Since threats to maritime security are increasing and becoming more sophisticated on a weekly basis, it is crucial to move with velocity to address this challenge. So an Action Plan based on a prioritised risk assessment framework should be developed in parallel with the National Maritime Security Strategy so that action can be taken immediately in order to incrementally improve Ireland's capabilities.

Any comprehensive solution for maritime security needs to be a holistic system that brings together the latest technologies and sensing modalities to focus and amplify the scarce resources of personnel and patrol ships and planes. Such a system should extend from the seabed to space and also include other aspects such as cyber security, human intelligence and international collaborations.

There's a strong emerging cluster of Irish SMEs focused on the defence and space sectors who can bring to bear world-leading technologies that can help Ireland to take a leadership role in addressing maritime security in Europe. Frameworks need to be put in place that enable the Defence Forces and other government organisations to engage with such companies and to procure technology and services from them and to do this with a high degree of agility and speed.

There are offerings available right now from indigenous Irish companies that can be brought to bear quickly and these capabilities can increase in scope and sophistication over time in line with the growth in Irish maritime security capability as decided upon in the strategy. Having under-invested in security for so long, counter-intuitively Ireland may now have an opportunity to leapfrog others by embracing the latest technologies without being excessively burdened by existing systems and infrastructure.

So a key element of the Action Plan needs to address procurement structures in order to empower the Defence Forces and government departments to make swift progress on this urgent issue. While existing procurement processes may be workable for dealing with large established suppliers and government to government procurement, other structures need to be considered which will enable the government to deal with Irish SMEs and to nurture the cluster of high potential indigenous companies who can bring sovereign control of important elements of the security solution.

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 would advocate, strongly, that a Project Management Office be established as part of Ireland's Maritime Security Strategy with responsibility for the execution of that strategy. The Office should be mandated to call on the expertise from all stakeholders, including the private sector, and to have clear, aggressive, timescales for when the various elements of the strategy are to be delivered. The Office should also be furnished with significant discretionary funds that can be used to trial new approaches and technologies which can contribute to our Maritime Security, or even to commission the development of such approaches and technologies, without having to go through the normal procurement processes. In addition the Office should be mandated to encourage and promote the development of technologies and solutions for our Maritime Domain, and to foster collaboration both within the private sector and between the public and private sectors, to make Ireland a world leader in the development and deployment of Maritime Security.

The use of technology as the cornerstone of Ireland's Security Strategy is not in any way intended to replace existing personnel or resources. However, it is considered that in this ever changing geopolitical environment, that the existing security services need to grow and that the rate of adoption of technologies by these services needs to increase significantly to allow them to deploy their resources is the most efficient and effective manner.

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

Any marine based infrastructure that passes through or is based in our EEZ or territorial waters. This includes subsea pipelines, cables etc. and surface located gas, oil drilling/extraction rigs as well as off-shore wind turbine installations..

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

Interference with or damage to any of the items listed above in Q1.
Ireland needs to have the capability to closely monitor/survey all of these facilities, identify any items placed near to or attached to these facilities and have the capability to quickly remove and make inert any suspicious items.
Ireland's navel and air forces need to have regular overt maritime patrols to dissuade foreign belligerent actions.
Ireland should have the capability to use deadly weapons in the event that foreign assets do not comply with Irish instructions to cease activities - a shot across the bows so to speak.
Ireland needs to invest in surface vessels and aircraft that are equipped for intelligence gathering e.g. radar, sonar and MAD (magnetic anomaly detection).

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

3000 character(s) maximum

All areas of the Ireland's west coast and south west coast Atlantic EEZ and territorial waters where subsea facilities are located, especially where such facilities are routed to converge into compacted (close proximity to one another) bundles, whether these compacted bundles make landfall in Ireland or bypass Ireland.
Close co-operation with UK, French and possibly Scandinavian authorities to share patrol and monitoring efforts of the eastern and northern sides of Ireland e.g. the Irish Sea and south east Atlantic areas (areas that are shared with our neighbors) would make these areas slightly less of a priority due to cooperation arrangements/agreements to share responsibility .
More localised focus on off-shore wind farms, gas and oil platforms should be worked into the monitoring regime.

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 modern highly capable radar, sonar and MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection) equipment on suitable surface and airborne platforms (ships and aircraft) with well trained specialists to operate. A submarine capability in the form of a salvage ship with ROV's (remotely Operated Vehicles) to facilitate close visual and sonar identification of suspicious items with the capability of manipulation, movement, salvage/recovery and possibly assist in destruction of such suspicious items. Such a salvage ship could also be engaged in normal /routine inspection/servicing of pipes and cables on behalf of the operators of the pipes and cables.

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

Private contractors could be involved as owners/operators of some monitoring //intelligence gathering assets be that surface seaborne vessels or aircraft. However where offensive capability is concerned this must be provided by Ireland's 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

As eluded to in Q3 above, yes Ireland needs to cooperate with all maritime neighbors both militarily and civilian including the EU and NATO. Cooperation should include intelligence sharing and use of borrowed capability. Ireland's neutrality should not be compromised if a careful framework of protocols is put in 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 an action plan should be put into place.
1. Liaise with other interested countries and organisations with a view to identifying all the threats and the best solutions.
2. Prioritise the Irish specific goals identified in 1 above. Obtain estimates on costs and time frames for delivery on all required goals.
3. Government to approve list of goals and allocate a budget.
4. Government departments to formulate a plan for the procurement of all required equipment and personnel and allocation of responsibilities i.e. Dept of Defense, Dept of Transport etc.
5. Go to competitive tender process which must include specific training requirements, spare parts availability and servicing.
6. Award contracts to successful bidders. Start recruitment and training.
7. Commission new equipment and work up training to operational standard.
8. Review success of implementation and modify if necessary. Combined training exercises with neighboring allied countries/organisations.
9. Onward review of effectiveness and plan for use of emerging new technology.

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 Irish Coast Guard's remit could be widened to include monitoring duties.

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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

An Under resourced Naval Service and Airforce.
Inability to detect and deter agressors

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

A deterioration of geopolitical relations leading to threats to sea based supply lines and infrastructure

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The strategy should have heavy detect and deter on key infrastrusture such as ports, subsea cables and future offshore energy facilities.

However Ireland is not a large island and modern detection and deter tools allow for a full area protection strategy and Ireland should have mobile platforms that project a strong effective deterrence over a wide area

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Detect and deter anti ship missle capabiliteis (Ship and land based)
Both Long to short range
Mobile launchersof aid missles
Antisubmarine torpedos that can be launched from aircraft/airborne and sea based drones.

Small GEOs" or "MicroGEOs are now envisaged to be relatively affordable mini satellites which will allow for total area survelliance.

Surveillance and attack long range air and sea drones. These can be sourced relatively cheaply and in numbers far greater than traditional aircraft - There should be more than one remote pilot base including mobile pilot bases to ensure redundancy and independent communication relays.

Lessons from Ukraine's successful campaign against Russia's black sea fleet need to be considered including the capacity to use of large quantities of small cheap unmanned platforms against large expensive ships and submarines.

Detection platforms to inlcude land based radar, and undergournd sonar detection.
Underwater drones can also provide addtional sonar detection further out from land.
These patforms should be relativelyeasy ot maintsin and update and detection of unusual activity in feedback should be enhanced overtime by allowing for improvements in AI.

New ships to have on board air and sub sea drones.

Investments should consider modern and affordable platform options rather than the traditional platforms such as expensive large aricraft, submarines which are quickly becoming obsolete from the perspecitve of a small island nation defence strategy.

Investments should be a mix of local and off the shelf purchases. Purchasing from large defence outfitters could lead to over engineered soon to be obsolete solutions, dependencies on nondependable countries, and being trapped into legacy systems that do not allow for future changes in technology.

Equipment purchases from foreign nations should only be done where there is no question of a foreign manufacture/govenrment hidden or otherwise kill switch or limits on the use of the equipment by Ireland.

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

Irish based and flagged vessels can act as an adddtional "eyes and ears" while at sea, including tailored close boxed equipment being provided to these vessels that report directly to defence receivers. These shoudl include sonar detectors for submersiable activities.

The same concept could be applied to sea infrastructures such as future offshore wind farm and undersea cables.

Implementation of detection platforms/equipment can improve Irealands security but where possible should also be leveragesd to offer Irish marine scientists rich data on our sea and subseascape where possible

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

The strategy should allow for a large element of self reliance given the level of change on geopolitical landscape. There should be redundancy in the systems so key elements cannot be easily neutralised by an aggressor.

Equipment purchases from foreign nations should only be done where there is no question of a foreign manufacturer/govenrment hidden or otherwise kill switch or limits on the use of the equipment by Ireland.

Building in self reliance should not preclude Ireland from cooperating internationally with our neighbouring countries and the EU.

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 key element that should not be overlooked is as the strategy is being put in place there should be a continuing annual review of new availble technology.
As an example while stealth unmanned drones are only in development now, in 15 years they may be affordable and relatively easy to apply in the field of operations. The application of a strategy now should not preclude the introduction of new technology until the next strategic review.

Another key element is that the action plan should cover how different Irish government agencies can operate effectively together through clear procedures, training and chain of command.

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 key concern is that the strategy considers the newly available relatively cheap technology that can allow a small country have serious monitoring and detection capalabilites as well as allow for an effective deterrence on larger and extremely expensive legacy platforms. A strategy that does not take on the lessons from the conflict in the Black Sea will not be effective.

My comments have mainly referenced maritime and land based platforms but the strategy needs to consider what role the airforce will play in particualr with reagard to monitoring, attack and defence capabilities.

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

The biggest threat to irelands maritime security is successive irish government's who have refused to take it seriously. The first & core responsibility of government is national security but ireland is an outlier as it refuses point blank to discharge its responsibility to our nation.
The 2nd major threat is from imperial Russia who currently is waging war in Europe & attacking infrastructure all over Europe.
The 3rd major threat is from organised crime who use our waters for importation of drugs,people trafficking & may be in league with hostile states

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

Russian imperialism targeting our infrastructure or infrastructure emanating elsewhere but passing close to us. We need ships,radar,air capacity & a career structure for personell recruitment & retention so that we know who the fuck is in our waters & what the fuck are they up to?

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Focus on infrastructure areas but we need whole area monitored & protected.

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 & all communications technologies together with ships & air support.
All in partnership with UK,eu,nato!

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,public monopolies don't provide the best services so partnership & outsourcing should all be part of the mix?

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,all of the above & especially eu,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

A strategy without an action plan is just wishful thinking.
Key elements of actio plan:
Security context & threats,
Strategic actions & timeframes,partnerships & resources,
Monitoring & evaluation,

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

Just do it!

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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

The undersea cables are vulnerable

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 to prepare for incursion from Russia in a hybrid war.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The Western seaboard and the Northern seaboard

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

3000 character(s) maximum

There are technical solutions to damaged undersea cables. The best way is to ensure that there is significant spare capacity and alternative routes. We also need effective maritime fleets

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. This should be a State initiative

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

Maximum cooperation with EU including building a new harbour to birth foreign warships

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

Make a budget. Buy second hand ships. Pay the naval officers a decent wage to retain. Join in joint military exercises with the EU. Be prepared to partner with an EU navy.

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've done reasonably well on a shoe string budget. The world is a very different place now.Time to play our part

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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

Our sub sea infrastructure including inter connectors and fibre optic cables is my primary concern.

Our lack of interdiction ability.

Our lack of situational awareness of our EEZ

The proven desire of international drug trafficking gangs to use this jurisdiction to land drugs from South America and our minimal ability to do anything about it

The use by hostile states to use our area of responsibility for potential hybrid warfare

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 use of our maritime environment by hostile actors to engage in hybrid warfare against our allies or indeed the state.

The increased use of our maritime environment to land drugs destined for the continent given the huge quantities involved

Increased situational awareness would benefit everyone. The increased use of drones both maritime, aerial and even static sun sea monitoring devices must be considered.

The role out of sonar and actual sub sea self defence capabilities. There is no point in having one and not the other

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No I don't believe so. It needs to be an all encompassing policy

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Sonar

Sub sea self defence capabilities
Maritime and aerial drones capable of extended periods of monitoring specific areas of interest.

The consideration of static sub sea monitoring both covert and indeed overt as a deterrent and indeed as an intel monitoring ability.

Better equipped Navy and Air Corps

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

In the same way private security are hired by land based to prevent unwanted access to sites on land prior to engaging An Garda Síochána for example, there is nothing to deter similar happening in a marine environment. Such an arrangement is in everyone's interest. It could be as simple as allowing state assists access to "private" infrastructure.

Installation of CCTV, monitoring devises etc on private property

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 be completely based on increased cooperation with key partners and allies

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

Timelines and cost

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

None

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

The main treat to our security is the fact that we do not have the following:
1. Long range radar:
A. Unable to monitor, track and identify vessels or aircraft within our EEZ, Territorial Waters or Airspace.
B. Protect our national interests within our EEZ.
C. Identify any suspect vessels that have an interest in investigating the seabed within our EEZ.
D. No practical ability to protect national assets like gas or HDVC interconnectors from interference by bad actors or third parties and states.

2. Non-availability of Naval Assets:
A. Not having the ability to deploy the full resources of the Naval Service Assets etc.
B. Not having enough staff or service personal to deploy and operate these vessels.
C. Not having enough specialist teams to operate self-protection mechanisms and in some cases deploying vessels without the ability to defend the vessel or to project the states national interest within the EEZ.
D. Not being able to protect, investigate or prosecute the laws of the state upon the EEZ or territorial waters.
E. Unable to apply the state and EU/UN laws around fishing, fishing quotas or over fishing etc.

3. Access to European waters.
A. Ireland, being on the fringes of Europe has a state and international responsibility to protect and monitor access to European waters and the EEZ.
B. The state leaving these protection responsibilities to the UK, France and Spain. We are becoming a third world country with respect to Defence and Security.

4. Responsibility for state protection.
A. The failure of successive Governments, Persons Responsible or Ministers to take Security as a main article to protect Ireland from all forms of attack both physical or Cyber.

5. Lack of willingness to maintain a working Navy or Maritime Force by the last few Governments or by the the persons responsible so as to protect 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

I believe the following to be the future challenges and threats to maritime security.

1. Protection of the fishing grounds and applying Irish, EU and UN law.

2. Physical aggressive attack on the gas or HVDC interconnects between Ireland and the UK/Europe.

3. Third parties, bad state actors and malignant forces interfering with the subsea communication cables that connect Ireland or transverse Irish waters.

4. The inability to act as high seas police force in identifying, tracking and interdicting with rogue parties dealing with drugs and other issues that would have a direct impact on Irish and EU law and also affect its citizens etc. [Recent interaction with international and state agencies in stopping a recent transportation and drug supply network is a rare success, but professional actioned].

5. The inability of the Irish Naval Forces to protect the national interests.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The new maritime strategy should be one that has the ability to accomplish the following.

1. Deploy a full capability of Naval Vessels and personal and services to protect the state, laws [Irish, EU/UN] and national fishing grounds and to stop unlawful transportation of illegal substances.

2. Have the ability to support UN requests to supply both vessels and personal for UN Peace Keeping and Peace restoration projects/mandates.

3. To project a naval and security presence across the EEZ in support of state protection/laws, Fishing conformance and search and rescue.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe that the first priority for the provision of a full capable naval force is as follows;

A. Having a fully resourced and trained naval personal force capable of carrying out the service requirements of the naval service.

B. Having the next generation in maritime equipment so that the ability of the naval service to project its presence and also carry out the required protection duties of the state [which are not possible at the moment].

C. As above invest in manpower building to required levels of qualified personal, the purchase and deployment of equipment that will have the capability to meet the present and future demands required to project its presence and to protect the state.

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

Technically no, but in times of extreme necessity the need to require private enterprise will need to be carried out.

A. But at present the Naval Services could use private submarine cable owners and submarine cable deployment companies to assist the naval serves when there is a requirement [Example is the recovery of the black boxes from Air France Flight 447 in 2009 when the Brazilian naval services did not have the capability].

B. The ability to work closely with the RNLI, Coast Guard and State Agencies in the requirements and needs undergoing SAR missions.

C. To have a good working relationship with the fishing industry so that these private vessels could assist the Naval Service and Dept of Marine with issues around suspicion of vessels, submersibles and bad actors etc.

D. To work closely with national and international maritime companies in information sharing and intelligence gathering.

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 project our naval presence within the EEZ as an acknowledgement that we are members of the European shield of protection, partnership for peace within the parameters of NATO and the joint European Naval forces.

We should work closely with our European neighbours in protecting the national and international waters of the EU and the UK.

We should be an example to other world non-aligned naval services in how we can be part of a joint protection partnership but yet be unaligned with any military partnership [NATO] with exception to European military strategy, which we should be a example of professionalism.

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 national maritime strategy does need an action plan, but it also needs commitment from the Department of Defence, Governments and persons responsible.

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

At present no, but I do think that with the publicity surrounding submarine cable technology and underwater assets, the many ministers stating that the state has a responsibility for submarine cables etc.

In my own professional opinion, I think this is misguided. Ever since the first submarine cable of 1850 there has been no state intervention in the protection of submarine cables. In fact during my many repairs of submarine cables, to get the Naval Services to assist in identifying the aggressive or accidental actors has been nearly impossible with refusal of any assistance.

I have had more assistance from the UK Coast Guard and Naval Services compared do the Irish Naval Services who have refused to help and in two instances where I had brought two bad actors to court over damage to submarine cables [one in Irish waters and one in UK waters] the UK naval services did supply assistance but the Irish refused. We won both cases. But this needs to change. To have a professional and cooperative nature the Naval Service needs to take every request for assistance on merit. With many Ministers stating the responsibility of the state to protect cables but the Department of Defence refusing to assist in in contradiction.

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C1. Cad iad na bagairtí nó an leochaileacht is suntasaí faoi láthair do shlándáil mhuirí na hÉireann, dar leat?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

1. Gníomhaíocht mhíleata na Rúise/Cumhachtaí Idirnáisiúinta éagsúla in uiscí na hÉireann
2. Sábháilteacht agus slándáil chablaí fobhuí
3. Tubaiste timpeallachta ó thaisme, m.sh. doirteadh ola
4. Smuigleáil drugaí, airm agus daoine
5. Brexit agus teorainn mhuirí na hÉireann/an RA
6. Sciúradh airgid trí ghníomhaíochtaí muirí
7. Gníomhaíochtaí spiaireachta ar an bhfarraige
8. Iascaireacht neamhdhleathach
9. Athrú aeráide agus ardú leibhéal na farraige
10. Easpa acmhainní cosanta cósta agus cabhlaigh
11. Gníomhaíochtaí sceimhlitheoireachta féideartha
12. Cur isteach ar an trácht muirí agus calafortach
13. Bagairt ó chibearionsaithe ar chórais loingseoireachta
14. Tionchar idirnáisiúnta ó choinbhleachtaí domhanda (mar shampla. Suez & Panama Canálacha, Murascaill na hÓmaine)
15. Gabháil neamhdhleathach ar longa nó gníomhaíochtaí píoráideachta

C2. Cad iad na bagairtí/na dúshláin is mó a bheidh ag teacht chun cinn do shlándáil mhuirí na hÉireann amach anseo, dar leat, agus cad é an dóigh is fearr le bheith réidh ina leith, dar leat?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

1. Cur isteach ó chibearionsaithe ar chórais loingseoireachta agus calafoirt
2. Gníomhaíocht mhíleata eachtrach méadaithe i gcrios muirí na hÉireann
3. Téamh domhanda agus drochaimsir níos minice
4. Méadú ar fhuinneamh amach ón gcósta (e.g. tuirbíní gaoithe)
5. Teorainneacha míshainithe ar chriosanna eacnamaíocha
6. Spiaireacht agus cur isteach ar cháblaí fobhuí
7. Smuigleáil agus gáinneáil níos sofaisticiúla
8. Easpa acmhainní i gcosaint mhuirí na hÉireann
9. Athrú i ndlíthe AE/náisiúnta a bhaineann le muir
10. Athrú sna patrúin trádála agus bagairt ar shlabhra soláthair
11. Coiriúileacht ó hoibreothrí agus marnéilig sna muir Eireannach agus gar do nar muireanna.

le hUllmhú dóibh súid thuas;

1. Infheistiú i gcabhlach nua-aimseartha agus teicneolaíocht mhuirí
2. Láidriú na gcóras cibearshlándála mhuirí
3. Comhoibriú níos dlúithe le hinstitiúidí idirnáisiúnta (AE, International Maritime Organization (IMO)
United Nations (UN)
UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
International Seabed Authority (ISA)
International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)
Interpol
World Customs Organization (WCO)
International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Whaling Commission (IWC) European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)
European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency)
Europol
European Defence Agency (EDA) EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR)
European Space Agency (ESA) North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)
Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N)
Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP))

C3. Ar cheart don Straitéis tosaíocht a dhéanamh de dhíriú ar limistéir gheografacha faoi leith i réimse muirí na hÉireann?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

ba cheart

C4. Chun leasanna muirí na hÉireann a chosaint ar an mbealach is éifeachtaí, cad iad na hinfheistíochtaí straitéiseacha sa teicneolaíocht, i mbonneagar nó in acmhainní ar cheart tosaíocht a dhéanamh dóibh?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

thuile mbáid de na forsaí chosaint a bheith againn

C5. Ar cheart go mbeadh baint ag an earnáil phríobháideach, i gcás úinéirí nó oibreoirí bonneagar muirí ríthábhachtach, leis an Straitéis Náisiúnta Slándála Muirí? Cén ról a bheadh acu?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

níl ceart.

C6. Cén ról a cheapann tú ba cheart a bheith ag comhar idirnáisiúnta sa Straitéis Náisiúnta Slándála Muirí nua? Ar cheart a chuimsiú sa chomhar méadaithe sin fócas ar ár gcomhpháirtithe san AE, le tíortha máguaird agus tríd an gClár Comhpháirtíochta atá Saincheaptha ar bhonn Indibhidiúil atá againn le NATO nó le heagraíochtaí muirí idirnáisiúnta eile?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

AE amháin agus pe dream eile tar eis reifreann nó dlí a gceadíonn don rialtas dul i ngleic leo.

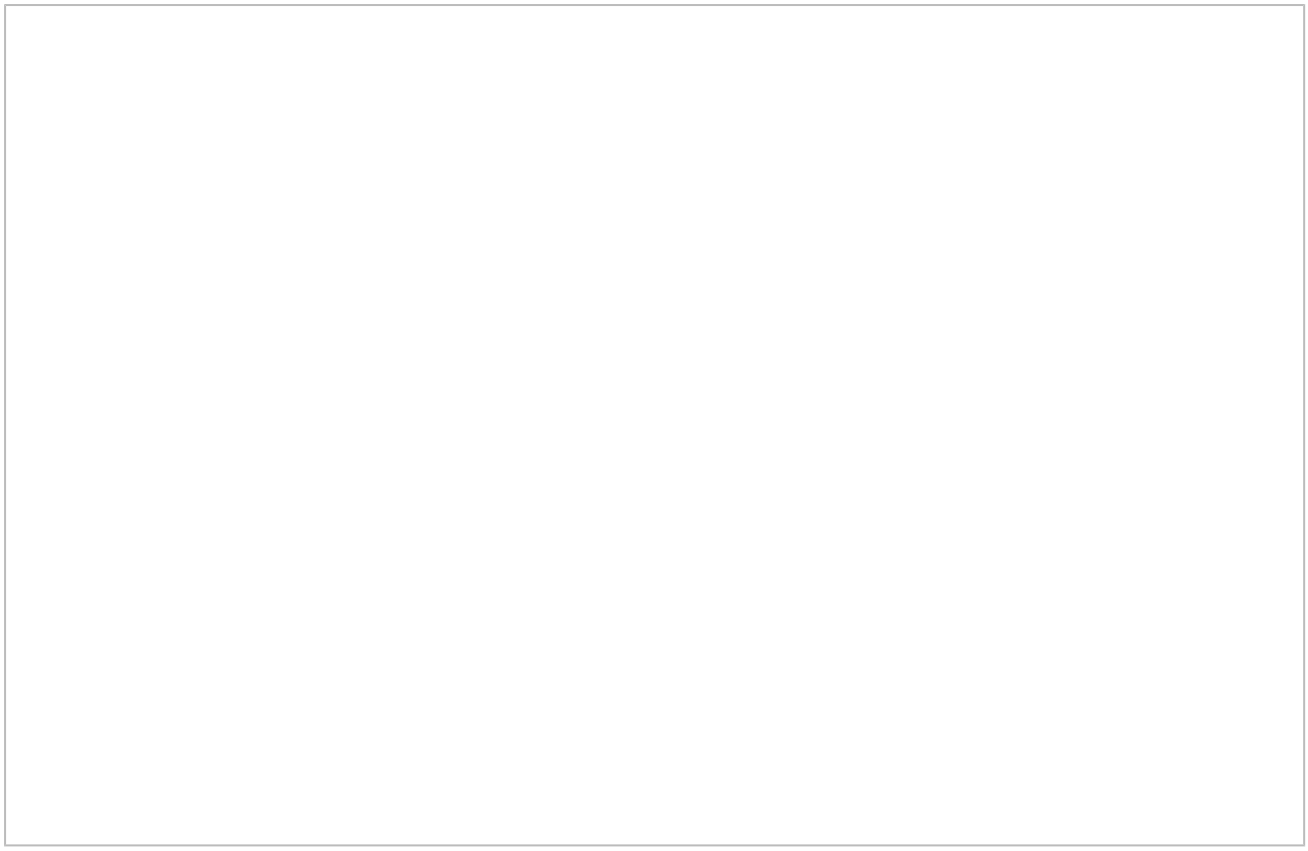
C7. An gceapann tú gur cheart Plean Gníomhaíochta a bheith ag gabháil leis an Straitéis Náisiúnta Slándála Muirí ina sonrófar an dóigh a gcuirfear an straitéis i bhfeidhm? Cad iad na príomhghnéithe ba cheart a bheith sa Phlean Gníomhaíochta sin, dar leat?

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000

n/a

C8. Má tá aon rud breise ba mhaith leat a mholadh nó má tá aon smaointe ginearálta agat maidir le slándáil mhuirí, iarrtar ort iad a chur in iúl dúinn.

an líon seo carachtar ar a mhéad: 3000



An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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 hostile actors seeking to strike at others through us and indeed directly at our country and its maratime infrastructure whether to provide a distraction while other action is taken or simply to degrade this country's or others abilities to enjoy freedom and prosperity

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

Surface and sub surface military threats together with our territorial waters being used to transship drugs or contraband. The naval service should be equipped with modern equipment and systems and modern technology to enable it to resist such threats together with an aggressive recruitment drive

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The state should be able to exert full control over all its maritime domain and this should be the priority and not a partial commitment

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Air assets able to adequately deal with surface and subsurface threats should be procured. These should be both fixed, rotary and drone. A core, perhaps three or four of the vessels currently in service should be upgraded to allow them to pursue all threats and importantly be equipped with modern self defence systems to enable them to operate in hostile environments. If they cannot be so upgraded they should be replaced by more capable vessels. The remaining vessels should remain in service to deal with lower grade threats but should be upgraded to handle such. There should be an emphasis on procuring the best systems available and not the cheapest. More use of unmanned systems or drones to carry out missions rather than more costly vessels should be looked into…. Air, surface and subsurface. Shore facilities should be upgraded and hardened and dispersed with defences against airborne threats in particular. Air assets should be able to engage hostile air, surface and subsurface actors

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. Further the private sector should be canvassed for proposals for equipment and software solutions for the naval service. Owners of critical structures should be levied with a contribution towards their defence and their comments and advices sought as how such defence could be facilitated

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

There should be cooperation with all states and organisations that share our country’s values and interests and who are placed to cooperate with us in return

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 key element is urgency

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

Our general and maritime security needs to attended to with far more seriousness and urgency than heretofore

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

I would say there are two big strategic threats to our maritime security. First, is the lack of accurate real-time intelligence available to Irish policy makers and military leadership about what is really happing in our territorial waters and EEZ area. What our undersea terrain and subsea infrastructure and marine assets looks like and how important they are. This is because of sustained underinvestment in both the Irish Naval Service ("INS") personnel and in its fleet and equipment. This is not just the fault of politicians and civil servants. This is a national failing by Irish society as a whole, based on our reluctance to engage in discussion on defence for fear of getting bogged down in arguments about the civil war, how our main political party system evolved or the troubles. But the last 20 years had provided an opportunity to move on from this. Irish governments need to mainstream sustained long-term resource planning for maritime security in national development plans and budgets.

The second is the failure to develop a proper national conversation amongst the Irish public and political establishment of the need to take, and fund, maritime security seriously. Over the last 50 years public consideration of our defence/security needs have been limited to the need to combat domestic risks from republican and loyalist terrorism (such as aid to civil powers in protecting cash-in-transit, or bomb disposal) or questions around Ireland's neutrality and role in peace keeping. However, the last 10 years have demonstrated the growing risk we face from serious organised crime groups, drugs, and smugglers using our maritime space to access Ireland and the EU. Also, the shifting global geopolitical landscape has exposed our weaknesses to bad state actors looking to influence public opinion or destabilise our economy or that of the EU. The primary focus recently has been on Russia. But we must be alive to other states who would seek to influence Ireland by operating in 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

I recall reading a quote more than 30 years ago in relation to our agrifood potential that “if grass were oil, Ireland would be Saudi Arabia”. I cannot recall who said it. But if the 20th century was grounded in the struggle for control of hydrocarbons, the 21st century will be focussed on the struggle for control of data. I believe Ireland’s maritime environment will become a front line in this struggle. At present 20% of all data centres in the EU are located here. This will grow in the coming years. Tens of billions of Euro’s worth of data in terms of personal, commercial, financial and government data passes through our maritime space every day. It is the digital equivalent of having the Panama and Suez canals passing through Ireland. In October 2025 the ECB may move forward with the development of a digital Euro currency. Our undersea cable infrastructure will, quite literally, become the new cash-in-transit network. It is vital that the INS is capable of monitoring and policing this space. Depending on other states, even friendly ones, is effectively taking control of critical Irish economic, foreign and security policy out of the hands of the Irish state and into the hands of other states who will, understandably, act in their best interest in our maritime area.

We face the growing threat of marine-based cyberattacks or electronic espionage hosted by on-surface /subsurface platforms against us, or vital commercial interests based here. This is the ‘soft underbelly of the EU’ argument. Policing and defending this space can only effectively be carried out by a modern well-equipped navy.

Impact of climate change on Ireland’s maritime security environment is also growing. Firstly, changes to aquatic life because of warming oceans may increase the number of states looking to fish in Irish waters. Enforcing the Common Fisheries Policy and protecting the Irish fishing fleet will be a challenge. Secondly, the opening of artic seaways presents a great powers competition scenario on our doorstep. Twenty years ago, it would have seemed laughable that states like PR China, or North Korea would look to project maritime power in the north Atlantic. But if you wish to intimidate the EU or influence which member states we admit, then one option is to focus political attention on a small EU members state that can’t police its own maritime territory. Thirdly, In the next 50 years a majority of Ireland’s installed electricity generating capacity will move offshore. The undersea electricity infrastructure which connects this to the Irish grid, or the connectors we use to export power abroad will all be exposed to a lack of protection if we cannot monitor and protect them. As we move away from fossil fuels to all-electric means for heating and transport, the impact to the economy and public confidence in the integrity of the state and those who lead and protect it will depend on ensuring our offshore energy sector is secure and protected from attack.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think various geographical areas each have their own challenges, and any maritime security strategy needs to address each of these in turn. Our civilian port infrastructure such as Dublin, Rosslare, Cork, Foynes etc. need to be protected, especially as our offshore renewables sector expands. Our maritime security strategy needs to begin before you get to the foreshore. The economic cost of the damage to Holyhead Port from Storm Eowyn in January 2025 shows just how critical our port infrastructure is now. This will become a growing concern in the coming decades.

If a foreign power wished to influence or intimidate us, why expend large resources in a complex attack against deep undersea infrastructure, when you could achieve a major impact with a hybrid/drone attack on a port like Rosslare or Foynes? This may not be as farfetched as many believe. Look at the recent bomb attempts at Aughinish island, or the recent conviction in the UK of petty criminals who were contracted by the Wagner Group to carry out arson attacks on Ukrainian owned businesses in the south of England. Hybrid digitally enabled warfare or terrorism is a reality here and now. You don't need 'embedded operators' like a cold war spy novel. All you need is greedy people willing to carry out attacks for money, connected via social media and with basic knowledge of how to build a pipe bomb or set a fire. So, our inshore and port security is a vital area.
The strategy will need to protect fishing, shipping and infrastructure in the deep Atlantic waters of the EEZ. This will require the use of fully crewed modern naval vessels on routine patrol in the Atlantic. These vessels will need to be integrated with other assets like underwater drone/sonar monitoring systems and maritime aerial surveillance.

Protection of the Irish Sea and the shipping that passes through it is also vital. Not only is it now an external maritime border of the EU, it is also Irelands most vital route for freight and passenger transport. The State and the INS has to be able to monitor and police what is passing over, and under the Irish sea. We will have an ever-growing infrastructure of data cables, offshore power generation and power cables, electricity interconnectors which all need to be monitored and protected. Finally, while people smuggling and small boat crossings are not yet a feature of the Irish Sea/Celtic Sea, they may become so. NW Brittany to the south coast of Ireland is about the same crossing distance as Libya to mainland Italy. 20 years ago, there were few small boat crossings from France to the UK. Today it is a major political issue in the UK. And it is used as a dog whistle for the far right in Ireland. Just look at the disgraceful Moygashel bonfire incident in east Tyrone this month. We must be able to effectively police the Celtic sea/Irish sea to dissuade people smugglers from trying this as a softer route/back door into the UK, thereby risking the Common Travel Area.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

It is unrealistic to expect a country like Ireland to have a crewed submarine force. But we must invest in tactical and reconnaissance undersea autonomous vehicles which can gather intelligence and, if needed, be capable of engaging in combat operations, either by deploying weapons or countering electronic warfare. We also need to invest in modern sonar systems to monitor all of Ireland's territorial waters and/or a major part of our EEZ. This will probably need to include costal sonar, as well as some sort of patrol capacity using a mix of surface fleet vessels and undersea drones.

Ariel reconnaissance of Ireland's EEZ should also not solely be left to the Air Corps. The Naval Service should also play a vital role in this. The Ukraine/Russia war has shown how UAV/Drone technology has advanced in terms of command and control, intelligence gathering and battlefield operations, not to mention ariel attack. Interoperability between the Army, Air Corps, Naval Service, Garda other agencies in terms of technological development, procurement and cooperation is vital.

Having all of Ireland's strategic maritime naval assets located in naval HQ in Haulbowline, while understandable and cost effective, is also a potential risk. Any incident in Cork harbour (accidental or intentional) could act to restrict access to the open sea, at least for a period of time. It also makes Haulbowline a possible target. I think the State needs to look at developing at least one or two other medium-size naval base /port facilities. One on the east coast near Dublin with quick access to the Irish Sea. The other on the western seaboard (such as near Shannon/Foynes, or Sligo or Lough Swilley), as this is where the bulk of our offshore power infrastructure will be located.

A conventional domestic defence industry in Ireland is neither a realistic prospect, nor would it be politically acceptable to the Irish people. As COVID-19 showed, we do need a basic minimum of domestically based and owned capacity in critical areas. I cannot see in my lifetime the State would abandon neutrality and join a military alliance. So, we should look to strategically invest in Irish tech start ups or companies which can co-design and develop both the hardware and software needed for maritime security, either for ships/surface vessels, or ariel and underwater UAV/drone capacity. For decades Sweden pursued the development of a domestic defence capacity of its own (as it was a neutral state). Growing uncertainty in global trade and tariffs means it will be more expensive to procure systems, even as part of a wider shared EU-procurement system. We should develop a strategic landscape of joining up the Defence Forces, with Irish academic and research, hardware and software development and manufacture to ensure a basic minimum capacity under the control of the Irish State. This could also provide longer term value for money as opposed to relying solely on foreign procurement.

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 I outlined in response to Q4, we need a mix of public and private sector stakeholders to deliver a fit-for-purpose maritime security. The decision to move to Level of Ambition 2, and eventually L of A 1 will see a major increase in public funding for defence. The State should look to develop Irish-based public/private sector partnerships which could lever this spending to develop and grow an Irish defence support sector. This would keep the value of that spending in the domestic Irish economy and ensures a sustainable Irish-focused SME tech/manufacturing sector delivering high value/high tech jobs in Ireland.
The weakest link in any defence strategy is human weakness. Ireland, as a state, has struggled to date with civilian vetting capacity in the public sector. Introducing private sector involvement in aspects of national defence comes with risks. The capacity of our civilian and military justice, security and intelligence systems needs to grow to meet the threat of espionage or blackmail against civilian staff involved in any support activities, such as contract maintenance, data analysis etc. Of course, this is also true for members of the defence forces. Private sector contractors many of which may be employed by Irish subsidiaries of larger overseas contractors, will need to be carefully managed. As a small nation, private sector involvement in support and contractual services for the defence forces is inevitable. We must be careful to avoid developing an overreliance on the private sector for direct defence capacity. We should look to ensure defence policy and staff are not overly influenced by a commercial sector. Where key decision makers in the civil service or defence forces are affected by the lure of higher-paying private sector jobs in return for influence in procurement or defence decisions. Irish military operations overseas should not have to solely depend on commercial shipping or support arrangements, or 'friendly' naval forces. The Naval service should at least have the capacity to respond to a need to deploy/remove or supply our own troops serving overseas.
Rather than relying only on the for-profit private sector to support our maritime security capacity, we should also look to a partnership model with networks within Ireland. A glimpse of how such a partnership might work was demonstrated in the national response to the loss of Coast Guard Rescue 116 in March 2017. The military, civilian and community response to this tragedy showed Ireland at its best. The role our fishing community played in the 2022 Russian Navy exercise controversy off our southwest coast also shows how our small country can draw on all its 'assets' to effectively deliver Irish defence or foreign policy. So, consideration should be given to the development of a coordinated Irish maritime security partnership across sectors like the fishing fleet sector, Irish merchant shipping, the RNLI, the Comm. of Irish Lights, coastal communities 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

For a small nation with a high value economy, proportionally, Ireland has to cooperate with international partners on maritime security. But this is where the practicality of the needs of Ireland's large maritime zone intersects directly with the political reality of geopolitics and public opinion. Since 1945, Ireland's defence strategy has depended on four elements as I see it. All of these are now in a state of flux!
Firstly, the international rules-based order fostered under the UN and its Security Council is likely to come under further pressure in the decades ahead as the retrenchment to purely national self-interest we've seen from the USA, following the lead of PR China, and Russia continues. This must cast a degree of doubt on such states likelihood to respect maritime law or WMO when it comes to Ireland's seas. This fact alone means Ireland need' s, in the first instance, to look to itself for its maritime security.

Secondly, Ireland has passively lived in the slipstream of the NATO defence umbrella, being surrounded by friendly maritime NATO forces on all sides (USA, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, UK, France etc.). But as the last six months have shown, there is currently doubt on whether Article 5 of the NATO treaty would be honoured in full. How reliable then would an increased reliance on a partnership founded through the medium of NATO be for Ireland. Any further official cooperation with NATO would also meet increased public resistance in Ireland and risk damaging any attempt to get the population to take our national defence seriously. It will play into the strategy of those voices who want to make the only national conversation about neutrality. This risks repeating the mistake of confusing military neutrality with defencelessness.

Thirdly, while we will always need a good cooperative relationship with the UK/Royal Navy, as our nearest neighbour, the Anglo-Irish relationship is open to many risks in which our maritime security could become a pawn. The current UK and Irish governments have rebuilt good relations from the nadir of Brexit. But we must be alive to the fact that this could quickly change. There is a realistic possibility that an overtly nationalistic/anti EU led government may come to power in London before the end of the decade. Issues like Rockall, the so-called "EU/UK border down the Irish Sea", fishing disputes etc. could all flare up again.

Fourthly, while there are also pressures and risks within the EU, not least from the election of hard right/hard left forces, I believe continued cooperation with our EU partners in the first instance, is the best approach to cooperation. This coupled with a friendlier and more cooperative relationship with the Royal Navy based on mutual respect and trust, albeit with a recognition Ireland can't be 'bullied' in its waters as it can deploy a meaningful naval deterrent, could ensure any maritime partnerships survive short term political conflict.

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 plan is vital. The question is how should it be drawn up and monitored? Who judges it's on track or needs adjustment? Now such a plan would be monitored by the Sec Gen of the Department and the Chief of Staff and the Min. for Defence. And of course, the Government and the Houses of the Oireachtas (through the Joint Cttee on Defence and National Security, and the C&AG and Public Accounts Committee) will all exercise oversight and review. That is true for almost all of the public service. Yet, all of this has not averted the crisis that has become the National Children's Hospital, or A&E trolley counts or annual housing unit delivery. And all of those are in sectors where the Irish public do not question the need for taxpayer money to be spent.
At present Defence is the one area there are no votes in, to quote an Irish political idiom. So, there may only be one chance to get this right from a political point of view.

I would look to the infrastructure the state put in place after the banking collapse of 2008 and the IMF bailout. We now have the Central Bank, the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council and the ESRI all providing quality analysis of Irish fiscal and economic policy. The Government of the day may not always welcome this in the immediacy of the moment, but in the medium to long term they (along with international partners) are vital in ensuring short term policy corrections avoid long term disaster. I question where the similar respected independent voices on defence are in Ireland? If this is the Department's action plan, then it will just further entrench the Dept of Defensiveness mentality which has hampered policy development in this area in the past. Is there an Irish equivalent to RUSI in the UK, or the Atlantic Council in the US?

What we need to develop is a broad-based defence forum in Ireland that draws on many strands of public life and is seen as much as a critical friend by the civilian and military leadership, as it is a critic.
A plan must do four things clearly. 1: it must realistically link multi-year expenditure and procurement with the delivery of the maritime strategy and reform and development of the naval service. 2: It must ensure the zipper-effect is met in terms of marrying No 1 with enough current and newly qualified trained naval personnel to allow the plan to deliver. 3: it must have built in mechanisms for meaningful review and consultation with a wide community of interested stakeholders. This is more than just the Dept of Defence, senior military leadership, PDFORA & RACO and the Dept of Public Expenditure. It should include the wider public, private, academic and community sector across Ireland. Expanding naval spending will impact local communities too. 4: it must foster a wider common sense of ownership and engagement with the defence forces and our maritime environment. If the INS is as a custodian and supporter of our maritime communities, there will be much more support for delivery of any 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 expansion of the Naval Service should also be seen as a vital opportunity for the soft power projection of Irish foreign and defence policy. This should be one of the key objectives of an enhanced naval service. I know first hand the high regard in which Ireland; its military and diplomatic service are held by many countries. As our old reliable cultural anchors fade (an ageing Irish cultural community in the UK and USA, increased strains in the EU), the benefit of a long range Irish naval visiting presence would be an asset. Take the Taoiseach's recent visit to Japan. Would the Naval Service at present be able to support such a visit, by say having a vessel visit Tokyo?

The whole of the defence forces must be made a more attractive job opportunity to young people, especially women. The Service should look to offer more flexibility; providing people with a 5 – 7 year career opportunity where they learn skills and work on equipment they can't get anywhere else in Ireland. This is especially true for onshore naval staff with high level qualifications in IT software development, artificial intelligence development or technical manufacturing. Further and Higher education delivering a pipeline of skilled graduates who could work in the military and then progress to equally skilled civilian jobs in construction or transport engineering, would build the workforce Ireland need for the next 50 years of development. We should also look to recruit from newly arrived communities, thereby allowing them to show their commitment to the State. Bring new skills and culture and counter false racist narratives. Will the strategy look to upskill languages and recruit them? Ireland's military must look like our country does today, not 50 years ago!
As a lay person even I can see the 2013 pension changes have been disastrous on retention and recruitment in the uniformed services, inc. the navy. Why spend money on purchasing second hand vessels from NZ when we know we don't have the crew to put them to sea! This is infuriating and undermines public confidence in the Dept. of Defence and the military leadership.

Our denuded naval capacity makes Ireland's ability to respond to emergency marine situations and provide humanitarian aid almost impossible at present. Could we respond today to a '79 Fastnet Race disaster, or an ' 85 Air India disaster? If there were major volcanic activity affecting civilians in Iceland, or the Canary Islands, could Ireland provide naval assistance and support? Just now I doubt it.

Finally, we need to consider how will Irish vessels be powered into the future? Part of being able to project and enforce sovereign control over our own territory is the ability to put vessels to sea. How far into the 21st century can we rely on marine diesel-powered vessels? Is there a domestic sector in Ireland looking to develop cleaner cheaper alternatives? All of these issues need to be encompassed in a wider maritime strategy.

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

Geopolitical instability, climates change.

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

A breakdown in the international rules based order. This could lead to a scramble for resources/protectionism. Coupled with climate migration and lack of climate change readiness, our EEZ could become a strategic area for international players while we struggle to accommodate a growing, poorer population with a greater number of natural disasters. And our closest partners could be suffering likewise.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The entire EEZ presents potential opportunities for the country, but those opportunities are also potential targets. Any existing or future offshore wind installations would to be protected and readily accessible. Mineral resources and even future food production could rely on our maritime area. The entire EEZ should be viewed as national territory for the purpose of 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

We need a native arms design and manufacture industry. R & D needs to be supported to grow unmanned capabilities, given our low population. A permanent or semi permanent offshore presence is essential.

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

Essential. Their experience and personnel could significantly improve our ability to see potential threats /weaknesses and also to innovate.

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

All of the above, especially in the short term. However, we need to prepare for the contingency that those partners' resources are required elsewhere. A formal alliance would be ideal.

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

Essential. A military officer should be given control over its implementation and input from trusted partners should be welcomed. Crossover responsibilities with neighbours could be negotiated between militaries.
Key elements would include:
•A clear picture in real-time of the entire maritime area
•shared intelligence in order to identify suspected infractions
•Technological innovation (off the shelf & bespoke) with regards to our unique requirements
•Game-changing incentives to attract the best available minds into the maritime security space
•A new grand partnership between military and private sector/ civil society in order to normalise interaction with maritime security issues and encourage engagement.

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 can no longer believe we are bystanders on security. We need an overhaul of our self belief in order to become innovative leaders.

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

- Ireland cannot currently Defend itself. It takes all the domains of Land, Sea, Air and Cyber to defend our maritime space. The Defence forces requires significant monetary investment (2% of GDPR) and follow on procurement and training mechanisms to acquire the capability to Defend it.
- Unknown threats as we dont have ability to monitors subsurface and limited ability above surface.
- Threat of espionage from foreign forces.
- Threat to undersea cables from foreign forces.
- Threat of foreign forces using Ireland Economic sea area for Naval exercises combined with cyber disinformation campaign to sow discord and political embarassment.
- Use of Irelands maritime area to launch attack on snother country.
- Invasion or occupation of Irish territory by a foreign force.
- Growing environmental challenges due to global warming.

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 ques 2 addressed by investing in the Irish Defence Forces people and capabilities.
-Whole of Govt approach to planning and preparing for future threats.
- Investment in Ireland flood defences.
-By developing a Marine Infantry military capability, Ireland would have the capability of Defending its littoral. I would suggest the current Unit in Galway be prioritised to develop this capability. It is the only DF Infantry element with real estate in the littoral and adjacent to a commercial port.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

- Irelands mainland flood areas need to be prepared.
- Galways port investment to be sanctioned and developed, a Naval base with a Marine Infantry element in Galway.
- Dun Laoighre Naval Base plans advanced and developed.

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 service to be equipped with 2 x Frigate class vessels and 2 x Multi role vessels to be able to develop ability to defend our maritime domain.
-By developing a Marine Infantry military capability, Ireland would have the capability of Defending its littoral. I would suggest the current Unit in Galway be prioritised to develop this capability. It is the only DF Infantry element with real estate in the littoral and adjacent to a commercial port. This capability could be acquired within 2 years.
- Develop Irelands Space domain to monitor our vast maritime area in conjunction with European Space Agency.

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 limited and on case by case basis. Defence cannot be outsourced!
- Irish Private sector to work with DF to develop capabilities for the DF.
- Crucial that Irish companies involved in capability development due to economic benefit.

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 absolutely vital that we develop our ties and relationships with MAOC/EU/NATO. The issue is we have currently nothing to offer in return as we have no Defence capability. Our DF needs to be repostured to Defend Ireland including her maritime domain. Currently the NS are equipped for fishery protection and coastguard duties only.

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 strategy without an accompanying action plan with meaningful and achievable KPIs is not effective (Sláinte care???). There is also a requirement for the political vision and will to impldment. Key elements should be tied in with existing Commission on DF projects and expanded!

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

A maritime security strategy needs to be accompanied by a national security strategy thus ensuring a whole of Govt approach.

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

I would characterise the greatest threats to Ireland's maritime strategy as:
- Drug smuggling by undetected ships/submarines due to inadequate patrolling of our coast. This allows the sale of drugs to be more profitable and less risky for international gangs, which has an unacceptable cost in Irish lives ruined or hijacked by drug abuse, and empowered (and richer) gangs who can exert more control over the areas/countries they operate in.

- Illegal fishing and use of illegal fishing methods by vessels which deplete fish stocks and damage ecosystems, thus threatening the future viability of Ireland's fishing sector, and our countries ability to meet global goals on biodiversity and nature protection.

- Repeated unlawful intrusions in Ireland's maritime area by hostile foreign powers such as Russia, which cannot be countered effectively due to an understaffing crisis, a lack of resources, and missing equipment such as sonar.

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

I foresee the following as the greatest emerging threats/challenges to Ireland's maritime security:
- Understaffing crisis in our Navy which leaves us years away from having an experienced force, even if all staffing posts were filled tomorrow. The greatest vulnerability here is not being able to scale up our military if the need arises, and not being able to successfully implement action plans.
This can only be solved by offering a mix of better working conditions, better salaries, and better career prospects. All of the solutions here would have been extensively outlined in previous reports and white papers by knowledge organisations.

- Potential for highly profitable people snuggling and irregular migration through our unguarded seas, which may offset any progress the government makes against people snuggling and irregular migration through currently active channels.
The solution here must be to prepare for potential people smuggling and irregular migration through the seas by reviewing this as a plausible threat, scaling up cooperation with European and British authorities, and solving the Navy's staffing crisis as soon as possible.

- Potential for international gangs to begin to smuggle fentanyl into Ireland via established sea routes.
I believe that it is only a matter of time before illegal drugs that cause a higher risk of death are found in Ireland, as gangs push to increase the profitability of their operations. This would however have a devastating impact on human lives.
The only solution here is to crack down on established sea smuggling routes by implementing more thorough patrols, and use of sonar.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No, all of Ireland's maritime domain must be secured.
Perhaps in time, with an adequate number of regular patrols (supported with sonar), high risk geographical areas may be identified and prioritised.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I cannot answer to specific equipment or infrastructure that should be prioritised, but the staffing crisis must be overcome ahead of any new equipment.

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 absolutely. The private sector must have obligations to support the Irish Navy by providing detailed maps of any marine infrastructure, so that patrol routes can be designed around tracking the highest risk paths.

A working relationship with the private sector is also crucial from the point of view that far more private vessels sail on Irish waters than Irish Navy vessels, and so the private sector may be able to report suspicious activity and any tampering with infrastructure to the Irish authorities.

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 any opportunities for enhanced maritime cooperation and training should be embraced.
This is the only way to turn Ireland's navy into an organisation on-par with world leading militaries, including those Ireland is likely to have to plan to stand against.

Cooperation is also needed with Britain and France as no matter how strong a navy we have, we still must engage with these partner countries on activities and planning to ward off ever-complex threats.

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, absolutely. Any strategy must involve an action plan that breaks down goals into steps required to achieve them. Without this, any strategy is only wishful thinking.

The key elements of this action plan must be:
- The implementation of recommendations from previous reports around recruitment and retention issues.
- The purchase of state-of-the-art modern equipment for our Navy.
- Enhanced cooperation with partner countries on training and drills.
- A focus on areas of concern that the Navy will prepare against (illegal fishing, drug smuggling, unauthorized mapping of undersea infrastructure by foreign powers)
- The establishment of additional navy bases along our coast (this will also benefit staff retention as affordability will be less of a concern for employees based outside of Ireland's largest cities
- Concrete steps to enforce Ireland's marine protected areas.
- Commitment to engage with indigenous fishing and maritime industries to hear of suspected illegal activity by foreign vessels.

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 would like the Department of Defense, Ireland's Navy, amd union representatived to be fully engaged in the establishment of this strategy to ensure that all groups can move in a coherent direction in implementing this for the betterment of Ireland's security, Irish society, and the future for all on our island.

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

Our oceans are terribly polluted, from many sources.
1. Greenhouse gas emissions resulting in climate change. This is seriously affecting the life cycle of many fish and other marine species
2 Chemical pollution - for example persistent organic pollutants are found in species in the arctic. Oil spills have devastated marine life.
3. Radioactive sources - from nuclear accidents
4. Microplastics are all a threat to the health of all marine creatures.
5. Bottom trawling results in massive reduction in marine biodiversity
We need a coordinated global approach to address the state of the oceans - where life on Earth originated.

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 seas around Ireland are monitored by the Air Corps and the Naval ships.

Damage to underseas cables is relatively common. Most of these cables are in private ownership, and as such, responsibility for surveillance should not be in public hands.

Fear spreads easily, and fears of a Russia invasion seems contagious. There is absolutely no evidence that Russia intends to invade Ireland. If there were to be a target, it would most likely be Shannon airport which regularly services US military aircraft

The development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal and storage facility in
Shannon will be a fire and chemical hazard. T0

If Ireland's maritime security is at risk, we need a risk assessment to delineate both the hazards and the risks.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I do not understand why specific areas should be prioritized - the water in our seas knows no boundaries

The Government's intention to scale back its commitment to stand alone marine protection legislation, in favour of amending existing Marine Spatial Planning legislation, is a worrying development in the protection of Ireland' s seas.

Jack O'Donovan Trá, Marine Biologist and Communications Officer with Fair Seas said, "Ireland is already a laggard and outlier among its European colleagues in terms of its commitment to marine conservation and management, but stand alone MPA legislation would be the minimum commitment required by the Irish government to stand among the ranks of other nations showing true leadership in the management of our shared ocean. At the heart of a strong MPA Bill is the engagement and involvement of coastal communities and the fishing industry. Nobody knows better than the fishing industry that fish stocks are dwindling and catches are not what they once were. The effective conservation and management of our seas as envisaged by MPAs is a major part of the solution to these very real issues." reference https://fairseas.ie/2025/07/02/government_u-turn_on_mpa_law/

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 risk assessment of the threats to our marine systems as outlined in Question 1. The technology and infrastructure needed should be determined by the results of this assessment.

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

If the private sector, such as oil companies run critical undersea infrastructure, then they should be involved.

However, as the seas around Ireland are monitored by the Air Corps and the Naval ships, we must ensure that these are adequately resourced,

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 must of course collaborate with other countries in protecting our precious marine environment, and we must work on this issue with the United Nations Environment Programme

We should have nothing to do with NATO, which is an aggressive military force, and has been involved in illegal wars. It has an expansionist policy, which is in no small way, has contributed to the current war in Ukraine

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

The main threats have already been outlined in Q1
Therefore, the Action Plan should involve action to reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions , which are already too high. Ireland must also work with international organizations and Irish NGOs to address the issues of chemical pollution, radioactive source, and microplastics, all of which are all a threat to the health of all marine creatures.
Bottom trawling must be stopped.
An educational and awareness programme must be initiated for all those working in the above industries.

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 seems to be currently a high level of tension in world leaders, of a Russian "threat".
The real threat is climate change, loss of biodiversity and other types of pollution. Concentrating on military "threats" allows us to take our minds off these pressing issues. Ireland needs to concentrate on fulfilling its obligation under Article 29.2 of the constitution and to work as a peacemaker. The world is spending an obscene amount of money on arms - we do not need to support NATO and add to it,

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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

Malevolent actors (eg. Russia, the US, Israel) sabotaging our connectors and pipelines for gas etc. Overfishing of 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

See above. I haven't a clue as I'm not hugely knowledgeable about this area but I think we need to invest in our navy and in our technology in order to monitor our waters. We also need to focus on our relationships with neighbours as my understanding is that we would be hugely reliant on Britain in the event of attack.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No idea-wherever is most at risk (from overfishing or from attack of undersea cables etc)

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 to detect submarines or illegal fishing vessels. A huge investment in recruitment for our naval services

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

Don't know but maybe no harm?

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, build strategic partnerships with our 'friendly' neighbours in the EU!

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

Sure.

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

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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

One of the most significant current threat or vulnerability that [redacted] sees are the:

- Impacts to subsea infrastructure, including gas interconnections and telecoms
- Impacts to ports resulting in supply chain disruptions

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Protection of Ports and subsea infrastructure should be considered as one of the higher priority 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

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

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

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

The expansionist policies of Putin's Russia is a threat to Ireland, to the rest of the EU and to GB. We must, as both a neutral nation and a high-tech hub, be prepared not only to defend our maritime domain but also all that is included in it, e.g. data cables, gas/electricity interconnectors, windmills and fishery grounds. In order to do this effectively we need a properly equipped Naval Service and Air Corps.
As it would take quite a few years to acquire new ships for the Navy, we should upgrade the 4 x P60s and potentially 2 x P50s to corvette standard as an interim combat solution. This upgrade should include air defence radar, sonar and improvements to ships damage control. Additionally, the weapons systems need to be upgraded, e.g. 76mm gun upgraded with Strales and Vulcano, and upgrade to Super Rapid standard (or if this is not possible to German Navy standard). New weapons such as Sea Ceptor air defence missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes and antiship missiles should be fitted (probably in a 16, 4, 4 configuration potentially using the Danish Cube system).
For the Air Force the 2 x C295s need to be upgraded to full MPA standard (from the current MSA standard). Additionally, another one or two C295 MPAs should be added to the fleet. The Air Force also requires combat aircraft that can intercept threats and in extreme circumstances take action against air or sea 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

The Russian Navy, Air Force and Ambassador to Ireland have not tried to hide their contempt for Ireland and our chosen foreign policy route (including our neutrality). If we want to maintain our neutrality we will need a large increase in Defence expenditure, higher even than if we joined NATO. We must be able to track and intercept their Aircraft (to be clear nuclear bombers and long-range maritime attack aircraft), the surface vessels (corvettes, frigates, destroyers, cruisers and their so called "research" vessels). They think nothing of patrolling/exercising close to our territorial waters/airspace and inside our EEZ.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The whole of the island's maritime and air domain requires patrolling and defending. It is about time we started acting as a sovereign state, taking responsibility for our country and being willing to defend same.
Regarding Northern Ireland and the Irish Sea, we should discuss with the British how we can best handle their defences. I would propose that once we have equipped our forces that we offer to handle the air and littoral defence of NI of the Irish Sea. This would be in the UK's best interests as they have much more global responsibilities and this would reduce their need to worry about their western approaches allowing them to concentrate on North and Western Scotland, the North Sea, the English Channel and Southwest England. It should be stressed that nothing I mention here impacts sovereignty, it would be handled in a similar fashion to current agreement between the governments of the UK and Ireland regarding Irish air defence ("a nod and a wink" if necessary).

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Immediate upgrade to our OPV fleet (either 4 x P60s and 2 x P50s or just to the P60s) and to our 2 x C295 MSA aircraft (bringing them to MPA standard).
Immediate acquisition of Air defence/Maritime defence long range radar (including to possibility of buying /leasing say two mobile versions as an interim measure).
Addressing in a serious way the issue of staffing in the defence forces.
A shake up of the Department of Defence so as they become an enabler for the Defence Forces rather than a inhibitor to the DF. Additionally a immediate appointment of a fulltime Minister for Defence.

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

Of course, the owners/operators of critical maritime infrastructure must be involved as they are the experts in the infrastructure. However, it must be remembered that these are taxpayers and therefore have the right to expect the State to secure the infrastructure just as a private citizen has the right to expect that their home and country is protected and defended.

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

Whether we decide to remain neutral or not due to our geographic location we must liaise with our neighbours, both inside and outside of the EU. We do not want our roles overlapping as this would be wasteful. Additionally, due to the two jurisdictions on our island we must ensure that we are not working against one another.
Also, we are very far behind in defensive matters and have a lot to learn and there is no better teacher than 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

We must be careful that this does not become another plan put on the long finger, we cannot allow it to be like the report from the Commission on Defence, published in February 2022 and still little or no action taken.

Equipment Updates
Personnel issues
Political issues

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 must take defence seriously, we have to stop painting civilian equipment green and calling it military specification. This applies to all attitudes towards defence not just hardware.

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

Russia/China are a growing threat in the maritime sphere especially Information cables between Ireland and the US

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 interference on our Maritime Cables.We need proper patrollin with the best available Naval equipment and personnel capable of deterrring interference.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The whole Island should be patrolled 24/7 365 days a year .

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Sonar /Ships and radar and personnel sourced within Europe.

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

They play a pivotal role as innovators that can directly take feedback from mariners concerning technology innovation on ships.

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

100% cooperation is Key with Europe/Nato 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

Basically to reform and Update our Navy to a standard ready for the challenges of the future.No more neglect of any security services.

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

This need to be be implemented yesterday we are under serious threat from Russia at this time we have had long enough to prepare their can be no more delays in refining and modernising our Navy service.

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

[redacted] the period up to 2050 will see a potentially five-fold increase in the usage of Europe's maritime space by offshore installations for energy and food production. This rise in activity will bring with it increased risks to safety of navigation, pollution incident risk, increased demands on search and rescue services, and vulnerability to nefarious interference. Protection of strategic maritime interests, natural and other resources, and maritime infrastructure is fundamental to the sustainable development of a maritime economy and the meaningful assertion of sovereignty as a coastal state. These challenges are being addressed through the development by Government of Ireland's first Maritime Security Strategy in 2025. The major planned expansion of Ireland's offshore renewable energy sector, in particular, will lead to a significantly greater number of strategically, economically and environmentally important assets and critical national infrastructures off Ireland's coasts that must be protected from harm. If we meet our 2030 and 2050 renewable energy targets, Ireland also has the potential to become a major generator of clean energy for the European continent, raising further the risk of interference, damage or attack by rogue actors.

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

[redacted] in advance of the large-scale deployment of offshore renewable energy installations, there is an imperative to provide effective oversight and security of existing offshore assets, particularly those on the seabed such as energy pipelines, interconnectors, and power and telecommunications cables. Ireland's strategic position as a gateway from northern Europe to the Atlantic means that around three-quarters of all telecommunications cables in the northern hemisphere pass through or near Irish waters54. The associated security requirements also present legal and governance challenges, as subsea cables generally have shared ownership and are not the property of a single state. Monitoring the maritime domain – including the air, surface and subsea - is a critical enabler to provide government, state agencies and other organisations with data, knowledge and intelligence to support effective management and decision-making for maritime safety and security purposes. Our maritime space is already subject to substantial monitoring through operational programmes linked, for example, to weather and climate services; EU marine, water and nature directives; intergovernmental commitments such as OSPAR; and scientific programmes; but Ireland's capabilities in this area are currently fragmented and are operating in a governance, legal and regulatory environment that is unclear.

Addressing maritime threats and vulnerabilities through advanced data analytics, national and international cooperation, and enhancing advanced maritime situational awareness capabilities will be key areas for research, knowledge and innovation. Substantial opportunities exist, both for the state and for private sector actors, in the areas of maritime security, cybersecurity, advanced ocean technologies, offshore engineering, navigation technologies, data exchange and data analytics, metocean monitoring and forecasting, seabed and

coastal monitoring, and digital products and services. Ireland already holds extensive expertise in its technology sector. As of 2024, 16 of the top 20 global tech companies and the top three enterprise software providers are located in Ireland, as well as six of the top ten cybersecurity firms (2021). There is, therefore, an opportunity to leverage the value of these Irish-based technology companies and expertise to apply cutting edge technologies and advancements to multiple safety, surveillance and security challenges. Progress in meeting all of these challenges and opportunities should be supported by RKI (Research, Knowledge and Innovation) across these technical and engineering domains but also in the natural sciences, climate science, ocean policy and governance, marine/environmental economics, social sciences and humanities.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

N/A

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] through the stakeholders, identified the following Research, Knowledge and Innovation Priority Areas:

Response to cyber and hybrid threats to offshore and coastal infrastructures Assessments of and response options to cyber and hybrid threats to offshore and coastal infrastructures, essential safety infrastructure and assets to ensure safe navigation, to inform prevention and emergency response planning. Assessment of threats and response options for the protection of critical national and underwater infrastructure to act as a deterrent or to mitigate potential risks and challenges in the maritime domain.

Advanced computational, modelling and predictive tools
Increased oceanographic modelling and predictive tools and capacities to inform optimum deployment of offshore installations, ship routing, operational and maintenance support and search and rescue. Enhanced

capacity for using big data analytics approaches supported by high performance computing to inform complex interactions between environmental, climate and sectoral activities.

Managing increasing intensity in the of use of marine space
Increased research in the areas of ocean governance, policy and planning, focusing for example on co-use, trade-offs, scenario building and testing to inform decision-making on marine spatial planning, consenting, licencing and co-existence of sectoral activities, maritime safety, surveillance, and search and rescue functions. Assessment of the cumulative impact of ORE development and offshore wind farms on maritime activities including navigation, safety and sea traffic management.

Harmonisation and interoperability of maritime information and navigation technologies
Exploration of future systems to integrate radio navigation, radio communication and emerging technologies including further harmonisation and interoperability of maritime information and navigation technologies to ensure maritime safety, efficient transport and environmental protection. RKI focused on understanding the risks and impacts arising from climate change and extreme weather and sea state conditions on surface, water column, seabed and sub-seabed installations, and associated adaptation mechanisms. Application to maritime safety and security goals of a shared, data-centric High-Performance Computing (HPC) Platform coupled with federated data spaces with advanced analytical tools that will enable digital twin approaches to addressing maritime safety and security challenges and threats.

Research to better understand public attitudes towards maritime safety and security threats
Social science and humanities research to better understand public attitudes towards safety and security threats and acceptance of the substantial change in the use of marine space and coastal ports and infrastructures.

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

Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research and innovation programme, adopts an integrated approach to marine security by linking it with broader goals of sustainability, resilience, and strategic autonomy. Security challenges in the marine domain, such as protection of critical infrastructure, surveillance of maritime areas, and response to pollution or hybrid threats, are addressed through clusters like Civil Security for Society (Cluster 3) and the Mission to Restore our Ocean and Waters. These frameworks fund collaborative, multinational research projects that develop advanced technologies — such as autonomous vehicles, sensors, and data platforms — and build shared situational awareness, while ensuring alignment with environmental and economic priorities.

A distinctive feature of Horizon Europe is its deliberate involvement of the private sector in marine security research and innovation. The EU recognises that much of the technology and many of the operators in the maritime domain are private — from offshore wind farms and telecom cables to shipping and fisheries — and their expertise and resources are essential for effective solutions. At the same time, Horizon Europe actively manages the risks of private-sector participation, including data sensitivity, misaligned commercial and public interests, and strategic dependence, through measures such as EU-only participation for sensitive projects, confidentiality protocols, and capacity-building support for SMEs. This ensures that private innovation complements public security objectives and contributes to European strategic autonomy.

Ireland, with its vast maritime domain and reliance on private operators in sectors like energy, cables, and shipping, can learn from this approach by more systematically involving private actors in its marine security research and policy. This includes creating public–private partnerships, supporting Irish SMEs to compete for

EU marine security funding, and aligning commercial and national interests in research consortia. While Ireland already channels national funding into marine R&I, there's an opportunity to more explicitly embed marine security priorities in these programmes—through dedicated calls on critical infrastructure protection, surveillance technologies, and public–private partnerships. Aligning national research calls with Horizon Europe missions and encouraging private sector participation can sharpen the focus on resilience and strategic autonomy in the Irish marine domain, develop indigenous capabilities, and contribute meaningfully to shared European maritime security objectives.

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

N/A

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

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

Naval recruitment and a patrol orientation of current naval vessels . Not armed sufficiently to defend three dimensional battle space . Ie below , on the surface and airspace above the sea .

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

Subsurface sabotage, increasing Russian testing of naval resources to evaluate how close they can get to neighbouring NATO counties via irish waters .

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Western coastline , extending from donegal to Cork, irish sea is less vulnerable as it shares border with uk

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Less spending on lightly armed , numerous patrol vessels incapable of challenging any mid to larger missile armed vessel . Invest in fewer but larger more capable multispace offensively armed modern vessel , capable of modern technological battle space data transfer .
Further naval rearming, resupply in suitably identified small harbours along the coast , not one main base in 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

Only in as much as they inform defence dept on their vulnerabilities and have a direct form of contact to a military central command should they suspect any form of infrastructure attack , thus reducing reaction times from a defence point of view

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

Combined logistics supply purchasing, be it similar vessels or weapons for same . Thus increasing cross border interoperability, training and expense

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 believe the a action plan is to limiting in a ever changing defense environment. And has in the past required to long a time period for agreement . Navy chiefs should be given more freedom to decide on military spending and needs and are better equipped to know current armament capabilities and how they fit in to ireland naval needs

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 anything in the current situation in Ukraine and indeed Iran has though us , is the need for air defence capabilities.
All current naval ships currently are not armed with surface to air missiles .
Cork as a main Base alone is not strategically wise .
We must be able threaten a hostile force if they engage in subsea sabotage . There is no point knowing they are doing it but can't do anything meaningful about it .
Reform naval reserve , offer real opportunities to go on patrol and get full pay when doing so . Let reserve force take over littoral space patrolling.
Intrigrate all defence forces real time data and movements with in a new combined services central command HQ

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

All indications are that the Irish Naval service will be tasked with policing Marine Protected Area's, Special Protection Area's for Birds, Special Areas of Conservation, and regulating and policing all aspects of fishing and offshore development. Currently Ireland has 8 vessels, with only one vessel staffed at all times. It seems blatantly obvious that we should at least be able to man all vessels. The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) regularly tasks the Irish Navy to intervene in cases of alleged over fishing only to find that the Navy doesn't have the capacity to check out the claim. The SFPA has only got 2 small ribs themselves, again a serious lack of resources but sin scéal eile.
Another serious threat is lack of training and knowledge gaps. A few years ago when it was clear to all drafting the Marine Protected Area legislation that the Navy was going to play a major part in policing and enforcing the legislation the Navy knew absolutely nothing about it. Where is the cross organisation collaboration or consultation?

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

Our biggest threat is to continue the mash grab operations that we have seen in recent years, whether it be fishing, exploitation of oil resources, or offshore wind, all to the detriment of the Irish marine environment. The fish quantities of the 1980's, 90's and early 2000's have disappeared. Contrary to the ICES massaged and manipulated statistics we are destroying was is left of our depleted fish stocks.
The best way to change our mash grab attitude is by legislation. Most of the Irish people do not benefit from wiping out the sprat species, or one company taking all gas off the Mayo coast, or the current land grab for Offshore Wind Energy.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

In my humble opinion the strategy should have a strong environmental protection focus, and should therefore be focused on protecting the most sensitive areas, species first.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Provide investment so we can man the Navy vessels we have. Provide training to all Navy personnel as to what their functions are in protecting the Marine environment. Presently we don’t even have our Natura 2000 sites marked on Admiralty charts so our “protected” sites are completely hidden from all mariners…

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

Absolutely, our Maritime area is vast with many different players, depending on the objective, everyone can play a role.

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

If it comes to war mongering I'd rather see them kept out, because as a small country we are almost certainly going to lose or get squeezed somehow. We are also a neutral country, we should not, under any circumstance be pulled into joining a European military force which will be guided and led by non-Irish leaders and will certainly not be in Ireland's best interest.
However International cooperation with regards to over-fishing etc, is very important.

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

Absolutely, I do not want to see another policy document exercise with no action, of some sort coming from it. An Action Plan should include putting all Marine Protected Area's on the Admiralty Charts. Resourcing the Navy to be able to man all Irish Naval vessels. Clearly define what the role of the Irish Navy is and train personnel accordingly.

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

Thank you for allowing me to make a submission to this strategy. The opinions expressed are my own and may not always reflect the views of organisations which I am associated with. I would however like to be kept informed as to what the final strategy will be and perhaps make more detailed submissions or observations in due course.
Ireland is a neutral country (even though we sell Israeli war bonds and allow the American military to use Shannon as a base/ refueling station, etc) I fully support our neutral position and feel that as a country we have a lot to offer from a diplomatic negotiation perspective. This consultation comes at a time when Europe is handing out large sums of money to try and create a large European Army. Most of the questions in this consultation are geared towards justifying increasing military spending in Ireland.
Instead of focusing on fighting off some imaginary opponent I feel we should be resourcing our Naval service to carry out the work that it is mandated to do but can't due to lack of funding. It seems hilarious to me that for years the Irish naval service hasn't been able to carry out its duties due to lack of staff but now that Europe wants to give out some money (lots of strings attached, no doubt) we are jumping into action. Did protecting our Marine resources from over fishing or ecological destruction not count before?
I am making a submission because I feel strongly about protecting the marine environment.

It is interesting how the threat from foreign vessels on our subsea cable network is seen as a high possibility threat, and yet on a daily basis we have bottom trawlers running their trawl doors, some of which weight many tons, across those cables… There are also historic dumps at sea, both nuclear and non-nuclear, how much bottom trawling happens on them and where is this material being pulled…
On the 4th of January 2024, the subsea power cable to Bear Island was severed by 2 fishing vessels trying to catch sprat. If this is the level of damage done to the seabed with a "mid water" trawl, what must the bottom trawling be like.
I look forward to further engagement in this matter.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

Ireland's offshore renewable sector is expanding, but this growth brings increased vulnerability. The most significant current threats could include unmonitored vessel activity near critical offshore infrastructure (e.g. wind farms, cable routes), undersea cable tampering, and limited situational awareness across maritime zones. These risks are compounded by the relatively small scale of Ireland's naval resources and fragmented data-sharing between agencies. From a climate and environmental governance perspective, maritime security also intersects with environmental protection obligations, and sabotage or damage to offshore assets could lead to marine pollution or ecosystem disruption, triggering legal and reputational consequences for 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

Future challenges will be shaped by the increasing strategic value of offshore energy infrastructure and subsea data cables. As geopolitical tensions rise, so too does the risk of hybrid or cyber-enabled attacks targeting wind farms or offshore platforms, particularly by state-aligned actors seeking to destabilise EU energy systems. Climate-related displacement and increased maritime traffic (from fisheries to shipping reroutes) will also add pressure. Preparation requires investment in dual-use monitoring systems, improved satellite surveillance, cross-sectoral threat intelligence, and structured engagement with private sector operators. We also need regulatory clarity on responsibilities in the event of infrastructure sabotage or disruption, especially where private ownership meets public security interests.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Priority should be given to areas of high strategic and economic importance, particularly those hosting or earmarked for offshore renewable energy developments. This includes the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, and Atlantic zones designated under the Maritime Area Planning (MAP) framework. These regions are increasingly active, not only with wind farm development but also with survey operations, subsea cable installations, and vessel traffic, and therefore create a complex risk environment. The Strategy should also focus on chokepoints for data and energy transmission infrastructure and ecologically sensitive areas where environmental damage could have disproportionate legal and social consequences. A risk-based, data-informed spatial approach will ensure resources are allocated effectively and reflect Ireland's evolving maritime footprint.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Priority should be given to the development of a fully integrated Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) system, including real-time vessel tracking, AI-supported anomaly detection, and secure data-sharing platforms between public and private actors. Increased deployment of autonomous surveillance systems (such as drones and unmanned surface vessels) would allow for persistent oversight of high-risk zones around offshore energy sites. Upgrading naval and coastguard capabilities, particularly in terms of rapid response and remote patrol reach, is also critical. Additionally, the establishment of a specialised unit trained in offshore energy infrastructure protection and cyber-physical threats would reflect the growing complexity of maritime risks in Ireland's 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

Yes. Excluding the private sector from maritime security strategy would overlook crucial operational expertise and infrastructure ownership. Offshore renewable developers and survey companies often have real-time data, site-specific risk assessments, and advanced geospatial capabilities. Structured collaboration mechanisms should be developed, including clear protocols for threat reporting, joint training exercises, and participation in scenario planning. Importantly, legal frameworks should recognise the shared responsibility while ensuring that private actors are supported, not burdened, in protecting national security interests. This approach would foster resilience while respecting human rights and environmental obligations under both EU and international law.

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. Ireland's offshore infrastructure does not exist in isolation; our grid connections, data flows, and marine environments are part of broader regional systems. EU collaboration is critical for coordinated monitoring, intelligence sharing, and alignment of legal frameworks, particularly regarding the protection of subsea cables and transboundary wind farm developments. Partnership with NATO and other maritime security organisations should focus on capacity-building, technical support, and shared threat intelligence. Not necessarily military alignment, but strategic coordination. Given the transnational nature of both climate change and hybrid threats, Ireland's security responses must be multilateral and legally coherent.

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 essential to give the Strategy practical effect and ensure accountability. Key elements should include:

- A timeline for implementation of surveillance and data infrastructure upgrades.
- A stakeholder engagement framework detailing private-public cooperation.
- A legislative review to identify regulatory gaps in offshore infrastructure protection.
- Investment commitments for naval, coastguard, and environmental response capacity.
- A cross-departmental coordination mechanism to prevent policy silos.

The Action Plan should also include metrics for reviewing progress and be adaptable to evolving risks, particularly those linked to climate and environmental change.

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

Maritime security must be understood not only through a defence or geopolitical lens, but also as an enabler of sustainable development and climate resilience. Offshore wind is central to Ireland's decarbonisation efforts; if we fail to protect this infrastructure, we jeopardise national climate targets and our obligations under environmental and human rights frameworks. [redacted] studying the intersection of climate law and human rights, I see the urgent need for a more integrated approach - one that connects security, sustainability, and sovereignty. The Strategy should be bold, but also future-facing: embedding environmental governance, transparency, and international legal norms from the outset.

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

Russian aggression and expansionism.

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 we are all aware Ireland's marine territory extends to in excess of 220 million acres or approximately 880,000 Km2.

The sea area exceeds the land mass of Ireland by a factor of 10.
Depths within that area can vary considerably
At face value this consists of a prodigious and difficult territory to police and control.

Fortunately the Threat is smaller, consisting of well-defined areas where undersea cables and pipelines transit Irish Waters, or in fewer instances, actually come ashore.

Factually Ireland is in the position of a householder who desires to protect a very large property.
A herculean and apparently impossible task.
Until the viewer realises that potential entry points are few in number.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Even America, who possesses exceptional military assets, cannot guarantee that a hostile power is unable to penetrate their waters.

Refocusing and reduction of the problem yields a solution.
Utilising strategic nodes in definable entry points reduces an otherwise complex network dynamic to a controllable and defendable monitoring area, which is also economic to implement and to maintain..

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 recently signed a deal with French company Thales DMS for asdic/ sonar [CAPTAS-1 system?] to detect submarines and monitor undersea cables.
'Mowing the Lawn', or deploying that equipment to detect Hostile intrusions, requires ships at sea.
Yet the Irish Navy is presently incapable of manning the ships already at its disposal.
Primarily in providing sufficient expert services.

Manpower Shortages that Dock or Reduce Active Ship Patrols.
Currently a lack of any expert renders' specific equipment inoperable.
Example, reliance on specifically trained Gun Layers means that ships go to sea without access to fire power.
These 'Experts' are university educated, over educated, adding to lead time before available for service.
There needs to be more Teamwork, more reliance on specific 'vocational' training programs that equip personnel to do the job on hand and as a team, or as a constituent of that team, using command principles employed in the Deutsches Heer, i.e. each willing, more importantly able to shoulder command responsibilities in their turn in the field.

Reduction of Civilian Poaching of Trained Naval Experts
A this strictly devised and training regime limited to Service requirements reduces the marketability of personnel in the Civilian Jobs Market, making their Service retention easier.
No more Electronics PhDs to be poached!

Manpower shortage is a powerful reason to review the Naval Service and remove anachronistic practices such as Drilling and Exercise as well as 'Cultural Requirements' unnecessary to discharge naval functions at sea.

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

Ireland learned hard lessons during the Emergency.
If a War is declared, foreign supplied munitions dry up!
Ukraine is presently learning that same Lesson

Irish Sourced Alternatives to Active Asdic/ Sonar
Use of Active Asdic/ Sonar during wartime requires seakeeping in all weathers and seasons.
Irish waters in winter can be particularly harsh and dangerous places.
Transmitting pulses to detect unwater targets in turn spotlights the ship to hostile attack.

Instead of 'Mowing the Lawn' at sea, and looking for elusive targets, instead concentrate that search process in the vicinity of Cable and Pipeline Runs, by using land-based stations.
A submarine or surface vessel built of steel becomes magnetised during building and use.
Effectively it's a Bar Magnet that can be detected using the very Cables it seeks to destroy.
Turning those Cables into metal detectors uses low tech methodology first employed during the Great War.

These detecting loops can also be supplemented by sound detectors.
Because all equipment at or under the sea makes noise.
Russian submarines are enormous, and noisy, because designers prioritized speed and deep diving capabilities as well as the ability to penetrate the Arctic Sea Ice.
Even quiet submarines becomes noisy and cavitate when conned at maximum speed of 20 to 30 knots.
Russian crews are routinely described as ill-disciplined, making unnecessary and detectable noise onboard during passage.

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

There is no Neutral Observation Stand available In modern warfare.
Perhaps there never was?
All future wars, potentially, will end up going Atomic, driven there by the desperate actions of a Losing Power.
As a benefitting part of the EU Ireland must naturally play its part in defending its trading partners.
Although this ‘choice’ amounts to 'localised defence' it nonetheless recognises a mutuality of European interests and culture, vowing to defend those, rather than entering a wider alliance, like NATO with its wider and often political interests and agenda.

Perhaps, based on the smaller EU, it has an ability to react quickly with threats to threats.
Quick response makes it potentially more potent than NATO.
There is an immediate ability to threaten retaliation at an earlier stage of any conflict situation. Perhaps preventing that situation from going Nuclear, escalating towards an inevitable and inevitably destructive nuclear exchange.

Whereas the NATO Accord promises If there is No Winner Possible, then no War is Possible.
Recently the foundation Principle, Article 5 is no longer certain.
The machinations that preceded World War 1 and 2 showed that National interests often threatened Treaty Obligations.
Indeed, the machinations that followed those wars showed the perils of depending upon partners who could choose self-interest rather than mutual interest.
Ultimately Europe’s Future and Freedom depends upon the EU.

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

National Maritime Strategies should never be Secret.

Aggressor Countries, like Aggressive Gamblers should be aware of what the Stake is as well as any Potential Win.

Europe, and Russia, marched into a First World War because of Secret and Inflexible Plans.

Effectively there was a 'Plan' to get involved in a War.
But there was no 'Reverse Gear' available, even when 'solutions' were offered.

The 'Plan' should depend upon Munitions held within the boundary of the State in the expectation that if a War occurs no further supplies of Munitions and Food will be available in the immediate future.

In so far as possible weapons should depend upon local manufacturing.
This is an Old Lesson that is being relearned by the Ukrainians.

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

Identification & Destruction.
Identification of any surface or submerged threats requires a policy decision, should it be destroyed or disabled?
Protection of Cables and Pipelines can be achieved by mooring electrically controlled mines positioned so that threats rather than threatened infrastructure is destroyed, disabled or simply warned off.
A Shore Station Listening and Monitoring Post can identify surface or submerged vessels approaching.
That Post can then choose to explode mines in the immediate vicinity of that threat.

History
The concept is not new or innovative, it was first used in the Dover Barrage Minefields during the Great War.
It was also used in Scapa Flow and in the defence of the Flanders U-boat Ports.
In Open Water selected detonation of mines can disable or kill saboteur divers up to a distance of 3 to 4 miles.

Using the Coastline.
According to Churchill, Britain served during the Second World War as an “Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier.”
Ireland might serve in any future spat as an “Unsinkable Submarine” simply by utilising the Irish coast in the vicinity of the underwater cables and pipelines.
During the Second World War the Admiral Hipper-class heavy cruiser Blücher attempted to pass through the Drøbak Narrows and attack Oslo.
The ship was caught in the Oscarsborg Fortress searchlights and engaged by its gun emplacements which caused some damage.
However, the Blücher was actually sunk by two torpedoes launched from a concealed and unknown battery nearby!

Accordingly I would suggest that positions on the Irish coast adjacent to underwater cables and pipelines are fitted with shore launched torpedo batteries.
I would suggest that domestically manufactured updated version of the wartime Japanese Type 93 torpedo, known to the Allies as the Long Lance, would make an excellent and low-cost ship or submarine killer.
The original Type 93 had a maximum range of 40 km (44,000 yd) at 70 km/h (or 38 knots) while carrying a 490 kg (1,080 lb) high explosive warhead.
Evaluation and local construction, using modern components, would make a very potent weapon system, ideally suited to Irish coastal installations

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

Ireland is an island nation and is at risk to many threats from restricted lines of commerce to attacks on its energy supply. Due also to the importance of the data cables that come to and from Ireland it is vital these are protected.

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

Ireland needs to properly resource the Naval Service and the Aer Corps as they can project irelands presence at sea and above it to deter interference with the energy and information networks that come to the island.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The strategy needs to focus on all waters around Ireland that fall within its area of responsibility and the sub surface area that Ireland claims.

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 to invest in the Naval Service as it is the only the surface unit that can respond to threats. The Aer Corps are also an important unit to resource as they can project a presence above detecting threats and tracking them from 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

The private sector owners of cables and pipelines need to be involved in the strategy as they can identify the infrastructure and where it lies and be involved in adding security to it and monitoring devices also to add to the layered approach that should be employed.

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

The EU is a multi member partnership. Assisntance to develop methods to monitor and track threats can be shared with Ireland to aid its progression to being a very capable monitor of threats.

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

The strategy will be no good without and action plan so that is needed. The action plan should focus on monitoring and tracking of threats. To enable this the Naval Servoce and Aer Corps need to be fully resourced to be able to respond to all taskings.

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

Maritime security has not been properly recognised in Ireland in the past to the level it needs to be. That needs to be a whole of county awareness so the country understands the importance of security at sea.

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

Critical Infrastructure Exposure: Ireland's subsea cables carry up to a third of global data traffic, including crucial transatlantic communications that underpin commerce and security. Alongside offshore energy installations and port facilities, these assets remain highly exposed to sabotage, espionage, and hybrid threats. The lack of a coordinated surveillance and protection framework leaves these critical infrastructures dangerously unguarded.
Naval Service Capability Challenges: The Naval Service is facing a serious operational decline. Chronic staffing shortages, fewer patrol days, and limited Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities weaken Ireland's ability to assert sovereignty, monitor its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and effectively respond to maritime incidents. This issue extends beyond defence and represents a critical national security concern.
Fragmented Governance and Coordination: Maritime security responsibilities are scattered across multiple departments and agencies, with unclear legal authority and weak inter-agency collaboration. This fragmentation hinders joint operational responses, reduces situational awareness, and slows decision making in emergencies. The lack of a permanent maritime security coordination body is a major governance gap.
Insufficient Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA): Ireland currently lacks a comprehensive MDA system. While the Irish Coast Guard and Naval Service gather data, there is no fully integrated maritime picture shared across government bodies or with EU partners. Significant gaps in radar coverage, surveillance capabilities, and data fusion mean large swathes of maritime territory remain unmonitored.
Organised Crime and Illicit Trafficking: Ireland's maritime borders are exploited by organised crime networks for trafficking drugs, weapons, and people. These groups take advantage of the porous coastline and limited maritime enforcement resources. Recent high-profile seizures only highlight both the scale of this threat and the insufficiency of current countermeasures.
Environmental and Search and Rescue (SAR) Vulnerabilities: Ireland oversees one of the largest SAR zones in Europe. The rising frequency of severe weather events, pollution risks, and offshore accidents places heavy demands on response capabilities. However, SAR efforts are not fully integrated with other maritime security functions, which diminishes overall resilience.
Cybersecurity Risks in the Maritime Sphere: Maritime cyber threats targeting ports, offshore platforms, and shipping systems are on the rise. Ireland's maritime cybersecurity framework remains underdeveloped, with limited regulation and weak coordination between civilian, military, and private sector actors for cyber threat detection and response.
IIreland's maritime security challenges stem from strategic neglect, institutional fragmentation, and operational shortcomings. Addressing these interconnected risks is a national priority.

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

Ireland's maritime security environment is evolving rapidly, shaped by advances in technology, shifting strategic dynamics, and mounting climate pressures. As an island nation with extensive maritime responsibilities, Ireland faces a growing spectrum of interconnected and emerging threats, including:
Hybrid and Grey Zone Threats: These include cyberattacks on port infrastructure, GPS spoofing, and sabotage of undersea cables and pipelines. Often below the threshold of armed conflict, such actions can still cause major disruption. State and proxy actors exploiting maritime vulnerabilities now pose a serious strategic concern.
Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability: Ireland hosts key transatlantic fibre-optic cables, offshore energy

infrastructure, and commercial ports—many of which are privately owned and lightly protected. Their strategic and economic value makes them prime targets for asymmetric or hybrid attacks.
Climate Change and Environmental Disruption: Rising sea levels, stronger storms, and shifting fishery zones may drive regional instability, migration, and disputes. Maritime insecurity from climate impacts has both humanitarian and national security consequences.
Illegal and Unregulated Maritime Activity: Unreported fishing, smuggling, and human trafficking are increasing in Irish waters. These challenges demand improved maritime domain awareness and closer inter-agency and EU-level collaboration.
Great Power Competition and Naval Activity: The North Atlantic and Arctic are experiencing greater attention from global powers. Ireland's EEZ may see more foreign naval transits, including submarines. Without sufficient surveillance and intelligence capabilities, these movements risk going undetected.
To respond effectively, Ireland should:

- Develop a classified maritime risk register, overseen by the National Security Analysis Centre, to prioritise threats and guide resource allocation.
- Enhance Maritime Domain Awareness via satellite and UAV surveillance, and integrate agency data streams through a National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC).
- Strengthen protection of critical infrastructure with updated vulnerability assessments, enforcement mechanisms, and coordinated planning with private operators.
- Build cyber resilience in the maritime sector through national cybersecurity standards and integration of maritime cyber threats into security exercises.
- Expand Naval Service patrols and ISR coverage to deter and detect hybrid and covert activity, especially in vulnerable areas.
- Deepen cooperation with EU and NATO partners by sharing intelligence, participating in joint exercises, and leveraging systems like MARSUR, CISE, and EMSA.
- Integrate maritime threats into national climate adaptation and security strategies to enable coherent, cross-sectoral planning.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

A focused, risk-based prioritisation of Ireland's maritime domain is vital to ensure limited resources are deployed effectively and the most critical vulnerabilities are addressed first. While the State holds sovereign interests across its entire maritime domain, some areas stand out due to the concentration of critical infrastructure, ecological significance, or heightened operational risk.
Southern and Southwestern Approaches (off Cork and Kerry): This area is a hub for subsea telecommunications cables and offshore energy infrastructure, including upcoming floating wind projects. Positioned along key sea lines of communication and near deepwater routes frequently used by foreign naval vessels, it holds substantial geopolitical importance. The presence of key Defence Forces facilities, such as Haulbowline, further justifies enhanced surveillance, enforcement, and resilience investments here.
Dublin Bay and the Irish Sea: Home to Ireland's busiest port, Dublin, this region also sees heavy ferry traffic and supports vital maritime supply chains. It hosts essential undersea cables and pipelines, while its proximity to the UK and the narrow geography of the Irish Sea heighten vulnerability to cross-border challenges, hybrid threats, and environmental hazards.
North Atlantic EEZ and Continental Shelf: Although this western zone is remote and lightly patrolled, it encompasses significant fisheries, potential seabed resources, and growing activity from foreign naval and research vessels. This area requires prioritised situational awareness through satellite surveillance, UAVs, and strong international coordination.
Coastal Zones and Ports: Major ports such as Cork, Shannon-Foynes, Dublin, Rosslare, and Waterford warrant focused resilience assessments and protective measures for critical infrastructure. Engaging coastal communities near offshore installations in vigilance and reporting initiatives can enhance maritime domain

awareness.
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Biodiversity Hotspots: As Ireland designates new MPAs, these ecologically sensitive zones must be safeguarded against illegal fishing, pollution, and unregulated seabed activities. Maritime security policy should align closely with environmental protection goals outlined in the National Marine Planning Framework.
Prioritisation should not mean excluding other areas but instead rest on a tiered risk framework regularly updated with maritime threat assessments. This framework should integrate classified intelligence, environmental risk analyses, and economic dependency metrics to guide resource deployment, monitoring, and resilience investments.
In summary, strategic focus should target where risk, value, and vulnerability intersect, particularly regarding critical infrastructure, trade routes, sovereignty, and environmental security. A geographic prioritisation model will bolster the Strategy's operational impact, credibility, and cost-effectiveness.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Effective safeguarding of Ireland's maritime interests demands strategic investment in modern technology, infrastructure, and operational capabilities that keep pace with evolving threats and national priorities. As Ireland's maritime domain grows in economic, digital, and geopolitical significance, investments must focus on boosting situational awareness, enabling rapid response, and strengthening resilience across all facets of maritime security.
Enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness and Coordination: Ireland needs to establish a National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) to deliver a continuous, integrated maritime surveillance and coordination capability. This centre would act as a central hub, fusing data from military, civil, commercial, EU, and international sources to create actionable intelligence in Irish waters and beyond. The creation of an NMOC should be treated not just as an operational enhancement, but as a strategic imperative and a cornerstone of the National Maritime Security Strategy.
Dual-Use and Emerging Technologies: Harnessing dual-use innovations, including AI for anomaly detection, maritime cyber defence tools, and autonomous drones, will significantly enhance Ireland's ability to counter hybrid threats, cyber intrusions, and unconventional risks. Partnerships with academia, industry, and EU innovation programmes should be fostered to accelerate capability development.
Naval Service Capabilities and Personnel: Sufficient resourcing of the Naval Service is critical to maintaining operational readiness, with patrol vessels outfitted with up-to-date sensors and communications systems. Addressing personnel shortages and investing in comprehensive training are equally vital to ensure continuous coverage of Ireland's extensive maritime zones.
Protection of Critical Infrastructure: Ports, offshore energy sites, subsea cables, and other maritime infrastructure demand robust physical security and cyber resilience. Investment in hardened facilities, strong cybersecurity protocols, and closer government-industry cooperation will mitigate vulnerabilities and speed up response.
Maritime Cybersecurity: With growing cyber threats targeting maritime operations and infrastructure, developing specialized maritime cyber defence capabilities—including threat intelligence, incident response, and resilience planning—is essential. Equally important is training public and private actors to build cyber awareness and readiness.
Training and Exercise Facilities: Investment in simulation centres and regular multi-agency exercises will boost preparedness and interoperability among Defence, Coast Guard, law enforcement, and private stakeholders.
Research and Development: Sustained funding for maritime security research, especially in areas like underwater sensors, environmental monitoring, and hybrid threat detection, will help Ireland stay ahead of emerging risks and maintain strategic edge.
Investment must be holistic and not sectoral.

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?

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The NMSS must clearly involve the private sector, especially those who own or operate critical maritime infrastructure like ports, undersea cables, energy installations, and shipping assets. These stakeholders aren't just potential targets—they're vital partners in building resilience. Leaving them out would create a serious gap in both prevention and response efforts.
The NMSS should set up formal public-private partnerships for sharing information, reporting incidents, and planning contingencies. Operators of maritime infrastructure should be part of threat briefings and joint exercises alongside government agencies. This kind of collaboration improves national situational awareness and speeds up responses to crise such as cyberattacks, sabotage, or environmental emergencies.
Private operators must meet minimum resilience and security standards aligned with EU regulations, such as the NIS2 Directive and the Critical Entities Resilience Directive. These standards should cover physical security, cybersecurity, redundancy, and business continuity. The State has a role in providing guidance, oversight, and, where needed, support to help build these capacities.
The Strategy should encourage co-investment in dual-use technologies. For example, port operators and the State could jointly fund surveillance and anomaly detection systems that serve both commercial and security functions. Offshore energy companies should also contribute by sharing data and using platform sensors to aid monitoring efforts.
The NMSS should appoint liaison officers or establish coordination cells within a National Maritime Security Coordination Centre to act as direct points of contact for key private sector partners, both during day-to-day operations and emergencies. Fast, trusted communication channels are crucial during high-stakes incidents.
Regular audits and reviews must include private sector involvement. A classified annual maritime threat briefing for industry leaders could help align corporate risk management with national security priorities more effectively.
The NMSS should promote awareness campaigns and training for private sector staff. Building a strong security culture means extending beyond government to include engineers, logistics personnel, and management across the maritime domain.
In short, involving the private sector is not just advantageous it's essential. A successful national maritime security framework depends on recognising, integrating, and holding all critical stakeholders to shared standards of readiness and resilience.

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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International cooperation must be at the heart of Ireland's National Maritime Security Strategy. The maritime domain knows no borders, and many of the challenges Ireland faces; cyberattacks, sabotage of undersea cables, transnational crime, or hostile state actions can only be tackled effectively through close international collaboration.
Ireland should deepen its engagement with EU maritime security frameworks such as EMSA, CISE, EUROSUR, and MARSUR. These platforms support real-time information sharing, joint surveillance efforts, and policy coordination. Moving beyond observer status, Ireland needs to take a more active operational role within these structures.
Participation in PESCO and the Coordinated Maritime Presences initiative offers further opportunities to influence EU missions in the North Atlantic and other strategic areas. Contributions to operations like IRINI

strengthen Ireland's standing and operational credibility on the international stage.
Ireland's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) with NATO remains an underused resource. Although Ireland is not a NATO member, there is scope for meaningful cooperation in areas such as maritime situational awareness, resilience of critical infrastructure, and countering hybrid threats including cyber-enabled maritime attacks. Engaging with NATO Centres of Excellence and relevant working groups focused on undersea infrastructure and military mobility would greatly enhance Ireland's maritime security capabilities.
Bilateral and multilateral defence diplomacy with key partners—France, Germany, the UK, and the U.S. should be strategically planned and well-resourced. Joint exercises, port calls, and coordinated naval patrols not only build interoperability but also demonstrate Ireland's commitment and resolve.
Appointing maritime security attachés to important diplomatic posts—such as Paris, Brussels, London and Washington would ensure consistent, high-level engagement with allies and international organisations.
Finally, Ireland has a vital role in advocating for responsible maritime behaviour and upholding international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Our diplomatic efforts should support global maritime governance, promote environmental security, and contribute actively to UN and IMO forums.
Maritime security today is inseparable from international cooperation. Without it, Ireland's maritime domain remains exposed. With it, Ireland stands as a reliable partner in safeguarding not only its own waters but also shared European and global maritime interests.

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?

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Yes, the National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS) must be paired with a detailed Action Plan to make sure its implementation is practical, measurable, and accountable. Without a clear roadmap, the Strategy risks remaining more of an aspiration than an actionable framework.
Key components of the Action Plan should include:
Clear Objectives and Milestones: Each strategic aim should have specific, time-bound targets to enable effective tracking and adjustments as needed.
Defined Responsibilities: Roles need to be clearly assigned across lead departments and agencies, with designated points of contact and accountability structures.
Resourcing Clarity: Successful implementation depends on transparent budgeting. The Action Plan must outline new funding needs, how existing resources will be allocated, and opportunities for support from the EU or multilateral partners.
Legislative and Policy Reform Schedule: Any necessary legislation or regulatory updates (such as a Maritime Security Act) should be clearly scheduled, with assigned leads and deadlines.
Institutional Development Roadmap: The plan should set out phases for establishing key bodies like a NMOC), appointing a Maritime Security Coordinator, and enhancing the National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC), including governance arrangements across agencies.
Exercise and Training Programs: A coordinated national calendar for multi-agency maritime security exercises—including cyber, environmental, and infrastructure scenarios—will build preparedness and interoperability.
Public-Private Engagement Framework: Formal mechanisms should be established for ongoing consultation, joint risk assessments, and coordinated incident response with critical infrastructure operators.
Review and Audit Cycle: Implementing a five-year review of the NMSS, with annual progress updates and independent audits, will help maintain strategic flexibility and continuous oversight.
Metrics and Evaluation Tools: Developing clear key performance indicators will allow assessment of effectiveness, readiness, and resilience at both national and agency levels.
Public Communication and Awareness: Where feasible, the Action Plan should promote transparency to build public confidence and encourage broader support for maritime security initiatives.
Ultimately, the Action Plan is the operational backbone of the NMSS. It should be developed alongside the

Strategy, adopted formally by Government, and subject to review by Oireachtas committees to secure sustained political and institutional commitment.

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

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Ireland stands at a crucial maritime security crossroads. The strategic importance of our maritime domain—spanning economic, digital, ecological, and geopolitical dimensions is rapidly increasing. Yet, our national capacity to secure this vital space remains constrained. The National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS) offers a timely chance to reset our ambitions and establish credible, coordinated, and future-proof governance in this area.

Several key priorities demand attention:

Sovereignty and Autonomy: Without the ability to monitor and protect our maritime domain, Ireland cannot truly assert strategic autonomy. Given Ireland's role as a digital and energy hub, we face disproportionate exposure.

Naval Service Capability Crisis: The operational decline of the Naval Service threatens to undermine all maritime security efforts. This issue extends beyond personnel shortages it's a national security emergency requiring urgent, whole-of-government action.

Policy Integration: The NMSS must be fully aligned with existing frameworks such as the White Paper on Defence, National Security Strategy, Climate Action Plan, and Critical Infrastructure Resilience policies. Maritime security is inherently cross-cutting and should be embedded in all relevant strategic planning.

Maritime Cybersecurity: As maritime systems become increasingly digitised, their vulnerabilities grow. Ireland must prioritise investment in maritime cyber defence, anomaly detection, and dual-use technologies like AI-driven drones and autonomous surveillance platforms.

Standing Maritime Security Forum: Establishing a permanent national forum involving government, industry, civil society, and academia would enable early warning, policy adaptation, and a whole-of-society approach to maritime security challenges.

MSA and NMOC: A cornerstone of effective maritime security governance is the establishment of a National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC). Embedding the NMOC within the NMSS framework ensures a centralized operational hub, improving situational awareness, enhancing inter-agency collaboration, and strengthening Ireland's capacity to safeguard its sovereign maritime interests.

Maritime Security Fund: Creating a dedicated funding mechanism would support rapid capability upgrades, innovation pilots, and civil-military collaboration initiatives.

Geography alone does not guarantee maritime security. What's required is determined political leadership, institutional innovation, and sustained investment to safeguard Ireland's maritime future.

[redacted] I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further.

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

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The vulnerabilities arise from Irelands reliance on undersea infrastructure for energy and communications. Irelands geographic position as an Island nation perched on the western edge of Europe means it is geographically remote from the rest of Europe. While the distances involved are not huge, the dependencies that have developed on underseas infrastructure for Gas and Electricity supply as well as data, coupled with the challenges and timelines involved in repairing any damage sustained by this infrastructure, leads to increased risks to the normal operation of the State. Much of the economic activity in Ireland, particularly in some of the areas of high corporate tax take such as Pharma and Financial Services, are very dependent on stable energy and data supply. Events leading to restrictions on energy supply or data connectivity could result in many businesses having to suspend operations. This has a local impact on the workforce, but there is the risk of large companies deciding that Ireland is no longer a reliable and stable country in which to conduct business. This view may also be influenced by instability in wider trading relationships. In circumstances where business restrict or limit their operations, decide to close operations, or postpone future investment in expanding operations within Ireland, this could lead to a significant fall in tax revenue resulting in constraints on the delivery of public services. There could be significant damage to Irelands reputation internationally, particularly in terms of attracting future foreign direct investment. On a domestic level interruptions to energy supply can impact the operation of all Health and Social care facilities. While there are mitigations in place, the impacts arising from Storm Éowyn demonstrated how a prolonged disruption to energy and water supplies can adversely impact health and social care. With increasing digitisation of Healthcare including implementation of digital care records. the use of virtual wards and remote monitoring of patients, disruptions to internet connectivity and access to data could lead to sub optimal outcomes for patients as well as slowing down the delivery of health services as "work arounds" are utilised.

The Threat comes from accidental damage as has occurred in the past to the likes of the Kinsale Gas field and in more recent times, the threat of deliberate acts of sabotage to underseas maritime infrastructure. There have been numerous examples in recent years of damage to internet and gas pipelines in the Baltics. The operation of Russian "spy" vessels as well as grey fleet ships in and around Ireland and the UK indicates that Russia is, at least, letting it be known that it has a capability to disrupt or may be actively planning to do so. The use of Chinese vessels in a number of Anchor Drag incidents is a curious feature. Are these acts endorsed in any way by the Chinese Government?

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?

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The challenge is how to surveille, protect and defend Irish vital interests within the Maritime Domain. I have already outlined some known threats, others could include acts of sabotage designed to reduce or capacity to import and export goods. For example, the deliberate sinking of a vessel in the approach channel to Dublin Port would halt imports and exports and disrupt flights in and out of Ireland (Aviation Fuel is supplied through Dublin Port). There could be deliberate release of oil or other pollutants designed to disrupt our fisheries and to distract authorities as they attempt to respond to such incidents. I am sure there are many hybrid scenarios which others can point to that could result in disruption to trade, supplies services and economic activity.

Planning and Preparation would likely need to be multifaceted. there has been a lot of comment on the capacity of the Naval Service to provide "constabulary" duties and clearly that is a key part of the States ability to exercise sovereignty. In my time vessels such as LE Eithne had both Sonar and Air Radar. In my fathers time in the Naval Reserve (1940s to late 60s) vessels had asdic and anti submarine munitions such as depth charges. SO there should be an urgent focus on returning all ships in the fleet to operational duties. This is linked to recruitment and retention. The ships capabilities should be upgraded (Which seems to be underway) to provide for sonar and UAVs etc. to gain a sub sea operational picture. If possible the current fleet should get upgraded armaments' to be able to defend against sub sea, surface and air threats. This is to provide some level of deterrence. In terms of any new vessels, these need to be of a scale and fit out to provide a robust all weathers platform to both monitor and surveil the maritime environment and to respond to threats.

Perhaps what is most important is the ability and capacity to maintain an overall situational picture around our coasts and into the EEZ. While I have no doubt this work goes on as it stands, there needs to be an increased focus on it and increased resources. This may include access to private and state sector monitoring of their infrastructure (Data cables, gas, Electricity etc), access to information sourced by the Coast Guard and live access to aerial surveillance from Air Corps airframes as appropriate. Access to surface and Air radar is capacity that is under development. This coupled with the reports from NS vessel serves build an operational picture as to what is going on. To be fully effective this should involve intelligence sharing with our neighbors in the UK and EU. The model used for Drug interdiction may be one that offers solutions. Finally you need to maintain a multi layered capacity to respond to and if necessary interdict emerging threats. There must be a opportunities to engage with Irish industry and academia to develop remote monitoring of key sites, use of UAVs both sub surface and surface

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

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My view is that it should cover all of Irelands maritime domain. However each of these are not the same. Given the scale of the EEZ off the West Coast not to mention the operating environment that may require a specific approach, whereas the South southwest coast may involve different assets. The Irish Sea is a relatively small body of water and one can quickly establish a presence with aircraft or fast vessels departing from Dublin or Waterford. A comprehensive risk assessment should be undertaken for the various maritime areas. This would identify critical infrastructure within those areas, identify the capacity to surveil protect and defend that infrastructure, and examine impacts of loss of that infrastructure. Then you could carry out a gap analysis to see what resources are required to provide for comprehensive layered monitoring of these areas. From that you can identify priority actions. You can also zone areas as high risk medium risk and low risk and adjust your response capacity accordingly. You will need a secure, resilient 24/7/365 operations centre with suitably qualified analysts in place to provide credible intelligence to decision makers including DF. This should include strong links with the operators of this maritime based infrastructure. It would also be useful to incorporate intelligence from state bodies such as the NCSC to provide a broad overview and to plan for early identification of potential hybrid type "attacks" on Ireland. So conceivably you could have low level damage to landing points for gas, data or electrical infrastructure on island, possible damage to sub sea infrastructure or damage to windfarm infrastructure and this could be coupled with some type of cyber attack on electrical distribution networks. View in isolation these could be seen as vandalism, accidents or a malicious cyber attack by criminals. Together following analysis, they might be identified as a coordinated series of actions designed to cause broader impacts to Irish infrastructure perhaps by a state actor.

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

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Address the retention and recruitment crisis in the DF and in particular the Naval Service. The actions taken so far have had limited affect and there seem to be very slow processes involved in key decision making (The example of loss of Air Corps ATC). This needs to be focused and prioritised and the attitude has to be one that capabilities must be restored at pace and sustained. From that base you can then expand the various branches of the DF as outlined in the Commission on Defence. The DF must be in a position to mount multiple operations with the Maritime Domain simultaneously. This will require improved 24/7/65 capabilities with sufficient forces and assets on duty ready to respond in all three branches.

Technology must have a huge part to play in this. While it is important to have a ship available at sea or maritime patrol aircraft, clearly there are limiting factors in their availability. Again the use of and access to remote monitoring of key infrastructure, satellite imagery, intelligence from partners in UK and EU, use of unmanned sea, subsea and air vehicles should all be considered. AI will have a role to play as it develops and lessons have to be identified from conflicts in Ukraine, Israel and Iran to see how best to plan a robust system for surveillance, protection and Defence suited to the need of Ireland.

Priority should also be given to mitigations such as the stockpiling of key resources on island. This could include pharma, PPE, key foodstuffs, key chemicals involved in water production etc. We should have a 90 day supply of gas on the Island guidance on installation of standby power generators for public sector and businesses. Some of the Baltic states have very good awareness of internet security amongst their population as well as clear internet security policies in all state and semi state bodies.

Above all there has to be a mindset change, that is people need to realise that there are threats out there that may be realised despite Irelands position on military neutrality. The nation could suffer considerable with a consequential fall in living standards and reduce investment in Health Educations, Policing, and Defence. We need to invest now while we can to protect Irelands economic well being as well as its 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?

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Yes, Firstly those who own and operate such infrastructure should be mandated to provide on going monitoring and surveillance of their infrastructure. They should be mandated in law to share all such data and intelligence in confidence with the DF or whatever body provides 24/7/36 operational monitoring and intelligence assessments.

Private industry should be asked to support the DF directly through release of staff for key duties (so former DF members called up, formerly the first line reserve)

There should be engagement with private industry and academia to research and identify possible solutions to a variety of problems. Where practical and possible Irish industry should be utilised to produce, maintain and update equipment used by DF as part of its capacity to monitor the Maritime Domain.

However the key objectives, and outputs must bed decided by the state. Any engagement with private sector will need to be carefully managed to keep the project on track and to avoid "mission creep" . It will also need to consider more flexible procurement models to facilitate development of new technology or adaptation of existing technology. The area of Intellectual Property will be another key consideration in this regard. Also this time of innovation approach will involve collaboration with institutions in other countries including those within the Defence and security industries, Ireland will need to be crystal clear as to what its policy is with regard to such engagement. It will also probably necessitate improved security clearance measures within Ireland.

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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I think partnership will be key to any successful outcome. Ireland may develop a layered system which could provide valuable intelligence to UK and EU partners. In turn those partners should share their intelligence with Ireland.

Initially my focus would be on bilateral or multilateral arrangements with the likes of France and the UK as they are our nearest neighbors and both have significant experience in this area. It could be expanded to include other maritime EU nations such as Spain Portugal etc.

Where there are suitable NATO programs for Ireland to engage with then that should be examined with a view towards participation. This may also provide a route for verification and validation of Irish systems to ensure that they are effective and fit for purpose.

Consideration should also be given to how we interact with EU and UK in terms of response to identified threats. The initial response should come from Ireland but it may require support from other nations for prolonged events or requirements for continuous patrols or surveillance of certain areas.

The sharing of information on new and improved surveillance methods , technologies and response mechanisms must be facilitated.

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?

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Yes, a funded action plan.

Clear objectives with robust timelines.

KPIs and key milestones

It should be led by senior official / senior DF personnel with strong Ministerial oversight.

Potential delays roadblocks etc. must be dealt with quickly and effectively (think Covid response and associated legislation around planning etc.)

Multi annual funding agreed.

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

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My concern is that we could find ourselves on the edge of a broader conflict , ill prepared and vulnerable. (as occurred in 1939) Strong cohesive actions taken now could provide a platform to protect the states infrastructure and allow Ireland to offer practical support in terms of intelligence and security of our maritime domain to our friends and neighbors within the UK and EU.

Ireland is well capable of delivering on this but it will require a focus and a multifaceted and multilayered approach. We should try and maximise benefits for Irish Industry and Academia, but also accept that we will have to engage with the wider EU UK Defence and security industry.

The Irish state has an obligation to protect its citizens including in relation to their overall economic wellbeing and social cohesion.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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

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Crime is always bad but it would be interesting to know if there is a correlation between the incidences of really horrendous crimes in Ireland and the people who are using drugs on a regular occurrence. To that end, is the lack of investment in the security services including all of those maritime services allowing cartels to illegally import drugs into Ireland and then onto other countries in Europe? My other big concern is the number of Russian ships/submarines that seems to in Irish waters or very close to our waters and what is being done to protect the country from any unwelcome "visits" that they continue to make. How protected are our underwater cables against destruction from foreign actors such as Russian and what is being done to keep them away. Kudos to all involved in capturing the ship and the record seizure of drugs but you have to wonder given the limited investment into our maritime services, if there are many more that have escaped capture. From a government level, I think there should be a dedicated full-time Minister for Defense supported my retired members who can provide good solid advise around ways to increase investment, where it should be invested and how to recruit new members across the board.

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?

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For an answer to both, please see Q1 answer. I do think that the public is poorly informed on the situation and the loudest (typically the most uninformed) are getting so much airtime that the actual experts and their opinions are being drowned out. The world has changed so much and Ireland cannot bury its head in the sand, complain about the British but expect the RAF to come and save us when we get into trouble or are targeted. There is a lot of money in the country and we should pull our pants up and act like adults and take steps to protect ourselves. I also think that a Civics class should become part of the secondary school curriculum so that we understand from an early age what our role is as an EU member state from a defense point of view as the world changes. I would like to see the media highlight the role of the defense forces across the country more and what further investment is needed particularly from retired knowledgable individuals.

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

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It feels like a lack of investment in rural areas make for easy targets for cartels to bring drugs into the country (although I'm not an expert on how difficult or easy that is but when it involves millions illegally, I'm sure they will find a way to make it work) but equally the underwater cables need further protection for our energy survival.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Besides increased recruitment across the board, radar systems, naval capacity, armored personnel carriers, helicopters, and a long-range aircraft, strengthening cybersecurity. The specifics for each are better addressed by the experts.

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

Great question - government can be so slow at making improvements when needed and don't always have access to the technology and resources to advise on the improvements that should be made. I'm torn.....part of me says yes but as with building infrastructure projects like the children's hospital that is about 4 times over budget at this point and still hasn't been opened, I think it depends greatly on how you do this so that government funding isn't taken advantage of. Maybe involve special advisors to the government (retired Irish defense staff) who can review capabilities with other European capitals of a similar size to Ireland on their capabilities and start from there. Then involve private sector to bolster their efforts in a controlled capacity.

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 to all of the above.....so ridiculous to hear people say that we are neutral and don't get involved in any conflict so we don't need to go crazy spending money on our own security (and the Russians are in Irish waters just for the fun of it :( ). And sure if the worst happens, the RAF will just protect us. Don't particularly want to go down the NATO membership route but all other measures to protect ourselves and take some responsibility in this changing crazy world is beyond due. Sharing knowledge of any nefarious elements with our partners is a must, ability to issue arrest warrants and extradite criminals where needed.....I defer to the experts on other measures that should be implemented.

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?

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Yes - way overdue.
Starting with personnel needed to fully staff all areas, measures to increase recruitment after years of neglect, capital investment needed for recruitment and technology, ships, helicopters needed, training required with outside experts (other EU governments and US partners), intelligence sharing capabilities with other EU and non-EU partners, communication with Irish public so that they are supportive of investment and efforts when the economy is declining, Working with judiciary so that criminals are given severe sentences for crimes committed. Maybe beyond the scope but the government should ensure that the Special Criminal Court is protected so that the public is protected from intimidation from criminal elements (can't remember if Sinn Fein has moved away from abandoning the SPC?) and any government parties who may want to get rid of it. I'm sure that there are many additional elements beyond my limited knowledge.

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

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The public need to be on board with the importance and need for this - more communication from the actual experts is a must. Kudos to all the services who worked on capturing the vessel with that record drug seizure with limited resources. More support for those services are needed.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

Threats are potential aggressor states and non-state actors/affiliates with political objectives contrary to Ireland's interests. Russia is clearly one major threat but China is also a threat.
International organised crime and drug cartels using Irish waters for passage or transhipment are another serious threat given our geographical position.
While less of a direct threat, the possibility of other entities using our waters and undersea resources for their own economic gain needs to be considered. Fishing has always been one of these resource threats but there are likely others which will emerge given the emergence of new technologies and the influence of vastly wealthy corporate power in today's world.

Vulnerabilities include the much-discussed undersea cables but also wind generation at sea.
A serious lack of naval capacity to patrol and surveil both above and below the sea surface is a serious vulnerability.
Lack of current military capacity at sea to challenge trespass etc. due to shortage of weapons technicians etc. as well as operational seagoing vessels is an open invitation to aggressors and criminals.
Undersea inspection and patrol capacity via remote and unmanned subsurface vessels is essential as is ship borne helicopter capacity.

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

Unmanned surface and sub surface vessels, possibly autonomous, must be see as an emerging threat and very different to what Ireland has faced in the past.
Having our own such vessels and ability to deploy these is an important aspect of our response to these rapidly emerging threats.
Being a target for active attack on sub sea infrastructure is a challenge to our political and defence culture and requires new thinking, training and resourcing.
A very active defence posture is required which, culturally, is not something we have traditionally built or maintained in Ireland.
I know we have some good naval and defence thinkers - just not enough of them and not many with the necessary high level training or strategic planning skills required for the future. Building a highly professionalised naval capacity is essential but will take some time. We need to get started now!
Naval capacity also needs to be part of a much more developed and coordinated national defence strategy. We need to adopt Level of Ambition 3 now and ensure the maritime aspect receives the appropriate prioritisation.
Of course, full and active engagement with the EU and other relevant maritime bodies is important to ensure cooperation and resource sharing. Ireland must be seen as an active contributor and as playing it's full part in mutual security. We must not be seen as complacent or as a freeloader.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We must prioritise security in our own national and territorial waters. Anything less is a dereliction of our responsibilities as a sovereign state. Illegal and suspect activities in these waters must be detected and challenged, including with a fully capable military response where necessary.

Because of our location, we have to also be active in our EEZ. This is a big challenge given the area involved. This is where security partnerships are very important and Ireland should be pursuing new arrangements in this regard with the UK and with other Atlantic states such as France, Portugal, Spain, Iceland as well as at EU level.

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

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As mentioned above, naval military capacity is required including new skills and equipment in the undersea domain.
Capability to interdict threats at sea from drug shipments, as we saw in action only last year, is essential. This capability needs to be available when required and to be properly resourced at sea as well as with airborne capacity and the requisite top cover. We cannot ask our service personnel to undertake such perilous missions on a shoestring.

Basing of vaval vessels on the East coast is an issue that needs to be addressed. Redundant infrastructure in Dun Laoghaire, for example, should be acquired under compulsory powers for the Naval Service. Allowing a State entity in the form of the harbour company to obstruct this is an example of how the State is not organising or prioritising maritime security as a national concern.

This kind of attitude and other forms of bureaucratic infighting must cease.A clear maritime security is an essential device in doing exactly this - making maritime security a matter of national importance (but this only happens if the strategy is implemented!)

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, most definitely. There should be requirements and controls on where and how such infrastructure is laid and what standard of protection/resilience s put in place at the design and construction stage. Private operators cannot be free riders on the State for protection - they must play their part and purely commercial and private profit concerns must be balanced with the public interest and the costs of protecting such infrastructure once built.

Legislation is likely required in this regard but so too is the building of joint responsibility and cooperation between public and private sectors, both domestically and at EU and international levels.

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

Most definitely, and as mentioned earlier, all of these are required. Ireland is a small state with a strategically significant maritime area of responsibility. We cannot assure maritime security in this area through our own efforts alone

I would advocate for the use of all available partnerships in the interests of national and shared EU security. I believe that arrangements with NATO should also be pursued give how important the Atlantic is internationally and given that NATO naval forces play a critical role in the defence of these waters. This is a reality which Ireland must recognise and be seen to recognise.

If Ireland is not to be in NATO, then we need our Government and diplomats, as well as military, to be astute in how they can create beneficial alignments with NATO that translate into improved maritime security for Ireland.

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 coated and timed implementation plan is essential. I believe taxpayers and the people of Ireland are entitled to see this and to have clarity on how intentions will be carried into effect

A maritime strategy will have a range of deliverables under various strategic areas arising from the threat analysis. Each action area needs to be stated in clear terms and give a grounded rationale for action and for resource commitment.

I would expect an Action Plan to detail actions in areas such as:
Required new policy and legislation
Structure for national maritime security planning & coordination
New naval skills and knowledge building
Military and navsl capital and operational investment
Cooperation and partnerships nationally
Cooperation and partnerships at EU level
Cooperation and partnerships internationally

A clear strategy with a focussed action plan would put this important area on the national agenda and would be critical in ensuring that implementation proceeds on a properly funded multi-annual basis (always a difficulty in our national budgeting system).

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 applaud the work you are doing in this area and wish you well in this endeavour. Ireland needs a well-crafted maritime security strategy and now is very much the time to create this and then to push it forward into implementation.

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

[redacted] this consultation focuses on Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) i.e., wind farms (but also wave and tidal technology deployments, in the medium term), while taking cognisance of the vital importance of gas pipelines, international electricity interconnectors and data cables.

Ireland is almost uniquely energy insecure. The EirGrid daily online 'Dashboard' reveals that, frequently, a significant share/majority share of the electricity demand is being met by gas (increasingly imported gas) powered sources and by electricity imports via interconnectors. This infrastructure is mostly, or will mostly be for the next decade, located in the Irish Sea and off the south coast.

5GW of offshore wind will be under construction by 2030 ('Phases 1 and 2') with further ambitious targets to 2040 (20GW) and 2050 (37GW). The 5GW will be provided by six developments in the Irish Sea and at least one off the south coast. The bulk of the later targets (2040, 2050) will be met off the Atlantic coast.

The ORE industry is concerned about security on several levels. Financial institutions and, particularly, insurance companies will need to be satisfied about the 'regime' for ORE security both at national level and for each wind farm site. Second, the industry has an obvious concern for the safety of its staff– each wind farm will be supported by a standing mobile, seagoing engineering team of 80-100 people based in a local operations centre. Third, ORE developers are concerned about accidents e.g., collisions of ships with turbines. Finally, and critically, the industry is concerned about deliberate, malicious interference in/destruction of offshore infrastructure ranging from minor damage by protestors to terrorist actions to deliberate sabotage by rogue state or 'shadow' state actors.

[redacted] notes the Department of Defence's recent comment about the '……recent increase in suspicious activity by foreign forces in Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone' and is encouraged by the statement that '… the security of the (offshore) infrastructure is of paramount importance….in light of Ireland's island status and Ireland's plans for offshore renewable energy sources.'

Ireland's maritime domain is vast and involves many stakeholders. It ranks third in terms of size in the Atlantic /North Sea-facing EU members. A Maritime Security Strategy (MSS) must address many needs including maritime defence to deter aggressors and create a safe and secure environment for ORE as well as taking account of needs under the traditional 'constabulary' umbrella, notably fisheries protection and counter narcotics smuggling.

The need to develop and implement quickly an MSS to secure our Critical Maritime Infrastructure (CMI) is evident and must be given priority. [redacted] recommends that the MSS focuses on the security of CMI as a 'first chapter' and that the Department of Defence deal with other maritime security issues and areas at a later stage.

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 emerging threats lie in the field of cyber attacks, drone and autonomous technologies. Artificial Intelligence is developing rapidly and it will enable both cyber and drones – air, surface and sub surface – to operate in ways which will be challenging to counter.

Cyber-attacks (whether by criminal gangs, states or state proxies), possibly in the form of hybrid or 'grey zone' activity, is an emerging and critical threat to all aspects of the maritime industry. Ireland requires the following key elements to be established:

o Integrated national policy – include maritime cyber security within Ireland's National Cyber Security Strategy with clear links to defence, transport and energy sectors.
o Designate CMI with identified sector protection obligations.
o Ensure compliance with IMO Resolution MSC.428(98) and EU NIS2 Directive across Irish ports, ferries, shipping lines, and offshore assets. May need to enhance maritime cybersecurity cooperation with EU agencies (ENISA, EMSA) and NATO's Centre for Excellence in Cyber Defence.
o Routine participation in multi-national joint exercises such as Cyber Europe and MARSEC.
o Develop a national maritime cyber threat assessment and include this in the national risk assessment. Would be useful to include real time sharing with the National Cyber Security Centre and national CIRT capability.
o Conduct annual maritime cyber threat exercises for national ports and associated maritime agencies (the National Maritime College of Ireland procured a Smart Maritime Exercise last year and will run another exercise in September 2025).

Artificial Intelligence is a key feature in the development of drones which have been such a feature, including at sea, of the Ukraine conflict. The potential impact on ORE is obvious: rogue 'actors' will in future be able to launch attacks on maritime installations, including ORE, with surprise and with significant kinetic effect. Any response will require real time intelligence, fast response protocols and investment in counter drone technology. A further challenge is that drone technology is evolving and changing rapidly while counter drone measures struggle to keep up – the CEO of a major Ukrainian drone firm stated recently that drone technology on the frontline of the Russia: Ukraine war has a product life cycle of just 3 months i.e., it has to be reinvented every 3 months!

A major challenge too going forward is climate change which is impacting on sea conditions – more frequent storms, higher waves etc. This will affect the Naval Service's capacity to operate at sea with current vessels and we note with approval the plan to acquire at least one large Multi Role Vessel for the Naval Service. This investment in ships must also be supported by investment in onboard capabilities to sense, scope, identify, target and, if necessary, remove threats to CMI across the domains. All of this capability must be augmented by an Emergency Towing Vessel capacity.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] the Maritime Security Strategy, 'chapter 1', should focus on specific geographical areas earmarked for ORE. We recognise that the MSS may also prioritise additional geographical areas specific to data and gas infrastructure.

The priority must be to develop an action plan for the Irish Sea, where all immediate wind farm projects and all gas and interconnector infrastructure is now, or to a large extent will in future be, located. A key action should be to establish quickly a Naval Base at Dun Laoghaire for the P70 Naval Service inshore patrol vessels, the P60 offshore patrol vessels and the future naval fleet – see also Q4 below.

Second, deal with the south coast where there is key energy infrastructure and new developments underway e. g., the Ireland-France Interconnector; the ORE Phase 2. The first stage of the Phase 2 wind farm will involve two offshore substations (uniquely, not required in the Irish Sea projects due to proximity to shore facilities). The geographical priorities, from ORE's perspective, thereafter will have to await the final National DMAP (2027). This exercise will identify suitable zones or sites for ORE which can then be 'called off' for development by the Government as required.

The National DMAP will identify sites off the Atlantic coast which will be exploited largely by Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) technology. Early ORE there is will be in the south west, off the Shannon Estuary, and may in the first instance involve a FLOW demonstrator project while the ESB is currently advancing a pilot Wave Energy farm in the same area. The attraction of the south west Atlantic coast includes suitable seabed conditions, wind resources, access to the grid at Moneypoint and deepwater harbour facilities being actively planned at Moneypoint (ESB) and Foynes (Shannon Foynes Port).

The ESB facility at Moneypoint is among the most important elements on the national infrastructure map. It is being converted into the 'national generator of last resort' i.e., the station that can be turned on quickly in the event of a major outage on the grid. It is also the home to a major access point to the grid. It houses the national 'inverter' – one of the largest in the world which supports grid stability when the grid is dependent on renewables and a major outage occurs. The lack of inverter capacity was the probable reason for the recent grid collapse in Spain and Portugal. The ESB is planning a major development of the site to support ORE, including further shipping facilities. The MSS must give attention to a security action plan for Moneypoint (and the nearby power station at Tarbet). This plan lies outside of the normal industrial security already adequately provided for at these locations. Facilities on the coast, notably at Moneypoint, are part of the CMI network and their security should be addressed in the MSS.

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 key tasks, for a first 'chapter' in a Maritime Security Strategy focused on Critical Maritime Infrastructure, are:

- Surveillance: This is identified in the Defence Policy Review as a priority and involves radars etc to cover both our maritime and our air spaces. A project in this regard is underway in the Department of Defence and we endorse the priority being given to it.
- Intervention: provide a military capacity to intervene when a judgement is made that, for instance, a particular vessel is seeking to damage CMI. Alongside this, the Naval Service must be given powers of arrest out to the 200-mile limit and this requires amendment to the Maritime Security Act of 2004.
- Remediation: provide a capacity to deal with adverse scenarios ranging from an accidental collision between a vessel and an ORE device to being able to deal with explosive devices placed next to interconnectors, export cables etc

We identify the following as key investments (in addition to the radar system referred to earlier and the recently ordered sonars for the Naval Service):

- A direct investment in well-established surveillance technologies such as the towed array sonars on order and the acquisition of further Remus remotely controlled vehicles already operated by the Naval Service
- In the first instance, perhaps trial advanced drone technologies such as advanced pipeline inspection systems, surface drones etc. This could be undertaken utilising a Contractor Owned Contractor Operated Naval Oversight (COCONO) model– see Q5.
- Develop immediately a Naval Base in Dun Laoghaire, to support the P70 inshore patrol and other vessels and with an immediate operational focus on ORE developments under Phase 1 and CMI generally in the Irish Sea.
- Upgrade the P60 class vessels to enable them to contribute effectively to Surveillance and contribute more credibly to Intervention and Remediation. The investment involved should prioritise the acquisition of naval surveillance radars and update other capabilities e.g., armament as necessary.
- Acquire platforms capable of undertaking multiple tasks e.g., deploying and supporting drones and doing so in Irish offshore weather conditions. We are aware that Defence is planning to acquire at least one Multi Role Vessel and we urge that this project be advanced.
- Acquire a capability to remove or destroy devices such as mines and improvised explosive devices placed in proximity to CMI. This element of drone technology is established and well proven and should be directly purchased and operated by the Naval Service
- Enhance the IT capacity at the Naval Service operational headquarters in Haulbowline capable of handling diverse streams of data arising from e.g. drone surveillance devices etc and turning them into actionable plans as required. Assign Garda/Customs/Coast Guards as watchkeepers at NSHQ to facilitate coordination.

o Establish partnerships with Irish companies to supplement data collection & analysis

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

ORE pays substantial fees to the State in respect of consenting, seabed leasing etc. ORE will not pay any special subvention for the provision of security services and arrangements – these are a role proper to the State, supported by normal national tax provisions.

[redacted] recommends that Defence should establish quickly (and chair) a Critical Maritime Infrastructure Security Liaison and Advisory Group with representatives of Defence, Naval Service, other State maritime agencies and ORE, data cable and gas pipeline industries. The purpose of the Group might include:

1. Build relationships: enable people in all areas of Critical Maritime Infrastructure to get to know each other, to build links and to grow a common understanding of CMI challenges and solutions
2. Determine roles: between ORE developers and Government agencies n.b., the Naval Service. E.g., agree responsibility for policing leisure craft sailing close to wind turbines; the provision of fixed monitoring devices at wind farms etc.
3. Planning: Enable industry to comment on and contribute to security scenario development, contingency planning etc
4. Collaboration and response exercises: enable collaboration and establishment of potential information sharing including development of guidance and coordination through “table top” exercises
5. Crisis links: Be a point of reference for those directly involved in crisis management in the event of a major security issue offshore.

Reference was made at Q4 to trialling drone technology and attention is drawn in this regard to the Atlantic Net project underway (initially utilising a Contractor Owned Contractor Operated Naval Oversight model) in the UK to provide an unmanned ‘surveillance barrier’ to Russian submarines entering the Atlantic through the Greenland Iceland UK (GIUK) gap:

'Under this construct, remotely operated or autonomous uncrewed surface and underwater systems would be fielded and managed by an industry partner. Uncrewed platforms will gather sensor data, make an initial assessment using artificial intelligence, and transmit semi-processed information to a secure Remote Operations Centre for review and analysis by Royal Navy personnel. The RN believes Atlantic Net could rapidly achieve initial operating capability within 1-2 years'. – see www.navylookout.com 24/6/2025 for more details.

As suggested at Q4, a similar low-risk model could be adopted by Ireland with the possibility of transiting later if desired to a Naval Owned Naval Operated model as is planned by the UK in regard to Atlantic Net. The approach suggested points to utilising the world class Irish companies in maritime technology field: e.g., Green Rebel and TechWorks Marine in buoy based lidars; Green Rebel for additional inspection and geospatial analytical services; xOcean in surface drones; and Cathx in sub surface drones. Involving Irish companies in the trial period would have the benefits of ease of access, building local resilience 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

Ireland's enormous national maritime territory cannot be walled in! Ships, drones etc can move in and out of it without facing physical obstacles and can do so with freedom of navigation under international law.

Nations already exchange information and cooperate about some aspects to maritime security. A notable example is the counter narcotics body Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) located in Lisbon in which Ireland plays an important role and another is the CISE programme referred to earlier.
This co-operative approach must be extended to the Maritime Security Strategy focused on Critical Maritime Infrastructure
. It should involve at least three components. First, joint contingency planning in regard to ORE. Second, real time information exchanges about maritime activity, particularly with our immediate neighbours, the UK and France. Third, agreement, within boundaries posed by law and by the requirements of Ireland's military neutrality, on joint support in the event of serious incidents.

Moreover, Ireland should draw on the expertise in the NATO team charged with developing CMI protection policy. Ireland should enhance and leverage its NATO Partnership for Peace membership in order to ensure international best practice is applied to our national capabilities and procedures. In addition, Ireland should promote an EU wide, co-ordinated approach to CMI security. This is particularly justified by the Union's plans for an EU wide electricity network with an emphasis in western member states in particular on an underwater grid which will involve Ireland.

Ireland is a leading member of the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) which '… supports and facilitates the development of the offshore grid development and the large renewable energy potential in the region'. There are eight members plus the European Commission and the UK. Associated with the NESC is the North Sea Security Pact which Ireland did not sign. The key feature of the Pact is NorthSeal which enables the maritime information bodies of the participating countries to monitor suspicious ship movements in real time, exchange information and quickly analyse threats. In light of the deteriorating security situation in Irish waters, it would be worthwhile to investigate the value and practicality of extending the 'reach' of NorthSeal into Ireland's maritime territory.

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

The Maritime Security Strategy should be a high-level guiding framework to achieve the goal of a secure Irish maritime area with a focus in the first instance on energy and data infrastructure. It should contain a clear statement of what the end goal(s) is; diagnose the maritime security environment for Ireland; identify the key challenges to overcome; and set out the means by which policy will be kept up to date as well as identifying key steps to achieving the goal(s). It is appreciated that the Strategy may cover some of the ground already dealt with in the Defence Policy Review.

The Action Plan should be a separate document, or an appendix to the Strategy, which identifies the actions required to fulfil the MSS; identifies the resources required; sets timelines etc; and allocates responsibility for delivery to specific elements of the Defence Organisation and elsewhere. It should be published alongside the MSS or as soon as possible thereafter.

The key actions [redacted] in the Maritime Security Strategy, in no order of priority (with one exception), arise from answers to the preceding questions:

1. Establish a naval base in Dun Laoghaire – this is the immediate priority in light of the development of Phase I ORE etc with Dun Laoghaire providing a "single footprint" for military operations in the Irish Sea
2. Establish a Critical Maritime Infrastructure Security Liaison and Advisory Group and, in general, involve the ORE industry in assisting and advising on policy implementation
3. Recover and regenerate the Naval Service. It is the primary maritime agency of the State and the national response capacity to the majority of maritime security risks, threat and challenges. A key task is to build up the Service's staff numbers and every possible initiative should be pursued in this regard e.g., recruitment of civilian staff as cooks etc; secondments from other navies seeking to learn from the unmatched experience of the Naval Service in demanding security etc operations
4. Amend the Maritime Security Act
5. Advance the investments recommended at Q4 above

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