

IRELAND 60 YEARS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

60 Éire ag na
Náisiúin Aontaithe
Ireland at the
United Nations
1955 - 2015

 Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy



IRELAND 60 YEARS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Marking the 60th anniversary of Ireland's membership of the United Nations

The story of Ireland's first year in the United Nations, 1955-56, presented by the Royal Irish Academy and the National Archives of Ireland, in association with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

1- Ticker tape of the telegram sent to Dublin announcing that Ireland has become a member of the United Nations, 14 December 1955 (NAI, DFA 6/417/130)

2- Ireland's flag is raised at UN Headquarters for the first time. Ireland's Consul General in New York Jack Conway stands second from the back, 9 March 1956 (UN Photo Library, 68476)

3- United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld welcomes representatives of the sixteen new members of the United Nations, including Jack Conway from Ireland (fifth from the right), 15 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 64941)

background- UN Headquarters, New York, on the shores of Manhattan's East River, 1960 (UN Photo Library, 190732)



1



*'Follow an independent line'*¹

IRELAND'S FIRST YEAR AT THE UNITED NATIONS

On 14 December 1955, as the 10th General Assembly drew to a close, Ireland took its place as the 63rd member of the United Nations. Sixty years ago this action began Ireland's tradition of principled, distinctive engagement on major international issues through the UN system.

Since 1955 UN membership has been a central pillar of Irish foreign policy. To mark the 60th anniversary of UN membership this booklet tells the story of Ireland's first year at the United Nations. It was a tumultuous time during the 10th and 11th General Assemblies filled with East-West Cold War tension, taking in the Suez Crisis, the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the birth of UN Peacekeeping.

Within this Cold War context, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) John A. Costello and Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave shaped Ireland's response to the challenges facing the globe. In doing so they firmly established support for the United Nations as a foundation of modern Irish foreign policy.

Today their commitment to the UN Charter and belief in what the UN can achieve is central to Ireland's outlook on international relations. Support for the United Nations remains a strong and distinctive signature of Irish foreign policy.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs 6/417/129/1, Conway to Murphy, 20 December 1955

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3



1- The Security Council votes in favour of admitting sixteen new members, including Ireland, to the United Nations, 14 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 64940)

2- Frederick H. Boland, Ireland's first Ambassador to the United Nations, presents his credentials to Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, 15 October 1956 (UN Photo Library, 159497)

3- Canadian Minister and primary architect of the 1955 expansion, Paul Martin, congratulates Ireland's Consul General in New York, Jack Conway, on Ireland's admission to the United Nations, 15 December 1955 (NAI, DFA 6/417/140)

background- The United Nations General Assembly in session, 23 September 1960. Ireland's Frederick H. Boland presides as the Soviet Union's Nikita Khrushchev addresses the meeting (UN Photo Library, 54488)

250/19

Ordinary Code

Cablegram from Washington Legation
Sent - 24 August at 15.35
Received - 26 August, 1946.

Estere Dublin.

335. United Nations Secretariat has forwarded report of Sub-Committee on Ireland's application.

Following are relative extracts:-

"The application was supported by delegates of the United Kingdom, China, United States, France, Mexico, Netherlands and Brazil. The delegate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics declared that he could not support the application of Ireland because there were no diplomatic relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Ireland."

"On the information at present available to it, the Australian Government would be prepared, at the proper time, to support the applications of Sire, Sweden, Transjordan and Afghanistan."

Full text being sent by airmail.

Hibernia.

2

Irish Government Service
Via Commercial Cable Company
Ordinary Rate

Secretary General
United Nations
Hunter College
New York

Sir On behalf of the Government of Ireland I have the honour hereby to apply for the admission of Ireland to membership of the United Nations paragraph Ireland is prepared to accept the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations paragraph Accept Sir the assurance of my highest consideration

Eamon de Valera
Minister for External Affairs

sent to 14 lines
2/8/46 dr



3

DEARG/
Hibernia Washington

354. We are asking Hearne go New York in connection with present discussions of candidatures for UNO. T. is still anxious we should be admitted and we feel that by personal contacts and discussions Hearne may be able ascertain and perhaps advance our prospects. Lester will be able help him in this. Have told Hearne advisable his presence in New York should appear to have some other object.

4

Estere

66 grs.
Coded & sent by C.T.O.
messenger. 12. o'c 9.11.46.

1946-1955: IRELAND'S NINE- YEAR WAIT FOR UNITED NATIONS MEMBERSHIP

On 2 August 1946 Ireland's Taoiseach and Minister for External Affairs Éamon de Valera informed UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie that Ireland was applying for membership of the United Nations and was prepared to accept the obligations contained in the UN Charter.

In the Security Council, Ireland's application, with others, became embroiled in Cold War politics. On 29 August 1946 the Soviet Union vetoed Ireland's admission. Moscow gave Ireland's wartime neutrality and lack of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union as its reasons. All other members of the Security Council, including Poland, supported Ireland's UN membership.

Although excluded from full United Nations membership, Ireland nevertheless played an active role in bodies within the UN family such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Cold War politics bedevilled Ireland's hopes for UN admission over the following nine years. UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld reported with regret in 1954 that half the states of Europe, including Ireland, were absent from the United Nations General Assembly.

Ireland's application remained live and with the Secretariat. By 1955 twenty-two countries, including Ireland, were on the waiting list for UN membership. There seemed to be little likelihood of the impasse being broken that year at the 10th General Assembly.

1- Ireland's Legation in Washington DC informs Dublin that the Soviet Union has vetoed Ireland's United Nations membership application, 24 August 1946 (NAI, DFA 6/417/33 pt1)

2- Telegraphic version of Ireland's application for United Nations membership, 2 August 1946 (NAI, DFA 6/417/33 pt1)

3- Even though Ireland was not a member of the United Nations until 1955, Irish nationals worked with United Nations agencies. Here Patrick Keelan from Dublin (left), a UN Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) Mining Project Officer, discusses a sample of Korean amethyst with mineral laboratory chemist Gerhard Lyckholm from Sweden. UNKRA's mineral laboratory tested ore samples to assess the commercial value of the deposits. Undated, but 1955 (UN Photo Library, 188774)

4- Telegram from Frederick H. Boland to Robert Brennan (Washington DC) showing Ireland's continued desire for UN membership, 9 November 1946 (NAI, DFA 6/417/33 pt1)

1

9. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish):
We shall now vote on the recommendation concerning Ireland.

A vote was taken by roll call.

Norway, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua.

Against: None.

The recommendation was adopted by 56 votes to none.



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3

You will be interested in being informed of the events of the past few days in connection with acceptance of Ireland as a member of the United Nations. Prior to our entry, I had been in close touch with the Canadian Delegation. Following the defeat of their Draft Resolution, the Soviet Union unexpectedly changed its position, and sixteen Nations were accepted as members. I consulted the Ambassador immediately, and I understand that he had telephone conversations with the Minister. As a result of the telephone conversations, the Ambassador instructed me to assume Ireland's seat at the General Assembly on Thursday morning, December 15th.

14 DECEMBER 1955: IRELAND IS ADMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Realising no other state would act, Canada, through its Head of Delegation Paul Martin, took the initiative to table a resolution at the 10th General Assembly to admit a group of new members including Ireland. Dublin had prior knowledge of Martin's plan and knew that the Canadian initiative stood a good chance of success, having American and Soviet support.

By early December 1955 Martin's resolution had 27 co-sponsors, virtually half the then membership of the United Nations. It was adopted on 8 December in the General Assembly. Ireland's Consul General in New York Jack Conway watched and kept in close touch with Martin.

When each proposed member was individually put to a vote in the Security Council, Japan's and Mongolia's applications were vetoed.

The non-admission of Mongolia and Japan left the fate of the package deal uncertain. On 14 December the Soviet Union removed its veto and proposed to admit sixteen new members to the UN. Each of the sixteen¹ was voted on individually and the Security Council decided unanimously to recommend Ireland's admission.

On 14 December the General Assembly held a special meeting to vote on each of the proposed new members. Ireland was unanimously admitted to the United Nations when its name was called.

Some days later as he passed through Shannon Airport Canadian Foreign Minister Lester Pearson remarked: 'You should have been there nine years ago, but it is not your fault you are late, better late than never'.²

1. Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka

2. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs 6/417/129 Pt 1, Murphy to Hearne, 19 December 1955

1- The General Assembly votes in favour of Ireland's admission to the United Nations, 14 December 1955 (UN General Assembly 10th Session, Official Record)

2- The Security Council votes for the admission of sixteen new members, including Ireland, 14 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 104053)

3- A section of Jack Conway's report to Dublin on Ireland's admission to the United Nations, 20 December 1955 (NAI, DFA 6/417/129 pt1)

background- The headquarters of the United Nations, New York, 1 July 1955 (UN Photo Library, 129540)

IRELAND TAKES ITS SEAT IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Jack Conway, Consul General in New York, became Ireland's first UN delegate when he took the country's seat in the General Assembly on the morning of 15 December 1955. First to congratulate Conway was Canada's Paul Martin who was 'particularly warm in his greetings'.¹

A telegram from UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld to Ireland's Minister for External Affairs, Liam Cosgrave, confirmed that the General Assembly, at its 555th Plenary Meeting, had, on the Security Council's recommendation, admitted Ireland to the UN. Hammarskjöld shared 'the profound satisfaction of the members of the United Nations with this decision'.²

Conway told Dublin that the Secretary-General 'welcomed me warmly'. So too did delegates from the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, India, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Reporting to Dublin, Conway emphasised how 'most of the members and particularly the Arabian-Asiatic and Latin American-Groups, expected us to play an important part in the activities of the United Nations'.³

Ireland would now 'play a full and fruitful part' in the UN. Its first General Assembly vote was in a secret ballot for Security Council membership.

The 10th General Assembly was drawing to a close. Conway's presence had been largely symbolic. In Dublin, plans were underway for a high-powered team, led by Cosgrave, to make Ireland's voice heard at the 11th General Assembly. This would prove to be a critical session, taken up with the Suez Crisis, the formation of United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), and the Soviet invasion of Hungary.

1, 2 and 3. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs 6/417/129 pt 1, Conway to Murphy, 20 December 1955

1- A section of Jack Conway's report to Dublin on Ireland's admission to the United Nations, 20 December 1955 (NAI DFA 6/417/129 pt1)

2- Draft of telegram sent to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld by Liam Cosgrave, Minister for External Affairs, on the occasion of Ireland's admission to the United Nations, 15 December 1955 (NAI, DFA 6/417/129 pt1)

3- Jack Conway, Ireland's Consul General in New York, who doubled as Ireland's Permanent Delegate to the United Nations from December 1955 to October 1956, 15 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 159495)

background- The Irish tricolour (third flagpole from right) is raised for the first time outside the United Nations Headquarters building in New York. Conway, in grey tweed overcoat, stands in front (UN Photo Library, 68477 and 77283)

1

African group which represents more than twenty votes in the United Nations, and that they were sure Ireland would have a lot in common with them, and they with us. He, of course, is particularly concerned about the Israeli-Syrian clash at the present time, and was anxious to sound us out on our position. He hinted that Ireland could, and should, accept a leading and active position among the anti-colonial small powers, since Ireland, although a western European country, is not a Western European colonial power, and is considered, because of her history, to be sympathetic to claims for self-determination. It is interesting to note that the Syrians and the Lebanese have created a position of influence in the United Nations greater than is warranted by their strength and actual importance by taking an active and constructive part in all possible aspects of U.N. activities.

Dag Hammarskjöld
Secretary General
United Nations
New York City
New York

2

Grateful for your telegram
informing me that
Ireland has been admitted
to membership of the United
Nations. Will send further
communication regarding
representation. Accept Sir
the assurance of my
highest consideration
Cosgrave Minister for E.A.

3





ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Misc. P. 2
Cmhr. S.16021/1

Extract from
G.C.7/120.

CABINET MINUTES
18. 5. 56.

Item 6.

TAOISEACH'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MARCH, 1956.
Report and recommendations.

Following consideration of a memorandum dated the 30th April, 1956, containing a report by the Taoiseach and recommendations following his visit to the United States of America in March, 1956, it was decided

- (1) that it be accepted, in principle, that Ireland must play a prominent role in the United Nations Organization and that everything must be done to ensure that our contribution is effective and likely to bring credit and distinction to the country;
- (2) that steps be taken forthwith to formulate the principles and, so far as possible, the details of the different aspects of our foreign policy, having regard to the matters outlined in the memorandum, and that, with this object in view, the Minister for External Affairs should, after a preliminary discussion of the matter with the Economic and Estimates Committee, prepare a draft statement of those principles and details, for early consideration by the Government;
- (3) that a separate permanent Mission should be accredited to the United Nations Organization, headed by an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary without any other functions, and with appropriate staff (including a Press Officer) and a suitable residence;
- (4) that the Ambassador so appointed should be the best qualified and most suitable person that can be secured for the post;
- (5) that the appointments referred to in sub-paragraph (3) above be made without delay and that, with this end in view, the Minister for External Affairs should, in consultation with the Minister for Finance, examine forthwith the question of the staffing of the Mission;
- (6) that the question of raising the existing Consulates at Boston, Chicago and San Francisco to the status of Consulates-General should be considered by the Economic and Estimates Committee;
- (7) that the following matters should be examined forthwith by the Minister for External Affairs, in consultation with the Minister for Finance:-
 - (a) the adequacy of the existing representation allowances paid to members of the staffs of the Irish Embassy and Consular Offices in the United States of America and
 - (b) the question of presenting a gift to the United Nations Organization;
- (8) that the Minister for Industry and Commerce should prepare, and submit to the Government forthwith, a

(4338) 3377. WLS377. D.69. 5400. 3-57. F.P.—G.28



DEFINING IRELAND'S UNITED NATIONS POLICY

Two keynote speeches in 1956 on Ireland's engagement with the United Nations established the institution as a foundation of Irish foreign policy.

In March 1956, Taoiseach John A. Costello spoke at Yale University Law School. He explained how Ireland's United Nations policy would be based on Christian principles, be strongly anti-Communist and pro-Western.

Yet within the speech was much that remains familiar in Ireland's twenty-first century foreign policy: Ireland would be a patient peacemaker, a neutral mediator seeking international justice and peace, always conscious of the rule of international law and working for the improvement of 'human affairs'.

Also in March, Costello met UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld to discuss the development of Ireland's UN representation. Hammarskjöld gave Costello a guided tour of UN HQ, and they lunched at Hammarskjöld's apartment.

Later, Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave outlined in Dáil Éireann the 'Three Principles' underpinning Ireland's United Nations policy.¹

Cosgrave emphasised first that Ireland unequivocally supported the UN Charter and second that it would 'maintain a position of independence' in the UN. Cosgrave's third principle indicated that Ireland would 'support wherever possible those powers principally responsible for the defence of the free world in their resistance to the spread of Communist power and influence'.

The 'Three Principles' had a Cold War context, but they contained themes central to Ireland's approach at the United Nations over the coming decades. Cosgrave's successor, Frank Aiken, also emphasised Ireland's independence in the General Assembly and its commitment to the UN Charter.

Ireland's fundamental policy was one of unequivocal support for the United Nations.

1. Dáil Debates, Vol. 159, 3 July 1956

1- A smiling Dag Hammarskjöld personally brings John Hearne, Alexis Fitzgerald, John A. Costello, Charles Murray, Joseph Brennan and Jack Conway on a tour of the UN Headquarters Building, 24 March 1956 (NAI, DFA Washington Embassy Series D22)

2- Taoiseach John A. Costello (left) pictured in the New York snow as Jack Conway (right) introduces Ireland's Ambassador to the United States of America John Hearne to the UN Chief of Protocol, UN Headquarters, 24 March 1956 (NAI, DFA Washington Embassy Series D22)

3- Draft Cabinet Minute 'Taoiseach's visit to the United States of America, March, 1956', 18 May 1956. The minute shows the impact of Costello's trip on the development of Ireland's UN policy (NAI, DT S16021C)

1

PROTOCOL
 OIFIG AN AIRE GHNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
 OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
 BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
 DUBLIN

Seen in hotel 18/10/56
 15/11/56
 B

Whereas the Government of Ireland has set up at the seat of the United Nations a permanent mission to maintain necessary contact with the Secretariat of the Organisation,

Now therefore we, Liam Cosgrave, the Minister for External Affairs of Ireland, have appointed and by these presents do confirm as permanent representative to the United Nations His Excellency Frederick Henry Boland, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

His Excellency Frederick Henry Boland is instructed to represent the Government of Ireland in all organs of the United Nations. He is also authorized to designate a substitute to act temporarily on his behalf after due notice to the Secretary General.

In faith whereof we have signed these presents at Dublin on the 8th September, 1956.

Liam Cosgrave
 Minister for External Affairs.



Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General, United Nations, NEW YORK.



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2

Liam Cosgrave
 Dr. M. White
 Secretary

PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS

31 OCT 1956
 23rd October, 1956.

Amint
 Secretary Department of External Affairs Dublin

I have to report that the Ambassador presented his Letters of Credence to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Monday 15th October at 3 P. M. Mr. Keating and myself accompanied the Ambassador during the ceremony and we were attended by Pierre de Meulemeester, Acting Chief of Protocol to the United Nations. After the ceremony, which was quite simple, the Ambassador and the Secretary-General conversed for about twenty minutes.

I enclose herewith copies of a press release issued by the United Nations after the ceremony.

E. L. Kennedy
 for Permanent Representative

Encl.: Copy of Press Release.



4

FREDERICK H. BOLAND

IRELAND'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

'one of our most experienced diplomats, a good debater, and entirely Irish in character'

Frederick H. 'Fred' Boland (1904-85) was Ireland's first Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Boland brought a wide knowledge to the role acquired over almost three decades working in the Department of External Affairs.

Boland had gained experience of international organisations at the League of Nations. As Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, he oversaw Ireland's engagement with the Marshall Plan and early steps towards European integration.

Appointed Ambassador in London in 1950, Boland moved to New York in the summer of 1956, presenting his credentials to UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld on 15 October of that year.

Boland's astute nature and consummate diplomatic skill made him a respected and influential figure at the UN. He was elected President of the 15th General Assembly in 1960.

Gaining both American and Soviet support for his candidacy, on his election Boland told the Assembly that he believed in justice and the rule of law as the surest guarantee of peace and security.

As President, Boland famously silenced Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev during an Assembly debate, slamming his gavel with such force that it splintered. Khrushchev sent Boland a case of wine to apologise.

In 1962, during Ireland's half-term on the Security Council which coincided with the Cuban missile crisis, Boland often sat in for Minister for External Affairs, Frank Aiken, at Council sessions.

Such was Boland's international prominence that he was rumoured in 1961 as a potential successor to Hammarskjöld as UN Secretary-General. After consulting with Aiken, Boland damped down the rumours, and remained Ireland's Ambassador to the United Nations until his retirement in 1964.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach S13750, Costello memo to Cabinet, 30 April 1956

- 1- Frederick H. Boland's credentials, signed by Ireland's Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave, as delivered by Frederick H. Boland to Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on 15 October 1956 (UNA, S/446/105/10)
- 2- Eamonn Kennedy reports to Dublin on Frederick H. Boland's presentation of his credentials in New York, 23 October 1956 (NAI, DFA 6/417/73)
- 3- Frederick H. Boland, prior to presenting his credentials to Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, 15 October 1956 (UN Photo Library, 159496)
- 4- Frederick H. Boland, as President of the 15th General Assembly, sits between Secretary-General Hammarskjöld and Under-Secretary-General Andrew Cordier, during a debate on the Congo Crisis, 17 December 1960 (UN Photo Library, 392644)

**SHEILA MURPHY**

(1898-1983) was until 1946 the Private Secretary to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. With a comprehensive knowledge of Irish foreign policy she was one of a small group of senior officials who advised Taoiseach Éamon de Valera during the Second World War. In 1955 Murphy was posted to the Irish Embassy in Paris. Such was her foreign policy experience that she was also placed on the General Assembly team. On retirement in 1964 as Assistant Secretary (ranking as Ambassador) Murphy was Ireland's most senior female diplomat.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

(1917-2008) joined the Department of External Affairs in 1944. In 1956 he was appointed head of its newly-established Political and United Nations Section. O'Brien favoured an independent and neutralist stance at the UN. A self-confident diplomat of verve and vigour, O'Brien later came to international prominence in 1961 as Special Representative of UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld in Katanga.

EAMONN KENNEDY

(1921-2000) entered the Department of External Affairs in 1943, serving on UN delegations from 1956 to 1960. Kennedy was appointed Ireland's first Ambassador to Nigeria in 1960. He was later Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1974-8) and thereafter served as Ambassador to Britain (1978-83) during a time of considerable strain in British-Irish relations.

PAUL KEATING

(1924-80) joined the Department of External Affairs in 1949 and served as Second Secretary at the Irish Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York from 1956 to 1959. He served on UN delegations through the late-1950s and later as Ambassador to Nigeria and to the Federal Republic of Germany. He was appointed Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974, steering Ireland through its first EEC presidency. Fittingly, Keating's final posting was as Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1978-80).

IRELAND'S DELEGATION TO THE 11TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ireland's first General Assembly delegation was led by Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave. It consisted of seasoned diplomats and many rising stars of post-war Irish diplomacy. In addition to Cosgrave and Boland, its most significant members were Sheila Murphy, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Eamonn Kennedy and Paul Keating.

The 11th Session was a baptism of fire for Ireland's UN delegates. It was punctuated by two serious international crises: Suez and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. The Irish delegates took these events in their stride, making prominent contributions to General Assembly debates.

opposite- The single most iconic photograph of Ireland's first year in the United Nations captures the Irish delegation at their General Assembly seats. (left-right) Sheila Murphy, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Paul Keating, Frederick H. Boland, Eamonn Kennedy and Liam Cosgrave, 21 November 1956 (UN Photo Library, 87885)

Ireland's response to THE SUEZ CRISIS

The crisis posed by the Anglo-French invasion of the Suez Canal Zone in the wake of the Israeli-Egyptian conflict in the autumn of 1956 shocked the world.

The invasion of Egypt was perceived, especially by the United States, as a neo-colonial act that could not be supported. World hopes for a peaceful solution were pinned on a firm reaction by the UN to these violent events.

The Security Council convened in Emergency Session on 1 November. Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN Frederick H. Boland and Dublin frantically exchanged telegrams, teasing out what line Ireland should take on the issue. Cosgrave's and Boland's thoughts were at one. The Minister emphasised that 'a small country like ours can only exist if international obligations are respected, including the vital obligation to seek a peaceful solution of differences.'¹

Ireland therefore condemned the actions of Israel, Britain and France in violating the UN Charter and using force. Cosgrave believed it was Ireland's duty to speak out when the Charter was flouted and 'when countries – even countries with which we have many ties – resort to war as an instrument of policy.'²

On 2 November an Emergency Session of the General Assembly passed a United States-sponsored resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Egypt. The following day it voted in favour of a Canadian motion seeking the establishment of a UN force to oversee the cessation of hostilities. Ireland supported both of these initiatives.

Faced with increasing international condemnation, including from their closest allies, Britain and France withdrew their forces with the help of this new UN undertaking: the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). With its creation, a new chapter in UN history began, and 'Peacekeeping', as it became known, would soon become a central pillar of Ireland's involvement in the United Nations.

¹ and ². National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission to the United Nations series 198, address by Cosgrave to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, 1 November 1956

¹ - Telegram to Dublin from Ireland's Permanent Mission to the UN capturing the immediacy and danger of the unfolding Suez Crisis, 31 October 1956 (NAI, DFA 5/305/173/2)

² - British soldiers stand guard on the pier at Port Said as Anglo-French forces evacuate the area, leaving it under United Nations control, 22 December 1956 (UN Photo Library, 141152)

³ - Smoke billows from Port Said following the initial attack on the city, 5 November 1956 (Imperial War Museum)

⁴ - Code telegram giving instructions to Ireland's Permanent Mission to the UN on the line to adopt on the worsening Suez Crisis, 1 November 1956 (NAI, DFA 5/305/173/2)

1

Machine code from UN Mission
Sent - 5.52 p.m. 31 Oct.
Recd. - 1 November, 1956

Estero, Dublin.

iii. From Mission Urgent.

Secretary General threatens resign and will do so unless Organisation acts. Possibility Emergency Session Assembly. Our view about this canvassed by several delegations including Scandinavian. Have replied no instructions but sure Ireland would support. Britain and France completely isolated excepting possibly Australian New Zealand abstentions. Canada would probably support Emergency Session. U.S.A. would certainly value support Emergency Session. Wire instructions.

2

4

Machine Code Cable sent 1 November, 1956, at p.m.

Hibernia, New York.

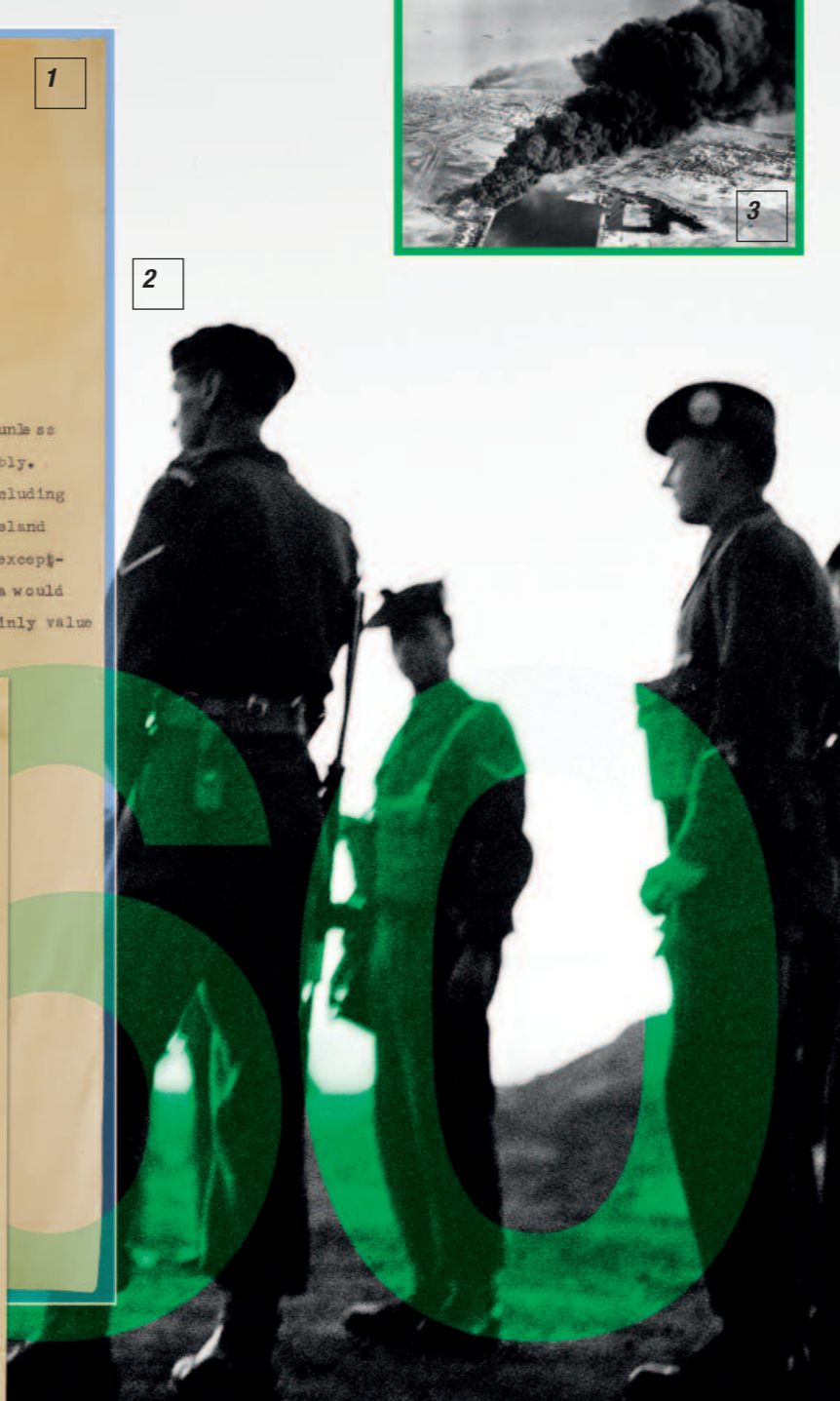
3. For Mission

Reference Assembly meeting view here is that you should support whatever Assembly resolution is likely to meet with general acceptance and will be directed towards cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of troops from Egyptian territory stop Without interfering with your discretion it is felt that you might support line taken by America and Canada stop If statement is called for you should strongly urge cessation of hostilities and return to peaceful negotiation.

Estero

Coded & sent by Mr. Paul
6.30 PM. 1-11-56 (153 group)

3



GUTHRIE 7181.
(Telephone)
UMRIRI THAGASTHA
(Reference No.)
S/502: 2150 9 29/11/57

AN ROINN COSANTA,
(DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE)
GEATA NA PÁIRCE,
(PARADEGATE)
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH,
(DUBLIN)
20th November, 1956.

1

Cable Received from Permanent Representative, New York, 2 after 9.30 p.m. 1st Nov. 1956.

Estero Dublin. 1. Your 1 Immediate for Secretary.

Suggest following policy Special Assembly Stop First Avoid prominent role in condemnation Britain France; Second uphold principles of Charter in voting; Third only speak if necessary and if so insist in moderate terms that principles of Charter must prevail Stop Foregoing assumes lead will be given by Americans not Russians Stop If otherwise would seek fresh instructions. Please cable views.

Hibernia

2

Personal.

Dear Sean,

On the instructions of our Minister we are at present examining the question as to what legislative and other action would be necessary before the Defence Forces or any part thereof could participate in a United Nations International Force such as that at present being sent to Egypt. To assist us in this consideration it occurs to me that the Irish Delegation at present attending at the United Nations Assembly could, perhaps, obtain quite a lot of very useful information in regard to the establishment and administration of the Force, including information as to the nature of the individual commitments of the participating countries and personnel. In particular, it may be possible for the Delegation to obtain information in regard to -

- (1) The exercise of command as between the different forces involved;
- (2) whether the personnel are on active service in accordance with their own domestic legislation;
- (3) whether each soldier continues to be liable to the military law of his own country, or whether any common code has, or is being, evolved;
- (4) court-martial proceedings and confirmation and review of sentences (including death);
- (5) disposal of persons sentenced by court-martial to detention, imprisonment, etc.;
- (6) pay, clothing and equipment;
- (7) financial arrangements, e.g. whether each country is liable for the commitments in relation to its own troops or whether such liability is met from a central U.N.O. fund;
- (8) civilian attachments, if any;
- (9) prisoners of war;
- (10) special requirements concerning -
 - (i) troops - strength, type (infantry, artillery, etc.), organisation and weapons;
 - (ii) rank of Commander of the Unit.
- (11) Accommodation and tentage;
- (12) responsibility for provision of medical treatment and evacuation of casualties and sick;
- (13) information on inoculation, special hygiene and sanitary measures.



'The effectiveness of UNEF in the Middle East conflict last year is recognised as one of the major triumphs of the United Nations in its ceaseless efforts to maintain peace and security in the world.'¹

UNEF and Ireland's first steps in Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is central to Ireland's United Nations membership. Since 1958 Irish Defence Forces personnel have undertaken over 66,000 individual tours of duty on peacekeeping operations. Each is a manifestation of Ireland's commitment to supporting the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

Peacekeeping emerged at the 11th General Assembly from initiatives to end the Suez Crisis. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) deployed to Sinai to facilitate the transition of authority in the Suez Canal Zone following the departure of Anglo-French forces. Ensuring the subsequent separation of Israeli and Egyptian forces, it remained operational until 1967.

There was uncertainty as to whether Ireland could actually contribute soldiers to UNEF if asked by Hammarskjöld and the advice of the Attorney General was sought. However, before Ireland could contribute to UN peacekeeping missions, an amendment to domestic legislation was required to allow contingents from the Defence Forces to serve outside the State.

On 4 December 1956 Ireland signalled its support for the UN's first peacekeeping mission by contributing \$26,600 to UNEF for 1957 (just over \$226,000 in 2015 terms).

Symbolically, the day before UNEF came into being, Cosgrave signed a formal declaration that Ireland 'unreservedly accepts the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations and undertakes to honour them.'

The realities of that declaration would begin with a 1958 deployment of Irish Defence Forces officers to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) and the United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) in the Middle East and over 6,000 individual tours of duty of Irish soldiers with Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) in Congo from 1960 to 1964. These pioneering missions began a tradition that continues to this day.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach S16113, External Affairs memo to Cabinet, 31 October 1957

1- Evidence of Ireland's desire for involvement in UN peacekeeping from its initial development. The first page of a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Defence in Dublin seeking information on UNEF, 20 November 1956 (NAI, DFA 5/305/173/1/2)

2- 'Uphold the principles of the Charter', Dublin advises Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN, Frederick H. Boland, during General Assembly debates on Suez and the formation of UNEF, 1 November 1956 (NAI, DT S16113A)

3- Departure of the third group of Irish Defence Forces officers for service with UNOGIL, 28 August 1958 (Furlong Photo Collection, in private hands)

4- Colonel Justin McCarthy (1914-60) of the Irish Defence Forces, Deputy Chief of Staff, UNOGIL, Beirut, August 1958 (UN Photo Library, 363129)

The Soviet Invasion of HUNGARY

In October 1956 the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, overthrowing the government of Imre Nagy. The crisis in Hungary began as the Suez Crisis broke and Suez temporarily overshadowed events in Hungary. The UN became the stage for international condemnation of Moscow, though all knew the UN could do little to influence events in Central Europe.

Ireland took a strong line on the Soviet invasion, joining Western condemnation of the USSR. When the General Assembly convened in Emergency Session on 4 November it voted by 50 (including Ireland) to 8, with 15 abstentions, for a US-sponsored resolution condemning the invasion.

Speaking in the General Assembly on 9 November Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN Frederick H. Boland highlighted Hungary's right to self-determination, and Ireland's empathy for small states invaded by more powerful neighbours. He also asserted the moral authority of the United Nations and described the Soviet action as a challenge to the values which the UN and the Charter represented.

Ireland was among the fourteen co-sponsors of a General Assembly resolution passed in early December calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Hungary and the despatch of UN observers to the country. In January 1957 Ireland co-sponsored a General Assembly resolution calling for the establishment of a UN investigation into events in Hungary.

In the context of the Cold War era, the politics of Ireland's actions on Hungary were obvious. Yet they also show that Ireland was beginning to take a lead at the UN as an active, pragmatic and constructive member, promoting international peace and security and seeking international consensus to preserve the rights of smaller members of the organisation.

1- Ireland and Hungary joined the United Nations on the same day in 1955. The photograph captures Ireland's Consul General in New York, Jack Conway, in conversation with Hungary's Deputy Foreign Minister, Károly Szarka, shortly after both states took their seats in the General Assembly, 16 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 147488)

2- 'Hole in flag - Budapest 1956'
(The American Hungarian Federation)

3- Events in Hungary and Egypt convulsed the 11th General Assembly of the United Nations and took up much of its time. This is emphasised by Frederick H. Boland in a 4 November 1956 telegram to Dublin, which is marked seen by Minister Liam Cosgrave. (The section in Irish explains that American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was incurably ill and would soon resign.)
(NAI, DFA 5/305/173/2)

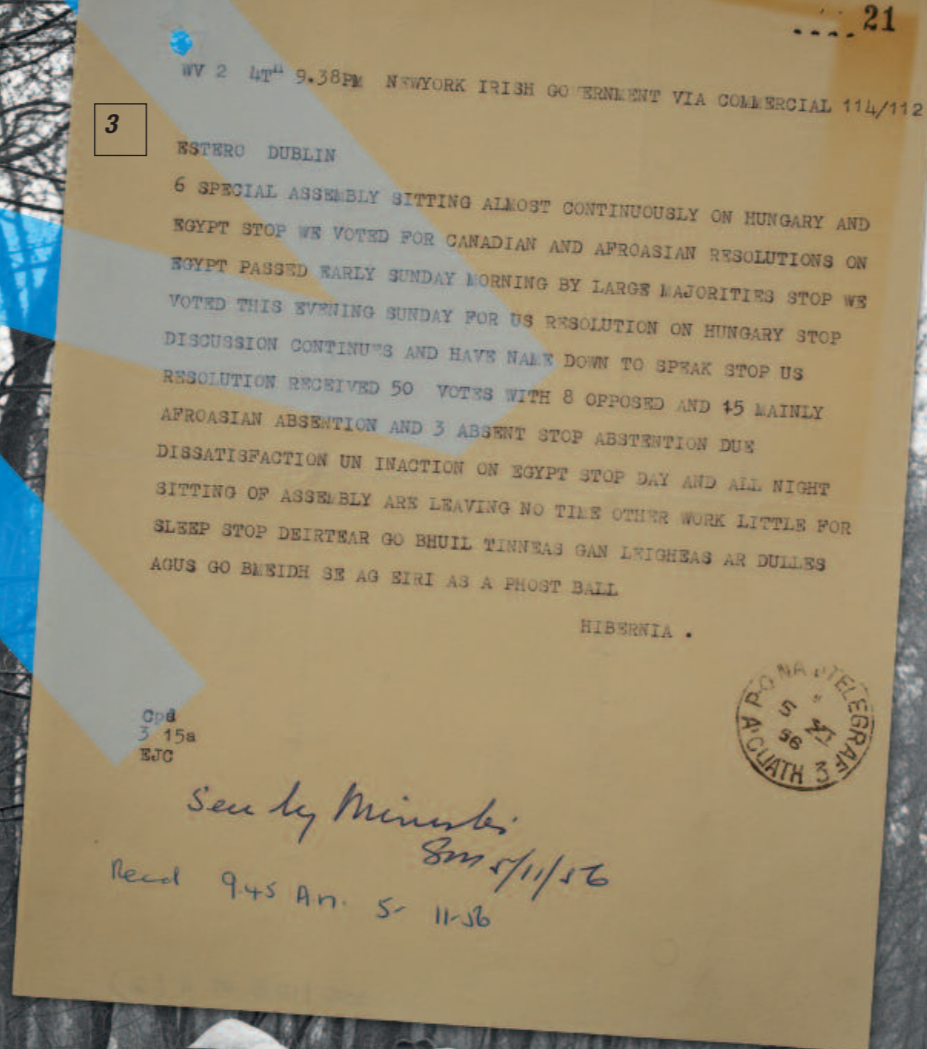
background- A group of Hungarian refugees walk along a snowy road soon after crossing the border into Yugoslavia, 1 March 1957 (UN Photo Library, 358004)



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ESTERO DUBLIN
6 SPECIAL ASSEMBLY SITTING ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY ON HUNGARY AND EGYPT STOP WE VOTED FOR CANADIAN AND APROASIAN RESOLUTIONS ON EGYPT PASSED EARLY SUNDAY MORNING BY LARGE MAJORITIES STOP WE VOTED THIS EVENING SUNDAY FOR US RESOLUTION ON HUNGARY STOP DISCUSSION CONTINUES AND HAVE HAD DOWN TO SPEAK STOP US RESOLUTION RECEIVED 50 VOTES WITH 8 OPPOSED AND 15 MAINLY APROASIAN ABSENTION AND 3 ABSENT STOP ABSTENTION DUE DISSATISFACTION UN INACTION ON EGYPT STOP DAY AND ALL NIGHT SITTING OF ASSEMBLY ARE LEAVING NO TIME OTHER WORK LITTLE FOR SLEEP STOP DEIRTEAR GO BHUIL TINNEAS GAN LEIGHEAS AR DULLES AGUS GO BREIDH SE AG EIRI AS A PHOST BALL

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See by Minutes
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Recd 9.45 Am. 5- 11-56

IRELAND, ALGERIA and decolonization

In the mid-twentieth century colonial rule was a reality for many African and Asian people. Decolonization increased after the Second World War. When Ireland joined the UN there were 76 members; this rose to 117 by 1965. The majority of the new members were newly-independent African and Asian states. Decolonization reshaped the UN as many European member states who were colonial powers faced these new members in the General Assembly.

Ruled by Britain until 1922, Ireland's attitude to imperialism was evident in its approach to the Algerian question at the 11th General Assembly. France, fighting a colonial war in Algeria, contended that Algeria was part of its metropolitan territory. Franco-Irish relations were strong, but this was a view Dublin, mindful of the partition of Ireland and its own past, could not agree with.

Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN Frederick H. Boland told the French delegation that Ireland's past meant 'it was impossible for us not to sympathize with the demands of the Algerian people for self-determination.' He tempered this by saying that Ireland felt 'the best solution of the problem was an agreement freely negotiated between the French Government and the people in Algeria.' Ireland took the view that while it was legitimate for the matter to be discussed by the General Assembly, the Algerian problem could not be solved at the UN, and when faced with a resolution on the matter voted accordingly.

Outside formal UN blocs, Ireland trod the middle ground regarding Algeria during the 11th General Assembly. It was a prime example of Cosgrave's preferred policy on decolonization at the UN: a moderate, balanced, dispassionate approach which favoured self-determination and an end to colonial rule.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, 6/440/11, Boland to Murphy, 14 January 1957

1- In a candid letter to Frederick H. Boland, Conor Cruise O'Brien discusses Ireland's position on Algeria at the United Nations and sets out his own view, 31 May 1957
(NAI, DFA PMUN 112)

2- Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken and Ambassador Roger Seydoux, Permanent Representative of France to the UN, talk at a break in a Security Council meeting during the Cuban Missile Crisis, 24 October 1962. Ireland served on the Security Council in 1962
(UN Photo Library, 143814)

3- Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken (centre), known for his supportive stance on decolonisation at the UN, with (left-right) Jack Conway, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Frederick H. Boland and Con Cremin, Idlewild Airport, New York, date unknown, but late 1950s
(University College Dublin Archives Department, P104/6021)



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ΑΝ ΡΟΗΗ ΖΗΤΕΑΙ ΕΑΣΤΗΑΑ
Department of External Affairs,

ΔΑΙΤΕ ΔΕΑ ΔΙΑΔ
Dublin.

31 May, 1957.

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Dear Fred,

Thanks for your letter of 9th May about Warnock's report and the disappointment of certain colonial countries about our attitude in the Assembly on the question of Algeria.

I quite agree, of course, that your statement on Algeria got a warm response from most of the anti-colonial countries but I think those who now express disappointment at our attitude are thinking not of the statement so much as of our voting which as you remember, could be interpreted as being a good deal more "pro-French" than our statement was. Sheila, who was in the first committee with me when the vote was cast - indeed it was she who cast the votes concerned - can corroborate that some Arab representatives including our Iraq neighbour felt that our votes, particularly on the Japanese resolution, were inconsistent with our statement which was regarded as "anti-colonial". Personally I feel that the decalage between our words and our votes on this particular question was rather wide.

I know I am regarded as something of a fanatic in this matter.

Incidentally you inquired not long whether we had any information about the development of the situation in Algeria with particular reference to what the F.L.N. and their friends might be prepared to accept. I am afraid we here are less well placed than you in New York to glean information about this. Apart from the Press reports we are dependent on the reports of Ambassador Fay in Paris which on the whole, understandably enough, tend to reflect French official and semi-official opinion. French Press reports tend to suggest that "pacification" is generally regarded now as having failed and it is fairly widely suggested that a Right Wing Government may, before very long, be able to propose some sort of deal which would at least be generous enough to split the rebels. As a personal opinion I do not think that the French Right has enough cohesion or sufficiently long term views to be able to produce anything solid enough to have a real impact on Moslem opinion; that is, of course, until the whole structure crumbles as it did in Indo-China. The news suggests that mass reprisals and terrorism against the Moslem population as such are more prevalent than they were a year ago, and the implications of this in relation to the presence of France in Algeria seem fairly plain.

Yours sincerely,

His Excellency F.H.Boland,
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations,
NEW YORK.

Conor

5/5/57

*Mr. Boland
Tosca
M*

Algeria file

Refce. No.



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AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN
EMBASSY OF IRELAND
WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 6, 1956.

His Excellency Frederick H. Boland,
Ambassador of Ireland to the United Nations,
Beaux Art Hotel,
North Building,
307 East 44th Street,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Fred,

I have today received your letter of the 4th instant enclosing a copy of your report of the 3rd December to the Department on the success of the Minister's speech in the Assembly on the 30th November (and the text of the speech itself) and a copy of our friend Stewart Jamieson's letter to you of the 3rd December.

We were all delighted here to read of the phenomenal success of the Minister's splendid speech. The reactions here from those who read the speech or that portion of it that was published in the New York Times of Saturday the 1st December were similar to those who had the privilege of hearing the minister in the Assembly itself. Heartiest congratulations to you all on the Delegation on this historic reentry of our country into the Society of Nations.

In the last paragraph on page 4 of your report to the Department of the 3rd December you refer to the representatives of the Algerian Nationalists in New York. I enclose herewith for your information a copy of my report of the 25th May last on Algeria containing an account of a conversation with Mr. Ait-Ahmed the Algerian representative in the United States when he called to see me on the 18th May.

I note also that you have arranged with the Greek Delegation to have a talk with you about Cyprus. I enclose in that connection a copy of a report which I send to the Department on the 1st June, 1956, recording a conversation on the subject of Cyprus with Mr. George V. Melas, the Ambassador of Greece in Washington.

Yours sincerely,

John J. Hearne

'On the side of peace, of justice and of charity'¹

Ireland's General Debate début

In November 1956, 36-year-old Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave led Ireland's first delegation to the General Assembly. A generation earlier, in 1923, his father, W.T. Cosgrave, independent Ireland's first Prime Minister (then known as the 'President of the Executive Council'), had led the new state's first delegation to the League of Nations.²

Addressing the General Debate at the Assembly on 30 November, Cosgrave focussed on the crises facing the globe and the role of the UN in responding to them. Drafted by delegation member Conor Cruise O'Brien, Cosgrave's speech contained a strong independent internationalist streak.

Covering Suez and Hungary, Cosgrave mixed a critique of colonialism with anti-communism. He asked the 'freedom-loving peoples of Asia and Africa' to recognise 'the true nature of Soviet imperialism'.

In comments critical of Britain, France, Israel and Egypt over events at Suez, Cosgrave recalled that 'the Suez Canal is not just an Egyptian interest and not just a colonialist interest: it is a world interest.' Focussing on the global impact of the crisis, Cosgrave emphasised that 'ordinary people throughout the world' were 'conscious of the terrible dangers which hang over us'.

Acknowledging that Ireland did not have 'infallible intuition' when it came to solving complex international problems, Cosgrave's address received loud applause and positive coverage internationally.

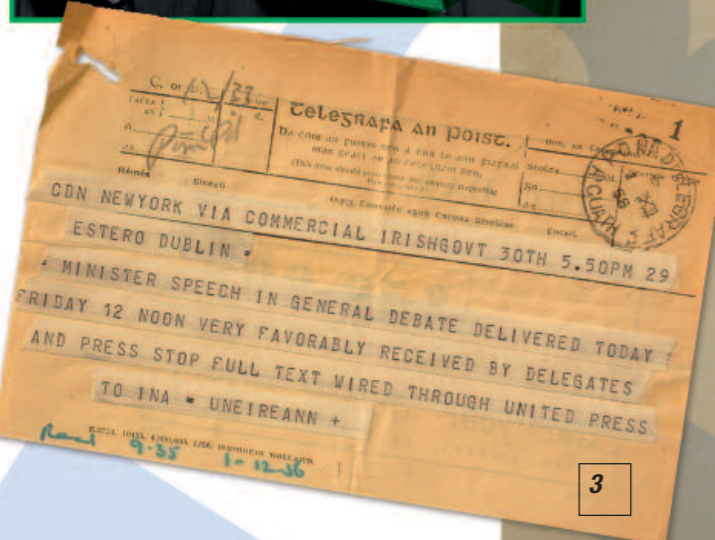
Cosgrave's speech remains relevant to Ireland's contemporary stance at the UN because it 'summed up the peaceful aspirations which are the object of passionate hopes of so many people'³ and these aspirations remain central to Ireland's foreign policy.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs 6/417/130/5, Liam Cosgrave, speech to United Nations General Assembly. All unattributed quotes from this file
2. Cosgrave would also follow in his father's footsteps as Ireland's Taoiseach (Prime Minister) from 1973 to 1977
3. *Irish Times*, 1 December 1956

1- The day before his General Debate début, Minister for External Affairs Liam Cosgrave hands over Ireland's instrument of accession to the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees to Constantin Stavropoulos, UN Legal Counsel, 29 November 1956 (UN Photo Library, 344191)

2- Ireland's Ambassador to the United States of America John J. Hearne writes to Frederick H. Boland and refers to Cosgrave's General Debate speech and the activities of the Irish delegation at the 11th General Assembly as 'this historic re-entry of our country into the Society of Nations', 6 December 1956 (NAI, DFA PMUN 112)

3- Telegram from Ireland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations informing the Department of External Affairs in Dublin that Cosgrave's speech in the General Debate was well received, 30 November 1956 (NAI, DFA 6/417/130)



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on cyprus file

A 'Golden Age' for Ireland at the United Nations

In 1957 Cosgrave was succeeded as Minister for External Affairs by Frank Aiken. The late-1950s and early-1960s became a 'Golden Age' of Irish engagement with the UN. This period included a half-term on the Security Council in 1962. It was the first of three occasions on which Ireland has served on the Security Council. Aiken was firmly committed to the UN, knowing it was a vital forum in which small nations like Ireland could voice their views.

Both Aiken's stance on the 'China Vote' and his work on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons illustrate Ireland's UN policy during this era.

The annual UN 'China Vote' had become a Cold War ritual by 1957. The United States insisted that the People's Republic of China be excluded from the 'China' seat, then held by Formosa/Taiwan. In 1957 Ireland controversially voted in favour of discussing China's representation in the General Assembly. To Aiken, a vote in favour of discussion was pragmatic, but it was attacked as 'a vote for Red China'. Aiken remained keen to demonstrate Ireland's independence at the UN, and the vote on China was a testament to this. This independent approach was also evident some years later when Ireland co-sponsored several resolutions on Tibet.

In the late 1950s Aiken highlighted the dangers facing the world from nuclear weapons. In a far-sighted initiative at the 1958 General Assembly, he advocated the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. He gained little support. Aiken kept the idea alive, and this persistence was rewarded in 1961 when both the USA and Soviet Union issued proposals for disarmament negotiations which included non-proliferation measures.

That same year, Ireland was the sole sponsor of a resolution on the need to negotiate an international agreement on nuclear non-proliferation. The General Assembly adopted the 'Irish resolution' unanimously in December 1961. Ireland's stance on non-proliferation and the 'Irish Resolution' paved the way for the groundbreaking 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In recognition of this pioneering role, Ireland was invited to be the first to sign the Treaty.

To this day Aiken's initiative remains a major UN achievement, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty the cornerstone for global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.



1- Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken and United Nations Secretary-General U Thant leave Iveagh House during the first visit of a UN Secretary-General to Ireland, 14 July 1962
(UN Photo Library, 366859)

2- At the General Assembly's Committee on South West Africa, Eamonn Kennedy (on the right) consults submissions, 8 July 1960
(UN Photo Library, 191229)

3- Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken with Permanent Representative to the United Nations Frederick H. Boland, Seán Ronan and Conor Cruise O'Brien prior to the opening of the 12th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 September 1957
(UN Photo Library, 75201)

background- Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken addresses the United Nations Security Council during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Ireland served on the Security Council during 1962. With Aiken are Mr. A. Quaison-Sackey (left) of Ghana, and Prof Mihail Haseganu of Romania, 24 October 1962
(UN Photo Library, 143673)

Ireland at the United Nations 1955-2015

'We have a part to play in world affairs; it is a small part you may say, but as every theatre-goer knows it is better to play a small part well than a big part badly'.¹

Ireland continues to use its membership of the United Nations to project Ireland's national values through the work of the organisation. These values include a strong commitment to international peace and stability, to UN peacekeeping, to human rights, equality and the rule of law; and to solidarity with those suffering from poverty, hunger and disadvantage.

Ireland plays a prominent role in the General Assembly and its Committees and has served three times on the United Nations Security Council (1962, 1981-2 and 2001-2). Ireland's soldiers, police and civilians serve within UN bodies and support for the international role of the United Nations remains central to the Irish public's vision of Ireland's role in the world. The belief remains, as Liam Cosgrave told the General Assembly in 1956, that the United Nations 'represents the best hopes of man on earth'.²

Ireland's entry into the United Nations in December 1955 signalled a step-change in Ireland's relationship with the world. In the decades that followed, Cosgrave, Aiken and their successors ensured that Ireland always sought to live up to the hopes of those fellow UN members who applauded Jack Conway in December 1955 and expected that Ireland would 'follow an independent line' at the UN.

1. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission to the United Nations series 198, speech by Liam Cosgrave to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, 1 November 1956
2. National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission to the United Nations series 198, speech by Liam Cosgrave to the General Assembly, 13 November 1956

1- Irish men and women have played their part on the staff of the United Nations. Here Emily Coll from Ireland of the UN Department of Public Information Visitors' Service Section briefs a group of visitors at UN Headquarters, 16 October 1958 (UN Photo Library, 383437)

2- Frederick H. Boland, Ireland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, converses with Britain's Permanent Representative Sir Patrick Dean before a tense Security Council session during the Cuban Missile Crisis, 23 October 1962 (UN Photo Library, 143452)

background- President of the Republic of Ghana Dr Kwame Nkrumah being escorted to the speaker's rostrum by the President of the 15th session of the UN General Assembly, Ireland's Frederick H. Boland, 7 March 1961 (UN Photo Library, 123753)2



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Text written and images chosen by Dr Michael Kennedy and Dr Kate O'Malley, Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Royal Irish Academy. Designed by Ger Garland.

front cover, main image- The Security Council meets to consider proposals to admit new members, including Ireland, 10 December 1955 (UN Photo Library, 68472)

front cover, inset- The telegram sent by Ireland's Ambassador to the United States to Dublin announcing that Ireland has become a member of the United Nations, 14 December 1955 (NAI, DFA 6/417/130)