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Ireland's Ambassador to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason.

UN Win

By Ray O'Hanlon

Ireland survived the "group of death."

Together with Norway, Ireland will take a seat on the United Nations Security Council for two years spanning the 2021-22 term.

Ireland secured the seat in a General Assembly vote Wednesday, June 17. Canada lost out to the two European nations, Ireland, a member of the European Union but not of NATO, and Norway, a member of NATO but not the EU.

The vote followed a three year campaign by Irish diplomats, political leaders and well known international figures including Bono and former president, Mary Robinson, whose post presidential carer has been largely as a global representative for the UN.

In a Wednesday evening statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs said: "Ireland this evening was elected to the United Nations Security Council and will now take a seat on the 15- member body in 2021 and 2022.

"Ireland campaigned on the themes of Partnership, Empathy and Independence as the key attributes that our country brings to its engagement with the UN and which will drive our work on the Security Council.

"Speaking after the result was announced in New York, the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said: 'This is a day on which we can all be proud. We have experienced a very difficult three months as a nation as we isolated ourselves from friends, family, work and travel.

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DOOR CLOSED



Lady Liberty has been laid of amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

By Ray O'Hanlon

For all intents and purposes America's "Golden Door" is now closed.

The Trump administration is extending a ban on green cards issued outside the United States until the end of the year and adding many temporary work visas to the freeze, including those used heavily by technology companies and multinational corporations, the Boston Globe reported Tuesday, as did multiple other media outlets. And the effect of the ban will be felt keenly in Ireland.

While there is virtually no flow of legal immigration from Ireland right now, and little or no transatlantic travel, there are not a few in Ireland who have been able to gain entry to the U.S. by way of specialized visas such as the H1-B and J1.

The Irish Times was reporting: "Donald Trump has introduced more sweeping restrictions on immigration that will affect everyone from green card applicants to scientists, doctors and au pairs who were hoping to go to the U.S. The president said the visa

restrictions would remain in place until the end of the year.

"But in the executive order that outlined the measures on Monday, Trump said they 'may be continued as necessary.'

"In his executive order, Trump said admitting more green card holders and temporary workers posed an economic threat to American workers. One of his officials told reporters the restrictions would create job opportunities for more than half a million American citizens."

The report added: "Critics are skeptical. Many business groups say it will hurt the U.S. economy by making it harder to attract talent. Some political experts view the move as an effort to revive the anti-immigration platform that Trump ran on in 2016."

The American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland was critical of the move, saying that the sweeping restrictions on immigration would damage both the Irish and U.S. economies as they struggle to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

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NY-NB remote, but never more connected

By Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

We would rather have been in New York for our 11th annual New York-New Belfast summit but there was certainly an upside to broadcasting live from Belfast and streaming in our partners from around the world.

Firstly, we had the highest-ever number of delegates: over 500 registered and, at time of writing, around 1200 people had watched back on YouTube at our five-plus hours of discussions, debates and musical interludes.

We also managed to expand our reach to bring in friends and allies from cities as far apart as

Adelaide, Australia, and Guadalajara, Mexico. The feedback online during the conference and feedback afterwards has been uniformly positive.

A big hand then for our sponsors: Tourism Ireland, NI Bureau, Irish American Partnership, Irish Business Organization, MasterCard, Cboe Hanweck, Forepont, KPMG, Invest NI, Options and, especially Belfast City Council.

Readers will also be pleased to know that donations to Covid charities Meitheal in New York – which surpassed its \$60,000 target – and the Robin Hood Appeal in Belfast, were fantastic.

What did we learn? Well, that the online conference isn't a sad



The intrepid team at NIAVAC behind the virtual summit.

Kerry Airport jobs safe

Kerry Airport Ireland has announced that, despite a critical fall in revenue, it will retain its entire workforce on pre-Covid-19 pay rates, and

This is part of a plan aimed at maintaining the airport's viability as air travel returns to normal in the coming months, said a release.

Stated the release: "2020 has been a devastating year for aviation and Kerry Airport, like all airports, has endured its worst downturn in living memory.

"It is the expectation of all experts in the industry that it will be 2023 before there is a return to the activity that was enjoyed in 2019. To ensure full employment at the airport a new resource system, with the flexibility to schedule the team when they are most needed, is in development."

The CEO of Kerry Airport, John Mulhern, said: "I must commend and thank the staff at Kerry Airport who have shown tremendous commitment and resilience in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"They remained at work throughout the crisis while shifts were developed to keep them safe. We are clearly facing into a different future and we have resisted taking the option that has been experienced elsewhere to lay-off staff, cut wages and reduce hours.

"Over the coming weeks, with the introduction of the new and more efficient scheduling system, it is our intention to see all staff return to full pay, full hours and full employment. The success of this reorganization will determine whether further and more difficult decisions are required down the line."

Continued the release: "This positive development for staff at Kerry Airport has been announced ahead of the resumption of Ryanair flights in July.

Routes to London (Luton & Stansted), Manchester, Frankfurt Hahn, Berlin, Alicante, Faro are set to commence soon while the twice daily Aer Lingus Regional Kerry-Dublin service, operated by Stobart Air, has continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic."

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substitute for the physical conference gathering but a stand-out event all of its own.

Look out then for enhanced use of what we learned as the first major conference in Ireland since the pandemic hit as we gear up for the Belfast International Homecoming and Golden Bridges in Boston later this year – which will most likely be hybrid happenings.

Finally, many of you ex-

pressed an interest in the work of OBBI, a Belfast start-up led by Gareth Macklin who addressed our conference. OBBI has created an innovative software management tool to ensure you can take the first step of the Rebuilding Journey – returning to work – with confidence.

Gareth can be contacted at gareth.macklin@obbisolutions.com.

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