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Irish Westernisation: A Resurgent Anglo-American Narrative in Irish Foreign Policy

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to assess the development and contemporary resurgence of an Anglo-American narrative in Irish foreign policy. This narrative looks to the English-speaking world as being Ireland's natural political and cultural hinterland. This unites the individually sovereign states of the English-speaking world into a unique international family of states. It is argued that the shared links of language, law and kinship, coupled with a shared commitment to economic and political freedom has delivered startling returns in the form of contemporary Irish modernisation, but that this has been largely in spite of, rather than because of, official recognition and support for an inclusive and pluralistic Irish identity.

The construction of this narrative is arguably sourced from two core realms. First, it sees Irish history as part of the warp and weft of a larger civilisational narrative. From the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century, the history of peoples on the island of Ireland may be seen as having been completely intertwined with that of the broader cultural family both within these islands and further abroad. Even as mass movements or radical minorities in Ireland sought to break free from an allegedly

‘alien’ English power and culture, the Irish people turned to other centres of the English-speaking world for refuge and became increasingly anglicised at home. This establishes the basis for claims that Ireland’s historic vocation is to the English-speaking world, regardless of (or perhaps because of) its problematic relationship with one of the states at the heart of that world. In that context this narrative also redefines the bilateral relationship with Britain as it focuses upon shared and common experiences. It also highlights what it would characterise as the absurd lengths to which a false differentiation between Ireland and Britain has been attempted and it reasserts the enduring realities of the interconnectedness of values and interests that unites the peoples of these islands and their far-flung kin across the globe. In order to do so, this narrative lays a particular stress on political pluralism within the island of Ireland and the need to respect multiple, different and hyphenated identities. This then lays the foundation for reclamation of what is seen as a long-suppressed British component of ‘Irishness’.

The second narrative source is rooted in an understanding of the Anglo-American world as representing modernity. From this source, policy actors establish a theme that speaks of Irish socio-economic success as being achieved only after an unhappy historical diversion into the backwaters of radical separatism and nationalism. It sees modernity as the key goal and looks west for its primary inspiration and socio-economic model– towards the New World, emphasising the liberal freedoms, individual rights and responsibilities that are seen to characterise it.

The implications of this narrative for Irish foreign policy underline key contemporary policy debates. This narrative, in part, rests upon a reappraisal of Irish historiography that is well established and ongoing. That reappraisal rescues the Imperial and British elements to Irish culture, history and society that were deliberately excised by the succeeding narrative of the Irish Nation immediately before and after the War of Independence. It seeks to reclaim identity space for those marginalized and written out of national accounts of Irish history and highlights what are claimed to be the pervasive, defining and binding sinews of language, culture, kinship, politics and socio-economic interdependence between these islands. It is perhaps most strongly reflected in historical and critical reappraisal of key events in Irish history; the Great Famine, the rise of romantic nationalism and a faux ‘Gaelicism’ in the early twentieth

century, the 1916 Easter Rising and subsequent War of Independence, the role of Irish servicemen in the both the First and Second World Wars and the Irish language movement. It has also made a crucial contribution to the language of pluralism, and multiple identities upon which much of the present Northern Ireland peace process has been founded, insisting in particular upon the reintegration of Britishness into the fabric of political and cultural identities on this island. More recently, this narrative has been engaged as a means of establishing a challenge to the orthodoxies of the dominant narrative in a by now key discursive dichotomy of 'Boston versus Berlin'. It also rejects what it characterises as a false parallelism between the Irish socio-economic experience and that of ex or post colonial states in the South, as well as being more cautious – if not critical – of the institutions of international multilateralism.

The rise of this narrative can be traced initially to a generation of professional historians dissatisfied with the orthodox and formalized presentation of the singular Irish Nation. Revisiting the key events and themes noted above, they demanded that account be taken of sources long ignored or stories written out of the official narrative. In a sense this gave rise to two distinct approaches. The first simply demanded that account be taken of the complexities and contradictions illustrated by the strong imperial and British strand in Irish identity and the need to qualify and pluralise that identity – to accept a more multivariate nature to the established narrative. The second, more radical approach was to challenge the established 'myth' of Irish identity, to unseat established orthodoxies and then to deconstruct what was seen as a perverse, dishonest and ultimately – in the context of violence in Northern Ireland – dangerous 'national' narrative. Where re-linking Irish identity to a British antecedent was too great a step, re-situating Irishness within an English-speaking, Anglo-American context was perhaps more palatable. Links to North America and the 'white' commonwealth had an immediate political and cultural saliency. It also offered an alternative model of socio-economic development, rooted in liberalism, and economic and political freedom.

Constructing the narrative of Anglo American State

The Anglo-American narrative is of comparatively recent vintage. It arises largely in direct challenge to the nationalist narrative and is, in significant part, a child of Irish historiography. Its challenge is to the foundations of the 'Irish Ireland' school of identity which one critic has characterized as being a 'self conscious attempt to re-Gaelicise an Ireland which had to all intents and purposes been incorporated into an Anglo-Saxon World' (Brown cited in Longley 1991:73). It was this very process which many Irish cultural and political leaders feared – theirs was a perception that Irishness was being swept away in tide of Anglicisation – with the consequence that Irish culture was becoming provincialised and ultimately derivative. (Longley 1991:56)

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was remarkable for the contemporaneous flowering of a wide range of cultural institutions in Ireland, all of which were engaged, to a greater or lesser extent, with the mission to recapture a defined and distinctively 'Irish' sense of identity. The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic League, the Pan-Celtic Society, the Irish National Literary Society and the National Theatre of Ireland (Abbey Theatre) all moved in the direction of creating a new, dynamic, often politicised and culturally confident sense of Irishness. In doing so – according to some critics – this politico-cultural revival also served to narrow the definition of what it was to be Irish, and (un)consciously to exclude those that did not fit the agreed vision. When this revival was then subsequently co-opted by the institutions of the new Irish Free State from 1921 (at least in part as a means of bolstering its own credibility and legitimacy in the face of its own citizens and internationally), it welded a very specific idea of what it was to be Irish with the State itself (Garvin 1996; FitzGerald 2005).

Critics insist that this move undermined a previously more open and accommodating sense of Irishness that had encompassed a wider range of cultural attributes and aspirations within the 'Irish' family. Moreover, the official project of defining the State in a distinctive 'Irish' fashion, had the consequence of creating something of a cultural mania for differentiating the state from its nearest geographical neighbour and its people from their erstwhile 'colonisers'. In addition, so as to subvert traditionally negative stereotypes, the Irish state and its new cultural establishment set about reifying these differentiated Irish values above those against which they were set;

privileging Catholic over Protestant, rural over industrial, the spiritual over the material and the local over the cosmopolitan.

In reaction, those cut out of the new definition of Ireland found themselves in a somewhat confused state (literally and metaphorically); they could contest the new definition – holding to their right to define themselves as Irish and contesting the marginalisation of their cultural values, or they could acquiesce – either by changing their own identification or by dropping beneath the cultural parapet of the new state.

A distinction here has then to be drawn between those marginalized within the new Irish State and those that now held power in that part of Ireland that remained within the United Kingdom. In Northern Ireland the initial strategy was one of contestation – holding onto a definition of Irishness that was comfortably contained within the cultural confederation of a single British state. However, with many more tools at its disposal and with – it must be said – a much stronger sense of mission in defining and promoting its sense of 'Irishness', it became increasingly difficult to sustain the claim of Irishness within a British context, to remain, as it were, an Irish Briton. In a sense, the Irish State won the struggle to define Irishness. For critics, the new Irish State had engaged in a nationalist cultural project that was designed precisely to distil an Irish Gaelic heritage. As a result of this success, political and cultural leaders in Northern Ireland became increasingly reliant upon the 'British' element of their identity to sustain their sense of self and to legitimise their presence on the island. This, of course, had the countervailing effect of accentuating their 'difference' and their minority status on the island.

For those then marooned within the new independent Irish state, contesting the dominant identity would have been much more problematic. While there was a substantial shift of population, a distinct minority remained that did not subscribe – and arguably could not subscribe – to the dominant definition of Irishness. To a significant extent their cultural expression and national experience simply disappeared below the national horizon and while their institutions and cultural forms remained, they were seen as being outside the framework of the new Ireland and either a relic of a bygone oppressive era or a political totem to the broadmindedness of the new Irish State (FitzGerald 2005:119).

Thus, throughout the 1930s and well into the 1960s the British-Irish identity on the island of Ireland was shifted in Northern Ireland to a more strident reliance upon its 'Britishness' and collective allegiance to the visible markers of the British state (Queen, flag etc.). In the Free State and later in the Republic of Ireland, by contrast, it over time British-Irishness became something of a curiosity – although in some quarters it also came to be seen as mark of aspirant class distinction that might be adopted through membership of certain clubs and institutions, in the pursuit of particular social activities and in the purchase of great houses and country estates.

Within this cultural community, it is also striking to note how North/South divisions and distinctions grew up. For some time, Northerners still looked to the great Irish institutions as being their own, but slowly and gradually they felt themselves loosing touch with a Dublin-centred institutional framework. They saw, in the passivity, decline and marginalisation of their southern brethren, their own likely future in any Irish State, witnessing in particular the demographic collapse of that population south of the border. For Southern Protestants that stayed, the picture was more nuanced. Unimpressed with the stridency and overt sectarianism evident in some aspects of the Northern Ireland State, they defined their own survival in terms of reconciliation with the State of which they were now citizens, accepting their minority position and in many ways retiring behind their own social, professional and cultural institutions. As Jennifer Johnston has put it, the overall aim for Southern Protestants was to avoid Rocking the Boat (Johnston cited in Longley 1991:18)

From the mid 1970s through the 1980s a new historiographical debate raged and has been professionally chronicled elsewhere (Brady 1994; Boyce and O'Day 1996). Its linkage with an emerging narrative of the Anglo-American state, however, is rooted in the fact that through its reassessment of Irish history and the identification of a more complex, nuanced, contextualised and contingent Irish history, it had the corollary effect of identifying and in some cases re-valuing a distinct British aspect to Irish history and identity, one which had been eliminated and/or marginalised from the official history and formal memory. That identity saw Irishness not as being antithetical to Britishness but standing alongside the constituent national personas of compatriots in Scotland, Wales, and the regions of England.

This new historiography, for example, reviewed the fact that many times more young men had answered the call of Irish Home Rule leaders like Redmond in 1914 to fight alongside their compatriots in World War 1 than had stayed at home with the Irish Volunteers – with even fewer still having been engaged with the 1916 rising and its guerrilla and/or civil war aftermath. It looked also at the way in which this Home Rule/Redmonite tradition adapted itself to the politics of more radical revolutionaries after 1916. Attention was also given to the sectarian roots of nationalism in its intersection with unionism and, crucially, it offered no privileged understanding or explanation for murder, fire-bombing, boycotts, ambushes, torture or terrorism regardless of the cause or source. However, the fact that the 'evils' of one side had been so carefully and even assiduously chronicled in traditional Irish history, meant that any rebalancing of moral accounts necessarily entailed a more critical and negative appraisal of Irish nationalism and nationalists than had been seen heretofore. Similarly, it seemed as though any reverence accorded to those many thousands of young men that laid down their lives in the fields of France and Belgium from 1914-1918 could only come at the expense of those that had laid down their lives in Ireland from 1916-1923 (Connolly 2004; 145). It appeared as though respect and understanding was a zero-sum equation. The cumulative impact of this scholarship, however, was to limit the exceptionalism of the Irish experience in the comparative historic record, to contextualise it within the age of empire and to underscore the hybrid and contingent nature of a resulting Irish identity – focusing especially upon its British componant.

In terms of Northern Ireland and the political conflict therein, this historiography – or 'revisionist' school – made a key conceptual contribution by first recognising and then reasserting the British element of the Irish story. This laid the basis of both a critique of the role of 'physical force' nationalism in Irish history as well as underlining the need to first accept and then to celebrate the pluralism of Irish identity. In the first case, it noted the extent to which 'both in Britain and Ireland, there has always been a strong intellectual tradition which asserts that home rule was the obvious basis for a peaceful settlement of the Anglo-Irish conflict, frustrated by selfish opportunism, physical force, and romantic nationalism (Bew 1999:739-740).' In the second case, revisionists broke the ground that allowed for the excavation and

reappraisal of a world of Irish identities of different national traditions –Anglo-Irish, Ulster Scots and Gaelic – within Ireland.

In more recent years, the Anglo-American narrative has been further developed and sharpened through the subsequent engagement of historical revisionists with another intellectual current – that of post-colonialism. From the 1970s and 1980s a new wave of scholarship in the social sciences and humanities began to query many of the modernist assumptions underpinning their disciplines; the pursuit of objectivity and evidence in research, the use of empirical methods, and, in sum, the appropriateness of the scientific method. While one writer has noted the facile ease with which 'the lethargic world of Irish academia caught on to the new trend just as it may have been on the wane…' (Smyth 2002:53) in Ireland, this movement hit the field of literary criticism sooner than many others. The challenge was crystallised by the Field Day Company based in Derry. Through its ambitious and groundbreaking publication programme, this group of writers, dramatists and intellectuals forged a new critique of Irish writing that was rapidly seen as relevant to other intellectual disciplines – most especially that of history.

In essence this challenge was rooted in a poststructuralist critique of truth and the scientific method. It was argued in a number of seminal Field Day publications that Ireland and the Irish condition might best be understood within a post colonial context that '…view the Irish past and many aspects of the present as negatively determined by British imperialism and look to 'Third World' thinkers like Fanon and Said for their interpretive paradigms' (Butler-Cullingford 2001:2). Such paradigms frequently rejected the bourgeois 'truth claims' of the written record (which by definition was the creation of imperial or locally co-opted elites) and instead privileged accounts of the 'subaltern' – the marginalized and the dispossessed, going so far as to dismiss the majority of historians for 'their pseudo-scientific orthodoxy' (Deane 1991; 91) This post colonial reading of history sought to make no claim of objectivity and rejected the very idea that 'the' history of anything could be definitively declaimed when, at best, all that could be done was to uncover competing historical narratives and understandings. This approach, of course, struck at the root of the revisionist project – even though there were some acknowledged points of synergy – such as uncovering

the ‘oral’ record of history and incorporating the lived experience of those marginalized from the great nationalist narrative.

The narrative of the Anglo-American state is also clearly rooted in a modernist project that sees positive social change arising from ‘…industrial technology, entrepreneurial skills and capital investment’ (McCarthy 2000; 14). The impact of such change is to give rise to a society that is argued to be marked by its meritocracy, equality of opportunity, the move from ideological to bureaucratic politics, broad industrialisation and the convergence of society towards a socially, politically and economically progressive norm. Ostensibly a-theoretical in its approach, it is criticised for its very liberal commitment to, and assumption of, human rationality, its de-politicisation of social issues and its privileging of the individual as consumer rather than as citizen. It is certainly true that as a corollary it posits nationalism as atavistic, pre-modern, authoritarian and chauvinistic.

The Whittaker/Lemass revolution from 1958 was the socio-economic modernist equivalent of the revisionists’ intellectual turn. As revisionists challenged the historical orthodoxies and began to craft what they saw as a rational picture of the Irish experience, Whittaker and Lemass undertook a fundamental reappraisal of Ireland’s socio-economic direction and undertook to bring modernisation to Ireland. The 1960s have thus become the defining era of Irish modernity with the contemporary Celtic Tiger sitting at the historical apex of Irish modernisation. (Connolly 2003)

It was the lost decade of the 1980s, however, that created the foundation for Irish modernism’s nemesis – post-colonialism. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as Ireland’s modernisation project appeared to first stall and then to spiral downward , post-colonialism and its associated economics of dependence and centre-periphery models of development appeared to offer a better explanation of the Irish condition. Ireland could not ‘modernise’ – it was condemned to a life at the periphery of the global economy, exploited by international capital simply as a base for low cost manufacturing and profit-laundering. As a result, the post-colonial thesis sought

lessons for the Irish experience from the developing world rather than from the 'West' and re-read the Irish historical experience through the lens of imperialism, occupation, usurpation and exploitation.

For the Anglo-American State narrative, therefore, the economic success of the 'Celtic Tiger' could be counter posed as the triumph of modernisation over Marxist-inspired post colonialism and dependency theory (Liam Kennedy 1992). From within this narrative there is no space for equating Ireland with more distant colonies and/or former colonies of the British Empire, since Ireland is today firmly identified as a prosperous member of the North Atlantic community. (Butler-Cullingford 2001:2; see also Howe 2000) 'In Ireland, revisionism and modernisation theory literally marked the coming of age of a new institutionalised and state-centred Irish intelligentsia who have sought to break away from what they perceive as the 'narrow nationalism' of the nineteenth century…' (MacLaughlin 1994:44) In its place, they looked to Ireland as part of a liberal, rational, English-speaking world, in fact 'the idea that Ireland is really an American country located in the wrong continent' (Dunkerly cited in Fagan 2002:135).

Irish foreign policy and the narrative of Anglo American State

Through this narrative, the very struggle for independence is problematic. Certainly, for majority nationalist opinion at the opening of the century, Home Rule within the Empire was the aspiration (Ferriter 2004:30 and Paseta 1999) whereas the ultimate settlement arrived at – the Irish Free State partitioned from Northern Ireland – may be viewed as '… not the triumph of the middle ground but its radical displacement' (Garvin 1996). Certainly, the contesting parties that emerged from the Civil War submerged the Redmonite tradition of the Irish Parliamentary Party – but this tradition arguably reasserted itself through the establishment of first Cumman na nGaedheal and its subsequent 1938 transformation into Fine Gael (Coquelin 2005).

From this narrative perspective, the extensive efforts made by the first two Cumman na nGaedheal governments to reconcile the new state within an evolving (British) Commonwealth of Nations saw their ultimate success in the 1931 Statute of Westminster. Extensive Irish diplomacy, working in concert with other like-minded

dominions had succeeded not only in gaining recognition for Irish independence but, in fact, in transforming the Commonwealth itself. The Statute of Westminster was the final legal recognition of the independence of the Dominions within the British Commonwealth, defining in statute the equal status of the Dominion Parliaments (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland and the Irish Free State) with that of the British Parliament. It also specified that these Dominions were under the authority of a common, shared Crown, and not the British government.

With the arrival into Government in 1932 of de Valera's Fianna Fáil – initially supported by the Labour Party but later governing with its own majority from 1933 – the Redmondite tradition of constitutional compromise was eclipsed. De Valera's preferred strategy of constitutional confrontation entailed a unilateral approach to constitutional reform – particularly with the promulgation of the 1937 constitution and an associated rejection of most of the constitutional provisions so painstakingly negotiated and bitterly defended by earlier Cumman na nGaedheal governments. In addition, the new Fianna Fáil Government declared itself not to be bound by earlier agreements on the repayment of British Government loans to Irish farmers to buy out their tenancies – the so-called land annuities. The new Irish Government's refusal to accept even the principle that these monies were owed and its subsequent rejection of binding arbitration within the Commonwealth led to the Anglo-Irish 'economic war' of 1933-1938 with a series of tit-for-tat retaliatory trade restrictions and levies.

Defence of the Commonwealth and Ireland's position therein quickly became a minority pastime. Fine Gael's Deputy Dillon, for example, could insist 'We, who may claim a part in building up the Commonwealth of Nations, have made ample provision for the absolute sovereignty and independence of every State in the Commonwealth' (Dáil 74:668) but the tide of policy moved in another direction. Not even the prospect of a great Anglo-American endeavour to secure peace in 1937 enticed much support, despite the exhortation, again of James Dillon, that 'if the Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America can be induced to co-operate in any way… We could thus make an immense contribution and the greater the contribution we could make the greater the bulwark we would raise around our own sovereignty and independence' (Dáil 67:682) By 1939 De Valera's governments had stripped every reference to the King and Commonwealth from Ireland's

constitutional infrastructure – leaving just an oblique constitutional reference and a single legislative Act providing for the King to ratify the appointment of diplomatic and consular officials.

With the outbreak of World War II the Fianna Fáil Government and the overwhelming majority of parliamentarians supported a policy of neutrality as and between the Allied and Axis powers – with considerable public support. For some, however, this neutrality represented a betrayal of Irish values and interests – despite whatever pragmatic logic might be applied in its favour. Prior to the outbreak of war, James Dillon, Deputy Leader of Fine Gael and later its post-war leader for a time, set out his desire that Ireland should 'declare, in no uncertain way on the side of liberty, decency and freedom' (Dáil 74:833). His party – sometimes informally referred to as the 'Commonwealth Party' by both supporters and detractors – was itself split over the legislation granting the Government sweeping powers in the impending war-time 'emergency'. With war, Dillon's position ultimately became untenable. His parliamentary speeches were censored in the national press and his attempts to publish them privately were also thwarted (Manning 1999). Even as he recognized the practical necessity – even perhaps the inevitability – of neutrality, he railed at its immorality, finally going public with his views in July 1941, declaring in the Dáil 'At present we act the part of Pontius Pilate in asking, as between the Axis and the Allies, 'What is truth?' and washing our hands and calling the world to witness that this is no affair of ours. I say we know, as between those parties, what the truth is—that, on the side of the Anglo-American alliance is right and justice and on the side of the Axis is evil and injustice.' (Dáil 84:1867). He then demanded that Ireland make whatever contribution it could to the allied cause – acknowledging that the implications of such a stand might draw Ireland directly into the conflict.

While Dillon's words went unreported under the strict censorship regime that then applied, their impact was near immediate, with senior party colleagues denouncing his impetuosity – and later expelling him from the Party for publicising his argument further before the party's annual conference. One government backbencher even threatened physically to throw him from the House (Dáil 84:1867). Less than a handful of other parliamentary voices were supportive – one fellow Fine Gael TD insisted that like Deputy Dillon, he felt 'there are a great many people who feel that in

this struggle there is a moral issue involved, and I believe that if a Vote were to come before this House on the moral issue, even the Taoiseach might be surprised at the result.' (Dáil 84:1887) Dillon did, however, return to parliament in the 1943 General Election as an independent deputy.

Other voices in support of the Allied cause were successfully thwarted by a zealous application of the censor's pen and an overwhelming political consensus that the country could only be effectively defended from external attack and from internal strife through neutrality (O'Drisceoil 1996). While arguments continue as to whether there was, in fact, a moral ambivalence towards the Allied struggle against Naziism (Roberts 2002), there was no official, public representation for the Anglo-American cause at home.

While Dillon's was indeed a voice in the official wilderness, there is substantial evidence that at popular level much sympathy rested with the Allies. Alvin Jackson (cited in Roberts 2004) has noted for example, that 'while most Irish people endorsed neutrality, there was broad sympathy for the allied cause; massive recruitment to the British army was compatible with popular support for De Valera'. Others too have pointed to the significance of the fact that between 1939 and 1945 nearly 200,000 Irish men and women migrated to work in the British war economy – many of whom remained in the country after the war – and between 50,000 and 75,000 are argued to have served directly in the British armed forces. (ibid.). Others too have since returned to the records and ascertained that despite the official and often excessive deference to some of the forms of neutrality, the operational reality was that Irish neutrality came to be directed towards the Allied cause quite early in the conflict (see Bowman 1982; Fisk 1983;Girvin and Roberts 2000; O'Halpin 2001).

The new international situation revealed at the end of the war – with the Allies divided over Germany and over a broader post-war settlement – again, however, gave rise to questions as to where Ireland 'stood' vis a vis the emerging protagonists. By tradition, sympathy and political orientation, Ireland's commitment to the 'west'

appeared unassailable, but it was again compromised by the issue of partition and renewed Anglo-Irish hostilities.

Anxious not to have its own nationalist hand outplayed during de Valera's 1948 anti-partition tour, the new Fine Gael-led inter-party government similarly raised the political stakes surrounding Anglo-Irish relations. Without formal parliamentary or cabinet debate, the Taoiseach, John A Costello, announced during his 1948 visit to Canada that the Government's intention was to declare Ireland a Republic and thereby sever the last constitutional link with the British Commonwealth and crown. The British reaction, in providing formal legislative guarantees on Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom, provoked the Irish Government into launching its own Anti-Partition campaign – further raising the heat in bilateral relations.

It was into such a domestic political context that the aforementioned US enquiries on Irish participation in a North Atlantic defence alliance fell. Seán McBride, whose own party had been formed from more radical nationalist elements, immediately contextualised the US enquiry not as an East-West, Cold War issue, but as one which directly impinged on Anglo-Irish relations and specifically upon partition. How could Ireland, he argued in cabinet and later in his formal reply to the United States in February 1949, join in a defence alliance with a state 'which occupies a portion of our country'? McBride subsequently flew to the United States in March 1951 for annual St Patrick's Day festivities and managed to set up meetings at the State Department and with President Truman at which MacBride again committed Ireland to the Western cause and unsuccessfully sought bilateral defence and security agreements with the United States outside NATO.

Nonetheless – and unlike World War II – the state's sympathies were firmly defined by a new inter-party government led by Fine Gael in pro-western terms. Even the

principles established to govern the state's UN membership – long delayed due to Soviet opposition – reflected this clash. A dedication to the UN Charter and a rejection of 'bloc' politics at the new international institution was qualified by a wholehearted commitment and dedication to 'the Christian civilisation of which we are a part'. This implied Ireland's support, wherever possible, to 'those powers principally responsible for the defence of the free world in their resistance to the spread of Communist power and influence.' (Dáil 58:144) In that same speech, introducing the policy of the Government towards the United Nations, the Minister for External Affairs, Liam Cosgrave, went on to argue 'In the great ideological conflict which divides the world to-day, our attitude is clear, by geographical position, culture, tradition and national interest. We belong to the great community of states made up of the United States of America, Canada and Western Europe. Our national destinies are indissolubly bound up with theirs.' (Dáil 58:144)

Much, then, of what might be characterised as the Anglo-American narrative came to be defined more in terms of anti-communism and support for the 'West' in its ideological struggle with the Soviet Union and its allies. In much of Ireland's UN policy, for example, the tension was between a more independent, anti-colonial and globalist position – championed by Frank Aiken as Minister – and an Irish position which lent its support to the democracies of the Anglo-American and West European world – the orientation of Ireland's first UN delegation under Fine Gael's Liam Cosgrave and arguably the position of Fianna Fáil's Seán Lemass as Taoiseach from 1959. This 'creative tension' it was argued, served to bring the best out in consecutive Irish UN delegations and contributed in no small way to the significant profile that Ireland generated as a positive and committed member of the UN family – while at the same time a recognisable and respected part of 'the West' (Skelly 1997:288;).

That overall Anglo-American or 'western' orientation was perhaps most strongly associated with Lemass' stewardship and was strongly linked to major shifts in Irish economic and trade policy and the associated membership application(s) to the European Communities – all told representing a spectacular 'revisionist new

departure' from earlier economic Irish nationalism (Foster 1988:577). Lemass himself was much more Atlanticist in orientation than either de Valera or Aiken and was anxious also to improve Anglo-Irish relations (Lyons 1973; Hachey 2002). Building upon a groundwork begun in the late 1940s – with, for example, the establishment of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Lemass' starting point was the generation of additional trade and investment.

In 1960 Ireland joined the US-led General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, opening the path to Irish participation in a series of trade liberalisation agreements. Within the domestic framework of the initial Programme for Economic Expansion and its immediate successor, Lemass also pursued a set of unilateral tariff reductions in 1963 and 1964 which in themselves generated substantial additional trade. Lemass also initiated the negotiations that led to the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement. This agreement marked a significant 'a coming-of-age' in bilateral Anglo-Irish relations as well as setting the stage for joint membership of the European Communities (FitzGerald 2002) Earlier legislative and taxation changes also served to attract international – specifically US – industrial investment to the State. In the decade of the 1960s more than 350 foreign-owned industrial concerns – mostly US – were established in the State. These firms, by the mid 1970s, employed more than a quarter of the manufacturing workforce, accounted for more than 65 percent of all non-UK destined exports, totalled more than $2 billion in US investment and represented the largest per capita US investment in Europe. The Irish economy was arguably becoming internationalised via its Americanisation.

As well as his economic turn, the Anglo-American narrative would see Lemass' seminal contribution to redeveloping bilateral Anglo-Irish relations as being critical. The scope for this in the early 1960s certainly appeared to be limited. Although the anti-partition campaign was all-but exhausted and the IRA had, in 1962, concluded a six-year bombing campaign that had claimed 19 lives, the Irish State had continued to wage its own mini Cold War against Northern Ireland even though this was

characterised by one historian as comprising no more than ‘parroting anti-partitionist pieties’ (Fanning 1987:206).

In a surprise meeting with his Northern Ireland counterpart, Terence O’Neill in Belfast on 14 January 1965 – and again on O’Neill’s return engagement to Dublin just three weeks later – Lemass ripped the seam from traditional Irish nationalism. While the potential arising from this series of meetings – and subsequent meetings of Lemass’ successor, Jack Lynch, with O’Neill in 1967 and 1968 – was tremendous, it was overtaken by events; the rise of the civil rights movement, subsequent civil strife and, ultimately, the decision of the British Government to prorogue the Government of Northern Ireland, establish direct rule from Westminster and to send in British armed forces. Lemass’ crucial opening remained salient, however, in offering the vision – however fleeting – of ‘normalcy’ between North and South and challenging long-standing assumptions that Northern Unionists had either to acquiesce to the demands of Irish nationalism or depart the island of Ireland.

The pre-eminent reflection of the Anglo-American narrative in Irish foreign policy has been in its challenge to an understanding of Irish identity rooted in a single definition of what it is to be ‘Irish’. A difficult and, for some agonising, reappraisal of nationalist assumptions began as the reality of inter-communal strife in Northern Ireland became evident to a horrified population south of the border and the associated violence spread beyond the confines of political ghettoes in the North. This contemporary political discourse obviously segued into the swirling academic waters that were at the same time – and for many of the same reasons – reappraising the Irish historical canon. This challenge to established myths had not just an academic and pedagogical purpose – but was now also seen as having an immediate political relevance. As Roy Foster noted in 2001 ‘the political rhetoric of the state has altered astonishingly over the last 10 to 15 years; and this is the outcome of reconsiderations enforced in the first place by new approaches to our history’ (Foster 2001; 34)

The political leaders that picked up this challenge engaged in a long and often painful re-evaluation of Irish nationalism. In a number of ways this culminated in the New Ireland Forum – designed in part to encourage constitutional nationalists in Northern Ireland (FitzGerald 1991). The Forum had the corollary purpose of offering an agreed nationalist framework for negotiation with the British Government and through the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement managed to secure – for the very first time – official British acceptance that the Government of the Republic of Ireland had a legitimate role in the governance of Northern Ireland. The 1984 New Ireland Forum was also 'a conscious search for an Irish identity that would simultaneously embrace and transcend the conflicting identities of unionism and nationalism' (Lee 1989:675) While it may not have succeeded in this respect, it did open to further debate and discussion the scope and depth of Ireland's own British dimension and feed directly into the Northern Ireland peace process – with its fundamental acknowledgment of self-determination in all parts of the island

One of the most significant consequences of this new relationship between Britain and Ireland over Northern Ireland is indeed the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of British identity on the island of Ireland. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement states that it is the 'birthright of the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose' (Article 1.IV). This reappraisal, in many ways, led to a return – if only as yet partial and contested - to a broader and more inclusive conception of Irishness.

Finally, there can be little doubt that the Anglo-American narrative is reflected in most commentary surrounding Ireland's contemporary political and economic success. From the first debates on Irish accession to the European Communities, membership was placed by many Irish policy makers in a much broader international and even Anglo-American context with at least some calls that the EC should be the first step on the road to the creation of a wider Atlantic Community (Dáil 190:1158) The Irish market itself offered little or nothing to foreign investors. EC membership, however, offered the means whereby substantial US Foreign Direct Investment might more successfully be sought to access a wider European market. Irish lobbyists thus assiduously marketed Ireland as the preferred English-speaking and US-friendly location for industrial investment in Europe, alongside the substantial tax benefits to

foreign manufacturers and guarantees on the repatriation of profits. As one Government junior minister noted in 2002 ‘American companies like to locate in Ireland because they view us as the gateway to the European Union marketplace. They believe that we have effectively utilised the benefits that the internal market and the single European currency regime can offer and that we will continue to do so.’ (Dáil 554:161) To paraphrase, Ireland chose Berlin so as to get Boston.

Ironically, however, in order to choose Berlin, the Irish had first to satisfy Washington of Ireland’s North Atlantic bona fides. In reaction to Ireland’s first EC membership application, it became clear that there were some difficulties. Following a 1961 tour of European capitals by Con Cremin and T.K. Whitaker, and subsequent discussions at the US State Department, it emerged that neutrality and Ireland’s ‘erratic’ behaviour at the United Nations had raised questions as to Ireland’s political commitment. In other words, the road to Brussels had been diverted through Washington, or at least that ‘A word from Washington can go a long way towards removing difficulties in Europe’ (Con Cremin cited in Keogh, 2000:271).

An all-out political and diplomatic campaign was thus launched in the summer of 1962 to address US concerns by underscoring Ireland’s political commitment to Europe and to emphasise that the ‘special circumstances’ which had precluded NATO membership in 1949 in no way diminished Ireland’s fidelity to the Western world in its struggle with the Soviet Union and Communism. In reply to some subsequently hostile parliamentary questions which inter alia demanded assurances that Ireland would not be ‘insinuated into NATO’, Lemass insisted that ‘NATO is necessary for the preservation of peace and for the defence of the countries of Western Europe, *including this country* (emphasis added)’ (Dáil 193:6) To this he added, in his famous interview with the New York Times, that ‘We recognise that a military commitment will be an inevitable consequence of our joining the Common Market and ultimately we would be prepared to yield even the technical label of neutrality’ (cited in Fanning 1996:143).

With Irish and British membership of the European Communities, the bilateral relationship was transformed with a consequent impact upon inter-community relations within Northern Ireland and upon proposals for a political settlement to the

dispute (Laffan 2003). Certainly, the positive development of ministerial relationships through the EU's various technical councils has been cited as a critical part of the story in Anglo-Irish relations (FitzGerald 2003:190-191), as have the relationships built up between respective Prime Ministers and officials.

Ireland's contemporary socio-economic success is also argued to be the fruit of a more clear-headed and rigorous attachment to Anglo-American values of personal liberty, support for freer markets, individual responsibility, delimiting state economic involvement and positive engagement with the process of globalisation. From a situation of economic crisis in the early 1980s – when the vista of formal IMF intervention was mooted – the Irish economy has been lifted to unparalleled heights. Full employment, outstanding growth rates, lowering debt/GDP ratios, diminishing national debt, budget surpluses, low interest rates and low inflation have now become normal business and the stuff of daily headlines over the last 10 –15 years.

Whether it was truly a 'Celtic Tiger' or just '…an offshore extension of the US boom' (Walsh 2000:119) or 'as an outpost of Silicon Valley' (Fagan 2002:135), the successful attraction of US Foreign Direct Investment – and the success of those US multinationals once based in Ireland – is argued to have made a huge contribution to Irish economic success. Upwards of 16 percent of Irish GDP in 2001 was accounted for by US-owned firms operating in Ireland, representing almost 100,000 jobs in the Irish economy (Forfás 2001). That was built upon a socio-economic approach that focussed upon competitiveness, low corporate and personal taxation and a 'liberal' approach to state regulation. All this adds up to create a powerful – and sometimes self-consciously described 'Anglo-American' – approach to economic growth (Garton Ash 2004:75). Nor is this a characterisation of contemporary Irish policy that is rejected by key policymakers. Mary Harney, as Tánaiste has noted (2000) that 'When Americans come here they find a country that believes in the incentive power of low taxation. They find a country that believes in economic liberalisation. They find a country that believes in essential regulation but not over-regulation.' Of course, as she then famously went on to say; the source of that successful model was to be found '…closer to the American shore than the European one.'

Challenges to the Narrative

The movement to professionalise Irish historiography, launched in the 1930s came to be seen as the crucible from which this narrative ultimately emerged. The progenitors of this movement were two of the leading historians of their day, Robert Dudley Edwards of University College Dublin and Theodore William Moody of the Queen's University, Belfast. Having both been trained at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London, they shared a passion for bringing to the study of Irish History the same scientific and rational rigour which had emerged at the leading centres of historical research in France, Britain and the United States. In pursuit of same they established an academic society for the study of Irish History pre 1900 and a similarly focused journal – *Irish Historical Studies* – jointly edited by the two principals.

In their introduction to the journal they insisted that they had two tasks '…the one constructive and the other instrumental.' (cited in Brady 1994:4) Their constructive task was to facilitate the use of new methods and the pursuit of new sources for historiographical studies – to broaden the field away from the biographies of statesmen and reviews of great political events. It was the instrumental purpose, however, that came to be controversial.

Both Moody and Dudley Edwards were critical of what they saw as the misuse of history and insisted upon a distinction between what Moody referred to as 'good history which is a matter of facing the facts' and what he characterised as myth making. Both men were anxious to encourage contemporaries and younger colleagues to challenge the received wisdoms of Irish history and to correct the errors of fact and/or interpretation that, in their view, bedevilled some of the traditional scholarship in the field. On the face of it, such a project could hardly be expected to raise an academic eyebrow, but the consequence of the approach (if not its purpose) was to attempt to unseat, and/or if not that then to subvert, well-established and much treasured understandings not only of Irish history, but also of Ireland and of Irishness.

Through their teaching, their publishing and, indeed, their ultimate dominance of their academic field, Dudley Edwards and Moody essentially began to recast Irish historiography (Brady 1994). While their own work and that of similarly-minded

colleagues such as FSL Lyons was critical, it was really the way in which they trained a succeeding generation of historians that placed this 'new' school of historiography into the spotlight. By the mid to late 1970s, the impact of this new scholarship was beginning to be felt and starting to generate a response. Two socio-literary journals; *The Crane Bag* and *The Irish Review*, were crucibles of the early period in this debate alongside *Irish Historical Studies* and later a number of scholarly monographs were published that truly joined battle with the old guard of Irish historical studies.

For this emerging revisionist school, their approach started from the premise that that there was no historical 'story' to be told – in the sense of a beginning, middle and end. In other words (and somewhat ironically for our purposes) it rejected the very idea of a coherent historical narrative. In consequence, it challenged the by now well established 'Story of Ireland' school of history in which the long suppressed national aspiration for independence which had been repeatedly thwarted by alien usurpation and internal treachery had been finally fulfilled by the sacrifice of 1916 and the subsequent establishment of an independent Irish State. This story was characterised as one in which 'a Gaelic and Catholic Irish populace, led by heroic and exemplary individuals, triumphantly (cast) off the yoke of British oppression.' These new historians were especially critical of the ways in which the state had co-opted this narrative so as to sustain its own founding myths.

In rejecting the established narrative of Irish history – the 'revisionists', in a sense, created a competing one. While rejecting the historical inevitability of independence and the idea that the Irish nationalists had in any way been 'forced' into the use of violence to pursue political ends, revisionists emphasised the complex, conditional and multi-causal nature of historical events. They tended to privilege coincidence where others had espied conspiracy and to give strong consideration to the context within which certain events occurred or decisions were taken. In so doing, such writers also tended to adopt a critical – and sometimes highly ironic and arch writing style that served to further distance the observer from that which was being observed. The cumulative effect of this – and in the eyes of some the purpose of this exercise – was to establish an approach to Irish history that robbed it of its passion and sense of purpose, which ridiculed heartfelt beliefs and understandings and which, crucially,

failed properly to account for popular feeling, aspirations and a communal sense of (in)justice in the development of the Irish nation and state.

This critical reappraisal of Irish history was also occurring at the same time as the worst phases of political violence in Northern Ireland. For their part, revisionists saw it as their duty as professional historians to debunk the mythologies of the past in favour of more rigorous and honest appraisal. For some of these historians, there was also an explicit sense of duty to do this because of the perverse role that a mythologized Irish history was playing in justifying contemporary political violence. For critics of this new approach, it was this very sense of duty that might be characterised as a highly political decision to serve new political orthodoxies.

Certainly, in terms of socio-economic elites, the Anglo-American narrative vies most strongly with that of the European Republic for discursive dominance. They are both, in a sense, claiming credit for Irish modernity. The Boston versus Berlin dichotomy is too crude but there is a sense – not least in the evident power of that simple metaphor – that Irish modernity is in restless search of its parents. It is striking too, the extent to which each demands exclusive fidelity. From the Anglo-American narrative, Europe is dismissed as enfeebled and enfeebling, a relic of Social Democracy in a world that is still coming to terms with the end of socialism. For the narrative sustaining the European Republic, the crude and undiscriminating commercial appetites of American consumerism is presented as both an object of scorn and a source of immediate threat – against which Europe must mobilise. But there remains the scope for possible synthesis.

The picture that emerges from a consideration of specific foreign policy issues and points of crisis is a complex one. On the one hand it reveals that there is a discursive dominance of the narrative of European Republic in two of the three foreign policy issues considered; Ireland's place in the European project and the place of Irish security and defence policy in the context of Europe's post Cold War security architecture. Where that narrative was effectively absent – in the 2003 war on Iraq – the Anglo American narrative dominated. Interestingly, however, the European dominance does not appear to be stable – and certainly not hegemonic – and it faces significant challenges, most notably from the narrative of Global Citizen.

Weaknesses in the European narrative certainly play their part in destabilising this discourse. The failure of narrative entrepreneurs to adequately and definitively account for the political nature of the European project and to define its overall status appears to leave an uncomfortable question mark over an otherwise convincing and comfortable narrative's reading of an Irish place in the world. As more marginalised narratives repeatedly seek to fill in the blanks behind that question mark, it becomes harder and harder for that narrative to maintain its position.

It would appear from these three instances that the attack upon the discursive dominance of the European republic is from two sides. Perhaps the most longstanding protagonist is that of the Global Citizen. Its strength seems to be rooted in four considerations; first, that this narrative is understood to be strongly grounded in a moral approach to foreign policy, second that its reading of Irish foreign policy history profits from a comparison with a perceived 'golden age' in Irish foreign policy that is deemed to have been more principled than contemporary policy, third that it profits from a sense of having been associated with a 'progressive' approach to foreign policy issues and fourth that might be able to encompass a missionary stance vis a vis the European Union's own foreign and security policy which might thus reconcile it with EU membership.

What is surprising, therefore, is that in the case of the 2003 war in Iraq – and in the effective absence of a European narrative – it was the Anglo-American narrative that came to dominate so strongly and to define policy. Its strength, in this instance, appears to have been grounded in its conservatism. It offered a reading of that crisis which presented the state as being in a difficult position with policy makers forced to make what were characterised as 'tough', 'difficult' choices. In such circumstances Irish policy was strikingly presented as being consistent with tradition, with the history of Irish bilateral relations – particularly with the United States – and reflective of specified material interests (investment, migration, peace process etc.). That this representation succeeded (in as much as post-conflict opinion polls registered such) is remarkable when juxtaposed against the protests of over 100,000 just one month before the war began. The Taoiseach's claim that those protests represented support for government policy may not have been so wildly counter-intuitive after all.

It is difficult to see how the broader discursive battle might be fought out. As indicated earlier, we may be witnessing a realignment of discursive forces, a short term 'wobble' in the dominant position of the European Republic or the destabilisation of the European narrative and its substitution by another. A discursive realignment is certainly possible.

A synthesis of the Global/European narratives into a postmodern, pacifist, anti globalisation meta narrative – an 'old Europe' Ireland – clearly holds some potential. It might stabilise the state's position within the European Union, placing it close to the western continental core of the Union. But this could also be compromised by an uncomfortable, overtly missionary profile vis a vis foreign, security and defence policy – entailing either permanent opt outs from a common European policy or else a determined attempt to transform that policy into a normative actor/civilian power model certainly at some distance from NATO. It would also be a challenge to sustain such a synthesis if the EU were to seek to move decisively in the direction of a strong political union with the corollary of global projection that might be assumed to result. Such a synthesis would also face challenges from both ends of the narrative spectrum, although these would originate from the respective fringes.

On the other hand, a European/Anglo-American synthesis might also be possible, which would seek to define a modernist, globalised and globalising meta narrative – a 'new Europe' Ireland – as it were. There are certainly discursive straws in the wind for such a turn in Irish foreign policy. Again, it would potentially stabilise the Irish position within a European project – if not 'the' European project – and would firmly identify the state as a North European, North Atlantic (possibly even 'Nordic'?) member of the European club (Garton Ash 2004:84). It would arguably have to be predicated upon a decisive discursive move on 'neutrality' – which would consign this concept to the national cupboard of memory and memorabilia alongside the 1919 Limerick Soviet and the anti-jazz campaign of the 1930s. Such a synthesis would almost certainly face a more concerted challenge from a revived and starkly contrasting Irish/Global narrative coalition.

It also cannot also be ruled out that the European narrative might re-establish its dominant position and even aspire to a renewed hegemony. It has a strong discursive base – and has maintained its dominance in the face of strong challenge(s) over the last number of decades. It is weakened, however, by the perception of hesitancy, loss of direction and/or dispute among its narrative entrepreneurs. Moreover, too many failures such as that perceived over the 2003 war in Iraq and the experience of turning decisively to another narrative might become a conditioned reflex. It should also be noted that the Iraqi failure of this narrative was not so much a function of the EU's political failure, but a failure of Irish narrative entrepreneurs to define for themselves a 'European denominated' response, which might – of course – have taken one or two very contrasting lines, but which chose instead to offer neither a convincing reading nor a helpful representation of that conflict.

Narratives can frame a foreign policy issue and, as we have seen, may well establish the parameters from within which a policy can emerge – they define the range of the possible. What then about the contribution that these very policies make towards the construction of these narratives? Is foreign policy reinforcing or undermining these discursive narratives?

When we consider contemporary Irish foreign policy on the European project we witness a policy that has been characterised as being pragmatic conservative, careful, realist, sometimes ad hoc, always lightly institutionalised, very successful in generating returns and presenting a positive persona as a 'good European'. This is certainly a positive base and ongoing contribution to a potentially dominant European narrative, but it perhaps does not lay the foundation for an overwhelming narrative identity that can aspire to hegemonic status.

In its earliest formulation, by contrast, Irish foreign policy towards the European project was indeed pretty much overwhelming of other policy priorities (see Dooge and Barrington, 1999). Lemass' dictums on neutrality and those of subsequent Taoisigh underscore the extent to which getting into Europe and then maintaining the Irish position within Europe – at or close to its heart – was an overwhelming policy priority and was seen to pay off in terms of direct financial returns and considerations

given to the Irish ‘case’ when special measures or derogations were sought from Dublin.

In more recent years, post (mid?) Celtic Tiger and certainly post the first (unsuccessful) Nice Treaty referendum, that sense of absolute priority of Europe over all else has visibly faded. The brief but potent ‘Berlin versus Boston’ debate also perhaps alluded to the fact that Ireland had options. Options not to ‘leave’ the EU and ‘join’ the US, simply that there were a range of possibilities within a substantially expanded and heterogeneous Europe and that perhaps Ireland had the resources, confidence, needs and other wherewithal to make choices where previously no choices were seen to be possible.

For its part, in reconciling Irish security and defence policy with the post Cold War development of Europe’s security architecture, contemporary Irish foreign policy has been characterised as being confused, contradictory, principled, traditional, arbitrary, contingent and incredible. The variety and range of assessments suggest that a clear, consistent and credible policy has not been forthcoming.

Certainly early in its formulation Irish policy was indeed consistent, rooted and broadly consensual and provided powerful discursive support to the truly hegemonic position of the Irish Nation narrative. Irish neutrality enjoyed widespread popular support – and even its critics acknowledged its legitimacy. With its identification with partition, however, the policy arguably became less securely rooted. Despite its subsequently being grafted onto a comparatively dynamic policy at the UN, neutrality came to be associated strongly not so much as a security and defence policy but as a national identity policy. For its part, a strong sense of a security and defence policy was simply lost.

The contemporary reconciliation of Irish security and defence policy with Europe’s new security architecture has been highly problematic. There has been a broad consensus on continuing to make a substantial contribution to international peace and security but a bitter disagreement on the appropriate institutional channel through which to make that contribution. There is thus a strongly contested discursive battle which has toppled the Irish Nation from its hegemonic position (by decisively

choosing engagement over disengagement) but which has not yet succeeded in replacing it. The strongest contender has been the narrative of European Republic and this has arguably enjoyed a discursive dominance. However, each policy move towards an explicit European engagement has been powerfully challenged. The post Nice II application of the 'triple lock' and its associated precondition of UN authorisation for Irish peacekeeping operations is perhaps the Rubicon. If that is crossed, and if in future Irish peacekeepers act without explicit UN Security Council authorisation (but perhaps with the support of the Secretary General and/or a majority of Security Council members) then a decisive shift will have been made towards either European or Anglo-American narrative hegemony – depending upon which framework is sought to legitimise that peacekeeping operation.

Finally, in the crisis surrounding the 2003 war in Iraq, Irish foreign policy was characterised as conservative, decisive, revolutionary, duplicitous and the death knell of Irish neutrality. Strikingly, however, the policy was carried forward with decisive and strategic skill. It built a careful and precise trail between itself and past manifestations of policy – even as these were contested and disputed – so as to lay a claim of consistency before the public. It relied on very specific truth claims and was unsettled only briefly (when it emerged that US charter transports of military personnel were not in full compliance with Irish legislation).

The deliberate and decisive way in which this policy was prosecuted certainly supported the sudden and swift discursive instantiation of the Anglo-American narrative. Its dominance was as quick as it was sudden and despite the bitterness of the earlier discursive play it quickly became solidly entrenched. The success of this discursive enterprise, appears to leave the Anglo American narrative well placed to pose a substantial challenge to the nature and shape of Irish foreign policy identity into the future.

And so Finally…

This paper has taken quite a risk in turning from traditional paths of social enquiry to one in which the link between national identity and foreign policy is defined as being mutually constitutive and that identity has been assessed through foreign policy as a

discursive practice. A key understanding of that process has also been the role of human agency which, through the (re)interation of discursive practices has illustrated the evolution of both identity and foreign policy through the successes and failures of four narrative identities in telling a ‘better’ story about an Irish place in the world. Those stories, in turn, can be said to have concluded that the limits of Irish foreign policy are defined most appropriately by commonly held beliefs surrounding Ireland’s place in the world.