

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

GENERAL CLANCY'S
NEAR ABROAD

WHILE DONALD Trump and Vladimir Putin sat down in Alaska and during subsequent meetings and calls with Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European and Nato leaders, the war ground on in Ukraine. There was to be no ceasefire. In the weeks prior to the peace negotiations, EU Military Committee (EUMC) chair (and former Irish Defence Forces chief of staff) General Seán Clancy travelled to Ukraine to meet defence minister Denys Shmyhal and commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces General Oleksandr Syrskiy to discuss the country's "defence capabilities" and "key battlefield needs".

Prior to taking up the top job at the EUMC, Clancy had served in the Irish Defence Forces for 37 years. In his current role, he is tasked with chairing a committee composed of the chiefs of defence of all EU states. Any military operations undertaken by the bloc as part of the Common Security and Defence Policy are guided by the EUMC. The EUMC is also tasked with providing military advice to the EU's Political and Security Committee, which is made up of the EU's ambassadors.

Clancy is supported in this role in Brussels by a team of Irish Defence Forces personnel. In addition to a close protection team assigned to protect Clancy, selected from the Army Ranger Wing, a further 10 Irish troops have been appointed to administrative roles in Brussels. These 10 range from a brigadier general and a lieutenant colonel to experienced non-commissioned soldiers.

As the war has progressed, Ukraine has become more self-reliant in weapons manufacturing. It now produces over half of the arms it requires to fight on, although this is largely financed by the countries' allies.

The EU is also providing substantial

military support to Ukraine. Up to last month, the value of this aid has amounted to €59.6bn. As part of this support, production capacity for ammunitions and missiles in the EU has increased significantly.

While then US president Joe Biden committed over \$65bn in military aid for Ukraine since Russia's invasion, the latest tranche of \$2.5bn, which he committed to supplying in December 2024, has been almost completely drawn down by Ukraine. It looks likely that the Trump administration, which has paused arms transfers a number of times, will now only sell weapons to Ukraine's

European allies, who then would be free to donate them to the war-torn country.

Clancy and Shmyhal discussed in detail the situation on the front lines in Ukraine as well as the protection of Ukraine from air attack and the supply of artillery ammunition and missiles. Ukrainian intelligence shared with Clancy and his team their assessment of Russia's military plans for the months ahead.

Clancy and Shmyhal also discussed the expansion of the EU Military Assistance Mission

(EUMAM), a military training mission set up by the EU to enhance the training and preparation of Ukrainian soldiers for combat. The pair also focussed on the production of interceptor drones, which might act as an alternative to Ukraine's dwindling stock of air defence missile systems.

Shmyhal stated: "We are grateful to the EU for its practical assistance. Together, we are defending not only Ukraine but all of Europe."

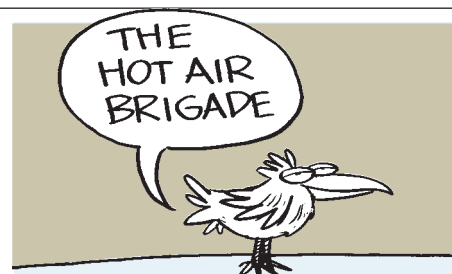
Clancy gave an insight into his assessment of the situation in Ukraine on the Irish Defence Forces podcast in November 2022. At that stage, when discussing the security situation, he explained: "I think the war on Europe, in terms of on the landmass of Europe, perpetrated by Russia on Ukraine, has shifted the model indefinitely."

He also stated: "If anything has come out of this in terms of positivity [it] is the unity within Europe in its response."

It was not a surprise then, in February 2023, with the backing of then Lieutenant General Clancy, that the Government approved the participation of up to 30 Defence Forces' personnel at any given time in EUMAM. Irish troops were then deployed by Clancy to Belgium, Germany and Cyprus to train Ukrainian armed forces.



Seán Clancy



Imagine that. 6% of all our electricity from the sun! And we are only at the beginning of this solar revolution. It is mind-blowing really, if we are honest. **RTE's environment correspondent George Lee has his mind blown, rte.ie**



George Lee

And I pray for the day when I can bring my wife back into our home; my home of 25 years, and stand by the fire and just... it's hard living in hotels for two years. **Michael Flatley on living in Monte Carlo, Sunday Independent Life Magazine**

We are very lucky in the position in Fine Gael that we have more than a number of people who are both affable, amiable, well qualified, you know, politically experienced, so we are in a very, very lucky position. **Regina Doherty on This Week, RTE Radio One**

What I do is a purposeful approach to design, it's never design for design's sake, it's me reflecting on a feeling that I want to talk about and translate into a concept, so I think our authenticity makes us different to other street brands. **Luke Rainey, head designer of fashion brand Dagger, Irish Times**

There's a tribalism to it as well. Like where do you get 32 women who can stand shoulder to shoulder, talk about their achievements, their culture, their identity, their Irishness, the craic.

Kathryn Thomas on the empowerment of the Rose of Tralee, Sunday Independent Life Magazine

Speaking to the *Advertiser*, Ó Cuív said he has been on tour recently at various functions in Belfast, Dublin, Wexford and farther afield, where he says the presidency was mentioned to him in small talk at every turn "except in Wales". **Éamon Ó Cuív on his election changes, Galway Advertiser, submitted by reader**

Hipster priests or rock stars – you wouldn't know who you might meet in Kildare. **Barry Egan, Irish Independent**

He is a multi millionaire who has never forgotten where he came from or his humble beginnings. When Gerry Hutch speaks, he is a bit like Michael O'Leary in some respects, you need to pay attention. He has his finger on the pulse and talks a lot of sense. **John Kierans, Irish Mirror**

Her island-traversing record as communities minister and her prominent role in the 1916 commemorations all now seem like kismet, for the blooming campaign behind the woman who insisted she didn't want to be president. **Ellen Coyne on Heather Humphreys' mooted presidential bid, Irish Times**

Please send suitable contributions to: The Hot Air Brigade, The Phoenix, 44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2 or email: hotair@thephoenix.ie

