA) - or the threat thereof - affecting maritime, underwater and offshore infrastructure with varying consequences for the well-being and functioning of the State.
- environmental and climate-related risks
- transnational organised crime and smuggling
- illegal/ unreported fishing
- lack of national preparedness to mitigate/respond to all of the above
- failure to ensure that key defence equities—i.e., the sum of what the Defence Forces contribute to, rely on, or are tasked with in the maritime space—are recognised and integrated into national policy and strategy, properly coordinated with other mandates, and adequately resourced.
- over-dependency on technology critical to maritime security provided by foreign companies
- broader supply chain security issues
- domestic politics

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

All of the above + the growing risk of international conflict and the potential for coordinated attacks across multiple domains (sea + subsea, land, air, space + cyber and electromagnetic spectrum) significantly affecting assets and services critical to the well-being and functioning of the State.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. The Strategy could prioritise geographical focus in terms of identified threats (conventional and non-conventional) as well as on the basis of risks relevant to the current and planned use of the ocean/seabed in Ireland maritime domain. This would require a layered approach and significant inter-agency coordination. In many instances, it will require coordination and collaboration with other countries or groupings of countries. It will also require significant up-skilling and leveraging of technology.

Geographical areas can be determined on the basis of:
- high risk areas where there are currently important surveillance gaps
- certain transit areas and all landing points for telecommunications cables and energy interconnectors and pipelines.
- areas designated for offshore renewable energy
- ports
- busy shipping lanes.
- fishing grounds.
- marine biodiversity areas.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Many of these issues have been amply covered in different documents and will likely be covered by other survey participants.

A couple of niche areas meriting strategic investment for their low-cost/high value to national and regional maritime security and resilience could include:

- integrating certain O&M capabilities (repair in particular) onto existing or planned vessels.
- establishing a specialised undersea infrastructure engineering training centre to ensure Ireland has the human capital needed to protect and expand its critical subsea telecommunications and energy infrastructure sectors. This would be an important contribution to extant and projected work force demands in both sectors, as well as to building up a possible national and EU reserve capacity in the event of crisis or even conflict. While centres such as Global Marine's Cable Engineering Training College already exist, they are insufficient to meet demand, and only cover training for subsea telecommunications cable systems. No engineering training centre covering both undersea telecommunications and energy infrastructure currently exists.
- establishing a dedicated information sharing platform in support of full maritime domain awareness that links into the CISE federated platform.
- establishing or supporting the establishment of a maritime security experimentation centre involving key industry actors and Irish research institutes to test technology in subsea, and seabed security cases in accordance with the Irish maritime security context.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. This role can be both formal and informal. For instance, the Strategy could consider establishing a non-regulatory [public-private] maritime information management regime through which industry partners can share vulnerability/risk information with relevant government agencies and vice versa. Such a mechanism would not supplant regulatory regimes (e.g., mandatory reporting on outages/incidents required) but rather provide a separate but complementary trusted and secure environment for sharing information.

Other actions involving the private sector could include
- engagement through the aforementioned maritime security experimentation centre.
- regular exercises across the different priority areas identified. As above and given the nature of some of the critical maritime infrastructure, this may also require coordination across departments, sectors and services and across countries.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation should be a priority and include EU, neighbouring countries, IMO, First Comm of UN General Assembly (future perm. mechanism on ICTs vis cybersecurity in maritime domain and critical infrastructure); Security Council as well as the ITPP with NATO.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes - it can be accompanied by a public-facing Action Plan which could, to a large extent, reflect the core pillars of the Action Plan accompanying the updated EU Maritime Security Strategy.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The Strategy should include a focus on both current and future generation policy and operational maritime security professionals. It is critical to Ireland's longer-term role in shaping maritime security and resilience at EU and global levels, and the government's vision of playing a lead role in global maritime policy. This could include:

- strengthening and sustaining partnerships and collaborations between the Irish Naval College at Haulbowline and naval colleges in Europe and North America.
- integrating maritime security policy into DFA training and professional development activities for young diplomats; and into academic preparatory pathways.
- sponsoring fellowship programmes or similar to enable young Irish legal scholars to participate in key training programmes and fora (e.g., Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy).
- standing up a national network of maritime security experts (researchers, former navy and government reps. etc.) or an academic network of maritime security scholars and organising regular conferences/ seminars on priority areas of the Strategy and Action Plan.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

As a small nation, we cannot expect to stand up to the might of many foreign countries that would wish to use us or to do us harm. We are the back-door into Europe from the Atlantic. It will not be enough to sit back and let others tell us their version of what is going on in our waters. In the very near future we are hoping (expecting ?) to have significant numbers of Floating Offshore Wind (FOW) turbines off our South and West coasts - we hope this will be a game-changer for Ireland and a major natural resource. They will need considerable security preparations and protection. It is likely that we will have undersea power cables from these areas that carry electricity to Europe (and from Europe to Ireland) - these cables will be very vulnerable.
- Our trans-Atlantic data cables are completely vulnerable but are of extreme importance. We must give monitoring and protection to at least the sections within our jurisdiction and collaborate with others for the remaining sections.
- Drug interdiction and general smuggling will require far more surveillance and tracking.
- The melting of the Arctic ice is opening up much faster sea passages from Russia and China to the North Atlantic. This means that we could have greater numbers of large combat ships, submarines and spy-ships sitting in or passing through Irish waters. We do need to have surveillance to know the extent of such activities. Fire-power from such vessels can not only knock out strategic Irish locations but also the countries beyond us.
- It is very possible that unfriendly ships in the Atlantic could launch cyber attacks directly to our civil and strategic infrastructures. Detection and location of such ships could be very important.
- We are strategically located in the flight paths of trans-Atlantic air traffic. We need methods to monitor this air-space and preferably have several methods.
- Climate change is making our seas very unpredictable. Future strategies should take into account the need to have stronger and wider meteorological data collection methods. Surface current knowledge could help greatly with any oil-spills from all ships but especially oil-tankers.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

While everything can be improved, I think that the physical security of our fisheries is well monitored and protected. I think that we are too small a nation to have the fire-power of other nations for any future wars and for this we must remain part of larger alliances to try and ensure that such wars can be avoided. Having said that, we do have a large part to play and we must take full responsibility for our land-mass and territorial waters. It is reasonable to think that we are protected on our East by Britain and Europe but we are totally exposed on our North, South and West coasts and out to the edge of our territorial limits.
Emerging threats are definitely becoming more evident from the activities of spy-ships (both surface and sub-surface) operating in the Atlantic (also the Irish Sea) and the presumption that under-sea cables, pipelines and shipping lanes are fully monitored. As we know from the activities in the Baltic Sea, the Straits of Taiwan, etc, the severing of these cables can be done quite easily - the problem for us in Ireland would likely be the cost of repairs, etc. We do not have the facilities and the disruption would be major. We must monitor these cable routes and prohibit vessels loitering in the areas.
- Drug interdiction must still be a major concern. It is generally accepted that we only catch a very small percentage of what is passing through. Apart from all the intelligence-led operations, we do need more surveillance and particularly the isolation of "dark" ships in our waters.
- Arctic ice is melting and opening up new shipping lanes on both the East coast and the West coast of Greenland. I think this will bring a lot more quick-turn-around combat vessels from the Far East. There will be a lot of testing and probing of the approaches to the EU and the UK - with Ireland sitting in the middle. This will require substantial surveillance and situation awareness.
- Our offshore renewable energy (both wind and wave) will be very important to our future economy and way of life. Perhaps our first very large natural resource. It will need considerable monitoring and protection both above and below surface. Much of this will be a short range requirement with radar and cameras above surface and Forward Looking Sonars (FLS) below surface. All to be monitored from a surveillance centre on land.
- Far out in the ocean we should have simple to operate Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USV's) with no crew and no fossil fuels and fitted with various surveillance sensors. Perhaps launch simple aerial drones from the USV to extend a search. Simple to operate and relatively very inexpensive.
- Some inshore areas have been used for the smuggling of large quantities of drugs. The strategic location of long-range IR cameras could be of major assistance, even with possibilities to identify the interaction of a RIB out to 12 NM.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Although we have to be very careful with all our strategic installations and facilities onshore (oil-storage, data-centres, grid distribution, etc) our thoughts here are for the maritime areas. Although the East coast ports are extremely important, there is a degree of protection by being in the Irish Sea.
- Outer limits of the Atlantic - I think that it would be very important to get "more eyes and ears" far out in the Atlantic towards the edge of the Irish territorial limits and try to form a "type of net" to gather information (above surface and below surface) of ships and submarines passing through our areas. It is too difficult (manpower) and too expensive to cover this very large area with standard patrol vessels. Deploying USV's (with self-charging aerial drones onboard) would be extremely cost-effective and could navigate up and down unattended for several years at a time while controlled from the base ashore.
- A medium range of, say, out to 150NM off the North, South and West coasts would be very useful to cover all the shipping lanes and FOW but, importantly, to try and isolate any "dark" ships or ships showing unusual activities. This area can also be very important for any maritime distress or disaster in our offshore coastal regions. The use of High Frequency Radar (HFR) installed on strategic headlands and controlled from the base could be very useful for these areas and relatively inexpensive. It could give long range ship detection but also some very important information regarding surface currents, wave-heights, etc.
- An inshore area from the coasts out to around 30NM could be covered from strategic shoreside locations. This should be a combination of standard marine radars and long-range IR cameras. Some short range underwater forward-looking-sonar in strategic locations would be useful.
- The air-space over Ireland and stretching out into the Atlantic would be very important to identify and monitor what is passing overhead. Combined with some surveillance aircraft from our Air Corp this should help close the gap and combine with the existing air traffic control from Shannon.
- My thoughts would be that if we assume that our naval service have, say, ten patrol vessels and our Air Corp have two or three patrol aircraft then we should utilise all the other facilities to back up the naval service and the Air Corp - and unusual activities being detected in specific locations could be used to bring patrol vessels or aircraft to the area of interest for more detailed inspection. More technology can be added to these existing or future ships and aircraft.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

my suggestions would be: there is an Irish development called OR-CA (ORbital waves - CArbon free) from Jospa Ltd (I am involved with these companies). This USV was model tested at the MaREI LIR test centre in Cork and is at TRL4 (Technology Ready Level) - it still needs to be developed up to TRL8. It has outstanding possibilities for open ocean surveillance and for a fraction of the cost of a patrol vessel. Various sensors could be installed - above surface: radar, long-range camera, AIS, etc - below surface: hydrophone sonar towed array, forward-looking-sonar, etc. A satcom system to feed all data and commands back to a control centre ashore. A maritime battery onboard to supply power for sensors and recharged from solar and wind. Such a USV would extract propulsion power from the waves (no fossil fuels) and planned to stay on the ocean for 1 to 3 years at a time. It could be envisaged to start off with one or two OR-CA but later expand to ten or twenty, etc. An onshore control centre would need to be developed for 24/7 monitoring and to direct ships, aircraft or drones to specific areas when they are flagged. Such control centres exist so it would only require some basic extension.
- HF Radar would have great strategic value for coastal coverage out to around 200NM. One of the main objects here would be to identify "dark" ships that have spoofed their AIS position or actually switched off their AIS. This is a prime target for close inspection. But in addition we could gather some very important data around the coast for ocean surface currents (predictions for lost containers, drug canisters thrown overboard by passing ships, lost shipping containers, Man-Over-Board, etc) and wave heights (important for boarding parties, ship rescue, etc).
- Naval vessels are always to a high standard but clearly any new ships in the coming years will require the most modern technology and facilities to work with minimum crew for the operations involved. But they could also have the facility to take over control of any USV's or aerial drones being operated in our distant water.
- The installation of remotely operated long-range IR cameras would be extremely useful. These cameras can greatly add to the other sources of information like radar, sonar, etc. They can also be brought to bear on targets indicated from other sources. There could be good opportunity for installations on lighthouses, coastguard stations, etc.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think that the future security system for Ireland should involve all possibilities so that, as a country, we can use as much innovation as possible to get a most advanced system for the budgets possible. Our security and defence is very important and we do have to get good results. However, if a private sector is brought into the picture then they have to agree to conditions set out by the DoD (or such department) and, particularly, there must be very strict confidential agreements to avoid security information being leaked. There could be concerns with the "lease" or use of any land or property for strategic use because ownership can change - best to have state ownership. There are cases where strategic ships have been contracted from a management company but I do not believe this to be a good strategy. Much better that the state own and operate the assets and keep full control. It could be useful to have the private sector operate certain sectors within the overall strategy and this can mean that the state re-take control at any stage if the operation is not going well.
It would likely be very useful to involve long-term maintenance contracts for specific supplies - eg, when purchasing a new ship or aircraft it might be very useful to choose strategic parts (say, the engine) but have a clear maintenance backup plan for the projected life of the component (15 years ?). The advantage of this would be that it is up to the component supplier to ensure full spares, software updates and to have own technicians fully trained and up to date. Perhaps to include calculations for a supplier technician to give routine preventive maintenance of one day on site every 12 months ? Such costs might well be balanced by not having own personnel travelling overseas for training updates (?).
It might also be helpful to have the private sector assist with the gathering of data, combining same and just present "red flags" or alarms to security personnel controlling the operations.
It would be similar for the maintenance of any systems located around the coastal areas - the private sector can handle this but leave the security personnel to handle the confidential parts of the operations.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is essential for Ireland. We are too small to host the many assets and weapons that are required for any serious threat. There is much that we can do and are doing but we are safer if we can work closely within the alliances of EU and Europe. Although it seems that the whole NATO partnership has been questioned in recent times, it is still very valid to us. It is my understanding that we are deeply involved with the EU Defence and I think this is very necessary. There are reports in recent weeks that the UK might also be discussing some closer cooperation with EU on defence and this should also be very beneficial. And, of course, we need to encourage and defend the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for all the general maritime rules and regulations that make our seas and ships safer places. The UN generally is also very important to us. So, my thoughts are that we should be part of all these Western organisations and we should have a strong voice (as we generally do) to promote the ideals. We can work well within all of these organisations.

But then we come to the point that we must also play our part and contribute our share to the protection and wellbeing of the EU and our neighbours. We do not carry the heavy weapons to fight back but we can and should protect our airspace and our maritime boundaries - in this we have much to offer to our EU fellow members. The Western approaches are vital to Europe. We can greatly increase the situation awareness and surveillance of the Atlantic ocean on our doorstep. At some recent lectures it becomes clear that the way forward is to develop and use more simple off-the-shelf products spread out to gather as much data as possible for all maritime locations. If we contribute this to Europe then we are more than playing our part and I think we will be well received. We already have most of the structures and we only have to upgrade and expand slightly in order to get started. I think the EU and NATO partners would also be very happy with what we can offer. And we, in turn, will gain and learn a lot from them. My understanding is that the EU Defence is pushing hard to get the member states to increase the defence spending - while this will be hard for everybody, it will also increase or create a complete new industry expansion with all the new innovation and research that will filter down. This we should welcome in Ireland because it can dovetail with our (hopefully) expanding offshore renewable energy industry.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, we should have an action plan and a strategy that sets out where we are heading. I do not think that this needs to be too complicated and I do not think it needs to be set in stone - technologies change, innovations bring new ideas and we can adjust.
I also think that while we have an overall long term (10 year ?) plan leading up to our version of a full defence (within EU), I think we should start off with some very simple achievable targets, particularly covering our maritime jurisdiction. Surveillance has to be one of the most important items for the EU members in defence and also the NATO partnership. The UK (and particularly the Royal Navy) are pushing very hard with their Project CABOT to cover various sections of the North Atlantic with unmanned systems - there is a need to cover the Greenland area by 2026 (?) which seems to show great urgency. But if Ireland just sets out to cover our territorial limits then we would have great opportunity for involvement and data collection. It is agreed that to use a frigate to tow a sonar array is a very costly exercise. My thoughts:
- Plans for the naval service new ships or upgrades and reduced crew for set operations. Larger vessels for more distant patrols or inspections from intelligence led data.
- Surveillance aircraft upgrade with technology.
- USV's for unattended surveillance and data gathering at outer limits (300NM off the coast ?) but also to monitor the undersea data cables.
- HF Radar installed at strategic locations for ship detection and data gathering.
- Air surveillance over land and especially out into the Atlantic.
- Long-range coastal cameras (with IR) at strategic locations in coastal areas.

It is likely that all or most of the above could be done within 2 to 3 years and, perhaps, without too much strain on existing budgets. But it would give an enormous step forward with our EU and European partners.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

We are a small country but with an enormous sea area and we are traditionally low on maritime security as in defence - we have played our part on fisheries protection, drug interdiction, coastal emergencies, etc. But I think that the recent events in Ukraine has caused the EU (and us) to sit up and pay attention. We are also now fully aware that the seas around us are of great importance and can yield great financial benefits - but they also show a very vulnerable backdoor to Europe. If we do not close the gap then others will try to. We must take ownership and be aware of what is happening out there.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

I see two threats and several vulnerabilities.
Threats:
1) A sea borne or maritime supported military attack on Ireland and
2) Greyzone attacks on our submarine infrastructure (telecoms and energy systems mainly) to undermine cohesion amongst the people and reduce our ability to respond in case of a military level attack or our ability to withstand coercion from other states.

Our current vulnerabilities include
1) inadequate real-time situational awareness in our maritime zones and beyond (in the air, at sea and sub sea)
2) inadequate force available to counter the threat of a maritime borne attack
3) inadequate dispersal of existing forces to avoid a neutralizing attack
4) inadequate reserves to bolster force size during conflict
5) low (but growing) recognition amongst the people that war might come to our shores - although Irish people think we have experience at war, the last significant land battle in Ireland was centuries ago.
6) As a high technology, information society, international trading country that relies on links to the outside world we are vulnerable to changes in the liberal world order and greyzone attempts to isolate us from partners.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Emerging threats include
1) autonomous maritime vehicles that can penetrate defenses, gather intelligence and soften our defenses before military lives are put at risk by an enemy
2) increased reliance on submarine infrastructure including inter state and from offshore facilities and the mainland
3) In the context of a great war between Europe and Russia, we will be a strategically important pawn, either providing intelligence and monitoring to Europe or coerced into remaining silent. Neither in an alliance or outside leaves us exposed
4) longer term, with global warming and the economic decline of our nearest neighbour, we may become attractive as a destination for irregular immigration via the sea (low threat as the impact would be small)
5) Climate change may make our waters more economically important and attractive , including for fishing, mineral exploitation and energy generation.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Although the seems that the east coast is less of a risk with the UK active in the area, ideally we should have all around cover especially situational awareness. Longer range weapon systems are unnecessary on the east coast.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Strategically, Ireland should be adopting 'Integrated Deterrence', essentially acknowledging that deterrence is complex and involves more than just military actions. It is a broad way of looking at deterrence, from realism to establishing norms.

Realist actions:
1) We should deploy military assets to some of the islands off the west, northwest, south west and south coast. These assets should include detection systems (radar, sonar, listening devices etc), electronic warfare, strike capabilities and anti missile technology (or at least facilities to base these type of platforms there if tensions escalate). Build a network beyond the immediate coast and also have similar systems on the mainland.
2) autonomous maritime vehicles are crucial and especially useful when we focus on defence. Variety is key but more important is the ability to continuously iterate and innovate in these design and building of these assets. We need to create a military industrial base that designs and builds these devices. Two top universities focusing on 'maritime engineering' would be beneficial as would contracts with several medium sized Irish companies to design, build, train and maintain this equipment. We should fund universities to create these courses and invest in firms that create an industrial base in the area.
3) We can use the off-shore windfarms and other assets (oil rigs) as a base for surveillance and eventually, if needed, for force projection. Drones and autonomous maritime vehicles could get power from these wind farms and could have cable communication connections back to the mainland.
4) invest in sonar sea bed listening devices (hydroponic devices) in strategic areas only. We should not do this everywhere and use the potential deployment of this technology as a deterrent against Russia - which has a higher interest in its strategic nuclear submarines stealth than in Ireland.
5)Deterrence by punishment is also possible, for instance by reducing the supply of materials, medicines and technology to Russia (assuming it is the bad actor) and by using Ireland's position as a member of the EU to seek broader sanctions and diplomatic isolation. This should be flagged.

Normative actions:
1) Ireland should support the establishment of a specialist UN or intergovernmental body to oversee the protection of undersea cable systems. For example, a joint task force of the International Telecommunications Union, the ICPC, the ISA and the OEWG could help build and re-enforce norms.
2) Ireland should declaratory language at EU and UN level that submarine cables systems are now so vital for society's functioning and that any attack on them is taboo.
3) Leaders must begin to use the term 'taboo' when discussing cable interference.

Due to the difficulties in making power infrastructure as resilient as telecom cables, military assets and surveillance should focus there - a more realist approach to these assets.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. It must.
1) The private sector will allow Ireland to build a military industrial base to sustain itself during conflict. It will also be a place where retiring naval experts work, bringing their expertise to bear on the industry.
2) It is no realistic for military engineering expertise to have capacity to develop and deploy the broad range of new technology that is now possible
3) The private sector can be involved in more than just providing technology it could also do operational tasks such as situational awareness monitoring
4) The private sector will bring in capital
5) The private sector can also help to connect the people to the military in a stronger way

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

This is vital. We should be cooperating with the EU, our neighbours and NATO states. This will allow us to learn and we need deep engagement at all levels and across all military organizations to ensure a depth of knowledge transfer. It is not just for the seniors. We should push international co-operation i.e. to support the establishment of a specialist UN or intergovernmental body to oversee the protection of undersea cable systems. For example, a joint task force of the International Telecommunications Union, the ICPC, the ISA and the OEWG could help build and re-enforce norms.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. I think a plan and a strategy are different and it is important that this strategy does not descend into a list of actions. It may have some key directions, but really is there to help inform decision makers all along the chain, civilian and military about what the strategy is. It should of course be done as part of a national security strategy and not as a stand along document, so perhaps it should mention that it will be updated once the overall security strategy is completed. Resist the temptation to append a list of actions.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The littoral is becoming more defendable with the evolution of new technologies such as drones (marine and aerial), AI, hydroponic and private infrastructure (cables, windfarms etc). Our strategy should be one of deterrence noting the way the littoral is now more surveilled and actively used.

We should also utilize our islands as an outer shield or extension of our reach

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

1) Our inability to protect our EEZ from the activities of rogue nations, criminals, illegal fishing, etc..
2) The inability of the Department of Defence to man even its current fleet of vessels which are already woefully insufficient to deliver 1) above.
3) The confusion of our Neutral Stance with our ability to defend our interests. Neutrality requires a country to be able to defend itself without relying on allies. While clearly the ability to prevent a major invasion is probably beyond the capability of a small country, it does not excuse a total lack of preparedness, as is currently the case.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

1) As noted above an insufficient naval fleet and the inability to man even what we have.
2) Zero radar air cover and zero intercept capability.
3) The change in Global politics meaning that we can no longer rely on friendly neighbours on either side of the Atlantic to do the job for us.
4) There is a significant economic threat to the country if the vital undersea communication and energy links were to be damaged by sabotage.
5) The addition of sonar to our woefully inadequate fleet, within the next few years, will merely identify potential rogue actors, but where is the deterrent?
6) The reliance on near-shore windfarm development to meet our renewable targets is likely to lead to significant public outcry, which will make delivering those targets problematic.
7) Our track record of delivering on infrastructure developments, outside of motorways, is a real issue which needs to be addressed.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The strategy needs to cover all geographical areas within the EEZ, however within the overall strategy it is likely that certain areas may require specific strategic, or tactical, emphasis. Protection of undersea infrastructure, might be one area of emphasis, provision of air cover might be another, and either or both of these might have a geographical focus?

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

As noted above, sea and air, fleets are inadequate, manning of both these areas is also problematic. So more ships, more crew. More planes, supported by radar technology. What weaponry, speed, capability etc. is required for these vessels and planes is beyond my area of expertise, but I reckon some sort of deterrent is required. Continuous availability at a level adequate to deter potential aggression in both air and sea is necessary. Thus the Government needs to set aside sufficient budget, both Capital and Revenue to support such increased activity.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Clearly for offshore power generation and undersea infrastructure the private sector will be involved, and as such they need to be involved. To what extent is another question, which will probably only be answered after consultations. In my experience Government Departments use State Support Legislation to exclude the private sector from many initiatives in a manner that is overly prescriptive, and care needs to be taken that advice does not come just from the State sector which often has a vested interest in the status quo!

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think it is imperative that we involve our neighbours and friends in any such Strategy, and we should not allow a very narrow view of what Neutrality means to limit such cooperation!

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes!
A Capital and Revenue budget.
A defined timeline for delivery.
A strategy for recruitment and retention of personnel.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think I have covered it all.

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Sea and Air we need to have a proper Navy and Airforce so that we can both protect and enforce our neutrality if needed , we also need below the surface of the sea capability to se what is going on and also to be able to enforce and protect our cables and interconnecters on the sea bed.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Both Russia and China . I would put in place both military grade radar and sonar Navy should consist of Corvettes and Frigates we also need the capabilities of under the sea protection and observation also we need a proper Airforce with fighter jets that can enforce our neutrality if needed . A proper more modern Army with modern weapons and methods and also a Intelligence Agency that can receive the information from allies and relay it to the Irish Defence Force so they can take it from there.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The strategy should encompass the whole Island so we would have to involve the Uk our nearest neighbour and allies

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Navy, Airforce and Intelligence Agency including cyber by disrupters.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No it should be all in-house our we risk leaking our strategy , in other wise keep it between our Intelligence Agency and The Defence Forces.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should share with both our EU Partners and NATO.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

There should be an action plan with a detailed strategy on how it should be implemented and should include the Admiral and General of the Defence Forces.
It should consist of joined up thinking between the government of the day. Intelligence Agency and Top Admiral and General of the Defence Forces.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

I do think that we need an Intelligence Agency to put all the information together it is to fragmented between the Garda and Defence Forces we need the Intelligence Agency to bridge that gap and it the information together also we need submarines to protect undersea Infrastructure.

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

It's Russia cutting our cables. They're the most important and strategic ones in the world, from military to connections to the rest of the world. They pass by us and are connected to us. And they're unprotected. That's pathetic. If we are cut off from the rest of the world, we have no way to get back without help from the British. And my God, are we to keep going cap in hand for help. Let's not get to that point. We cannot afford it. Russia will make moves for the Suwałki corridor soon, and there will the cutting of all strategic cables they can get. They'll start with the Baltic cables and then come for the ones in the Atlantic. They have already marked where they are. And we know that. It's time to prepare.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Same a Q1 + Land base sonar, buoy sonar, tow sonar, radar stations, gripen fighters, joint RAF training with the air corps, joint naval exercises, 3 new warships - fast and manoeuvrable, and a surface to air missile system. Basically
a primary radar system, air combat/interceptor capabilities, and replacement of aging armored vehicles and coastal patrol vessels. Modernising...

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

We need to be able to relay on the UK, and they on us. We need to have the abilities to divvy up responsibilities. It's the joint working partnership with them and our ability to meet targets and be called upon that will be the backbone of our deterrence. Two island nations, effective land battleships. They're as much on their knees as Ireland, and they're too proud to ask for support. We need to be able to help them patrol their skies and seas when called upon as well as our own. That's paramount.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Land base sonar, buoy sonar, tow sonar, radar stations, gripen fighters, joint RAF training with the air corps, joint naval exercises, 3 new warships - fast and manoeuvrable, and a surface to air missile system.
a primary radar system, air combat/interceptor capabilities and replacement of aging armored vehicles and coastal patrol vessels.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Go government to government. Appoint a czar to cut through the bureaucracy and get value for money. The private sector will rip the piss out of us and we'll be left with dirt and a big bill.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring

countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

They're a given. We need our partners. But, we also need to be able to bring our own skills and talents to the table. See previous answers for this. If we can reach our partners by land and sea within a short space of time, then we need they need to be the ones we approaching for help. We can't approach them if we have nothing to go in.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Cut through the bullshit and get it done. There is far too much pussyfooting around this. We know what needs to be done.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

We need action, not promises, not talking, not seeking advice. We have a list of things we need, that we always needed, that we never had. There's your stater for ten. No more thinking about it, folks. Action now before we're left cut off from the rest of the world and having to plead with other nations to come to our rescue. We can't be shamed like that anymore. Listen to the your defense forces, they've been crying out for all of this and more for many years.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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Questions

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's adversaries do not share our values, respect our national sovereignty & actively engaged in grey zone activities to undermine Ireland and the international rule of law. Conflict is not inevitable but EU is preparing for war in 5 yrs.
Russia – Considers Ireland an 'unfriendly country'. Ru warships, submarines & spy ships operate aggressively in EEZ. In 6 months, 7.9m tonnes Russian oil transited EEZ on old, poorly maintained &, likely, uninsured Shadow Fleet tankers. If a tanker sinks the cost to the State is billions. Ru is conducting a hybrid war in Europe - With documented cyberattacks & subsea critical infrastructure damaged or destroyed. The Atlantic is a strategic maritime domain for Russia & NATO, the US classifies it a contested space. In war, it is likely both will seek to deny the use of this vital space to the other.
China - Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, stated Beijing can't accept Russia losing its war against Ukraine as it would allow USA to turn its focus on China. China supports Russia. 2 Chinese ships caused damage to subsea cables in the Baltic, MV Newnew Polar Bear & MV Yi Peng 3. Sister ship MV Yi Peng 5 went dark in Irish EEZ 30JUN25. On 28JUN25 Chinese Shupang-class spy ship entered Atlantic. Its purpose likely to survey the Atlantic for its Navy & fishing fleets.
Iran - Is accused of sponsoring drugs shipments to Ireland using Hezbollah with Kinahan's co-operation. Iran is alleged to have funded the MV Mathew drug running attempt.
Organised Crimes Syndicates – domestic/international are engaging with nation states to generate vast profits at the expense of the State, undermining the rule of law, & devastating communities.
Energy - Is a pillar of security. Gas & electricity subsea infrastructure is vulnerable & future offshore renewable energy (ORE) will require protecting from malign actors.
International Corporate Entities - Are in partnership with nation states. Chinese electronics are high risk; NATO is removing from communications & security infrastructure. Social media weaponised to destabilise societies & advance influence operations to undermine democracy.
The Irish Intelligence Services - Are the first line of defence & is being overwhelmed with vast amounts of information & rapidly evolving threats.
Recognised Maritime Picture - Lack of real time surveillance hampers situational awareness of the maritime domain.
Emergency Towing Vessel – There are none to assist tankers in distress off Ireland.
Irish Naval Service - Is a constabulary navy & does not have the capability or capacity to deter malign activity. It has no capability to protect ports & SLOCs or defend Irish territorial waters from military threats. Since 01JAN25, 104 merchant vessels of interest were observed in the Irish EEZ. Approx. 2 ships every 3 days required monitoring and/or escorting. The Navy must have the capability and legal powers to detain vessels whose activity is contrary to the security of the State.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Investing heavily in the Intelligence Services & building a strong Navy is essential for security.
War in Europe - The perception in Ireland is Russia will not attack. European Intelligence estimates warn Russia will have the capability to attack in 5 years; 2 years if a ceasefire agreed in Ukraine. The EU has increased Defence Spending to deter invasion. The Russian Navy use of HF & MF radio communications is at Cold War levels. This infers it expects to operate in a satellite denied battle space. It is accused of putting a nuclear weapon in Low Earth Orbit. Detonated over Europe it will destroy navigation, communications & timing crucial for energy, transportation & financial infrastructure.
Critical Underwater Infrastructure (CUI) - Operating systems & connectivity are vulnerable to Cyberattack & to physical attack.
Climate Change - 1.9m people live within 5kms of the coast in Ireland. Port infrastructure is vital to the economy & coastal defences essential for safety.
Legal instruments - Govt. must work with partner nations using Port State Controls, publishing vessel blacklists & holding rogue vessels/operators to account. It must implement domestic laws & procedures for rapid pursuit, interception, & detention of suspect vessels. Ireland is not a signatory to 1884 Convention for Protection of Submarine Telegraph Cables. UNCLOS Art. 21 allows Coastal States to adopt laws to protect cables within their territorial waters. UNCLOS Art. 113 - Countries shall punish vessels flying their flag for cable damage outside territorial waters. Enforcement is responsibility of Flag State, not the victim - which rarely act.
Deep sea mining - President Trump declared US will commence deep sea mining without permission from UN. This may effect Ireland's maritime claims by US deep sea mining companies.
Illegal and unreported fishing - China has a global fleet capable of such large scale grey-zone activity.
Piracy & Human Trafficking – Unlikely at present, climate refugees may appear in 10 yrs.
Ship to Ship (STS) Transfers – There are no laws governing STS in Irish EEZ & territorial waters. Oil spills are difficult to clean up & perpetrators hard to identify & detain.
Autonomous & uncrewed vessels - Will require monitoring/policing and can be used for malign activities such as transfer of illegal drugs from merchant/fishing/leisure craft. Superyachts with moon pools can launch UUVs & AUVs to tamper with subsea cables.
Maritime salvors - Illegally stripping war grave wrecks & treasure ships in EEZ.
Extortion - Criminals may extort Govt/Companies by threatening to damage CUI.
The Irish Intelligence Service - Is the 1st line of defence & is overwhelmed with vast amounts of information & rapidly evolving threats. Expanding its capabilities will lead to accurate & timely intelligence & efficient use of scarce resources. It will provide better informed decision making for military & political leadership, leading to better outcomes.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No.
Focusing on one specific region will be to the detriment of the others and allow adversaries to exploit weaknesses. Ireland's maritime security is only as strong as the weakest link.
Each area is unique and demands a specific strategy.
Protect ports and their sea lines of communication – The economic, food and energy security of the nation is dependent on the ports and access by commercial shipping. The Irish Navy has no Mine Counter Measure capability and its ships are not de-magnetised (De-permed) to protect against naval mine warfare. In previous conflicts, the waters surrounding Ireland were heavily mined. Russia has engaged in unrestricted sea mine warfare in the Black Sea (Sea of Azov) in contravention of the 1907 Hague Convention VIII, and in 2025, practiced the laying of naval mines using aircraft, ships and submarines in the Baltic Sea.
The Irish Sea - Is a key area for trade with the UK & Europe and significant expansion of ORE is essential to energy security of the State. The UK is a likely target for future Russian and Chinese grey-zone operations and Ireland may be caught in the middle of grey zone activities. 15 November 2024, Russian Spy Ship 'Yantar' engaged in an aggressive pattern of life by sitting over CUI (Critical Undersea Infrastructure) in the Irish Sea. It was challenged by the Irish Navy and monitored by the Air Corps. The UK surfaced a submarine beside 'Yantar' as a warning as it had no major surface warships immediately available to escort it. It ex-filtrated the area soon after. While this was occurring merchant ships engaged in unusual patterns of life in the EEZ as a means to distract & stretch Irish & UK Armed Forces.
South West Coast / Celtic Sea - CUI – 75% of intercontinental data traffic passes through the Irish Maritime Domain. Ireland has an obligation to protect this CUI, not only for its own security, but on behalf of Europe & the United States. Undersea cables are vital for both civilian and defence infrastructure, including future AI-powered technologies.
Celtic Sea & Atlantic - Energy security is one of the pillars of society and ORE is expected to expand rapidly in the next decade. This will require large investments for both private companies & the State and must be protected from nation state actors seeking to gain an advantage over the State. It will require infrastructure to support these offshore installations. Marinas will become very popular on the Atlantic as disposable income increase & more maritime traffic arrives from Europe.
Atlantic – East - Is an important SLOC for Russia's Shadow Fleet vessels & a strategic waterway for NATO. It is likely nuclear ballistic missile submarines operate in these areas as well as SSNs & SSK submarines, both Russian & NATO. It is only a matter of time before Chinese PLAN warships & submarines enter the Atlantic.
Fisheries - Are unique to each sector and are vital to the economy and food security & a policy should include their security.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Military intelligence - Is critical to enabling informed decision-making for military & political leadership. Integration of real-time data analysis & surveillance is crucial for military intelligence to generate situational awareness allowing proactive measures to mitigate risks. It is vital in counteracting asymmetric warfare tactics typically employed by Russia, China, Iran & non-state actors. When Israel's attack disconnected 95% of the internet in Iran, dozens of Scottish Indy-Ref social media accounts went dark.
Naval Attachés - US/Canada/UK/Iceland/Norway/ France Spain/Portugal. Can provide intelligence insights in technology & threats. Good OSINT can be generated from Defence Exhibitions, Journals, Trade Shows and interpersonal relationships with partner nations.
National Maritime Information Centre - Information from academic, commercial, maritime, ports & organisations connected to the maritime domain should be managed here.
Joint Maritime Security Centre - Headed by Irish Navy. Maritime surveillance systems such as over the horizon radar, subsea acoustic systems & satellite technology to be integrated to collate real-time data, enabling swift interpretation & response.
The Irish Navy - Is a constabulary navy designed for a benign security environment. A navy fit for purpose in 2030s requires a rapid uplift in capability to deter threats. Investment in improving pay & living conditions (fit for 21st century) & improved pension arrangements are essential to recruit & retain personnel. The navy requires a mix of frigates, OPVs, IPVs, MCMs and MRV fleet support ships, the latter for HADR & NEO. 2 crews are required for each ship to maximise operational effectiveness & maximum number of hulls at sea & ensure maintenance in port is not compromised.
Multi-role frigates - ASW, ASuW and AMD integrated with UUV, USWs and UAVs are essential. Uncrewed systems are ideal for countering grey zone tactics enabling persistent presence, reduced costs, and enhanced capabilities.
Mobile Coastal Missile Batteries - To defend ports, SLOC's & territorial waters.
A Naval Marine Infantry Corps - Specialised in maritime operations be established to conduct boarding operations of vessels by surface or aerial insertion.
Naval Air Force - Crewed, uncrewed, autonomous fixed wing, rotary assets including Airborne Early Warning aircraft to identify threats early.
Naval Service Reserve - Should be staffed with merchant seafarers of all ranks ready to step into a seagoing appointment at short notice. The Navy has no surge capability.
Merchant Marine Reserve - Database to be managed by Marine Surveyors Office detailing experience and cert of competency & merchant seafarers invited to sign up. Navy can then activate to meet demand.
Airborne Early Warning aircraft - To identify threats early & collect IMINT, SIGINT in the AO.
Research & Development - Encourage partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector to innovate in surveillance,

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Critical Maritime Infrastructure covers a wide variety of areas such as ports, shipping & shipping routes, shore based navigation equipment, Global Navigation Satellite Systems, Energy Platforms, including Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE), communications, Coastguard, repair ships, fishing and fishing areas. Each have expertise, familiar with capabilities & vulnerabilities and should be responsible for their own security with Govt. co-operation.
Industry bodies for each are already in place & should have a mandatory security element. It should require organisations which own or operate designated Critical Undersea Infrastructure (CUI) to provide detailed security plans & robust measures to ensure continuity of operation.

Chinese owners & operators of electronic equipment such as Huawei, should be excluded from all maritime security projects including CCTV & mobile phone networks in ports. Huawei is currently sponsoring acoustic marine surveillance in the Celtic Sea for monitoring marine life. This information is relayed to Cloud Infrastructure which can be accessed by Huawei and can be screened for shipping & submarines.
The UK is currently removing all Chinese electronic surveillance equipment including CCTVs from sensitive sites & expects to be completed by 2027. The UK has mandated that Huawei 5G Chinese technology be removed from communications in the mobile telephone network by December 2027 due to its ties with the Chinese Communist Party. There are numerous instances of Chinese electronic equipment with back doors written into their operating systems to capture information & send it back to China.

Protecting CUI is a difficult & complex task, requiring partnership between security services & private companies to ensure continuity of supply or service. An industry organisation should be created by Govt for a forum between operators & the security services to exchange ideas & information on how best to protect CUI. The operators have the expertise of how CUI functions, how they are connected & dependent on, what vulnerabilities they face and what is required to repair and replace them. Operators closely monitor their equipment for failures & security breaches. They should be made aware of the threats they face & may need to adjust their procedures such as bury cables, rock armour, securing landing sites on the coastline & protection against Cyber threats. Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV) should be employed to monitor CUI continuously & the data shared with Intelligence services. Government should work with private operators to ensure guaranteed access to cable repair vessels capabilities during crises or national emergencies, as well as strategic stockpiling of cable repair parts. Subsea cable operators can provide acoustic data to the Intelligence Services. ORE providers should build redundancy into their CUI so if damaged it can be can be replaced or repaired quickly.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

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The Maritime Domain is a complex environment, international in nature and introduces legal obligations on the State to provide protection to life, property and the environment for the international community.
Ireland should engage in treaties and co-operation with its neighbours and the EU to protect the Maritime Domain and meet its international obligations.
It should engage with its Flag State partners in the United Nations International Maritime Organization (IMO) to create a mandatory reporting requirement for merchant shipping entering an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)s. Upon entering the EEZ it should be mandatory for shipping to have the Automatic Identification System (AIS) active and if faulty obliged to report it as a defect immediately. This is to facilitate effective management of vessels within the EEZ and to call upon if necessary if there is a casualty or emergency at sea. The Coast Guard may need to call upon merchant shipping for responding. A sailing plan from the position of point of entry with waypoints until they finally depart, including port calls and ETAs for these waypoints.
Upon entering the EEZ, the Master of the vessel should be required to confirm that their anchors are properly secured by way of providing photographic evidence and a signed declaration attesting that all securing arrangements are in place and in good order.
Legislation giving the Navy powers to board vessels within the Irish EEZ without notice to conduct compliance inspections.
The National Maritime Security Strategy should be integrated with the EU Maritime Security Strategy and co-operation with our neighbours increased. Expanded co-operation with the UK and EU partners is essential to security. Learning to work & integrate operational systems and procedures leads to a win – win situation for all parties working towards a common security strategy.
Ireland should sign up to the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) drone program and expand the European Defence Agency MARSUR III program to enhance the Recognised Maritime Picture. This should be linked to mobile platforms to give naval commanders real time situational awareness 24/7.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Define the Threat, Plan the Response, Deliver the Assets to Mitigate the Risk.
Budget Commitment: Secure dedicated funding to support all facets of maritime security, from technological investments to personnel training.
Timeline and Milestones: Establish a timeline with specific milestones to track progress and ensure timely implementation of the strategy. Regular reviews and updates can help adjust the plan as needed2.
Research & Development: Encourage partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector to innovate in surveillance, cybersecurity, and response techniques.
Sustainability: Ensure that funding and resources are allocated not only for current needs but also for future scalability as technological and threat landscapes evolve.
Continuous Improvement requires regular reviews at least every three to five years, ensuring alignment with emerging challenges and advancements.
Oversight Committee: Establish a Maritime Security Oversight Committee—comprising representatives from government, military, cybersecurity experts, and private stakeholders—to monitor policy implementation and recommend necessary adjustments.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Inertia - is the biggest threat to the security of the State – doing nothing invites attack.
The security of Ireland is a whole of society responsibility. It is every citizen's duty to safeguard our national identity, our way of life & our institutions. The international rules based order is under attack & the right to self-determination is no longer guaranteed.
It starts with awareness of influence operations in daily life on social media, challenging & questioning information that undermines the rule of law & democracy. It is supporting those who defend the State, our Intelligence Services, Defence Forces & An Garda Shiochana. Influence operations have been conducted in Ireland unrestricted for decades. This has led to bizarre discussions on neutrality which perplex other nations.
People should be given the opportunity to volunteer their skills & expertise in protecting our country. Highly specialised skills such as professional seafarers, professional aircrew, cyber security, communications, etc. should be invited to volunteer their skills in the service of the State.
Promote Public Awareness & engagement to foster a culture of maritime security. This includes educational campaigns, stakeholder consultations, & community involvement. Our professional seafarers, fishers or leisure sailors should be encouraged to report unusual activity in the maritime domain. Provision must be made to provide this access.
Ireland cannot rely on Regional neighbours to assist in a crisis. Our neighbours assist if it is to their military advantage. Adversaries may attack Ireland to distract from the main point of conflict.
The Intelligence Services are the eyes & ears of the State, identifying threats, providing solutions & employing scarce resources efficiently & effectively. The nation requires a world class intelligence service that can pivot rapidly to deal with regional & global crisis in a digital world that streams ballistic missile attacks as they happen from countries thousands of miles away.
An Intelligence and Security Committee combining all aspects of security intelligence should be created. It should brief the Minister of Defence weekly, the Taoiseach monthly & the Oireachtas Committee on Defence & National Security quarterly.
The world has changed dramatically & a different approach necessary to secure our waters. The Navy's capability & capacity requires heavy investment. The Navy posture must pivot from defensive to aggressive. An aggressive posture is necessary to deter malign actors & proactively engage adversaries quickly. To preserve the security of the state there must be no doubt that action will be taken should any malign activity be conducted in Irish territorial waters. The Navy has been the nation's shield & now it must be the spear.

The IIMM made a detailed submission to the Commission for Defence, much is relevant today & should be referred to.

We are proud of Ireland's Maritime heritage, it must be protected, securely!

Contact

Contact Form

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Current Threats:

Climate Change: Immediate and urgent Climate Action is needed. According to DNV's 2024 ETO report, While 2024 represents peak global emissions, slow emissions reduction especially in hard to electrify Sectors e.g. Maritime places key climate goals out of reach. Proactive decarbonisation efforts are critical.

Energy Security: Ireland is currently building a LNG facility. Gas will be necessary to handle intermittency issues associated with large scale adoption of renewables. As a far cleaner fossil fuel alternative to coal and oil powered electricity and with significant reserves remaining offshore, capable of connection to existing infrastructure, the state should at least be in a position of readiness to utilise this resource. Scope 3 emissions and the security risk associated with reliance on externally sourced LNG is a concern. This area probably needs a good re-think. ORE infrastructure in Irish EEZ is at risk of damage from the increasing effects of Climate Change and increasingly vulnerable to bad actors as autonomous technology develops. Floating Offshore Wind technology (early TRL but promising) appears particularly vulnerable.

Lack of Defense Resources: It is a fact that Ireland's defense forces are chronically under-resourced in terms of equipment and personnel e.g. Irish Naval service staffing shortages. Irish Aircorp's lack of air traffic controllers. The Minister for Defense is also currently serving as Tániste and while this level of seniority is important, addressing Ireland's present defense issues probably requires a sole focus.

Lack of Defense Capability: Naval Service struggling to get ships and appropriate crew to sea. Irish air defensive capability almost non-existent. No primary radar. Increasing global significance in terms of subsea infrastructure, very little capability to protect or defend it. Increasing plans to develop Ireland's EEZ for ORE implies that this infrastructure will be very vulnerable to interference from bad actors unless our Security Policy drastically scales up its capabilities. Large maritime jurisdiction (EEZ) means that adequate intelligence surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations requires new technology and innovations to be leveraged in order to meet threats

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Emerging/Future threats and challenges and how to prepare for them.

Climate Change: Focus on decarbonisation in hard to abate Sectors, ensure a thriving ocean economy. Deliver on targets for Offshore Wind. Embrace the ISO14068-1 Standard governing carbon neutrality claims.

Lack of Maritime Defense capability: Become leaders in the practical application of autonomous technology and resulting outputs. Develop a highly capable naval and aerial service integrated and built to operate efficiently with the above. Focus on providing clear career pathways and excellent working conditions to attract and retain the talent required to operate effectively. Ensure the new Strategy equips leaders with the direction, resources and tools to support forward looking development capable of meeting unexpected challenges.

Cyber Threats and Warfare: Become a center of excellence for cyber security. Engage with partners facing mutual challenges. Ensure education and awareness is at the heart of the most vulnerable operations. Ensure redundancy, backup and disaster recovery are built into critical operations and activities.

Autonomous Technology: Increasingly inexpensive and effective (e.g. Ukrainian impact on effectiveness of Russian Black Sea Fleet). Increasing risk level in the era of LEO Satellite internet (Starlink). Develop practical, effective countermeasures to protect against most challenging aspects e.g. swarm tactics, subsurface AUV.

Vulnerable Infrastructure: Ensure new technologies like floating wind fully considers the risk posed by sabotage and bad actors. Ensure effective ISR activities by leveraging autonomous technology to increase remote presence. Look to best practice elsewhere. E.g. US Navy, Denmark's Baltic Sea technology appraisal (see next section below).

Changing World Order and associated military operations: Any change to the post war international status quo in particular, US participation in NATO. Many countries are rapidly scaling up military expenditure which will have a direct impact on sub sea and intelligence gathering operations conducted within the Irish EEZ.

Although as a civilian I do not have direct knowledge of these operations, my general assessment is that a lot of submarine activity is conducted in shelf depths as sound does not propagate as easily in shallower water depths <500m (thermocline). Accordingly a change in cooperation between NATO allies would have the effect of increased risk associated with military operations from multiple nations within the Irish EEZ. Increased use of autonomy for ISR activity and the newly acquired towed sonar technology should increase Irish military awareness and associated readiness to respond on the event of collision, accident or incident.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, for monitoring purposes the Irish EEZ should be divided into discrete geographic sectors which the Strategy should consider in their own context based on specific risks associated with a particular Sector (e.g. shipping lanes, cables, ORE infrastructure) and in the wider context of adjacent Sectors (related risks) and the overall Irish EEZ.

These Sectors should be the basis of a comprehensive Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) programme run by the Department of Defense which leverages autonomous technology which can be securely operated on station 24/7 365 days a year.

While developments like the introduction of towed sonar to support naval intelligence and situational awareness are a positive step, the capabilities of this technology on its own, do not go far enough in meeting expected long term security requirements.

The present situation where a lack of capable crews and sufficient vessels capable of remaining on continuous patrol is unlikely to abate to the point where the actual Security requirements of the State are adequately met using this approach alone. I say this as I expect it to be increasingly difficult to recruit, train and retain the numbers of personnel required to operate 8-9 ships of an effective naval service. Especially in the context of a thriving offshore wind sector (as per Ireland's stated 20GW target for 2040 for Offshore Wind) which will offer very well compensated seagoing allowances and career progression.

By embracing remotely operated / autonomous technology (sea and air) capable of long term deployment as the front line of ISR activity and combining these efforts with focused ship based naval operations the State should

be able to maintain the necessary military presence to mange ever increasing threat levels within Ireland's maritime space.

Lastly, [redacted], I must point out that actionable solutions and precedents are already on the table which would allow for a fleet of well equipped autonomous craft to be deployed for long term operations as part of a sentinel chain covering the most at risk Sectors of Ireland's maritime space. I would also caution against losing years through re-inventing the wheel technologically (re-invent it, but in parallel) or by seeking to leverage comparable but less capable technology that does not fulfill the mission. For this I would point towards the latest initiative of the Danish Government who have committed to the deployment of Sail Drone Technology for a three month trial in the Baltic Sea: https://www.saildrone.com/news/saildrone-launches-the-future-of-maritime-surveillance-in-the-baltic-sea.

I would strongly urge the Dept of Defense to conduct a similar appraisal of this particular technology as soon as possible as the learnings would guide full evaluation of a field proven ISR technology capable of long term and continuous deployment.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Satellite Monitoring and LEO Technology (mini satellite deployment)

Further investment in CISE related infrastructure and activities

UAV technology with heavy payload, advanced sensors and long duration loitering capability

Autonomous Surface and Underwater Vessels for ISR activities and Force Multiplication

Advanced Radio Communications Technology - Alternatives to GNSS

Advanced Capabilities in Cyber Security

Advanced Capabilities in Artificial Intelligence

Advanced Strategy in Technological Redundancy for Critical Processes.

Strong Protocols for Leveraging Private Sector Expertise and Technology without compromising the State's Capability and Capacity to deliver on its Security obligations.

Develop a secure remote operations campus/facility and operational programme. Fund research in this area and develop Ireland into a centre of excellence for remote and autonomous technology.

Invest in fast response offshore patrol craft with reduced crewing requirements and enhanced remote support capability.

Invest in the development of aircraft and crews dedicated to maritime patrol.

Invest in training and careers for mariners, with realistic timelines and career paths. Ensure suitable and competitive (with industry) compensation for seagoing operations. There should be competition for seagoing

positions.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes but with caution. The Dept of Defense needs to maintain full visibility and technical capability/know-how over technologies deployed on its behalf.

This represents a conundrum as in a world of rapidly evolving technology and potential threats, Ireland's Maritime Security strategy needs to be able to be able to leverage external technology and expertise without developing problematic dependencies or co-dependencies.

Consideration should be given to incorporating a semi commercial operator along the lines of the Marine Institute (or as a branch), capable of efficient dealings with corporate and private sector operations while meeting the required standards for governance and transparency in terms of its own operations.

Alternatively, a pool of trusted and reliable companies incorporated and domiciled in Ireland could be engaged through standard procurement channels, especially for technical advisory. The issue here is that most defense contractors' operations are way above the OJEU threshold, meaning procurement outcomes could possibly drive/negatively impact the effectiveness of any strategy deployed.

Lastly, certain operations e.g. data gathering could be outsourced as part of bundled operations with the commercial/research/private sector, for example where an array of sensors produces a time series of data supporting research activity some of which may have security implications. Once ashore, significant data could be handled separately from the main collection. As an example: A autonomous craft equipped with multiple metocean monitoring sensors, transfers data to a secure server via end to end encryption in close to real time. A separate stream of encrypted data (e.g. passive acoustic data) is similtaneously transferred to another secure server, is assessed for security measures and is then made accessible to CISE operators.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

It should focus on the Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO as this provides a common language/set of understandings on which further strategic cooperation can be based.

Given the strategic geographic position of Ireland in relation to the US, UK and the EU, great care will need to be given in maintaining working relationships and understandings. For example: UK - Ireland: We still rely on the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office for carrying out charting obligations around the Island of Ireland. While Ireland has an active and successful seafloor mapping programme which provides the UKHO with high value information, this example illustrates how Ireland's history impacts our practical dealings with the UK, our

nearest neighbour. A similar situation exists with Commissioners of Irish Lights a member of Trinity House who play a key role in ensuring safe navigation around the island of Ireland. Both hydrographic and navigational relationships have strategic significance in the context of Ireland's maritime security.

In terms of our relationship with the EU, it is a natural expectation that Ireland's security position will align ever more closely over time with our European partners. It is essential that any new Strategy gives full consideration to existing Directives, e.g. MSP Directive 2014 and legislation at EU level as well statutory legislation at national level.

Lastly, in terms of transatlantic cooperation and partnership, while more uncertainty exists over the USA's long term commitments and interests e.g. NATO membership. Good cooperation could be fostered through partnership with US based defense contractors like the example recommended above. A suitable vehicle for this type of cooperation should exist e.g. professional semi state entity tasked with managing government relationships with private sector entities, whose operations are overseen by the Irish government and the Dept of Defense.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

My view of what the National Maritime Security Strategy should accomplish is as follows: It should present the country with a clear, comprehensive and achievable vision for how our Maritime Security Apparatus should function by a specific point in time in order to meet all of our current obligations and which is prepared to meet future challenges and developments both projected and unknown.

With that definition in mind, it is not as important to have a specific Action Plan as many elements will remain to be determined over the short to medium term. Without clear agreement and policy backing on what this Strategic vision actually represents, an Action Plan will not take us where we need to go and if adhered to overly rigidly, may bring us in the wrong direction.

This Vision of a Secure Irish Maritime Sector which I hope the National Maritime Strategy presents, should of course maintain sufficient flexibility to ensure the end vision remains in focus while providing guidance of the key steps and necessities required in order to achieve this vision.

These will necessarily include:

Capacity Building. Procurement Mechanisms and time bound Capital Expenditure Programmes, Mapping of relevant Authorities and their roles and responsibilities. Mapping of relevant accords and their implications for Irish Maritime Security. Establishment of regular review process and measurable objectives enabling course correction and allowing us to gauge how well the Strategy is working. A programme for embracing innovation and leveraging all resources at our disposal (public, private, technological and political) in order to achieve the vision set out in the Strategy.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

I offer this response to this public consultation as a professional in [redacted] and as an Irish Citizen. The opinions expressed are solely my own and I declare that I have no registerable interest in any of the avenues suggested or recommended. These inputs represent my views based upon twenty years of experience working in [redacted] which are offered in good faith with a view to ensuring that they may be accounted for during the development of this critical Strategy for safeguarding Ireland's future.

I am happy to be contacted in a professional or private capacity about any aspect of the information I submit here and I wish the authors of this Strategy the very best with its development.

[redacted]

[redacted]

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The understaffed navy and underfunded defence forces.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia and cyber attacks , increase defence spending , creation of the army into a more marine based force in places and used for boarding parties as well as base protection on land for the navy

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should concentrate on a whole island approach along with the British in the north.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Larger and more modern ships. Radar and increase in air dominance over our national territory

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Defence should be completely in control by the government

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Massive , we should use these institutions to increase our operability untill we can up skill and increase our own maritime power

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Build and sustain our control of our sovereign waters

Increase size and strength of navy and air force , supplementing with a land component for boarding tasks and conventional warfare with a maritime edge

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Invest heavily. Our ability to protect our waters and infrastructure will create a calm that large corporations will then see and increase their stake in Ireland. This can only be a good thing for our economy in the long run , having a safe and secure environment will only increase the attraction to our country

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Irelands under sea cabels are very exposed due to lack of interest the govt has in properly resourcing the Irish Naval service, Russian navy frequently enters Irish waters and few years ago tried doing a live fire excercise in our waters. Another vulnerability is overfishing unregistered trawlers are entering Irish waters and due to naval service only being able to staff one ship they can't properly enforce this.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia has made clear that they do not like Ireland due to our support for Ukraine. Majority of the communication cabels coming from US to Europe come through Irish waters which they could sabotage easily as Ireland has no way of deterring them. Others threats would be drug cartels smuggling products into Ireland but Irish govt couldn't really care. Best way to prepare for them is buying navy proper ships equipped with modern sonar and defensive weapons along with Air Corps buying more reconnaissance aircraft along with anti submarine capabilities.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland should allow defence contractors setup in Ireland as it would create more jobs boost economy and allow Irish govt purchase better military technology. Investment in secure navy bases along key Irish ports and better Air Corps capabilities such as more hangars as Ireland should have minimum 4 maritime reconnaissance planes to adequately patrol our island they should also have a base in Shannon and cork.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

YES

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should take part more frequently in EU led battle groups and train more frequently with UK Armed forces.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

we have no navy we have bail of drugs washing up on our shorelines for such a small country we have one of the biggest cartels in the world Cleary Ireland is a transit country for drugs coming from sea to enter uk and European markets

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

drug trade and our border in the north the uk have been funnelling refuges into irelabd the amount of pll crossing onto rish soil after being in safe countries this need to stop

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

yeah where an island nation protect out maritime borders invest in drones for surveillance we don't need f 35s drones are the future and where a small island so they will suffice

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

drones and unmanned aircraft jets will be obsolete in a few years same as ships for surveillance

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

no way this will be the beginning of a military industrial complex in Ireland any investment should be government production that way the peoples interest will come before corporation profits just look what happened to America

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

no other nation should be in our airspace or water s this will damage our reputation and our neutrality we need to take a major step away from the British here unreliable and cant control m16

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

n/a

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

n/a

Contact

Contact Form

Questions

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The most significant threats to Ireland's maritime security are the interconnected and mutually reinforcing challenges posed by climate change, geopolitical instability, and severe domestic preparedness gaps.

Key Vulnerabilities and Threats:

Strategy and Governance Vacuum:
The primary vulnerability is the absence of a published National Maritime Security Strategy. This creates a critical void in direction, coordination, and national resolve, leaving Ireland perpetually in a reactive posture. This is compounded by fragmented governance across multiple agencies with no single body having overall responsibility for Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier: Climate change is not a distant threat; it is actively intensifying maritime risks. Increased storm frequency and intensity directly threaten coastal communities, where 73% of the population lives, and critical infrastructure such as ports and offshore energy installations.

Geopolitical and Hybrid Threats: The global security environment has deteriorated, directly impacting Ireland. Threats include:

Disruption to Global Trade: Events like the conflicts and blockades affecting the Red Sea, and drought impacting the Panama Canal, highlight the fragility of the sea lanes vital for an island nation that conducts 99% of its trade by volume via the sea.

Hybrid Warfare: State and non-state actors increasingly use hybrid tactics, including cyber-attacks on port infrastructure and interference with critical undersea cables. A significant portion of all transatlantic subsea cables, crucial for global data flow, passes through Ireland's claimed seabed territory.

Transnational Crime and "Dark Fleets": There has been an exponential increase in narcotics smuggling through Irish waters. Furthermore, the growing "dark fleet" of vessels used to circumvent sanctions poses a direct threat, as illustrated by the hypothetical but plausible collision scenario in the article.

Capability Deficits: Despite multiple expert reports, including the Commission on the Defence Forces, government action has been insufficient. Ireland's Naval Service is under-resourced compared to similarly sized nations, and crucial recommendations for enhancing MDA capabilities are listed for "Further Evaluation," indicating a lack of urgency. This leaves Ireland without the necessary tools to monitor its vast maritime domain—which includes an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) more than six times its land area—and protect its sovereign rights.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The greatest emerging threat is the risk of simultaneous, cascading crises where climate change, hybrid warfare, and global instability intersect. We can no longer expect to deal with one crisis at a time but must manage various crises simultaneously. The future challenge is a "perfect storm" scenario, like a concurrent oil spill, cyber-attack, and infrastructure failure.

Emerging Threats & Future Challenges:
Compounding Crises: The future involves not single events, but multiple, interconnected crises like extreme weather, shipping accidents, and infrastructure failures overwhelming national response capacity.

Hybrid & Grey Zone Warfare: Threats will increasingly involve unconventional tactics, including cyber-attacks targeting port infrastructure and interference with the vital undersea communication cables in Ireland's maritime domain.

Climate-Driven Instability: Global issues like drought, food insecurity, and resource conflicts will fuel regional instability, leading to increased irregular migration and humanitarian crises with a direct impact on Ireland.

Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability: Ireland's profound dependency on the sea for trade (99% by volume), energy (81.6% imported), and data transmission creates an acute national vulnerability to disruption.

How to Prepare:

Preparation requires a fundamental shift from a reactive to a proactive national posture.

Publish a National Maritime Security Strategy: This is the most critical first step. It must provide a comprehensive framework to guide decision-making, investment, and inter-agency coordination, ending the current "strategy-free zone". Preparedness efforts must be benchmarked against worst-case scenarios.

Establish Joint Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA): A centralised, joint MDA program is essential. This requires investment in surveillance capabilities and integrating data from all relevant agencies to create a single, comprehensive maritime picture to ensure threats are not missed.

Implement Expert Recommendations: The recommendations of the 2022 Commission on the Defence Forces must be implemented with urgency, not left for "Further Evaluation". This includes substantial investment to address Naval Service personnel and capability shortfalls.

Strengthen National and EU Coordination: The strategy must clarify roles and responsibilities across all government agencies and deepen engagement with EU partners, aligning with the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) for collective security.

There MUST be one lead agency for Maritime Security and Domain Awareness that has the authority and responsibility to coordinate all matters maritime related and has sufficient legal standing to coordinate across the full security spectrum from civil to military.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the Strategy must prioritise specific geographical areas based on threat assessment and critical infrastructure protection.

Ireland's maritime domain extends across multiple zones requiring differentiated approaches:

Priority Area 1: Southern and Western Approaches
The Atlantic approaches represent Ireland's most vulnerable maritime frontier. The MV ALTA incident demonstrated how threats can traverse undetected through our southern waters, passing critical infrastructure like the Kinsale gas rigs without monitoring. This area requires enhanced surveillance given its exposure to transatlantic trafficking routes and "dark fleet" vessels avoiding sanctions.

Priority Area 2: Critical Infrastructure Corridors
Two-thirds of all transatlantic subsea cables pass over Irish seabed territory. These communications arteries are vital to national security and economic stability. Recent incidents involving fishing trawlers damaging Virgin Media's undersea cable highlight the vulnerability of these assets. The Strategy must prioritise protection of these underwater highways.

Priority Area 3: Energy Security Zones
With 81.6% of Ireland's energy imported via sea routes, areas around energy infrastructure (Aghada, Whitegate, gas interconnectors) require specific protection protocols. The hypothetical scenario of simultaneous infrastructure attacks demonstrates how maritime threats can cascade into national energy security crises.

Priority Area 4: Port Approaches and Shipping Lanes
99% of trade by volume passes through Irish waters. Cork, Dublin, and Rosslare approaches require enhanced monitoring, particularly given increased cyber threats to port infrastructure and potential for cascading failures during extreme weather events.

Geographic Focus Rationale:
Current Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) gaps allow threats to slip through undetected. The lack of centralised maritime picture means no single agency has comprehensive responsibility for monitoring these critical areas. Prioritising specific geographical zones enables:

Efficient resource allocation
Enhanced sensor placement
Coordinated response protocols
Clear jurisdictional responsibilities

Climate Change Considerations:
Intensifying storm patterns and changing maritime conditions require adaptive geographical prioritisation. Areas previously considered low-risk may become critical as shipping routes shift and infrastructure faces new environmental pressures.

The Strategy must move beyond the current "strategy vacuum" and establish clear geographical priorities backed by adequate surveillance capabilities and coordinated governance structures.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland must prioritise establishing a comprehensive Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) system to address current capability gaps that allow threats to slip through undetected.

Priority Investment 1:
Integrated Maritime Domain Awareness System
The MV ALTA incident exposed critical surveillance gaps - satellite detection was available but "no one was looking at the screen." Ireland needs:

Centralised Maritime Operations Centre integrating all sensor data
24/7 monitoring capability with AI-powered threat detection
Integration of EMSA SEG satellite detection layers with national systems
Automated alert systems preventing human oversight failures

Priority Investment 2:
Multi-Domain Surveillance Capabilities
Current deficiencies span air, space, and underwater domains:

Long-range maritime patrol aircraft for Atlantic approaches
Unmanned aerial systems for persistent surveillance
Underwater sensor networks protecting critical infrastructure
Space-based assets for "dark fleet" detection and tracking

Priority Investment 3:
Critical Infrastructure Protection
With two-thirds of transatlantic cables traversing Irish waters:

Subsea cable protection systems and rapid repair capabilities
Port cybersecurity infrastructure (addressing threats like Dublin Port cyber-attacks)
Energy infrastructure hardening (Aghada, Whitegate, gas interconnectors)
Resilient communications networks for crisis coordination

Priority Investment 4:
Enhanced Naval Capabilities
The Naval Service faces significant capability gaps compared to similar-sized nations:

Modern patrol vessels for extended EEZ operations
Specialized vessels for cable protection and underwater domain awareness
Intelligence gathering and processing capabilities
Personnel retention programs addressing current staffing crisis

Priority Investment 5:
Inter-Agency Coordination Infrastructure
No single agency has comprehensive MDA responsibility:

Joint Maritime Security Centre establishment
Shared intelligence platforms across agencies
Standardised communication protocols
Regular inter-agency training and exercises

Technology Integration Priorities:

AI-powered vessel tracking and anomaly detection
Automatic Identification System (AIS) gap analysis capabilities
Weather-resilient sensor networks
Machine learning for IUU fishing detection

International Cooperation Investments:

NATO Maritime Centre for Critical Undersea Infrastructure integration
EU MARSUR and CISE system enhancement
Bilateral agreements with UK Joint Maritime Security Centre

These investments must address Ireland's role as an EU Atlantic frontier state while recognising that 73% of our population lives within 25km of the shore, making maritime security inseparable from national security.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, private sector involvement is essential given their ownership and operation of critical maritime infrastructure vital to national security.
Critical Private Sector Infrastructure:

Undersea cable operators managing two-thirds of transatlantic communications
Port operators handling 99% of trade by volume and 95% by value
Energy companies operating offshore installations
Shipping companies and logistics providers
Telecommunications and internet service providers

Essential Private Sector Roles:
1. Threat Intelligence Sharing
The MV ALTA incident revealed intelligence gaps that private maritime AI companies could have prevented.

2. Infrastructure Protection and Resilience
Recent incidents like the €800,000 damage to Virgin Media's undersea cable demonstrate vulnerability:

Implement enhanced physical security measures
Develop rapid repair capabilities for critical infrastructure
Establish redundant systems and backup protocols
Coordinate maintenance schedules to avoid simultaneous vulnerabilities

3. Maritime Domain Awareness Enhancement
Private sector possesses significant surveillance capabilities:

Commercial satellite operators providing real-time maritime monitoring
Shipping companies sharing AIS and vessel movement data
Oil and gas platforms serving as maritime observation posts
Fishing industry reporting suspicious vessel activities

4. Cyber Security Coordination

Port cyber-attacks represent growing threats to maritime security:

Implement coordinated cybersecurity standards across maritime infrastructure
Share cyber threat intelligence with national security agencies
Develop incident response protocols for critical infrastructure attacks
Regular cybersecurity assessments and vulnerability testing

5. Crisis Response Capabilities
Private sector resources essential during maritime emergencies:

Tugboat and salvage companies for vessel recovery operations
Emergency response vessels and equipment
Specialized personnel and technical expertise
Logistics and supply chain management during crises

Governance Framework Requirements:

Formal information sharing agreements with security clearance protocols
Regular public-private sector maritime security exercises
Standardized reporting procedures for security incidents
Legal frameworks protecting commercially sensitive information while ensuring national security

International Coordination:
Private sector's global reach enables international maritime security cooperation, particularly with companies operating across Ireland's Atlantic approaches and connecting to European and North American networks.
The Strategy must recognize that effective maritime security requires partnership between state agencies and private infrastructure owners who possess critical capabilities, intelligence, and resources essential for protecting Ireland's maritime domain.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is absolutely critical given Ireland's position as an EU Atlantic frontier state with responsibilities extending far beyond national capabilities. It's essential for Ireland's maritime security given our geographic position and the transnational nature of maritime threats.

EU Partnership Priorities (including EU NATO members via NATO platforms:
Ireland must align with the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) while addressing unique Atlantic challenges:

Enhanced integration with EU MARSUR and CISE systems and more critically EU NATO Members NATO systems for comprehensive maritime surveillance.

Coordinated response to "dark fleet" vessels and sanctions evasion
Shared intelligence on transatlantic narcotic smuggling routes
Joint capabilities development addressing common threats like IUU fishing and hybrid warfare

NATO Individually Tailored Partnership Programme:
Ireland's neutrality doesn't preclude essential maritime security cooperation:

Integration with NATO's Maritime Centre for Critical Undersea Infrastructure protection
Access to NATO's maritime intelligence sharing networks
Joint exercises addressing undersea cable protection and maritime domain awareness
Coordinated response to hybrid threats targeting critical infrastructure

Bilateral Cooperation with Neighboring Countries:
UK Partnership: Despite Brexit, geographic proximity demands continued cooperation:

Integration with UK Joint Maritime Security Centre for shared threat assessment
Coordinated surveillance of shared maritime approaches
Joint response protocols for major maritime incidents
Information sharing on vessel movements and suspicious activities

France/Spain Cooperation: Atlantic approaches require coordinated monitoring:

Shared surveillance of transatlantic trafficking routes
Joint maritime patrol operations
Coordinated fisheries enforcement in NEAFC areas
Intelligence sharing on West African migration patterns linked to IUU fishing

Other Critical International Partnerships:
United States: Given transatlantic cable importance and strategic partnership:

Enhanced cooperation on undersea infrastructure protection
Intelligence sharing on "dark fleet" activities
Joint response to cyber threats against maritime infrastructure
Coordination on sanctions enforcement

Regional Organizations:

North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) for fisheries enforcement
International Maritime Organization (IMO) for shipping security standards
European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for enhanced surveillance capabilities

Addressing Capability Gaps Through Cooperation:
Ireland's limited resources require international partnerships:

Shared satellite surveillance capabilities addressing "no one looking at the screen" problems
Joint procurement of maritime patrol aircraft and surveillance systems
Coordinated training programs for maritime security personnel
Shared intelligence analysis capabilities

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, an Action Plan is absolutely essential. Ireland's history of maritime security policy failures demonstrates that strategy without implementation is meaningless. The Commission on the Defence Forces (2022) made clear recommendations, yet key maritime security initiatives remain under prioritised in the implementation plan. This pattern of inaction must end. Without a concrete Action Plan with timelines, resources, and accountability, the Strategy risks becoming another unfulfilled promise.
Key Action Plan Elements:
1. Immediate Actions (0-12 months):

Establish Joint Maritime Operations Centre with 24/7 monitoring capability
Activate EMSA SEG satellite detection layers (addressing "no one looking at the screen" failures)
Create inter-agency Maritime Domain Awareness coordination protocols
Implement emergency response procedures for critical infrastructure protection

2. Short-term Implementation (1-3 years):

Deploy integrated surveillance systems covering Atlantic approaches
Establish Maritime Centre for Critical Undersea Infrastructure protection
Implement comprehensive cybersecurity framework for ports and maritime infrastructure
Launch enhanced Naval Service recruitment and retention programs

3. Medium-term Development (3-5 years):

Acquire long-range maritime patrol aircraft for EEZ surveillance
Deploy underwater sensor networks protecting critical cables
Establish regional maritime security partnerships with EU and NATO
Develop AI-powered threat detection and "dark fleet" identification systems

4. Governance and Accountability Framework:

Designate single lead agency with overall MDA responsibility
Establish Maritime Security Council with ministerial oversight
Create quarterly progress reports with public accountability

5. Resource Allocation and Funding:

Multi-annual funding commitments preventing capability gaps
Public-private partnership frameworks for critical infrastructure protection
EU funding maximization for maritime security projects
International cooperation cost-sharing agreements

6. Legislative and Regulatory Actions:

Update maritime security legislation addressing hybrid threats
Establish legal frameworks for private sector information sharing
Implement penalties for non-compliance with maritime security requirements
Create fast-track procurement procedures for urgent security needs

7. Personnel and Training:

Address Naval Service staffing crisis through retention incentives
Establish joint training programs across agencies

Create maritime security specialization tracks
Develop crisis response leadership capabilities

8. International Integration:

Formal agreements with UK Joint Maritime Security Centre
NATO Maritime Centre integration protocols
EU MARSUR and CISE system enhancement
Bilateral cooperation agreements with Atlantic partners

Ireland cannot afford another cycle of expert recommendations followed by government inaction.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Final Thought:
Ireland must "reconcile our historical traditions and defence prioritisations, with the reality that we are a frontier island, surrounded by water." This reconciliation is not optional—it's essential for national survival in an increasingly dangerous maritime environment. The Strategy must be transformational, not incremental, addressing decades of underinvestment and strategic denial about Ireland's maritime security responsibilities.

Ireland must confront an uncomfortable reality: we are a frontier island nation living in denial about our maritime security responsibilities.

The Strategy Vacuum Crisis:
Ireland's lack of a published National Security Strategy since 2019 represents a fundamental governance failure. This "strategy vacuum" leaves Ireland vulnerable to cascading crises where multiple threats converge simultaneously. The Niinistö Report warns we must "take worst-case scenarios seriously as the benchmark for our preparedness efforts" and "manage and respond to various crises simultaneously." Ireland is unprepared for this reality.

Critical Recommendations:

1. Establish Maritime Security as National Priority:
Maritime security cannot remain "an under-prioritised and poorly understood area for policy makers." The Strategy must elevate maritime security to the same level as other national security concerns, with dedicated ministerial oversight and protected funding.
2. Address the Naval Service Crisis:
The Naval Service faces an existential staffing crisis with personnel leaving for better-paid positions on cruise ships. Without immediate intervention through retention incentives and career development, Ireland will lack the human resources to implement any maritime security strategy.
3. Embrace Technology and AI:
Ireland must leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning for threat detection. The country's position as a technology hub should be exploited for maritime security applications, including IUU fishing detection, vessel tracking, and anomaly identification.
4. Recognize Economic Interdependence:
With 73% of Ireland's population living within 25km of the shore, 99% of trade by volume conducted via sea routes, and 81.6% of energy imported maritimely, maritime security is inseparable from national economic security. The Strategy must reflect this reality.
5. End the Culture of Inaction:
Ireland's pattern of commissioning expert reports followed by minimal implementation must end. The Strategy requires political courage to confront hard truths about Ireland's strategic position and resource requirements.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Underwater cables, being the vulnerability, and the total lack of detection capabilities against unfriendly actors, is the absolute greatest threat.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Terrorists groups may develop undersea capabilities, but consider the appearance of unfriendly naval forces in European waters.
We are defenceless.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ports are particularly vulnerable, especially the entrances to Cork and Dublin ports.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Naval port in West, possibly Galway.
Small depot in Dun Laoighre (as is) to facilitate sovereignty and otherwise on East Coast.
Develop Haulbowline. Excellent potential here.
Capabilities? Long range maritime patrol aircraft that have offensive ability. Detection is one thing. Deterrence, another.
We don't need to project power beyond our shores, just defend what we have.
About 4 frigates with decent surface to surface, surface to air, and ASW capabilities would suffice.
Submarines would also be a very useful deterrent.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Our electorate does not support membership of a military alliance, but, at very least, it would be advantageous to have the same operating procedures and standards, so that, in the event of a foreign threat, and change in views of the electorate, a seamless transition to a greater deterrence force could take place.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, but get busy.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Aim for layered defence such as comparable countries, like Denmark and Norway, possess.
Air, Sea and land forces must be coordinated.
Ireland is not interested in war. But other contour there, are.
Credible defence will deter them.

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Inadequate resourcing, pay, equipment, vessels, and staffing. In adequate air support and inadequate innovation(Maritime and aviation drones, etc.). No submarine Security.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia. China. Develop a plan to counter over, on, and under sea threats. adequately resources and increase pay to boost recruitment.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Under sea cables protection should be a priority. Remote coastline is exploited for smuggling drugs.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Underseas cables protection. Maritime and aviation drones, supported by manned vessels. Submarine counter measures long range air support.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. The private sector should be restricted to support functions only. The private sector may own and operate critical marine infrastructure, but securityshould be the remit of the state.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is vital. This should include the EU and NATO.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. An action plan with timelines is necessary. Key milestones should be met, particularly around resourcing.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia and hybrid attacks from Russia, also drug trade and gang activity.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The world is in a precarious position. Allies will most likely put the defence of their own territory above all considerations. We simply cannot rely on their goodwill as a foundational defence policy for this country. We need to be able to hold our own. We need to be able to have a force that is compatible with other ally nations also.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The priority is obviously undersea cables but Russia has shown it is an ingenious adversary and willing to use proxies and simple methods to inflict maximum chaos. We saw with the HSE attack and their current attacks on infrastructure in Nordic countries and the baltics. We need to be ready to meet the threat wherever it may rise.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

We need a functional navy, radar and an air force with fighters at a minimum

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Please stop trying to farm our government responsibility to the private sector especially in such a vital area which is a high target for espionage and crucial for the defence of the state. You don't have control over their security systems, you have to trust what they say on paper about their policies. This should be a state only endeavour. Look at the state of the search and rescue debacle.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. They defend us now. The reality of the situation is what it is.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Budget allocations and purchases with deadlines for completion. You have been planning too long. You know the issues. Start actually increasing our capabilities.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

For the love of god do not privatise the defence of Ireland. If that's not your job, what is?

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The size of our marine jurisdiction is very challenging to adequately monitor and enforce regulations and EU & International Directives. There is also a plethora of complex laws governing the seas. A current threat is to not include defence of our marine environment which had already been degraded through overfishing, pollution and a lack of protection - we are waiting years to get protection of 30% of our marine space under Marine Protected Areas and are now rowing back on this.

Whilst appreciating that traditionally securing communication cables, fisheries and offshore resources has been the main focus we need to also defend the vital resource and pillar of security a healthy ocean offers through an expanded mandate.

Ireland's Maritime Area lies adjacent to a significant nuclear power with the fuelling and waste disposal from Britain's West Coast nuclear facilities travelling by sea immediately adjacent to our territorial seas (12nm) from Donegal to Cork along our NE, Eastern, SE and Southern seaboards. An accident at sea with one of these shipments would result in massive damage to our marine environment. The policing of all such movements is an essential element of our maritime security.

The current geopolitical situation is a vulnerability as it can generate an overemphasis on military style defence without considered thought as to how our principal seagoing agency can be supported and resourced to broaden it's remit and effectiveness to also defend the very life and services our ocean provides.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The EU is going to shift considerable resources to defence budgets and it is imperative on the Government that those budgets are utilised in a broader manner to meet the safeguarding of our waters in every aspect. The mandate of the Naval Service needs to be expanded to include monitoring and enforcement with regard to infringements and harms to ocean life and given a proactive role in the management of our Marine Environment most especially the designated Protected Areas.

The Naval Service does currently have access to appropriate seagoing craft and technology for it's current monitoring and enforcement activities but capacity does need to be resourced better so the role can expand and new craft and personnel accommodated.

Climate change is a current threat that will only have more impact in future years disrupting the functioning of our oceans, we are already seeing quite an effect this year from disruption of the ocean Conveyor. Near shore evidence of coastal slumping, particularly in the South East, is more vivid the past few years. The acidification of the ocean, the pressures on life there to move or adapt is becoming more problematic and as we begin to roll out our Offshore Renewable Energy projects the economic vulnerabilities are uncertain.

The Naval Service already coordinates with multiple Departments and agencies and is adept at being agile and taking on a more coordinated and integrated role to provide an integrated service to help safeguard our waters.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes as it is impossible to adequately cover the whole area it is more strategic to prioritise areas that already have protection, which also include areas far offshore, and areas that are ecologically significant or are strategically important such as our estuaries and ports.

Fair Seas have done a lot of work in identifying areas that are ecologically important and should be considered for Marine Protected Area designation. The offshore assets such as ORE will also feature as important economic assets on top of existing priorities.

The security framework should as already mentioned be extended to include those important ecological areas and significant features such as seagrass.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

The Naval Service should have access to the best equipped craft and technology available and have integrated systems where sharing of data and information is available in real-time. The personnel capacity needs to be supported through training at the Naval College to reflect the capabilities required to carry out such a broad mandate effectively.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes the NMSS should include the Private Sector as they are key players in this space whether operators of ORE, Fisheries, or Port and coastal infrastructure. Many of these private operators conduct surveys and have data that should be shared with the State.

It should extend beyond public agencies and private organisations and have some mechanism to also include the citizen interests, in particular with a wider remit of monitoring and enforcement of marine protected areas to include NGOs and local community representatives.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring

countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is vital in this time of fragile security and the growing need to share responsibility for securing the marine environment and protecting our maritime interests.

Clearly with fisheries, pollution control and protecting our designated marine areas an all-Island approach is necessary. In particular strengthening cross-border relationships with the UK and our EU neighbours are vital.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes as without an Action Plan it will just remain as an unimplementable Plan. The Action Plan needs to set out Roles, Goals, Timelines and an adequate Budget.

It needs to assign actions under the various main responsibilities to include a new mandate for monitoring and enforcement of Marine Protected Areas.

Include Radiological Risk and Protection in the Plan.

Creation of an Integrated Cross-Sectoral Advisory Board to include research institutes and NGOs.

A Plan to increase and improve/ expand equipment, technology and personnel capabilities.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The prism through which maritime security is viewed needs to expand beyond traditional maritime interests to include defence of the natural marine environment itself. Without a healthy functioning ocean the threat to life itself for all species increases exponentially.

To counteract the threats and vulnerabilities of the current geopolitical situation and the risk of increased focus on militarism it would be very welcome to see Ireland, as a non-NATO neutral country, to take a lead role in this Strategy to promote peace and harmony, this is contained within SDG 16 which Ireland supports and would act to counterbalance the drive towards conflict and a less secure world. Security can only be achieved by cooperation and dialogue and striving for a shared goal of a more equal, just and peaceful world. This is ultimately good for our marine environment, our maritime interests and for people.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

At the moment, I feel our biggest threat is interference with undersea cables by any subversives, wheater they be russian military, nato forces, criminals or any private individuals or corporations.
Any damage to these communication cables or pipe lines could plunge Ireland into recession.

Secondly, I believe much more stringent patrol and enforcement is required for fisheries and natural resources protection. For this the Irish Navy and Air Corp needs to be tripled or maybe even quadrupled in fleet and manpower size, with extensive undersea and aerial capability urgently needed.
The long overdue and much talked about primary radar should have been installed years ago

Thirdly, Drug interdiction to stop the supply of drugs into Ireland to put a stop to the drug epidemic and criminal organisations/gangs that make millions from it and the further criminal activity it causes on the streets of every Irish Town, large and small up and down the country.
So called petty crime like muggings, assaults, car break in's and theft are not so petty when they affect you personally.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

As per question 1, We need to know what and who is in our EEZ at all times, in the air, on the sea and below the sea.
Surveillance and enforcement is critical at all times.
Expansion of the Navy and Air Corps and its capability is badly needed.
Not just patrol vessels, but actual war ships that would make any other countries naval vessels or criminals think twice.
We need to be respected in our own territories.

Also, fishing quotas for our own Irish fishing fleet are deplorable and need to be renegotiated as our fishing industry is dying. This is also important for food security, but will also help to negate the inevitable decline in our corporate tax income as I believe there will be a sustained effort by America and other countries to attack Ireland in this area long after the current Trump era has passed.
Irelands fishing industry should be huge given the size of our EEZ and xhould be contributing at least 10% of our GDP.

Oil and Gas extraction from our EEZ should be on the agenda too.
The idea of the current "leave it in the ground" is ridiculous as we then have to import it via ship, which just causes even more pollution globally due to shipping been one of the biggest polluters.
Also, energy security is hugely important for Ireland as a small country.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No, all areas are important, no shortcuts or half measures should be taken.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Radar, naval and Air Corps investment needs to be tripled at a minimum.
Air sea and undersea patrol and monitoring is very important.
The Navy needs actual warships, not Coast guard type patrol vessels.
Proper warships will provide a dual purpose of fisheries and drug/criminal interdiction and defence of our undersea cables by enforcement, with over head support from the Air Corps in actual fighter jets that shows we mean business.
That strategy has been used by Russia in the baltic sea successfully recently.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No, no outsourcing should be contemplated. A surcharge/tax would be acceptable, but in no way should any monitoring, patrolling or enforcement be outsourced to any other organisation or country.
Other Countries/Organisations will always put their own interests first.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Partnership with other Countries & Nato is fine, but in our territorial waters, the Irish Navy & Air Corps should always take the lead and not be the junior partner.
In other words, invest in a proper navy and Air force so not to be relying on "partners"

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

A security strategy is an action plan, no need to over complicate things.
Monitor, patrol, enforcement, simple.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Drone technology should be embraced for air, sea and under sea. Both autominous and piloting remotely

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Most of the fibre optic broadband cables between the US and Europe go through Irish seas. I would also say probably 80% of the drugs in Europe travel through Irish seas on route to their EU destinations. We have no deterrence in Irish waters to Russian rogue ships or to any drug mules as we have enough ships to police our waters but not enough crew to run them so embarrassingly if we detect a rogue ship in our waters it's the equivalent of ringing Dublin Gardai to report a burglary in progress in Killarney but the squad car coming from Dublin is restricted to 55kph. By the time they get there the criminals or rogue elements are long gone

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia is constantly testing the waters literally. They can and do cause damage to undersea cables all around the EU. They test reaction times and deterrence levels in each area not for fun but for the purpose of checking and testing to see how far they can push it. How much can they get away with so that when not if, but when the day comes they decide to cut lots of cables and send the cashless society we have become into a frenzy, that they come out on top and they will.know exactly how much time they have to do it and be long gone befoee they risk any chance of being detained or punished. Drug sales are also ever increasing in the EU. These drugs come primarily from south america and can only get there throigh our waters mostly. Drug barrons will keep. pushing the boundaries of what they can push across.the atlantic for as long as they can get away with it undeterred.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. No one area of Irish maritime sea area is more important than the next. Draw two converging lines from the north end of south America and the south end of south america to europe. The majority of a lot of that area in between is Irish. We have extremely important undersea cables, fisheries and drug trafficking areas to protect there. Ireland is the absolute laughing stock of Europe when it comes to Defence. We rely on everyone else to police it for us so we dont have to spend money and we use the word neutrality as an excuse to not invest in defence but our neutrality means jack sh1t if it compromises our sovreignty. Anyone and i mean anyone can walk in tomorrow and take away our country. We are far under resourced to protect us and we refuse to join any type of alliance that may possibly protect us if something were to happen. The very ones that give out about joining any defence pact would be the ones that scream out how "they'd never let that happen to us" but they wont invest in "them" and they criticise others for taking defence seriously. They expect others to sacrifice their children to defend ours but wont contribute in absolutely any way shape or form.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland needs sonar capability. They also need close cooperation with our neighbours and EU counterparts to effectively police our seas from external threats, drug traffickers, human traffickers, russian invasions and incursions and also to act as a deterrent to rogue actors. We need a well resourced and manned naval service. Enough crews to man every ship twice. Keep them out at sea and keep them harrassing ships and boats in our waters. Reassure our fishermen that the grounds they fish are theirs and are secure.
Reassure the Irish public they are watching out for and stopping russian rogue actors before they get into our EEZ

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

There can be a cooperational role for the private sector in helping witb the latest technology and reapurces to give us the best chance at defence. Civilians can also be a deterrence when they are empowered to be able to report sightings and rogue behaviour in oir waters and know that their report will be taken seriously,. investigated and concluded efficiently and with pride and professionalism.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring

countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should be part of NATO. We should also be part of and play a pivotal role in the EU defence pact. We have one of the largest martime areas of the EU and therefore should have one of if not the largest navy in the EU. We should be training smaller naval services in the EU passing on the wide variety of knowledge.and experience we have given our large sea areas but we dont. We should encourage other navys to train with us, cooperate with us and procide mutual defence with us. We are not just Irish anymore.....were europeans and we need to accept that and embrace it and we should be as willing to defend them as they would us.

International law is often bandied around and quoted. In recent times we have seen countries like Isreal, Russia and various others, flout those internstional laws and get away with it completely unpunished in any way shape or form. What use are laws if they are not enforced. Ukraine was once forced to disarm and become neutral. Look how that had served them. Nobody will go in and defend the pact that was once signed that guaranteed their security and safety if they just became neutral and gave up their nuclear weapons.

Now they are much weaker militarily and as a result have been invaded without one guarantor of the original agreement coming in to help them fight to defend themselves. Russia can bomb civilian hospitals, apartment blocks and schools. They can use North Korean and chinese troops along with Iranian Shahed drones but if Ukraine hit military targets deep inside Russian territory to defend themselves they are the aggressor and blamed for making the situation worse. This is what happens when you sign away your defence and wave a neutral flag. Youre seen as weak and defenceless and open for the taking.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Not to be published. It should make a plan and strictly stick to it. Prioritise defence for once in the lifetime of this country.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The naval service is only part of it. No navy is complete and competent without a fully functioning air defence system with a capable air force. We need eyes in the skies monitoring the seas as much as radar. We need an all round new approach to our defence forces and we should call upon former members of PDF and RDF to sign back up and play a role in bringing experience and knowledge to the area of defence in this proud country. We are proud of this country and we know its worth fighting for. We should bring back the pride in the Green White and Orange and be prepared to stand and fight for the values we believe in of sovreignty, pride, neutrality, self determination and cooperation with oir European counter parts

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

There is a stark mismatch between the scale of Ireland's strategic maritime responsibilities and the limited capabilities of our surveillance and security infrastructure. This enduring gap highlights the challenge faced by a small island nation tasked with safeguarding the Atlantic gateway to Europe.

Over time, the Naval Service has been reduced in public perception to little more than a fishery protection agency, with 95% of recent patrols dedicated to that role. This distortion of purpose undermines national defence. It is neither credible nor sustainable to suggest that a fishery protection service can meet the full spectrum of the State's defence requirements.

We need a Naval Service recognised first and foremost as the maritime arm of national defence, with a core mandate to uphold sovereignty. Fishery protection, search and rescue, and other ancillary duties are important, but they are secondary to that central role.

Defence capability cannot be switched on and off at will. Once lost, it takes years to rebuild. A credible, capable Naval Service must be maintained and resourced as a standing strategic asset, not a part time auxiliary.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

As an Island nation we are constantly exposed to maritime threats, from criminal elements, both national and international. As presently constituted our Navy is not fit for purpose to meet the current threat. There have been some success with major Drug interdiction, where the Naval Service have played a major role. Such success poses the question , what would the success levels be if the Navy was properly resourced.

The grey threat is an insidious reality of modern maritime security.
It :
Exploits ambiguity (Neutrality)
Undermines accepted international principles.
Is difficult to deter or respond to effectively

Recommendations :
This requires nuanced, multilateral, continual responses, combining law enforcement, diplomacy, and naval presence including coastguard, fishing trawler fleet and all national maritime resources.

Structure requires establishment increase; Currently not fit for purpose,

9 Ships - Double crewing
Base infrastructure must be updated;
Berthage, dockyard support, etc.

The Navy should be responsible for;
Maritime security and situational awareness,
Maintenance of National Maritime Operations Centre and picture,
Require an increased Maritime Reserve

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's EEZ constitutes approx. 13% of EU waters further highlighting that Ireland as an island nation has a disproportionately large and resource-rich sea area compared with our land mass. The existing naval base in Cork, along with strategic locations in Limerick and Galway, presents an ideal framework for the development of additional facilities aimed at improving maritime surveillance in the western Atlantic.

Forward operating bases/deployed units (east and west coasts – commercial ports). Whilst west Coast is the operational priority I purposely include east coast to facilitate recruitment . As an island nation, the principal seagoing agency of the State must have primacy in the collection, collation and development of the State's Maritime Situational Awareness capability, to ensure that it provides this information to relevant national Government Departments and Agencies. The creation and development of a National Maritime Information and Analysis Centre would, be the central location for the collation and assessment of data and conversion into knowledge and intelligence.

Recommendation :
Given the scale and strategic importance of such an initiative, substantial financial support from the European Union would be essential to ensure its successful implementation and long-term sustainability

9 ships deployed – double crews,
Enhanced maritime presence,
Forward deployed ships (east and west coasts),
Fit for purpose establishment,
Supporting joint operations,
Sustain overseas deployment.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

The war in Ukraine has profoundly disrupted long-standing assumptions about national and regional security, exposing the vulnerabilities of conventional defence postures and underscoring the strategic importance of resilience across all domains, including the maritime sphere. It has demonstrated the accelerating impact of smart technologies, autonomous systems, and hybrid warfare tactics, while also revealing the critical need for agile, adaptive military thinking and enhanced civil-military coordination to respond effectively to evolving threats. In addition to strengthening our Naval Fleet with appropriate balanced fleet capable of providing for the maritime defence and security requirements of the State. We need Strategic Investment in Surface to Air, Surface and Subsurface environments . The reorganisation of the Defence Forces following on the principle of Jointness and interoperability should ensure our ships are up to date with available technology.

Remaining cognisant of Ireland's EEZ and its extensive Continental Shelf, the Naval Service will require a second Naval Base on the West coast to optimise the delivery of operational effects and an additional forward operating base on the East coast post Brexit. Furthermore, Ireland's EEZ constitutes approx. 13% of EU waters further highlighting that Ireland as an island nation has a disproportionately large and resource-rich sea area compared with our land mass.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Responsibility for the security of the State should not be exclusive to the Defence Forces. The owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure have a responsibility to work with state agencies to ensure the security of maritime infrastructure. We have to distinguish between commercial maritime entities and critical infrastructure for which the state have primary responsibility. The security of such structures should be an integral part of planning ensuring modern security technology is installed from the outset. By harnessing the expertise and infrastructure of the international tech sector, already based here, we can make strategic, cost-effective advances in safeguarding our marine interests, critical infrastructure, and sovereign water responsibilities.

Recommendation:
Initiate collaborative partnerships that upgrade our geopolitical, security and environmental requirements. The concept of dual purpose military civil spending is the new norm

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Taking into account the extent of our sea bed area, Ireland is the third largest EU state in the North Atlantic, with a seabed territory of almost 1 million square kilometres which represents 10 times the size of Ireland's landmass. Ireland's EEZ constitutes approx. 13% of EU waters further highlighting that Ireland as an island nation has a disproportionately large and resource-rich sea area compared with our land mass. We need a constant Naval presence in these waters to provide for our maritime security, flying the flag, with constant patrols is the best deterrent

The only way that Maritime Security can be enforced, guaranteed and protected is by a decisive maritime presence, and that means suitably empowered law enforcement agents operating from suitably endowed platforms – ships

We have to draw on our EU partners to support the security of our Western Border. Given the sheer scale and complexity of the maritime domain no single nation can effectively monitor and manage it alone. As previously stated the interconnected nature of maritime activity, from commerce to security, means that a threat in one jurisdiction often has ripple effects far beyond its borders.

We need to step up as a sovereign country and take responsibility for the effective security of our territorial waters. whilst we should be supported or financially compensated by our European partners for securing the EU western borders, we should not abdicate that responsibility to other nations. A tailored Partnership Programme is complex but in a changing world it very well may be a reality. In this context, a collective approach is the only viable strategy to ensure safety, security, and sustainability at sea. This should not be used as an excuse to withhold critical investment in our Navy

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

To ensure our maritime security strategy is fit for purpose in a rapidly evolving political and security landscape, we must fully leverage the most advanced tools available, notably Artificial Intelligence. We should avoid reverting to outdated, last year's file syndrome, all time consuming methods when smarter, faster alternatives exist.

Recommendation:
Adopt an AI-powered, intelligence-led approach as the foundation for planning and resource allocation. Use this to assess current capabilities, conduct a realistic situational analysis, and candidly acknowledge our vulnerabilities. From this informed position?, design a maritime security strategy that aligns with our national interests, one that balances risk, capacity, and geography, while also recognising the strategic value of partnerships with neighbouring states.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

As previously highlighted in relation to Ukraine, the Defence Forces remain significantly behind where they should be in the deployment of MALE (Medium Altitude Long Endurance) drones. These systems are capable of providing persistent aerial surveillance for 9 to 12 hours at a time, making them a critical asset in modern security operations. A senior security source noted that much of Ireland's current surveillance burden, whether monitoring undersea infrastructure, airspace incursions, or counter-narcotics activity, does not require the physical presence of aircrews or naval patrols. What is urgently needed is dependable, real-time aerial intelligence: in short, "eyes in the sky."
The case for advancing Ireland's drone capability is no longer optional, it is urgent and essential.

Ireland lacks sovereign space-based observation assets, leaving it reliant on third-party data for maritime surveillance, environmental monitoring, and strategic awareness. With vast maritime responsibilities—particularly under UNCLOS—owning or co-owning a small satellite constellation could significantly enhance national autonomy and resilience.

Ireland has much to learn—and even more to gain—from Denmark's example. The key message is that sovereign access to space-based information is not a luxury—it's a strategic necessity for a modern state. With the right political will and investment, Ireland could rapidly build capacity

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russian sabotage and drug importation along with human trafficking

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

We need more ships patrolling our waters against hostile ships and smugglers . Also I believe that over fishing is a huge problem and with climate change protecting our oceans is vital if we are to have a role in fighting back against climate change

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The west coast i would speculate is the most vulnerable

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Staff, radar, ships

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes why not , expertise in recruiting , engineering etc could be needed

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We should join NATO and work with EU partners

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes , and I'm not fully up to speed on this but if they have an action plan they need to devise it quickly and implement it quickly

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

There's a war coming so look busy

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