Small States and (In)Security: A Comparison of Ireland and Slovenia

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This article compares the defense and security policies of two of Europe's smallest states: Ireland and Slovenia. The Irish military has a relatively small permanent force, based in part on their being sequestered from any major threat due to their island location, but there is also the precedent against a large military stemming from the nation's long occupation by the British military. The Slovene military evolved concurrent with the Slovene state: a small, homogenous entity that embraced Western institutions and values. Despite a relative lack of experience in democratic civil-military relations, Slovenia has tenaciously promoted its place in the world, and developed an active and professional military within a democratic state. This essay aims to add to the theoretical understandings of the major security decisions—especially with respect to the civil-military dynamic—that small states make. This comparison is key in understanding overall patterns of democratic governance and civil-military relations.

When compared to other states in the Northern Hemisphere, Ireland and Slovenia do not hold privileged positions in the defense and security realms, perhaps not meriting even a second glance. However, in a world of states that are interrelated through regional and global intergovernmental organizations, where the impetus for small-state participation is on the rise,[1] understanding how states react internally at key stages in the development of the security apparatus can deepen our grasp of the issues and concerns that buffet the smaller players in the international realm. Thus, this article seeks to describe the interplay of the international ambitions of two small and successful European states and the influence on their respective civil-military dynamics.

The research question that frames this comparative study is, What is the impact on the civil-military dynamic from Ireland and Slovenia's joining the EU and their association with NATO (in Slovenia's case as a member, in Ireland's case via the Partnership for Peace)? Though not perhaps explicit, the dependent variable is the civil-military dynamic, with the common dependent variable each country's commitment to

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[1] Simply recognizing the aggregate increase in the number of small states in proportion to large states demands the attention of both scholars and practitioners in the field of international relations and security studies. The World Bank estimates that there are fifty states that have a population of less than two million people, which is about 25 percent of the world's total number of states. See Swaminathan and S. Anklesaria Aiyar, "Small States: Not Handicapped and Under-Aided, but Advantaged and Over-Aided," *CATO Journal* 28:3 (Fall 2008): 449–78.

joining international security regimes. We expect that the militaries will be more re-sistant to changes than the civilian elite, with the net result being significant tension, at least in the early stages of the development of each nation's defense and security structures.

Theoretical Framework

Calling on the Weberian adage that the state exercises the sole monopoly over the le-gitimate use of force, this paper accords the military a privileged position over the other constituent parts of a modern state's security apparatus: intelligence agencies, police, and internal security services. The tension between liberal democracy's need for accountability and transparent civilian control over all state institutions and the military's need for autonomy and the development of an ethos sometimes distinct from the broader society it is intended to serve is subject to vicissitudes, but even in the states characterized by the healthiest form of civil-military relations, a tension always remains. As Born, *et al.*, remark in their work on democratic control over European militaries:

> Democratic control, then, is not only a matter of preventing the military from seiz-ing power. It is about aligning the goals of political and military leaders sufficiently that military interests do not overtake the broader societal interests. It is about not allowing the military to subvert democratic constitutional authority or to absorb a disproportionate amount of resources relative to other societal values and priorities, while ensuring that the military can and does fulfill its functions through the provi-sion of adequate resources.[2]

The body of theory, as suggested above, then refers to the interplay between (pre-sumably) military elites and the democratically constrained political elites who control their actions and institutions. As Barany notes, however, the military has access to a wide spectrum of options to pursue in the realm of their interactions with political in-stitutions that fall short of overt involvement in electoral politics, the most extreme being *coups d'état*. "Military influence," he argues, "the range of institutional behavior that falls somewhere between the extremes of violent *coups d'état* and the army's full compliance … has proven difficult to theorize about."[3] It is precisely this large and amorphous middle ground this article intends to address. Even the most superficial study of contemporary Irish and Slovene political dynamics show that their trajectory in all realms has been toward democratic liberalism, though exactly how this trajectory *in comparison* has affected the civil-military dynamic remains not fully understood.

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[2] Hans Born, Marina Caparini, Karl Haltiner, and Jürgen Kuhlmann, eds., *Civil-Military Rela-tions in Europe: Learning from Crisis and Institutional Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 4–5.

[3] Zoltan Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military: Military Politics and Institutional Decay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 10.

Civil-Military Relations and the Small State

The task of creating a responsible, capable military that has significant professional competency while remaining responsive and loyal to the polity that created it has been ruminated over since Plato's thinking on the subject. The body of theory, however, remained ill-developed until the twentieth century, when new avenues of discussion opened—particularly since the 1950s, a development clearly linked to the global carnage in the preceding decade and the rising importance of unprecedentedly large militaries in the emergent Cold War. The emergent debate, framed mainly by Samuel Huntington's *Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, focused on the United States as the major democratic state grappling with the *problematique* of civil-military relations. This debate has hardly been resolved. As Feaver notes in his contemporary work on principal-agent models of civil-military relations, "there are remarkably few deductively grounded alternatives that have sufficient analytical scope to challenge Huntington."[4] The lacuna in the literature is not a healthy debate over civil-military relations in general, but instead a detailed discussion of potential theoretical models for small states and their civil-military dynamic. This work aims to make a modest contribution by studying these relations as they exist in Ireland and Slovenia.

Small States: A Conceptual Orientation

The seemingly straightforward concept of a small state rapidly becomes muddied as concepts such as inter-subjectivity play themselves out.[5] The study of small states, Simpson notes, "is gaining unprecedented audience and interest in the academic community," due in large part to the end of the Cold War and the creation of small states in the wake of the dissolution of larger national constructions.[6] Indeed, as Jazbec argues, "there is general agreement that there is no satisfactory and acceptable definition of small states."[7] The great opportunities opened by this lack of definitional rigor, however, are mitigated by the practical considerations in case selection, which forces a decision about exactly what a small state is.

The most discernible characteristic that defines a small state is population size, with the World Bank arguing:

> There is no single definition of a small country because size is a relative concept. For instance, Simon Kuznets in "Economic Growth of Small Nations" used an upper limit of 10 million people. By this measure, 134 economies are "small" today.

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[4]   Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 4.

[5]   What one colleague terms the "small dog vs. large dog concept," where the small dog is not aware of its diminutive stature.

[6]   Archie W. Simpson, "Small States in World Politics," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19:4 (December 2006): 649.

[7]   Milan Jazbec, *The Diplomacies of New Small States: The Case of Slovenia with Some Comparison from the Baltics* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2001), 36; as cited in Simpson, "Small States in World Politics," 649.

Other indicators such as territory size or GDP are sometimes used. But population is highly correlated with territory size as well as with GDP; therefore, use of population as an indicator of size helps highlight small states' limited resources. By the same token, there is no special significance in the selection of a particular population threshold to define small states. Indeed, the Commonwealth, in its work on small states, uses a threshold of 1.5 million people.[8]

The use of this population barrier as a definition of what makes a state "small" is compelling because of its straightforward empiricism; those that fall on or above are large, those under, small. In the European context, the distinction between large and small may rely on even greater magnitudes. For example, as cited in Molis, "the distinction of small and large states may be based on B. Thohallsson, who attributes states with a population of 38 million and above to the large states of the European Union (the EU), and the states with a population below 17 million to small states."[9] As Table 1 depicts in its comparison of EU member states, this threshold creates large numerical discrepancies between small and large nations, potentially creating more significant roles for small states in supranational entities.

More compelling, though less concrete, is what Jean-Marc Rickli calls the "fourth generation" of scholarship on the definition of small states. Small states, in his contention, stem not from the geographic size or population, but rather "from the lack of power that can be asserted. Due to their lack of power, small states lack the power to set agendas."[10] This creates, then, a dilemma for states that have limited capacities yet desire to maintain their security. The list of options open to such states is short: develop *ad hoc* security arrangements or join a multinational institution. Due to the preponderance of the latter in Europe, the concept of small states in international organizations remains an important theoretical consideration.

Small States and International Organizations [11]

In some ways, the idea of small states in multinational organizations did traditionally hold some theoretical interest, but it was hardly relevant to important actions in the "real" world. However, with the proliferation of small states in the wake of post-colonialism as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these states have increasingly brought pressure upon and influenced global events, through their actions in the United Nations in general, but also through their partial membership in the all-important Secu-

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[8] The Commonwealth Advisory Group of the World Bank agreed to use the cutoff population of 1.5 million to distinguish small from large states in its report *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (Washington, D.C.: Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997).

[9] Arūnas Molis, "The Role and Interests of Small States in Developing European Security and Defence Policy," *Baltic Security & Defence Review* 8 (2006): 82.

[10] Jean-Marc Rickli, "European small states' military policies after the Cold War: from territorial to niche strategies," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21:3 (2008): 309.

[11] The authors relied heavily on the structure of Zlatko Šabič and Charles Bukowski's *Small States in the Post-Cold War World: Slovenia and NATO Enlargement* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), most particularly their framework of analysis laid out in the introduction.

Table 1: European Union Member States: Small and Large in Comparison [12]

	Population (in mln, by 2004)	Surface area (thousands of km^2)	GDP (in bn USD, 2004)
Small States			
Malta	0.4	0.3	5.4
Luxembourg	0.5	3	31.7
Cyprus	0.7	9	15.3
Estonia	1.4	45	10.9
Slovenia	2.0	20	31.7
Latvia	2.3	65	13.0
Lithuania	3.4	65	22.1
Ireland	4.0	70	180
Finland	5.2	339	184
Denmark	5.4	43	239
Slovakia	5.4	49	41.0
Austria	8.1	84	290
Sweden	9.0	450	340
Hungary	10.1	93	99.5
Czech Rep.	10.2	79	106
Belgium	10.4	31	349
Portugal	10.5	92	166
Greece	11.0	132	202
Netherlands	16.3	34	575
Large States			
Poland	38.2	324	241
Spain	41.0	507	986
Italy	57.5	302	1660
U.K.	59.9	245	2130
France	59.9	552	2000
Germany	82.5	357	2670

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[12] International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2005–2006 (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005); as cited in Molis, "The Role and Interests of Small States," 83.

rity Council. The role and influence of the small state has nowhere been as pronounced as in the EU, with the majority of the newest members falling into the small-state category.

Ireland and Slovenia: Institutional Choices and their Impacts

Ireland and Slovenia share several key similarities, making them ideal choices for comparison in that certain variables can be controlled with a degree of confidence. Both are parliamentary democracies with strong commitments to the protection of rights. Both states' populations are essentially homogenous. Both feature markets oriented toward neo-liberal principles, which have allowed for a relatively high level of per capita economic success.[13] Moreover, both Ireland and Slovenia have committed themselves to a vision of a unified Europe. As the cases will illustrate, however, this vision has not come without some internal tumult, particularly in the realm of civil-military relations. Each case begins with a broad overview of the most important political factors in its respective history, focusing on security-related issues. Following this is a discussion of the actual composition of the armed forces, and their animating structures and doctrine. The heart of each case centers on the civil-military dynamic at those critical moments of independence and the demands the alliances placed on each state. Lastly, the cases conclude with an analysis of this conflict and the convergence of civil-military dynamics. Each case is necessarily compact, and therefore depends on the research and analysis of other subject experts, which allows for enhanced analysis and treatment of the cases as emblematic of a larger class: small states in large supranational entities.

Ireland

Ireland is small state with a small professional Permanent Defence Force, which has 10,500 personnel in the Army, Air Corps, and Naval Service.[14] The civil-military dynamic in Ireland is, like much of Irish political culture, influenced by the history of Anglo-Irish relations, specifically the creation of the Irish Free State in the early 1920s and the civil war that followed. The Free State (now the Republic of Ireland) steadily expanded its autonomy in international affairs and was a staunch supporter of the League of Nations, which was seen as a defender of the rights of small states. Ireland

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[13] Ireland, for example, was touted as the "Celtic Tiger" for its stunning economic growth in the 1990s and early 2000s. However, with unemployment currently at around 12.6 percent and home prices for many Irish homeowners spiraling downward, there is significant contemporary introspection regarding its previous economic success. See, for example, "For Irish, E.U. May Stand for Economic Unity," *The New York Times* (4 October 2009); available at www.nytimes.com/2009/10/05/world/europe/05ireland.html.

[14] Department of Defence and Defence Forces, *Strategy Statement 2008–2010* (Dublin: Department of Defence and Defence Forces, 2008), 20; available at www.defence.ie/WebSite.nsf/fba727373c93a4f080256c53004d976e/a221c63d3721aa2f802573f400554af9/$FILE/Statement%20of%20Strategy%202008-2010.pdf.

has traditionally promoted the peaceful settlement of international disputes and, after acceding to United Nations membership in 1955, has contributed to UN peacekeeping missions on a regular basis.

The other factors that are important influences on civil-military relations in Ireland are its geopolitical location and its accession to the then-European Economic Community in 1973. Ireland is on the western periphery of Europe and, while not a member of NATO, was safely behind NATO lines during the Cold War, which allowed Ireland to maintain both a small military and a low level of defense spending. Ireland's membership in the European Union and participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy have greatly expanded the horizons of Ireland's foreign policy and increased the importance of security policy in Irish domestic politics. On the one hand, the state's neutrality policy has been maintained, while on the other hand, the security policy has been adapted to developments within the EU and Ireland has increased the level of security cooperation with its European partners.

Domestic Politics in Ireland

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, Ireland's two main political parties, have their origins in the Irish Civil War (June 1922–May 1923), which followed the treaty with Great Britain that created the Irish Free State as a dominion within the British Empire. Thereafter, party affiliation was handed down through families, and the relative weakness of the left/right party division resulted in the continuance of an insular political system.[15] Some seventy years after the end of the Irish Civil War, the predominant configuration in Irish politics remained an "attenuated radical [Fianna Fáil] versus moderate [Fine Gael] nationalist cleavage."[16] The legacy of the civil war dominated politics for decades because the leaders of the two sides in that conflict went on to make up the political elites of both parties for over thirty years.[17]

The political cleavage, the weight of history, and the sensitivity of issues related to national identity contributed to the avoidance of debates on neutrality and security policy.[18] Moreover, the neutrality policy has had the potential to complicate the lives of the leadership of both major parties in a way that would not be true if they divided over left/right issues, as is the case with the major parties in most other EU member states.

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[15] Patrick Keatinge, *A Singular Stance: Irish Neutrality in the 1980s* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1984), 100.

[16] Richard Sinnott, "Cleavages, Parties and Referendums: Relationships between Representative and Direct Democracy in the Republic of Ireland," *European Journal of Political Research* 41 (2002): 815. See also Richard Sinnott, *Irish Voters Decide: Voting Behaviour in Elections and Referendums since 1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 295.

[17] Michael Gallagher, *Political Parties in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 5.

[18] Brigid Laffan, "Ireland," in *The European Union and Member States: Towards Institutional Fusion?*, ed. Dietrich Rometsch and Wolfgang Wessels (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 307.

In the absence of critical analysis and serious political debate, the policy of military neutrality became over time a given in Irish public opinion, and the

> political parties have been reticent in tackling the issue of security cooperation, which is an inevitable concomitant of deepening European integration. The frequency with which politicians call for a "debate" on neutrality but indicate their own views only tentatively suggests a distinct nervousness on the issue, and possibly a perception that people's commitment to the principle is deeply rooted. However, it is true that the dominant parties have been moving to a more accommodating position on the issue of pan-European military alliances, while those parties which adopt an uncompromising policy on neutrality are weak in terms of electoral support, even if they are rather vocal on the issue.[19]

NATO, Military Alliances, and the Partnership for Peace

Ireland received in 1949 an informal overture to participate in the talks that led to the North Atlantic Treaty later that year, but rejected participation in a military alliance with Britain as long as the partition of the island remained. Neutrality was not cited as a reason for this rejection, and Ireland even offered to participate in a bilateral defense pact with the United States, which declined to consider an arrangement outside of the Atlantic Alliance. Ireland's location, as noted above, afforded it protection by NATO without the need to accede to the alliance. The current aversion to NATO membership, however, is not related to the issue of partition. Rather, this sentiment is based on opposition to nuclear weapons and to the automatic defense clause (Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty). Ireland's position is that its military personnel are deployed on a case-by-case basis by the government (and with the sanction of the UN Security Council).

The long road to Irish participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program demonstrates not only the Irish attitude towards NATO, but the divide between the two main political parties and its impact on the civil-military dynamic. Fianna Fáil, the more nationalist of the two parties, strongly objected to PfP when it was in opposition (December 1994–June 1997) despite the rather tepid interest expressed in participating in PfP by the Fine Gael-led coalition government of the day. The Fianna Fáil leader famously asked if the Fine Gael-led coalition envisioned foreign troops training in Ireland and if it would approve a return of British troops to the Curragh (a reference to the former British military headquarters in Ireland). While this was clearly an appeal to nationalist sentiment for partisan advantage, it was nonetheless in keeping with Fianna Fáil's political tradition and indicative of a distinct strain in Irish political culture. The mistake that would haunt Fianna Fáil after returning to government, however, was the call for a referendum on whether to join PfP.

Fianna Fáil returned to government in June 1997; in January 1999, citing changes in the program, the party reversed its position on PfP, and also on the need for a refer-

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[19] John Coakley, "Society and Political Culture," in *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, ed. John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (London: Routledge, 1999), 63.

endum. The opposition parties were critical of the government's reversal on PfP participation, and frequently cited Fianna Fáil's comments on the program when in opposition;[20] at the same time, Fine Gael made regular, even impatient, requests to join as soon as possible once the government had revealed their intention to do so.[21] While they derided Fianna Fáil for having used the PfP for partisan political purposes, Fine Gael maintained the position (which it had held when its government was in power) that no referendum was required.[22] There was an obvious utility in membership given Ireland's long association and numerous deployments in UN peacekeeping missions.

The two main parties have achieved a consensus on most policy issues related to the EU, but the Irish political divide has contributed to Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael holding different positions on neutrality and security policy. This difference in attitudes, in turn, has been the major cause of Ireland's *ad hoc* approach to the acceptance of increased security integration and the hesitation over a common EU defense structure. The Labour Party—Ireland's third-largest party—for reasons unrelated to the nationalist political cleavage also continues to identify with the neutrality policy, which has likewise militated against a political consensus of the future of neutrality vis-à-vis the EU's aspiration for a common defense.

Training of Foreign Troops, EU Battle Groups, and Other Issues

There are a number of issues that affect the future of Irish security policy but do not regularly feature in the public discussions of the subject. Participation in expanded EU security operations, for example, would require the commitment of more financial resources for the training and upgrading of the military. No government, however, is likely to approve any significant increase in the defense budget when there is limited money for social projects, such as the construction of new hospitals.[23] The fact that the Irish military were not able over many years to increase their participation in EU joint operations was blamed on the fact that there had been no formulation of a clearly stated defense policy for years.[24] There was no need for the commitment of resources for defense during the Cold War, and by staying out of NATO Ireland may actually have avoided friction with the U.S. over its low level of defense spending.[25] The Irish mili-

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[20] Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern responded to such quotations with this or similar answers: "I respect the position of those who remain opposed. They are quoting many of my arguments." See Dáil Debates, vol. 499, 655–56 (28 January 1999). For the "Curragh" speech, see Dáil Debates, vol. 463, 1321 (28 March 1996).

[21] Dáil Debates, vol. 504, 625 (11 May 1999).

[22] Gay Mitchell, *Ireland and the Partnership for Peace Initiative: Our Place in the New European Security Architecture* (Dublin: Fine Gael, 1998).

[23] Interview with Deputy Gay Mitchell, Fine Gael spokesman on foreign affairs and Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs, at Leinster House in Dublin, Ireland, 5 September 2003.

[24] Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland: The Irish State and Its Enemies since 1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 344.

[25] Interview with Dr. Martin Mansergh, Fianna Fáil Senator and former special advisor to Charles Haughey and Bertie Ahern, in Dublin, Ireland, 4 December 2003.

tary has avoided any involvement in politics,[26] and yet the attitude of various governments has been that the Irish military should not be increased in size.[27] These factors (especially the budget issue) could have a more pronounced chilling effect on increased defense cooperation than the lack of political consensus on neutrality.

As of late 2009, the training of foreign troops in Ireland is still prohibited and remains a policy area in civil-military relations in which the political elite and the military leadership see the question from different vantage points. There is a significant isolationist mentality within the political elite, which "runs very deep within certain people in all parties."[28] While this sentiment has not been exhibited in the public realm, it has exerted influence over the formulation of policy, for example, the government's aversion to the harmonization of legal systems within the EU. This attitude might well have influenced the decisions against training exercises with foreign troops within Ireland. A Fianna Fáil-led government received the Attorney General's advice that the training of foreign troops in Ireland would breach the Irish Constitution's provision that only an armed force established by the Dáil may operate within the state.

Fianna Fáil had expressed reservations when in opposition over PfP bringing foreign troops into Ireland, which was in accordance with Fianna Fáil's longstanding position on this issue.[29] The Permanent Defence Forces, however, remain interested in such joint training opportunities, and uncertainty exists as to whether the advice given to the government by the Attorney General was intended to represent a legally binding decision, or merely to provide political cover.[30] The Fianna Fáil–Progressive Democrats coalition government also sent a negative message politically by attaching a declaration on the subject of training within Ireland to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) negotiated for the ESDP. In addition, no SOFA has been agreed with PfP as of this writing (2009)—a failure that is viewed by the Irish military as a wholly political decision—which has allowed the government to minimize discussion of the PfP and to keep the program out of the headlines.

The participation of the military in training outside of Ireland was delayed for similar review by the Attorney General. The government had expressed concern in 2005 that Article 2 of the Defence Act contained no provision for the government to send personnel abroad for such training, while the military pointed out that the act did not forbid it. The Defence (Amendment) Act 2006 authorized the Irish military to en-

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[26] Ray Murphy, "Ireland, Peacekeeping and Defence Policy: Challenges and Opportunities," in *Ireland in International Affairs: Interests, Institutions and Identities, Essays in Honour of Professor N.P. Keatinge, FTCD, MRIA*, ed. Ben Tonra and Eilís Ward (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2002), 25.

[27] O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland,* 344.

[28] Interview with Deputy Pat Carey (Fianna Fáil), Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs, at Leinster House in Dublin, 2 December 2003.

[29] Eamon De Valera had, for example, sent a protest to the U.S. government when American troops were stationed in Northern Ireland during the Second World War.

[30] Interview with a senior officer of the Permanent Defence Force, May 2005; the rest of the paragraph is also based on this interview.

gage in overseas training and field maneuvers, and allowed for early pre-assembly and dispatch of contingents (a requirement for participation in an EU Battle Group). In November 2006 the Irish government approved the arrangements for Irish participation in the Nordic Battle Group, and two EU Battle Groups became operational in January 2007. Ireland participated in the Nordic Battle Group (NBG) for a six-month period that began on 1 January 2008.[31] The deployment of Irish personnel on standby with a battle group, however, is subject to the so-called "triple lock" process: government (cabinet) approval, Dáil approval, and a UN mandate. The need for UN authorization has been criticized as inconsistent with the vision of a rapid reaction force, but it remains the position of the Irish government.

Slovenia

As a country of some two million people, mostly ethnic Slovenes, Slovenia has an identity rooted in an interpretation of history that recognizes its maintenance of a distinct cultural heritage in the face of more powerful external forces. This history traces the Slovene people's history through the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the various iterations of a multi-ethnic state based on a Southern Slavic identity. When the opportunity to distance itself from all attempts at external control finally came in 1991, Slovenia's ten-day conflict against some forces of the Yugoslav National Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*, the JNA) led to the creation of an independent state. In the conflict's wake—and aided by the emergence of a much larger (and bloodier) conflict farther south)—negotiations to join the European Economic Community (the predecessor to today's European Union) helped to calm tensions and allowed for a peaceful withdrawal of the remaining JNA forces in October 1991. Grizold notes: "It is not surprising then that Slovenia entered independence and statehood in 1991 entirely without experience in defending itself or a vision of how to do so – widely regarded as a necessary condition of national sovereignty."[32] The almost universal recognition of Slovenia's status as an independent state allowed for an internal wholesale transformation of its political, economic, and social structures, which would have major implications for Slovenia's civil-military relations.[33]

The Slovene nation found itself for the first time in an independent and essentially homogenous state, though the rapid movement toward developing modern state structures was short-lived, as the military conflict in the other successor states from the dismemberment of socialist Yugoslavia prompted internal reflection from Slovenia's elites (and, presumably, the general populace) that defense could be ignored only at the

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[31] Department of Defence and Defence Forces, *Strategy Statement 2008-2010*, 14.

[32] Anton Grizold, "Slovenia's Defense Policy in a Euro-Atlantic Reality," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19:3 (2008): 116. Grizold was Slovenia's minister of defense from 2000 to 2004, and currently is the dean of the social sciences at the University of Ljubljana.

[33] Marjan Malešič, "Executive Decisions and Divisions: Disputing Competencies in Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia," in *Civil-Military Relations in Europe: Learning from Crisis and Institutional Change*, eds. Hans Born, Marina Caparini, Karl Haltiner, and Jürgen Kuhlmann (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 131.

peril of once again imperiling the state's existence. However, according to Grizold, the Slovene elite initially experienced difficulty in reaching consensus, especially as to clarifying Slovenia's national interests.[34] In short order, though, a two-pronged strategy of achieving concurrent NATO and EU membership emerged. This elite consensus held that Slovenia could not rely on the United Nations' collective security framework, noting that a small state in a tumultuous region needed more robust guarantees than the UN could provide.[35] Echoing this sentiment, Barany argues, "While NATO membership may not provide the kinds of tangible, long-term economic benefits that EU membership does, NATO accession is nevertheless a democratic milestone for the countries of Eastern Europe … a more important objective than EU integration."[36] With the external impetus of regional conflict and the internal ambition to consolidate its independence, in Slovene defense circles, NATO membership became the clear official priority.

Slovenia and NATO

After an initial round of defense-related changes prompted by the legislative foundations laid down in 1990–91, the 1994 Defense Act formally created Slovenia's defense organization, while the subsequent Law on Fundamental Development Programs (FDP) was aimed at creating a Western-modeled professional military from the various remnants of the Slovene defense forces.[37] This, coupled with Slovenia's entrance to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, prompted the Slovene military to adjust its force structure to meet NATO's strictures for entrance.[38] Despite significant Slovene lobbying (along with external support), at NATO's 1997 Summit in Madrid, only three Eastern European states were offered NATO membership: the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary. The nine states that still aspired to NATO membership—the three Baltic republics, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—then became participants in NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). After a series of annual reviews, during the 2002 NATO Summit in Prague, seven MAP members (excepting Albania and Macedonia) were invited to join the Alliance at the 2004 meeting.[39] The hand-wringing and consternation within Slovenia over achieving an invitation to join NATO were over, although the debate would now look inward, particularly at Slovenia's civil-military dynamic.

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[34] Grizold, "Slovenia's Defense Policy in a Euro-Atlantic Reality," 116.

[35] For an overview and analysis of the United Nations' efforts in the former Yugoslavia, see Frances Pilch and Joseph Derdzinski, "The UN Response to the Balkan Wars," in Jeffrey S. Morton, et al., *Reflections on the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break-up of Yugoslavia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004), 93–118.

[36] Zoltan Barany, "NATO's Peaceful Advance," *Journal of Democracy* 15:1 (2004): 63.

[37] Grizold, "Slovenia's Defense Policy in a Euro-Atlantic Reality," 117–18.

[38] PfP's intent is to prepare and assess NATO aspirants, focusing on a state's political developments as well as commitments to military modernization. For an official explanation, see NATO's website at www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm.

[39] Barany, "NATO's Peaceful Advance," 68.

Slovenia's Defense Framework [40]

Reflective of the struggles of the militaries of most developed countries, in the first years of independence Slovenia faced a variety of hurdles, with military recruitment and staffing being two of the most contentious. Unique in comparison to the other states that were spawned out of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia had a low number of professional military men, which forced it to fill its ranks with conscripts. The elimination of conscription and raising education requirements appear to have been successfully implemented; all active military officers are now required to have a bachelor's degree before earning their commission. As early as 2004, a senior Slovene defense official stressed that the Slovene military's goal is to have an entirely professional armed forces by 2010, to include 8,500 professional officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, as well as 5,500 reservists. [41]

Slovenia seems to have taken its role as a NATO member in earnest, in both word and deed. Grizold notes that:

> Since 2004, the military has been organized in full accordance with NATO conceptual and technological standards. Depending on their combat role, the troops are being divided into compartments for war fighting, support, war preparation, and leadership. The force's organizational structure has also been transformed. This involves two elements: a decrease in the size of the command structure corresponding to the decrease in unit size. This measure aims to correct past inefficiencies and address the criticism that the Slovenian military structure was bloated and "hollow." A second goal is to help the army fulfill its responsibilities and mission as a member of a collective security organization. [42]

NATO membership has prompted legislative changes, including laws allowing Slovene troops to be stationed abroad and permitting Slovenia to host NATO forces. Strategic planning is now consistent with NATO's baseline. Moreover, Slovenia participates actively in multinational operations, though it desires to contribute mainly in situations where it perceives that it has a comparative advantage, primarily in Southeastern Europe. According to the Ministry of Defense, 2,200 Slovene troops have participated in regional stabilization operations in the northwestern Balkans, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, coupled with the EU's assumption of leadership of the peacekeeping mission in 2004, Slovenia withdrew troops from Bosnia in 2005 in order to bolster its military presence in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Under NATO's auspices, in 2005 Slovene forces participated in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the International

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[40] Substantial portions of this section derived from Joseph L. Derdzinski, "Slovenia's Contemporary Defense Framework: What Implications for Theory?" *Slovene Studies* 1:2 (2003): 71–80.

[41] Interview with Milan Jazbec, State Secretary, Slovene Ministry of Defense, Denver, Colorado, 17 June 2004.

[42] Grizold, "Slovenia's Defense Policy in a Euro-Atlantic Reality," 120.

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the EU-led EUFOR, and in the UN's TSO presence in the Middle East.[43]

Civil-Military Relations in Post-Independence Slovenia

Slovenia's overall trajectory into democracy and economic prosperity belie the actual political vicissitudes that characterized its first ten years of independence. Particularly viewed through the lens of its civil-military dynamic, Slovenia had experiences that typify the post-communist experience. As Anton Bebler posits, the common characteristics of this experience include low levels of education and professionalism of military-related elites, endemic cronyism in personnel decisions, and corruption.[44] This manifested itself in what Marjan Malešič argues is "a specific meritocratic mentality, i.e., those who performed the key roles in the independence process were to maintain the predominant political positions in the period following the war, regardless of the outcome of the democratic election."[45] Hendrickson and Ethridge note the evidence of this lack of overall consensus (or temporal divide) between those who participated in the ten-day war and others, most importantly concerning NATO relations:

> … one gap of recent policy concern exists between the Slovenian General Staff and some civilian Defense officials. It is argued that the more senior military officials, especially those who fought in the 10-Day War, appear to be more ideologically conservative that the younger Slovenes, and demonstrate less interest in NATO's request for international engagement. A divide seems to exist between those who favor traditional deterrence as the primary national security strategy, and younger officials who are more favorable toward accepting a larger role in international military affairs.[46]

The institutional structure exacerbated tensions between the civilian political leadership and the military. The Slovene state adopted a parliamentary structure, with a prime minister as head of state, and a president, whose mostly symbolic duties include the titular role as commander-in-chief. The democratic practice of the bicameral legislature has rarely been questioned, although in the 1990s Defense Minister Janez Janša's tenure was criticized as subverting the institutional-legal structures that had been put in place to promote democratic governance.[47]

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[43] Slovenian Ministry of Defense, "Defence System of the Republic of Slovenia," 2; available at www.mors.si/fileadmin/mors/pdf/ministrstvo/defence_system.pdf.

[44] Anton Bebler, "Civil-Military Relations in the Central-East European States in Transition," *Balkan Forum* (September 1994); cited in Malešič, "Executive Decisions and Divisions: Disputing Competencies in Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia," 132.

[45] Malešič, "Executive Decisions and Divisions: Disputing Competencies in Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia," 132.

[46] Ryan C. Hendrickson and Thomas Ethridge, "Slovenia and NATO Membership: Testing the Criticisms of Alliance Expansion," *Baltic Defence Review* 12:2 (2004): 119.

[47] Malešič, "Executive Decisions and Divisions: Disputing Competencies in Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia," 132.

As Slovenia entered into the second round of NATO enlargement in the early 2000s, when its political elite recognized that it would likely receive a formal invitation, Slovenia's democratic control over the armed forces once again came into focus. Emblematic of this scrutiny, the U.K. defense advisor to Slovenia's Ministry of Defense assessed in 2001:

> From an outsider's subjective viewpoint, Slovenia has the "feel" of a Western democracy. There may be some cultural differences but it is difficult to envisage that any form of non-democratic rule is likely to arise in the near future. In this context, the military may be unhappy with the low level of government funding and the strong control from civilians but I have never felt that any serious thought is given to disobeying or otherwise disrupting the processes of democratic oversight of the Armed Forces.[48]

Slovenia experienced tumult in its early years of independence, not so much in terms of reining in its military or promoting the transition to democracy, but rather in developing experience and expertise (and perhaps some fortitude as well) to further refine the praxis of democracy and derail potential roadblocks, such as recalcitrant defense ministers. Little evidence suggests that either the civilian or the military elite were hindrances both before and after NATO accession, suggesting that Slovenia as a small state followed the suggested pattern of seeking security in international entities, while its civil-military dynamic was pliable enough to adapt to internal and exogenous factors.

Summary and Conclusions

This comparison of the security policies and civil military dynamics of Ireland and Slovenia offers a view of two small EU states that have a commitment to contribute the services and expertise of their relatively small, professional armed forces to the maintenance of the international order. Both countries also clearly share the realization that they must cooperate with their international partners, both for improved training for their militaries as well as in cases where forces are deployed. Small states, as expected, are flexible as a result of the need to be part of larger, regional groupings and their lack of options that are available to larger states. Small states, on the other hand, are also able to retain control over their security policies (and, as was seen in the discussion of Ireland, over the deployment of its military personnel). Ireland's case is different from other states in a potentially significant way: the political elite in Ireland is less open to change in the form of new or increased cooperation and opportunities. The military is the sector that is more open to new and expanded involvement, while maintaining their professional, non-political posture.

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[48] Neil Grayston, "Democratic Control of the Armed Forces of Slovenia – A Progress Report," in *Civil-Military Relations in Post Cold War Europe* (Shrivenham, U.K.: Conflict Studies Research Centre, December 2001), 12.

The comparison of Ireland and Slovenia also shows that the security policies and security needs of small states vary based upon their histories, locations, and domestic political factors. Slovenia's geopolitical location argued in favor of accession to NATO, whereas Ireland's history with Great Britain made NATO membership unattractive, and its location made it unnecessary. Ireland's history and domestic political context have resulted in more tentative increases in security cooperation within the EU's ESDP, specifically retaining control over decisions to deploy Irish personnel, even those assigned to the Nordic Battle Group, on a case-by-case basis. On the other hand, Irish personnel (on 1 July 2007) were serving in six UN missions, eight UN mandated missions, and four OSCE missions. The cases of Slovenia and Ireland point to a conclusion that small states can be engaged international citizens, while at the same time retaining control over their security policies and military personnel.

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