Irish neutrality and European integration, 1960-1972

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Irish neutrality and European integration
1960-1972

Maurice FitzGerald

Ireland's eventual accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) on 1 January 1973 was the culmination of a decade's unremitting efforts by successive Irish governments. The traumatic experience of economic stagnation during the mid-1950s, coupled with the emerging reality of freer trade in Europe later that decade, were two of the foremost reasons responsible for the eventual realisation in the upper echelons of Irish politics that it would be necessary to radically change the nation's whole economic outlook. The prognosis at the beginning of the 1960s was fairly straightforward: if Ireland was to avoid turning into a European economic backwater it would have no choice but to dismantle its comprehensive system of protection in favour of freer trade in agricultural and industrial products.

The breakdown of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) wider Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations in 1958 had negated the immediacy of the economic reformation that had initially been envisaged. And, despite the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957 and the establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) two years later, such economic developments as there were did not have the exigent catastrophic implications that had originally been feared. Anglo-Irish trade remained the single-most important feature of the state's foreign economic policy. But, although Anglo-Irish trade catered adequately for the crucial agricultural sector, the Irish government had finally begun to face up to the vital question of industrialisation or Ireland's lack of it. The future economic structuralisation of Europe was also rapidly crystallising but, as yet, the EEC was not one of Ireland's major trading partners and EFTA's ambit was limited to the freer trade of industrial goods. The time for complacency and inactivity had undoubtedly ended but it was imagination that was needed most from the Irish government.

Thus, when Ireland decided to apply for full EEC membership at the end of July 1961 it did so for a number of reasons, prime amongst them because it had no realistic alternative but to do so if the United Kingdom (UK) also joined. Once negotiations between the EEC and the UK broke down in mid-January 1963, however, the Irish application fell into a limbo-like state. Nonetheless, the Irish government continued to prepare the country for its future integration into a European freer trade system by undertaking two unilateral tariff reductions of 10% each in

* I am particularly grateful to Richard Griffiths and Bjarne Lie for useful comments and suggestions regarding the drafting of this paper.
1963 and 1964. Though more of a symbolic nature than anything else - due to the fact that Irish tariffs were already so high - these cuts indicated that the Irish government was confronting its economic dilemma with some vision. Ireland was gradually moving from protectionism to freer trade, that is out from under the shelter of its high tariff walls and into the full exposure of wider trade structures. The signing of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1965 was a momentous step in this regard as it improved UK market access for Irish agricultural products whilst being balanced by an Irish commitment to phase out tariffs on UK industrial goods. Nevertheless, this rudimentary example of what were Ireland's steadfast ties to the UK economy only highlights what was, in fact, a lopsided relationship of acute dependence. EEC membership was evidently anticipated as being some sort of economic panacea to what clearly was an unacceptable economic situation. The future direction that Irish foreign economic policy would have to take was becoming more discernable at this point in time as the country oriented itself closer and closer to the EEC in an effort to break that dependence. Ireland and the UK abortively applied to join the EEC in 1967 and, though unsuccessful then, both nations finally adhered to the Treaty of Rome after protracted negotiations in the early 1970s.

Throughout the 1960s the concept of Irish neutrality underwent a radical perceptual change as the government's drive for EEC membership became the foreign economic policy priority. European integration and the pursuit of economic objectives not only overtook Irish neutrality as a central policy determinant but also surpassed other more intractable political considerations such as the island's partitioning into the Republic/Northern Ireland. The premierships of Seán Lemass (Taoiseach, 1959-1966) and Jack Lynch (Taoiseach, 1966-1973) demonstrated a preparedness by both to drop Ireland's supposedly 'traditional' attachment to neutrality. In essence, neutrality Irish-style was superseded by a concerted government effort to gain accession to what was increasingly being viewed as an economic escape-route. This foreign economic policy transformation did not take the form of some momentous pronouncement in which the government expressed explicitly, precisely and unequivocally to the general public how European integration - for Ireland that exclusively meant EEC membership - would necessarily impinge upon Irish neutrality. Instead, what was the conscious compromising of neutrality can be seen as the consequence of 'cumulative effect' rather than the result of individual actions or gestures. Of course, there was one striking exception to this general lack of lucidation, that is when the Irish government decided to seek membership of the EEC in July 1961. The rationale behind, and implications of, this decision forms the basis of this paper on Irish neutrality and European integration 1960-1972.

Most of this paper concentrates on introducing the reasoning behind the Irish decision to seek EEC membership, that is its placing of economics before politics. At the same time, an integral component of this paper is to make it manifestly clear that whilst Ireland was
distinguishable from the other countries of Western Europe - neutrals and non-neutrals alike - it could, in a peculiarly Irish way, also be identified with both groupings. The basic conclusion being drawn is that the Irish government placed an uppermost value on economic development, and by implication European integration, which came before any fundamental attachment to neutrality, an attachment that was actually more deeply rooted in rhetoric rather than in reality. Indeed, it is by investigating how Irish neutrality compared and contrasted with the neutrality practised by other European neutrals that this paper introduces some of the peculiarities of the Irish concept. It does so by concentrating on two main questions:

(i) where did Ireland's peculiar view of neutrality place it politically and economically in comparison to other European neutrals?; and
(ii) what essentially happened to the concept of Irish neutrality in the context of European integration between 1960 and 1972?

This paper will begin though by introducing some of the background to the relationship between Irish neutrality and European integration.

**Trade and security considerations in 1960**

Lemass succeeded Éamon de Valera as Taoiseach in June 1959 and, almost immediately, Ireland's public position on the issue of neutrality was discretely revised. In essence, a dynamic shift in Irish government policy had taken place as the new Taoiseach sought to exploit the opportunities proffered by European integration. Of course, this change in the direction of Irish economic development policy had already been signalled whilst Lemass was Industry & Commerce Minister in the years 1957-1959. The thrust and stress of subsequent policy was based on T.K.Whitaker's *Economic Development* and the resultant government *Programme for Economic Expansion*. That period has been viewed as an economic 'watershed' because of the critically important decision to phase out protectionism in preparation for full EEC membership and the instigation of a set of economic policies based upon the attraction of foreign capital to invigorate what was a 'stagnant' industrial sector.² This change of foreign economic policy emphasis had its origins in Ireland's undistinguished war-time experience, an experience which had important lessons that were later reflected in Lemass's pragmatic economic approach as Taoiseach. It is true to say that Lemass recognised that the practice of neutrality - which was essentially political - had practical economic consequences in the long-term.³ Nonetheless, at the beginning of the 1960s, Ireland's foreign policy transformation was not particularly overt.

Lemass began his drive to eliminate neutrality as an important policy consideration by making references in speeches that ran contrary to the neutralist positions being adopted by his External Affairs Minister, Frank Aiken, at the United Nations (UN). Lemass restricted himself
to this at first but under his leadership - as distinct from de Valera's final administration - Aiken was slowly peripheralised away from the foreign policy mainstream or at least away from the wielding of real foreign policy power. In fact, between April 1959 and April 1964, Aiken was out of the country on official business on 35 occasions - mostly to do with the UN - and was not even present in Dáil Éireann to answer the question on his extensive absences. A complete change of tack had taken place in the decision-making process, that is in determining which issues were to be prioritised. The emphasis of Irish diplomacy turned from being dedicated to political action within the UN, that is ‘active neutrality’, to being focused economically on Europe, that is ‘military neutrality’. Irish political strategy fell in behind developments at the EEC rather than those at the UN as the consideration of EEC membership began to play a continuously enlarging role in the actual shaping of government policy. At the same time Irish neutrality was undergoing a process of dilution through the European integration policy being pursued by the government. In the context of European integration therefore, the early 1960s marked a subtle shift in emphasis which also saw the demystification and devaluation of neutrality as an absolute government policy. Ireland's orientation towards the EEC was increasingly being viewed as an economic necessity with Lemass seeing EEC membership as something that could be partly exchanged for Ireland's independent foreign policy, though obviously only if need be.

Political considerations had suddenly lost their positions of pre-eminence in Irish foreign policy thinking and implementation as the government began to pursue a bolder set of economic policies. Protracted political questions such as the island's partitioning and Ireland's non-membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) unexpectedly became side issues because from this point onwards it was economics - and more pointedly, European integration - that mattered most. It can be persuasively argued that Irish policy has been 'stunted', both domestically and internationally, by the intractable question of partition. The early 1960s marked a notable departure from the Irish practice of continually raising the question whenever Irish officials had an international audience. Economic considerations had finally taken over from politics.

However, it was not EFTA which was seen as the cure-all to Ireland's economic ills but the EEC. Patrick Keatinge, one of Ireland's most celebrated historians on neutrality issues, holds that:

... EFTA ... very pointedly did not meet Ireland's special demands, and by the summer of 1961 full membership of the EEC, with its potential for agriculture, became the aim of the government's economic foreign policy, the more so given the United Kingdom's simultaneous moves in this direction.

In fact, EFTA membership would still have been very acceptable to Ireland - especially if it had
been able to obtain the special provisions that Portugal had received - but it was never given the opportunity to participate in negotiations. Indeed, Ireland was very brusquely excluded by the UK from doing so for reasons relating to her own trade requirements, that is the protection of cheap agricultural imports. As it stood, EFTA did not necessarily meet Ireland's needs anyway primarily because it had not developed along the lines of the EEC. But, when the UK moved to join the latter the government had major cause for concern. Exclusion from an expanded EEC including the UK would have meant Ireland running the risk of devastating economic isolation as Anglo-Irish trade links and the EEC's potential for dealing with the agricultural question put it into a totally different category to EFTA.

Ireland and the UK had reaffirmed their bilateral relations through an enhanced trade agreement in 1960, even though the Irish had been disappointed that all their needs had not been met. One thing remained certain, Ireland could not afford to be outside an economic bloc like the EEC especially if it included its most important trading partner - at the time around 75% of Irish exports went to the UK and 50% of Irish imports originated there. The startling reality of such economic dependence therefore left Ireland with no real alternative but to follow the UK lead. Lemass admitted as much when he said:

> If all the countries of Europe with which we are trading, Britain and the Six, join together in an economic union, we cannot be outside it. That clear simple proposition can hardly be seriously contested. Whatever might be the problems for us of entering into such a union - and there is no doubt these problems would be very considerable - to stay out in these circumstances would be disastrous. We can see no economic future for this country if it were to be cut off by a uniform tariff applying to both agricultural and industrial projects from all our European Markets.\(^\text{10}\)

Such dependence was bound to have political implications. In fact, Ireland's economic reliance upon the UK was a type of 'economic Achilles heel' to an independent - neutral - foreign policy.\(^\text{11}\) However, in public, Lemass stuck rigidly to the formal government position that the EEC had no military links or obligations, that the question of Ireland joining NATO was irrelevant to EEC membership.\(^\text{12}\) Of course, the truth was much different especially when the 'ambiguity' of Ireland's independent stance at the UN became manifest in the context of its application to join the EEC; political support was slowly but effectively withdrawn from New York and gradually but energetically redirected towards Brussels.\(^\text{13}\) Ireland's neutralist position was going to be compromised in the process.

The issues of Irish neutrality and European integration were totally obscured by reticence on the Irish government's part to make a clear, honest and unambiguous statement about how one position would have to infringe upon the other. Patrick Keatinge has also said that when information is offered by the Irish government:
... it is often expressed in general, vague and even ambiguous terms. An example was the Lemass government's treatment of the political implications of joining the European Economic Community. In June 1961 the Taoiseach confined his comments to admitting that "there are ... certain political implications which, in my opinion, are not such as to make it undesirable for this country to join the Community ..." Lemass did not elaborate any further, 'vagueness' was proving to be his most effective weapon.14

The Irish government concentrated on ignoring, rather than tackling, the subject of neutrality and European integration as much as possible despite its claims to the contrary. In reality, Ireland's attempt to join the EEC signalled a readiness to abandon the vestiges of neutrality should it be made a condition of membership.15 Indeed, this has actually been Ireland's foreign policy position for decades as successive governments have been prepared to throw off even the vaguest attachment to neutrality when any emergency arose. One only has to look at the role willingly undertaken by the Irish during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, when Warsaw Pact planes transiting through Shannon Airport were routinely inspected, for evidence of the lengths that Ireland was prepared to go to please the United States (US) and to tow the NATO line. John F.Kennedy later thanked the Taoiseach for "the action taken by the Irish authorities in having searched a number of aircraft which were en route to Cuba".16 This action can hardly be reconciled with the even-handed policy of a neutral especially when one considers that 167 military aircraft of Western origin transited unhindered through the self-same airport in the period January to July 1967.17

The investigation of the Irish government's parallel and intertwining attitudes towards neutrality has proved to be one of the less obvious ways that has emerged for tracing Ireland's experiences of, and views upon, European integration. Ireland's singular form of neutrality distinguished it from most of Western Europe but, at the same time, did not; this apparently contradictory statement obviously requires explanation. By taking the two major 'European' economic and military groupings of the late 1940s, the OEEC and NATO, and by adding in the EEC and EFTA developments of the late 1950s, the linkage between trade and security at the beginning of the 1960s becomes an interesting lens through which to view Ireland's peripherality and its neutrality policy in an era of European integration. This is explained visually in fig.1

Venn diagram depicting trade and security considerations in 1960.
fig.1 Venn diagram depicting trade and security considerations in 1960

(1) the year is 1960 and there are two main sets: (i) the OEEC, representing trade; and (ii) NATO, depicting security.

(2) note that from OEEC intersection NATO we get from left to right: (i) the four OEEC neutrals with Finland depicted outside the OEEC set; (ii) countries common to both organisations, that is trade and security considerations (OEEC ∩ NATO) with Spain peripheral to both; and (iii) the two North American members of NATO.

(3) add in sub-set EEC from 1957.

(4) add in sub-set EFTA from 1959.

(5) note the peripherals and the neutrals - specifically Ireland - which is not only excluded from the major European trade developments but is also outside the West's major security network.

Nota bene: If one was to integrate another major trade organisation like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into this Venn diagram one would find that Ireland is excluded even further still. Of the countries displayed, Ireland was the penultimate member to accede to the GATT, doing so through Agreement N°106 on 22 December 1967. Note that Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, the UK and the US were all members by 1951; Portugal was already affiliated through EFTA and acceded in 1962, Switzerland signed a bilateral agreement with the US in the 'Dillon Round' of 1962 and acceded in 1966; Spain acceded in 1963; and Iceland acceded in 1968. John H.Jackson, World Trade and the Law of GATT (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), 898-899.
As has been intimated, EFTA, whilst not giving it the opportunity to join, did not meet Ireland's needs anyway. Ireland had wanted a loosely organised free trade area which would take special regard for agricultural produce whilst enshrining a transitional period for industrially retarded countries to catch up. EFTA was not what Ireland wanted or needed. However, the question of joining EFTA, or not, boiled down to economics as neutrality had nothing to do with it. Three neutral countries - that is Austria, Sweden and Switzerland - had helped to initiate EFTA and another neutral - Finland - would very quickly establish close ties. So, what was so different about Ireland's experience of neutrality? How did government policy affect the image Ireland conjured up for neutrals and non-neutrals alike? Perhaps, a quick review of general perceptions that were held would serve as an effective further introduction to the Irish experience of neutrality and integration in the 1960s.

**Superpower and neutral views of Irish neutrality**

EFTA was established as an organisation with one simple aim, that is to create an FTA. It required unanimity in any decision in favour of further obligations beyond those laid down in its constituent treaty. This effectively meant that any neutral member of EFTA could veto additional moves toward integration deemed contrary to its own neutral status. Therefore, the European neutrals had much different attitudes with respect to EFTA when compared to their views of the more supranational European Communities, especially the EEC. The EEC was considered "incompatible with their special international status" primarily because of the wider scope for economic and political integration implied therein.\(^\text{18}\) Ireland was not of the same opinion because, as will be illustrated, when the question of European integration became a leading determinant in Irish foreign policy-making, Irish neutrality diverged in many important respects from the experience of other European neutrals:

The latter appeared to be testing the new concept of political integration against what were to them clearly established principles of neutrality policy ... [whilst Ireland] on the other hand, seemed to be testing an ambiguous concept of neutrality against an innovative economic policy.

Put into its proper historical perspective, Ireland's neutrality was made 'negotiable' through the European policies that the government pursued; European integration had become a purely economic question. As in the late 1940s, the Irish government began referring to its neutrality as 'military neutrality'. Such a concept meant that Ireland did not belong to any defence organisation that already existed such as Western European Union (WEU) but that, because the Irish government's long-term commitment to integration was unmistakeable, neutrality was
"essentially limited and ultimately negotiable". This begs the question: in what way did other states view Irish neutrality?

The US was not prepared to pander to Irish sensibilities regarding partition despite determined efforts by Ireland and its supporters to link it to the question of NATO membership. Indeed, this Irish propaganda campaign failed miserably and may very well have had negative effects, prompting Conor Cruise O'Brien to say that he personally "realised fairly early that the anti-partition campaign was doing no good, but it took me a lot longer to realise that it was doing serious harm". The US was not about to antagonise the UK over Northern Ireland especially when the US rightly considered that the threat of Ireland falling under the hegemony of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was limited. Normalcy dictated that Ireland's geographical position within the NATO umbrella precluded invasion by the USSR whilst its political and economic orientation effectively forestalled the need for any aggressive move by the West. This was, of course, excepting the wildest scenario. Ireland had made no concerted attempt to even appear capable of defending itself and it is an accepted fact that the only reason Ireland was able to stay neutral during the Second World War was because of its geographical position. Nevertheless, the US would not have hesitated to occupy Ireland if the necessity arose, a policy hangover from that earlier period. The occupation of Ireland had not been a 'strategic imperative' then and would obviously have been wholly insignificant in a global nuclear war. US attitudes towards Irish neutrality during the late 1950s were rather ambiguous but ultimately Dwight D. Eisenhower held the view that: "If a nation wants to be neutral that's entirely their right and their business". As the decade came to a close, US relations with Ireland improved to such a degree that the latter was gradually able to emerge from its self-imposed political purgatory. By the early 1960s, after a period of debate within the US State Department, US opinion held that Ireland was not a neutral in the context of full EEC membership. Meanwhile, the US was strongly against Swedish or Swiss associate EEC membership because both countries "maintain that their neutrality was a matter of national policy and could be abandoned if they so chose". These countries did not apply for full membership because it would have breached their neutrality and thus stood accused of wanting to reap the economic benefits of the EEC without being prepared to pay the political price.

Lemass appeared to be more willing to sacrifice what was viewed a minority of those in power as Ireland's traditional policy of neutrality in the search for economic betterment. The US understood that Ireland was "not in the least neutral to the ideological issues involved in the East-West struggle". In fact, despite initial reservations, the US was generally 'pleased' by Ireland's application for full membership and hoped that Charles de Gaulle's veto of the UK would not dissuade the Irish government from its decision ultimately to fully participate in the process of European integration; therefore, the US remained strongly in favour of Irish membership.
US even went to the extent of persuading Germany, an ambiguous viewer of Irish neutrality in the context of European integration, to reevaluate its anxieties regarding Irish membership of the EEC. Such support did not preclude criticism of Ireland. At a news conference on 7 March 1962, Kennedy, was asked to comment about the positions of a number of nations who had come out publicly in support of "either nuclear free zones in different parts of the world or for a so-called non-nuclear club" - amongst the countries named as being part of this process were Brazil, Ireland, Sweden and a number of socialist countries. Kennedy said: "If you have a missile that can carry a bomb 5,000 miles, does it really make that much ... difference, if you don't have a bomb stationed in this area but you have it 5,000 miles behind, which can cover that area?" However, Irish-American relations were still very strong in this period. So, what about the other superpower's attitudes towards Irish neutrality and European integration?

When it came to defining Irish neutrality, the USSR was fairly consistent in its attitudes, Ireland was "only very rarely considered a neutral state". The USSR correctly perceived Ireland as a Western European nation that was highly antagonistic towards communism whilst holding that permanent neutrality and EEC membership were totally incompatible anyway. Ireland was not a 'significant case' in the determination of general USSR policy towards neutrality whilst its attitudes towards European integration were basically negative anyway. Ireland had been consistently vetoed by the USSR from attaining UN membership until 1955 because it did not possess the 'necessary qualities' to join. Basically, Ireland had very little to do with the USSR and vice versa; indeed, they would not have bilateral diplomatic relations until 1973, a move which had more to do with the basic realities of trade rather than with any considerations regarding neutrality.

The policies that Ireland would effect in the event of war were updated in the period 1961-1964 and it is interesting to note that it was not the UK or the US but the USSR - or Russia as it was inaccurately termed - which was potentially seen as the 'overrunning power'. Thus, if the threat of war was imminent, the Irish had decided that: "Steps will be initiated at a suitable opportunity for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. with which some method of communication will be necessary in the event of Ireland remaining neutral." As early as December 1960, Lemass had made the Irish position regarding the USSR absolutely plain:

... we do not profess to be indifferent to the outcome of an East-West conflict, nor present ourselves as neutral on the ideological issues. Nobody who knows our people, their deep religious convictions and love of freedom, could ever think of us as neutral or negative. We are clearly on the democratic side, and everyone, East or West, knows that this is where we belong.

One wonders how the USSR could even rarely have considered Ireland to be a neutral state:
acting independently, yes, but actually neutral?

Ireland was not seen as being in the same neutral category by the Austrians, Finns, Swedes or Swiss either and was at pains not to model itself as such. As has been stated, Ireland's lack of vulnerability impacted on the defence budget. Nonetheless, though significantly less throughout the 1960s, Ireland's defence expenditure was comparable to that of Austria and Finland by 1971, both of which also suffered from economic marginalisation and peripherality; it was also half that of Switzerland and a third that of Sweden. Therefore, Ireland's defence expenditure was not exceptionally different to that of other European neutrals and so did not differ from them in that respect. When Ireland finally joined the EEC in 1973 it regarded defence considerations as being way down the line. Could one then argue that Ireland accepted economic integration knowing that political integration might very well be in the realms of never-never? As Hanspeter Neuhold has argued for the other four neutrals, was Ireland not in a position "to convince a would-be aggressor that the costs of invading and occupying their territories in terms of human casualties, war material, time and political prestige exceed the benefits so that he refrains altogether from attack"? Therefore, could one not argue that Ireland's view of neutrality was an economically perceptive one?

Hanspeter Neuhold has actually asserted that, as a matter of principle, Ireland does not belong to any military alliance but that it definitely parted company with the European neutrals when it joined the EEC as a fully-fledged member. He holds that "(permanent) neutrality spills over into the economic sector and prohibits ties with other countries in this field beyond a rather low threshold of integration"; thus, Ireland was not a 'permanent neutral' because permanent neutrality rules out such economic and political intimacy. However, this was not Ireland's main preoccupation as economics came before political considerations. Lemass held that Ireland did not have any:

... obligations under international agreements or arising out of traditional national policies, such as appear to arise in the case of Switzerland, Austria and Sweden, which need cause us to hesitate in accepting the authority of the institutions [of the EEC] ... If we can be satisfied that it will promote this country's economic welfare and progress we can welcome the prospect of European integration, even those of use who are not prepared yet to look further than the obligations which are specified in the Rome Treaty.

He had not consulted the other neutrals and did not seem interested in discussing the question of the EEC and neutrality with them; indeed, he felt that the Treaty of Rome did "not bear directly on the policy of a member State in the matter of neutrality". Of course, the lack of definition with regard to the political implications of EEC membership - notwithstanding the ramifications of the Bonn Declaration of mid-July 1961 - aided Lemass's ability to deflect questions on neutrality. So what kind of neutrality was Ireland actually pursuing?
At the UN, though regarded by the US as a ‘maverick’, Ireland was not particularly close to those members of the ‘non-aligned’ movement. In fact, even in the ‘heyday’ of Ireland's promotion of independence at the UN, that is circa 1957-1961, Ireland's voting record on all Cold War issues showed that it was in accord with the US three times as often as against her.36 Thereafter, Ireland's voting pattern was ‘solidly riveted’ to that of the US except on issues such as arms control and self-determination.37 Ireland generally agreed with the position of the US, but why is that such a surprise? Ireland's policy can still be seen as ‘independent’ in such circumstances but it was also pragmatic, realistic and Western-orientated. This was not even unusual for the other European neutrals. Figures available on UN votes cast on Cold War issues in the period 1955-1959, show that, in a voting index ranking the degree of support for the US position ranging from -1 to +1, Ireland reads +0.739; however, for the other European neutrals in the UN, this reads: Austria +0.783; Finland +0.174; and Sweden +0.607. These figures are depicted in fig.2 Voting index on Cold War issues: relative positions of the European neutrals at the UN 1955-1959.

**fig.2 Voting index on Cold War issues: relative positions of the European neutrals at the UN 1955-1959**

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<tr>
<th>USSR</th>
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This degree of support for US positions was therefore not ‘remarkable’ as Dennis Driscoll holds, but quite the opposite, that is totally expected. In relation to the EEC, he does make the fair point that for Ireland's admission to an "organisation which anticipates the ultimate political union of most of the European members of NATO seems somewhat incompatible with the independence suggested by the concept of ‘neutrality’/’non-alignment’". Nevertheless, he is clearly mistaken in using such data to argue that as "Ireland distances herself even from those European states which regard themselves as non-participants in either the Eastern or Western blocs ... it is clear that Ireland cannot be regarded as a ‘neutral’".38 This thesis does not hold up because from 1960-1972 Ireland was most definitely a neutral, though a neutral of sorts with certain peculiarities. It has been said that:

Neutrality is a policy decision - not an immutable principle. It is a decision more easily exercised the farther one is away from physical threat; or conversely, the nearer one is to it and intimidated by it. It is sometimes a luxury, sometimes a requirement.39
It may be true that successive Irish governments have adhered to a 'tactical neutrality' without apparent enthusiasm, that "Ireland is neutral by accident, not by conviction".\(^{40}\) Definitively, Ireland took a different path regarding neutrality and integration when compared to the one chosen by the other European neutrals. But that does not make Ireland somehow unneutral, it just shows that its experience of neutrality has been different to that of the other European neutrals. By tracing this evolution through the premierships of Lemass and Lynch an interesting and unique picture emerges as to what Irish neutrality actually meant.

**Lemass and the shift in foreign policy orientation**

So, how exactly did Irish neutrality change in the period dating from its EEC membership application? The simple answer is: not conspicuously, especially in the eyes of the public. However, the question of Irish neutrality and European integration has to be looked at in the larger context of a nation moving from the physical, psychological and intellectual isolation of war-time neutrality - in a time when the "Irish people found themselves strangers, and not very popular ones, in a strange post-war world"\(^{41}\) - to a position whereby Ireland was declaring itself ready to play a role in the future economic and political orientation of Europe. There were many instances indicating a shift in Lemass's views on what European integration would mean for Ireland but, although in the public domain, these utterances did not cause any feeling of urgency among the general populous. By tracing Lemass's public and private statements on NATO, it is possible to gain an impression of this new policy position.

As stated earlier, during de Valera's last government and in the early years of Lemass's own tenure, Aiken had been given a virtual free hand in determining Irish policy positions at the UN. The application of these heartfelt opinions is wistfully regarded as the "zenith of Irish independence of mind" when the Irish delegation at the UN "pressed neutrality as a virtue rather than a vice".\(^{42}\) Nonetheless, with regard to foreign economic questions, Lemass exercised the bulk of control and did so 'explicitly'. He had none of de Valera's 'inhibitions' about EEC membership announcing that the main responsibility for EEC entry negotiations had to rest on himself as Taoiseach.\(^{43}\) Therefore, he was able to gradually, but purposefully, redirect government policy on neutrality by making it 'negotiable', continuing to move the country in a direction whereby neutrality would be put aside as soon as was necessitated by developments in European integration. Aiken's position thus slowly became less relevant with his internationalism 'tolerated' rather than approved.\(^{44}\) Despite the fact that Lemass had little in the way of patience with the idea that Ireland should remain forever outside Western military alliances such as NATO or WEU, he was careful not to fully reveal the implications of his thinking.\(^{45}\) It was too early for such a bold move by an Irish government.
However, observers have shown that as early as 1959 Lemass was saying that if Western Europe was threatened in a conflict that "there would not be a moment's doubt as to the side on which our interests and sympathies would lie". Lemass adopted a much more 'pragmatic approach' to the questions of partition and neutrality when Ireland's application to join the EEC revived interest in these subjects; in so doing, he also questioned whether the traditional Irish interpretation of NATO was 'wise in the national interest'. Furthermore, Lemass argued that, although only latterly acquainted with the text of the NATO Treaty himself, he felt that if Ireland continued to insist that:

... the North Atlantic Treaty bears the interpretation we have put on it over the years, that it involves an undertaking to do nothing about Partition, to abandon our aims in respect of Partition, we can well be met with the argument that, in so far as we signed the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Charter of the United Nations, we have already abandoned our position on Partition. That would be manifestly absurd ... [Membership of these organisations] have never been held to mean that we have in any way abandoned the position we have taken in relation to the reunification of our country.

Lemass went one step further still when he told the *New York Times* in July 1962 that:

We recognise that a military commitment will be an inevitable consequence of our joining the Common Market and ultimately we would be prepared to yield even the technical label of neutrality. We are prepared to go into this integrated Europe without any reservations as to how far this will take us in the field of foreign policy and defence.

His view was the only opinion on neutrality that mattered; even Lemass's predecessor was rebuffed at this time. In October 1962, de Valera had said that neutrality was the 'constant national policy' and that Ireland would never allow a foreign state to use the country as a base. Lemass immediately contradicted de Valera when he announced that:

In the East-West conflict we are not neutral ... we have made it quite clear that our desire is to participate in whatever political union may ultimately develop in Europe. We are making no reservation of any sort including defence.

Therefore, European integration as a process suggested the constant "implicit, piecemeal attack on neutrality as a political issue" that was intimated in the introduction. Indeed, one can argue that, as far as Lemass was concerned, the economic arguments in favour of membership were so strong that he was prepared to compromise Irish neutrality, the actual method employed being its unremitting desanctification.

Lemass expended much effort in trying to persuade the various EEC members that his government did not view neutrality as an impediment to full membership. However, right from
the beginning of the application process, the Irish government was unable to convince the 'Six' that it understood and accepted the political implications implied by the Treaty of Rome Preamble which states that members are: "Determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe".53 Far from assuaging the doubts of the 'Six', the aide-mémoire circulated by the Irish government at the beginning of July 1961 only threatened to heighten them.54 A short, forthright statement supporting the EEC's political aims would have been more beneficial than the said aide-mémoire which, instead, concentrated on various envisaged economic difficulties that accession would doubtlessly create for Ireland. The Irish government's White Paper from the same period, on the evolution of the EEC, was another missed opportunity and did nothing to further knowledge of the political implications that consequent European integration would bring.55 The fact that the government did not appear convinced or convincing to the 'Six' was understandable. Lemass repeatedly stated that: "Our accession to the Rome Treaty would involve us in no specific commitments other than those set out in the Treaty".56 In the process the Taoiseach managed to elude questions on the continuously developing implications of membership. Thus, for example, in reply to a question about whether the retention of military neutrality was compatible with EEC membership, Lemass said that the "Treaty of Rome ... contains no provisions of a military character".57 It was no wonder then that the 'Six' were ambiguous about Ireland's credentials for full EEC membership.

The official Irish application for membership came at the end of July 1961 in the full knowledge that the UK was proceeding in the same direction. The EEC Council President, Ludwig Erhard, was informed that the Irish "Government fully share the ideals which inspired the parties to the Treaty and accept the aims of the Community as set out therein, as well as the action proposed to achieve those aims".58 Soon after Ireland's application was deposited it became clear that the 'Six', and the institutions of the EEC itself, had reservations. These apprehensions and qualms were centred upon doubts regarding Ireland's economic capacity to fully participate in the EEC and were primarily related to the stringent demands that would be necessitated by integration. The Irish had equated that the cost of EEC membership, between obligations and opportunities, would ultimately bring a favourable balance to the country. The 'Six', though, were unconvinced about Ireland's aptitude for full EEC membership. Previous Irish demands for concessions during the OEEC FTA negotiations only latterly served to raise severe doubts about Ireland's capability to assume its EEC responsibilities. However, economic propensity was not the only problem because the 'Six' also harboured political reservations. The EEC Council of Ministers consequently decided to exclude Ireland from its round of positive interim replies to the applicant countries in 1961.

In searching for an answer to this snub, the Irish government determined that the Council doubted Ireland's ability and/or willingness to accept the political obligations of membership. Of
course, these political obligations had not been overtly stated in the Treaty of Rome but had been developing in the intervening period. Accordingly, the government found that its application had stalled partly because it was not a member of any military alliance. Hence, one of the central questions being aired was whether Ireland would be ready to follow through with the ideals envisaged by the Council. Statements emanating from the EEC suggested that new "members would have to accept the political institutions of the Six" and "that only members of the Outer Seven who are also members of NATO qualified for full membership of the Six". The 'Six' were, generally-speaking, less obviously antagonistic. During a visit to Dublin in May 1961, the German Foreign Minister, Heinrich von Brentano, contradicted the sentiments emanating from the EEC:

Economic and political co-operation within the European Economic Community has nothing whatever to do with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and I am convinced that a number of countries which pursue a neutralist policy to-day can participate in the Common Market, and that this would have no effect on membership of NATO either directly or indirectly.

Two months later, the leaders of the 'Six' issued the Bonn Declaration which obviously envisaged some form of European political union, even if only in the long-term. The Irish government concluded that the problem was more to do with general perceptions rather than the actual Irish position. The Irish government actually stated that it accepted the Bonn Declaration, even if its members did not know what it really implied. Nevertheless, it did so because Ireland was in danger of being classified as a neutral in the same mould as Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland. To allay such fears the Irish Finance Secretary, T.K. Whitaker, and the Irish External Affairs Secretary, Con Cremin, were sent to the capitals of the 'Six' in September 1961 to explain Ireland's singular position. They were confronted with the argument that Ireland would not be suitable for full EEC membership substantially because of economic, rather than political, misgivings. Irish neutrality was not the bugbear of European integration.

Even still, Lemass continued to declare that Ireland agreed with NATO's general aims, the ideals behind European integration and the 'duties, obligations and responsibilities' that EEC membership would bring. Regarding NATO, Lemass said that it would be 'highly undesirable' to:

... give the impression in Europe that there is a public opinion in this country which regards membership of NATO as something discreditable. The view of the Government in that regard has been made clear. We think the existence of NATO is necessary for the preservation of peace and for the defence of the countries of Western Europe, including this country. Although we are not members of NATO, we are in full agreement with its aims.
Lemass accepted that EEC membership was only open only to nations that accepted the Bonn Declaration but ultimately he was not prepared to put any envisaged change in neutrality policy to the test by referendum. There was, after all, no constitutional need to do so but such a move would have at least constituted more open government rather than signalling the generally furtive manner in which Irish governments operated on the matter.

It was only in October 1962, after intensive discussions with the 'Six', that the EEC finally agreed to open membership negotiations with Ireland. This decision was greeted with relief prompting the Taoiseach to declare that there was no doubting Ireland's orientation:

99 per cent. of the people agree with my view that this country is anti-Communist and will remain anti-Communist ... There is no doubt that this Christian country is and will remain to be completely antagonistic to the Communist concept.

Lemass felt that Ireland's EEC application would ultimately present no difficulty but this development gave rise to false hopes and did not have time to mature into full negotiations. Following the French veto of the UK application in January 1963 - Ireland's application had not failed, it had been ignored - the government, after failing to make progress on constructing an interim arrangement with the EEC, left its application on ice and turned back to cementing its relationship with the UK. In reality, Ireland could not have joined the EEC without the UK's participation. The Irish government made tentative, initial inquiries nonetheless. However, it would not have been realistic for Ireland to take a step resulting in the erection of trade barriers between Ireland and its biggest market, the UK. Instead, the Irish government concentrated on constructing an Anglo-Irish trade agreement, resulting in the bilateral FTA agreement which came into effect on 1 July 1966, but this move should be viewed as an intermediate step in Ireland's stated desire to ultimately join the EEC. Less dramatic than its application to join the EEC, this new Anglo-Irish agreement indicated the immediate future direction of the Irish economy and acted as an important stepping-stone to what was being increasingly viewed as the inevitability of EEC membership.

Between February 1963 and September 1966 the question of EEC membership went firmly on the backburner because of these Anglo-Irish trade developments. Indeed, at one stage, Lemass had to reply to the affirmative in Dáil Éireann that Ireland still had an ambassador accredited to the EEC and that the 'ultimate objective' remained full membership. Whilst holding that the Treaty of Rome did not expressly state that the EEC would develop from an economic organisation into one which also encompassed military and political co-operation, Lemass had privately accepted, and indeed welcomed, the reality of this ramification. The underlying direction of European integration expected such a political development despite endless public assurances from Lemass to the contrary:
If we can be satisfied that it [the EEC] will promote this country's economic welfare and progress, we can welcome the prospect of European integration, even those of us who are not prepared yet to look further than the obligations which are specified in the Rome Treaty.  

In truth, Lemass had been fully cognizant of the ultimate implications of EEC membership but would only state that the political ramifications of European integration were something that would be dealt with when the time came. There were other important matters with which to be dealt. In January 1965, Lemass had met with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill, a manoeuvre which considerably helped to lighten tensions over Northern Ireland. The Irish government made further moves to widen its economic horizons - in preparation for eventual accession to the EEC - by joining the GATT in December 1967. Meanwhile, by November 1966, Lemass had resigned as Taoiseach. He was replaced - just as he had been replaced as Industry & Commerce Minister - by Jack Lynch. Ireland's economic and political alignment was firmly directed towards Europe - Lynch also regarded Irish neutrality as an "historically pragmatic rather than doctrinal neutrality". It would not be allowed to get in the way of constructing the necessary intimate ties with the 'Six'.

**Lynch and Ireland's entry into the EEC**

At the end of 1966 Harold Wilson declared UK intentions regarding the EEC; it soon became Lynch's 'earnest hope' that this would lead to Ireland's application being renewed. The Irish government attempted to join the EEC at the same time as the UK and, though unsuccessful in its quest for membership, Lynch was able to restate his government's position on neutrality and integration. Whilst confirming that the 'ultimate goal' was a united Europe, economically and politically, Lynch gave a ominous warning replete with hyperbole:

> I should like to emphasise that the political consequences of economic stagnation would, by reason of their much greater import, bear no relation to those arising from participation in the Community - and economic stagnation would be our fate if we remained outside a grouping which included our principal trading partners.

The EEC once again suggested that neutrality could constitute a problem regarding Ireland's application. Lynch responded by emphasising that the government had no reservations regardless of the political aspects of the Treaty of Rome. The Finance Minister, Charles J.Haughey, concurred by reiterating that Ireland totally accepted the political implications of EEC membership, including those aspects related to defence.

The boom effect of the 1960s and heightened expectations about Ireland's future prospects within the EEC were being reflected by increased industrial development, for which
the Irish government was prepared to pay any reasonable price.\textsuperscript{73} It had explicitly signalled its intention to escape economic dependence on the UK; this is depicted in \textbf{fig.3 Changing emphasis: Irish exports and imports 1960 & 1969 (percentages)}.

\textbf{fig.3 Changing emphasis: Irish exports and imports 1960 & 1969 (percentages)}

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1960</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>Imports</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>5.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>4.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>74.76</td>
<td>49.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18.24</td>
<td>32.55</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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\textit{Nota bene:} These percentages were formed from figures supplied in the following publications by the Central Statistics Office: \textit{Ireland: trade and shipping statistics 1961} and \textit{Ireland: trade and shipping statistics 1970}. The category 'EFTA' obviously does not include the figures from the UK. The most significant constituent of the category 'Others' was the US, whose relative figures for exports in 1960 and 1969 were 7.55\% and 8.24\% respectfully, whilst its relative figures for imports in 1960 and 1969 were 10.62\% and 8.90\% respectfully.

In 1969 Ireland was sending over 65\% of its exports to the UK, a fall of 9\% from the beginning of the decade. Despite the fact that the Irish timetable for EEC entry was being continuously put back, this diagram shows that Ireland was slowly orienting itself towards Europe and the wider world and that it was trying to influence the economic direction it was taking by sourcing from as diverse a set of countries as possible. This changing emphasis, away from the diaspora towards mainland Europe, has been termed "a triumph of geography over history".\textsuperscript{74} Nonetheless, Lemass had held that the:

\textit{... facts of geography cannot be changed by either the institutions or the rules of the European Community and it is certain that the proximity of the two countries will retain a situation in which the great bulk of our exports to and imports from Europe will be consigned to and from Great Britain.}\textsuperscript{75}

This situation still pertained under Lynch but there had been a steady shift in emphasis throughout the decade. This change did not proceed as quickly as it may have done because of various time-consuming domestic problems; nevertheless, the future pattern of Ireland's foreign economic policy had been established with 'continuity' the essential feature.\textsuperscript{76}

The future prospects of European integration were transformed with the sudden departure
of de Gaulle in April 1969, though Ireland acted cautiously to this development. But, by the end of the year Ireland's bid to enter the EEC had been reactivated. Once again European integration came firmly upon the political agenda. However, it was not by veering off into the sublime that Ireland would convince its European partners of Ireland's eligibility for EEC membership; at one point, Lynch had said:

... for Ireland is a part of Europe, not only by virtue of her geographical situation and the bonds of trade and commerce, but also by the shared ideals and values of fifteen centuries. Our friends in Europe are fully conscious of the part played by Irish scholars in the defence of these values at a dark moment in Europe's history ...

More practical steps than these would have to be taken. P.J.Hillery took over as External Affairs Minister in July 1969 after the election victory of Fianna Fáil but, like his predecessor, Lynch maintained a close interest in the subsequent membership negotiations. Significantly, Lynch had already declared, in relation to Ireland's application to join the EEC, that Ireland had never been "ideologically neutral". The Irish government's relationship with neutrality had changed though as Irish statesmen became more and more unwilling to even use the term 'neutrality'; for example, in July 1969 the Taoiseach said that he did:

... not think that the word 'neutrality' is relevant in the context of our membership of EEC. Neutrality would not be relevant in the context of our being attacked by anybody; we would defend ourselves. We applied for membership of these communities because we believed in the aims and objects and because we believed it would be in our best interests to do so. Being members of that community, we would naturally be interested in the defence of the territories embraced by the communities. There is no question of neutrality there.

Statements on European defence tended to obfuscate, rather than clarify, the issue and concentrated on unlikely eventualities rather than the reality. Lynch had declared that Ireland had no 'traditional' policy of neutrality unlike Austria, Sweden and Switzerland who had declared themselves to be 'permanent' neutrals; therefore, under the 1937 Constitution - Bunreacht na hÉireann - the Irish government had the freedom to make up its own mind regarding its neutrality in the light of the prevailing circumstances. No clear statement was being made about what that neutrality actually meant for Ireland as ambiguity became the order of the day. Hillery was able to say that Ireland had "never adopted a permanent policy of neutrality in the doctrinaire or ideological sense". So what kind of 'permanent neutrality' did Ireland follow, the impermanent kind? The language adopted by Irish politicians regarding neutrality was frequently and indisputably the language of double-speak. Discussion of the issue of Irish neutrality was avoided at all costs, European integration had become too important.
However, to enter the EEC, the Irish government had to amend *Bunreacht na hÉireann* and it was obvious that the ensuing referendum would be the only opportunity for those supporting the concept of Irish neutrality to make their voices clearly heard. In the process, though, they confronted most of the establishment and found themselves unable to convince the electorate that there was any viable alternative to EEC membership. Considering that their campaign was also in the face of Irish government claims about futurist, undefined defence commitments in exchange for immediate financial reward, it is easy to see how and why the views of the populace were influenced in the ways that they were. The majority of parliamentarians were in favour of membership and this was reflected in the referendum campaign and debate. Despite the best efforts of the opposition, neutrality was never an important enough issue to hinder the economic aspects of membership winning the argument. The two main political parties - *Fianna Fáil* and *Fine Gael* - headed the campaign supporting EEC membership while a divided Labour Party ended up attacking this movement. The contest was uneven with the economic grouping most in favour of entry being the farmers who campaigned vigorously for entry, whilst those against EEC entry comprised of what has been described as "the negligible and fragmented forces of the left". The government had not only had a ten year delay in which to ease any transition pains related to tariff reductions, but also had the same period to convince the general public that their attachment to neutrality was not necessarily endangered. Thus, the intervening decade, dating from the announcement of Ireland's intention to join the EEC in 1961 to the referendum in 1972, had helped to ease the public's affinity for neutrality to such a degree that it did not interfere unduly in the country's drive towards European integration. Neutrality was something that the government could not totally ignore but the economic importance of membership won the issue.

In discussing the Irish government White Paper of January 1972, J.J.Lee has pointed out that it dealt with the questions of neutrality and sovereignty in different ways. The loss of sovereignty was put bluntly, but he holds superbly, by effectively saying that Ireland could hardly lose what it did not have as the government could exercise little effective sovereignty in economic terms. However, he goes on to say that:

> ... there was no comparable disquisition on the nature of neutrality. Rather than entering into a discussion on the realities of international relations in this sphere, the White Paper contented itself with the cryptic, and sometimes disingenuous reminder, that "the Treaties of Rome and Paris do not entail any military or defence commitments and no such commitments are involved in Ireland's acceptance of the treaties".

Openness regarding the application was a cause of major concern for the opposition with accusations that Ireland's policy towards the EEC was a 'mystery' between the *Taoiseach* and the
External Affairs Minister with no one else privy to information. In fact, the whole debate upon EEC membership was pitched primarily at the material level and when polling-day came in April 1972, the country voted overwhelmingly in favour of membership with 83.1% of the electorate coming out in favour. In this context Patrick Keatinge does not view Ireland as one of the 'acutely politicized countries', as he says:

It is not that mass opinion was not given its chances; there was a referendum, preceded by a long campaign characterised by a high level of group and media activity. Why was the outcome not divisive in terms of party politics? Partly the answer is to be found in expectations of clear-cut economic advantage for a large agriculture sector ... Why did not the "loss of sovereignty" question have more impact in a country whose independence was more recent than that of Norway, whose idiosyncratic neutrality was unique in the Community context, and whose constitution contained an irredentist claim against another applicant to the Community? ... this ... can be largely explained by the established élites' assumption that Community membership was in the long term an escape route from an unwelcome bilateral dependence.

The importance of agriculture was fundamental to Ireland's decision to join the Community but as the 1960s progressed it was obvious that there were other economic advantages to be had as well. There would ultimately be a political price to be paid - including Irish neutrality - but Lemass and Lynch saw it as a price worth paying.

Ireland acceded to the EEC in January 1973 and Hillery departed for Brussels as the country's first EEC Commissioner. He was replaced as Foreign Affairs Minister by Brian Lenihan but within three months the government was out of office after Fianna Fáil lost the election. Garret FitzGerald, an ardent supporter of European ideals, took over the post in a new coalition government. As was the case during the 1960s, neutrality had been a peripheral issue during the referendum, economics had been the key. The government's position on neutrality, dating from its initial application, has been succinctly expressed by Trevor Salmon:

When it was expedient to express commitment to the European cause, or even to European defence, then this was done. When, however, such commitment was not seen as necessary, the Irish tended to withdraw to an emphasis upon neutrality and the constructive contribution that their non-involvement in military alliances allowed them to make. Although there certainly was ambiguity in the Irish position, one is left with the impression that they would have been prepared to do virtually all that was necessary on the political side, because of the perceived economic case for membership.

Lynch's government had publicly accepted that Ireland would participate in the defence of a fully integrated EEC but, in the view of the new Foreign Affairs Minister, the defence issue was unlikely to arise in the imminent future. Upon taking up his new portfolio, FitzGerald arranged a
conference with senior department officials and ambassadors. This took place in April 1973 and primarily dealt with what was perceived to be the evolution of Europe towards political unity. FitzGerald stated his view that, because of the relative slowness in the general process of European integration, the question of a European defence mechanism was still some way off. In May 1973, he declared "that an acceptable and exclusively European defence system is unlikely to emerge for some considerable time to come"; Ronan Fanning has remarked on the "anodyne [nature of such] assurances that as yet there is no proposal in existence for such a change in defence policy which would mean a major change of policy for any Irish government". The whole aim was to say as little as possible or, even when forced to do so, obfuscate the point being made.

Concluding remarks

What this paper is generally trying to say is that Ireland was distinguishable from the rest of Western Europe while, at the same time, in a peculiarly Irish way, it could also be identified with it. Unlike the other European neutrals, Ireland had applied for full EEC membership and expected a full voice in the future determination of political policy; therefore, Irish neutrality was "not of the same nature as theirs". The link between the EEC and NATO was indisputable but not sine qua non. Another conclusion that has been drawn was that Ireland placed a pivotal value on economic development and, by implication, European integration as EEC membership was a case of economic survival. This importance came before any pseudo/fundamental attachment to neutrality, an attachment that was clearly more deeply rooted in rhetoric rather than reality. Writing in 1978, Patrick Keatinge said:

... it is a simple historical fact that the western alliance has done without Irish participation for over twenty-five years, sometimes in circumstances a great deal more fraught than those of the late nineteen-sixties and seventies. NATO has required benevolent neutrality from Ireland, and that is what it has received.

In such circumstances, Irish non-participation in NATO was not necessarily a barrier to EEC membership because of Ireland's already intimate relationship with the West. Between 1960 and 1972, Irish neutrality had been by definition 'negotiable'. Irish neutrality did not encroach profoundly upon European integration. Throughout this period therefore, more than any other in the second half of this century, Irish neutrality had been significantly diluted. Irish neutrality has always been a policy of expedience and has never been doctrinal or traditional, from the Second World War to the Falklands conflict. Such expediences have, of course, invariably led to various consequences.

In conclusion, Irish neutrality did not unduly interfere with the process of European
integration but, in fact, was ignored or just glossed over when it suited Lemass or Lynch. John Lang correctly maintains that Irish neutrality has been a policy which has not been thoroughly considered or discussed since the Second World War when, quite obviously, circumstances were entirely different and decisiveness was an imperative.97 Trevor Salmon says that:

> It is clear that if NATO membership had been a prerequisite of Community membership, although it would have been a hard and bitter pill to swallow, Lemass personally would have done so, and would have tried to take the party and country with him.98

That decision never had to be made but the Irish government still went into the EEC with its eyes open to the political implications. Irish neutrality was anything but precise in 1973; it remains undefined and this has suited successive governments. One thing is certain because, as no country became a member of the EEC for the "good of mankind or for any other predominantly altruistic reason", so it was with Ireland which enthusiastically and willingly entered into a trading alliance where economic advantage and foreign policy were inextricably linked.99 It has been said that few countries have made so "heavy an emotional investment in the rhetoric of neutrality"; however, Irish politicians have made sure that it remains a subject that has not been conclusively defined, something that actually characterises the mind-frame of the Irish government.100

**Notes**

5. The term 'active neutrality' refers to Ireland's independent foreign policy that included the initiation of a global non-proliferation treaty, a commitment to peacekeeping and support for consideration of the position to be played by China in global politics; in many respects, Ireland's views at the UN accorded with positions consistently taken by Sweden.
6. The term 'military neutrality' essentially boiled down to considering how best could the Irish government further the state's improving, though inherently weak, economic performance whilst not making any unnecessary military alliance or defence commitments - such as NATO or WEU - though being prepared to do so if required.
13. McSweeney, "Out of the ghetto", 405-406/411. McSweeney also accuses Lemass of assuming that there was a causal link between Irish neutrality and economic depression and "that not only had neutrality caused poverty in the past but it would necessarily retard economic growth in the future and, in addition, it was immoral".
17. Salmon, "Ireland", 208.
22. The Department of State during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, "Administrative History of the Dept. of State Volume 1 Chapter 3 (Europe): Section C", Box #1, Administrative History of Dept. of State, Johnson Papers (JP), Lyndon B. Johnson Library Austin Texas (LBJ). Of course, the US did support Sweden and Switzerland's full EEC membership because it would conflict directly with their traditional neutrality but, obviously, had to accept the implications of Austria's peculiar constitutional position and the geographical situation of Finland.
23. Austria, Sweden and Switzerland finally entered into free trade agreements with the European Communities in 1972 but, because of its ties to the USSR, Finland once again could only conclude an even more limited free trade agreement with the EEC in 1973.
29. T.O'Carroll (D/T) to Secretary (D/EA), 14 August 1961, D/FA-P342, National Archives Dublin (NA); N.Nolan (D/T) to Secretary (D/EA), 4 September 1964, D/FA-P342, NA.
30. Lemass quoted in US State Department paper *Republic of Ireland* from 1964, Box #195, National Security File, JP, LBJ.
42. Salmon, "Ireland", 209; McSweeney, "Out of the ghetto", 405.
44. John A. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989), 150.
46. Keatinge, *A Singular Stance*, 25. Quotations taken from Norman MacQueen, *Irish Neutrality: the United Nations and the Peacekeeping Experience, 1945-1969* (New University of Ulster: DPhil thesis, 1981), 49-52. Two years later Lemass asserted that Ireland would be able to help Western Europe more by "support of the principles for which the free democracies stand outside NATO than within it" but this was said at a time when the direction the EEC was taking was not totally known.
47. Fanning, "Irish Neutrality", 36.
54. Irish aide-mémoire to the luxembourg government, 5 July 1961, D/T-S16877M/61, NA.
55. *European Economic Community* (Dublin: Government Stationery Office, 1961), D/T-S16877L/61, NA.
58. Lemass to Erhard, 31 July 1961, M6114/34, FO371/158220, PRO.
63. Driscoll, "Is Ireland really 'neutral'?", 56; Lemass speaking in *Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates* Volume 193 Columns 6-7, 14 February 1962. This statement was made in reference to a speech made by the Lands and Gaeltacht Minister, Michael Moran, to the Claremorris Chamber of Commerce on 5 February 1962 in which he said: "It has been made quite clear by the Taoiseach on different occasions that a policy of neutrality here in the present world division between Communism and freedom was never laid down by us or indeed ever envisaged by our people. Neutrality in this context is not a policy to which we would even wish to appear committed". Moran speaking in *Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates* Volume 193 Column 967, 1 March 1962.
64. Lemass speaking in *Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates* Volume 193 Columns 19-23, 14 February 1962.
65. Lemass speaking in *Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates* Volume 197 Columns 7-8, 30 October 1962. He later said that Ireland was not neutral in the sense of being pro-Communist: "In that case we are on one side and not neutral"; this statement was issued during a debate on the EEC in which Brendan Corish (Leader, Labour Party) was unable to


67. Lemass speaking in Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates Volume 216 Column 722, 10 June 1965; Lemass speaking in Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates Volume 221 Column 922, 3 March 1966.


70. Lynch speaking in Dáil Éireann, Dáil Debates Volume 226 Column 785, 8 February 1967.


73. Commenting on this increased industrial development in the late 1960s, Susan Baker has pointed out that the pressure on meeting the country's energy needs grew commensurately. The Electricity Supply Board looked for alternatives to what were limited indigenous supplies and began to examine nuclear power as an alternative to the country's growing dependence on oil. A feasibility study was commissioned in 1971 and plans for a nuclear power plant were drawn up. Although subsequent developments go outside the timeframe of this paper, the point Baker makes is that, in relation to Ireland's neutrality, one should bear in mind the question of a nuclear power policy and the relationship between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Indeed, this realisation was to form part of the campaign tactics utilised by those opposed to nuclear power. Susan Baker, "The Nuclear Power Issue in Ireland: the Role of the Irish Anti-Nuclear Movement", Irish Political Studies Volume 3 1988, 3-17. Of course, Ireland intended to join the European Atomic Energy Community when acceding to the EEC and would, in the process, be enshrining a nuclear policy that it had been at pains to avoid in 1958 when the US had offered some of its technology.

74. Keogh, "Ireland", 290; phrase originally taken from T.Desmond Williams.


76. Keatinge, The formulation of Irish foreign policy, 68. Most significantly there was the Arms Crisis of 1970 when two senior government ministers - including Haughey - were dismissed for their alleged participation in an intrigue to supply arms to nationalists in Northern Ireland.


82. Salmon, "Ireland", 212; Hillery quotation comes from the Irish Press, 2 December 1970.


84. Murphy, Ireland in the Twentieth Century, 149.


88. F.S.L.Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976), 597-598.


90. Garret FitzGerald, All in a life (London: Macmillan, 1989), 118-119. According to Dermot Keogh, the new minister "brought a new dynamism to the post ... [and] enjoyed a reputation for clarity of thought and high administrative competence unequaled by any other Irish politician in Europe"; his 'whirlwind' style gave Irish attitudes towards Europe a vibrance which was effectively translated into Ireland's stronger promotion of integration ahead of considerations such as neutrality. Keogh, "Ireland", 291.


94. Roy Foster speaks of Irish neutrality remaining a 'watchword' but qualifies this supposition by saying that the "significance of this may have been more psychological than political". R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), 570. Throughout the period 1960-1972 it had been indicated that, when the right opportunity came and the circumstances prescribed it, Irish neutrality would be allowed to fade away.


96. The Second World War and the post-war years had been marked by Ireland's peripheralisation; Ireland had been unwilling to join in the war and had been excluded from the reconciliation. McSweeney, "Out of the ghetto", 405/411. In reference to post-1973, the Falklands conflict had also led to a deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations which nevertheless rapidly improved upon a change in the Irish Government. MacQueen, "The Expedience of Tradition", 38.


98. Salmon, "Ireland", 211.
