

# Public Diplomacy in Ireland and Japan

# Politics, Security and Society in Asia Pacific

This series welcomes comparative and interdisciplinary research in the fields of politics, economics, contemporary social issues, security and human rights in Asia Pacific.

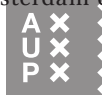
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# Public Diplomacy in Ireland and Japan

*John Neary*

Amsterdam University Press



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This book is dedicated to everyone who has contributed to public diplomacy activities between Ireland and Japan. May your efforts inspire others to follow in your footsteps and further deepen the bonds between our two countries.



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Finally, I would like to thank my wife Kathleen for her constant encouragement and support throughout this project. I could not have done it without her.

1 In this book, Japanese names are written in the order of: family name first, then given name.

## About the Author

John Neary is a former diplomat who served as Ireland's Ambassador to Japan from 2010 to 2014. A graduate of University College Dublin (UCD), he joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974. Following his retirement in 2016, he was appointed Adjunct Professor in UCD. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Chester Beatty in Dublin.

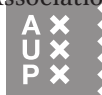
# List of Abbreviations

AFIN	American Friends of Irish Neutrality
AIESEC	International Association of Students in Economics and Business
AnCO	An Comhairle Oiliúna
APSO	Agency for Personal Service Overseas
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asia Nations
ASEF	Asia Europe Foundation
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CGP	Centre for Global Partnership
CIAA	Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs
CICC	Coalition for an International Criminal Court
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CNN	Cable News Network
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CPE	Century of Progress International Exposition
CPI	Committee on Pacific Information
CRC	Cultural Relations Committee
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DCU	Dublin City University
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIAS	Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies
DIFP	Documents on Irish Foreign Policy
DOS	Department of State
EBC	European Business Council
EC	European Community
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FÁS	An Foras Áiseanna Saothair
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association



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G7	Group of Seven
G20	Group of 20
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAESTE	International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience
IASIL	International Association for the Study of Irish Literature
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
ICIC	International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IFJ	Ireland Funds Japan
IJA	Ireland Japan Association
IJCA	Ireland Japan Cultural Association
IJCC	Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce
IJEA	Ireland Japan Economic Association
ILE	Irish Literature Exchange
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INA	Irish News Agency
INJ	Irish Network Japan
INS	International News Service
IPR	Institute for Pacific Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
JAMCO	Japan Media Communication Center
JBS	Japan Business Society
JCC	Japan Creative Centre
JET	Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme
JETAA	JET Alumni Association
JIEA	Japan Ireland Economic Association
JIS	Japan Ireland Society
JLPT	Japanese-Language Proficiency Test
JLTI	Japanese Language Teachers of Ireland
JOCV	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer
KBS	Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MUFG	Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group
NAAJS	National Association of America-Japan Societies



NAJAS	National Association of Japan-America Societies
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHK	Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OGC	Office of Global Communication
OGP	Overseas Graduate Programme
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PR	Public Relations
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMBC	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TV	Television
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UL	University of Limerick
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOGIL	United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon
US	United States
USIA	United States Information Office
USP	Unique Selling Points
VHF	Very High Frequency
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association



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# Introduction

I retired from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) of Ireland in December 2016 after a career that spanned 42 years and included serving in eight different divisions at the Headquarters in Dublin and seven diplomatic missions abroad.

My penultimate assignment was as Ambassador of Ireland to Japan, from 2010 to 2014. It was a difficult time to be an Irish representative abroad. Ireland was just emerging from the global financial crisis of 2008 and all efforts were focussed on using our international connections to support Ireland's recovery. It was a challenging time in Japan too. In March 2011, Japan experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake, the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in the country. It was followed by a tsunami which devastated large areas along the eastern seaboard of Japan and led to the destruction of the nuclear power plant at Fukushima. Around 20,000 people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands were forced to evacuate their homes.

Despite the great distance between the two countries, I found the connections between Ireland and Japan to be vibrant and strong. In terms of values and global political priorities, the two countries are closely aligned. Both are strong supporters of multilateralism and of a rules-based international order. Trade and investment links are also very extensive, and much of my time in Japan was taken up with supporting the efforts of the economic state agencies – principally Enterprise Ireland, IDA<sup>1</sup> Ireland, and Bord Bia – to develop those links further.

But it was the cultural ties between Ireland and Japan that were the greatest revelation to me. I was aware of the interest among Irish people in Japanese culture, including film, martial arts, and computer games, but after I arrived in Japan, I was surprised to find an equally strong interest in Ireland. I encountered a large number of Irish-related groups which brought together people with a great affection for Irish culture in all its forms – literature, music, dance, food, and language. Many of these people had never visited Ireland themselves but had acquired an interest through reading Yeats or

<sup>1</sup> Industrial Development Authority

Heaney, or listening to Irish musicians such as Enya or The Chieftains, or through some other secondary association. Their enthusiasm for Ireland was undimmed by the absence of direct contact. I found it extraordinary that two countries so far apart could each find so much of interest in the other.

After I retired, I was invited to assist University College Dublin (UCD) in developing its links with Japan, and this led me to a deeper reflection on the nature of the relationship between the two countries. Moreover, 2017 was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Japan, and two booklets about Ireland and Japan were published with support from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as part of the events to celebrate this milestone.<sup>2</sup> Both booklets covered all aspects of the relationship between the two countries but naturally concentrated on the official ties. It seemed to me, however, based on my experience in Japan, that there was more to say about the extent to which connections between Irish and Japanese citizens had brought depth and energy to the relationship between the two countries. In some cases, the two governments had nurtured and supported these connections but, in others, they had grown up without any involvement by either government.

This ability of private citizens to influence the relationship between two states led me to reconsider the nature of diplomacy in the world in which we now live. For most of my career, diplomacy was largely the preserve of governments. But this is no longer the case. Diplomacy is now broader and more democratic than ever before. We need to think about what this means for the conduct of international relations.

I started by researching the evolution of public diplomacy, but I found that in order to do that, I had to go further back to the origins of diplomacy itself. This story is set out in Section One of this book.

Then I looked at how Ireland had made use of public diplomacy as part of its foreign policy strategies. It was evident that, long before the term 'public diplomacy' entered the lexicon, there was an acute appreciation among Irish policymakers of the importance of promoting a positive image of Ireland abroad and engaging with public opinion in other countries as a way of influencing their governments. Section Two describes how this developed.

Similarly in Japan, from the time it opened up to the world in the Meiji era, it sought to promote a favourable image of itself and to influence the attitudes of foreign publics towards their policies. This is the subject of Section Three.

2 The department's name changed to 'Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade' in 2011 and reverted to 'Department of Foreign Affairs' in 2020.





The final section, Section Four, looks at how public diplomacy has played a role in the relationship between Ireland and Japan. This aspect of the relationship is multifaceted. It includes activities and events that are supported by one or other government as well as a wide range of contacts that have grown up and continue to develop without any official involvement at all.

In researching this book, I have drawn heavily on the records in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) and the excellent *Documents in Irish Foreign Policy* (DIFP) series published by the Royal Irish Academy. The Library of UCD has enabled me to access a wide range of sources about Irish and Japanese foreign policy, both in hard copy and online. I have supplemented these sources with conversations with practitioners and students of diplomacy in both Ireland and Japan.

This book was started before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic began and largely completed before it ended. The pandemic had its own impact on the way in which diplomacy is conducted. Face-to-face meetings and official visits were largely abandoned. International travel was substantially reduced, and in-person events, including cultural activities, were severely curtailed. Public diplomacy was also affected and, in most cases, could only be carried out online. Communications technologies stepped in and filled the gap to some extent. Video calls and instant messaging systems became essential tools for diplomats as they did in many other areas of working life.

It is likely that these developments will influence the conduct of diplomacy in the long term and remote forms of communication may reduce the number of meetings and visits. Communications technologies are constantly changing, and it can be expected that other new developments in this field will also influence diplomacy in the future as the Internet and social media have done so dramatically over the last 30 years. However, just as the telephone or email never entirely displaced face-to-face meetings, it is probable that diplomacy will largely revert to its pre-pandemic state when this crisis is over. Diplomacy has always been at heart a process of people looking each other in the eye and seeking ways to trust and get on with each other.

My conclusion is that public diplomacy is here to stay both in general and as part of the Ireland-Japan relationship. My hope is that, with a better understanding of how public diplomacy contributes to this relationship, it may be possible to devise methods that will harness the energy and enthusiasm of those involved even more effectively in the future.

