Press Release

13/3/2020

**Europe must support Society and Halt their Military Exercises**

Last Sunday a Norwegian soldier tested positive for the Coronavirus prompting the withdrawal of Finland followed by the cancelation of the multinational military exercise ‘Cold Response 2020’ due to take place in Norway involving over 14,000 soldiers.

Announcing the cancellation Lieutenant General Rune Jakobsen, Chief of the operational staff at the Joint Operative Headquarters, at a press conference stated: “What is new since yesterday is that the Coronavirus is out of control in society. We want to preserve the armed forces’ ability to fight so that we are able to support society in the complex period that will follow”.

Roger Cole of PANA stated, I never thought I would find common ground with this Lieutenant General, but he is right all resources must be diverted to support and protect society, hopefully we find more brave leaders that will demand a halt to other large scale military exercises like ‘Defender Europe 20’ that begins next month.

We must also highlight the concerns of Shannonwatch who are calling on the Irish government to take the threat of Covid-19 infection from US troop transits through Shannon Airport seriously, after reports emerged that a soldier deployed to Kuwait is being monitored for Coronavirus. Most of these troops have spent at least two hours within the terminal building using the restaurants and duty-free areas and mingling with airport workers and other airport passengers before heading off to European and Middle East military bases.

NATO’s biggest wargames for over 25 years ‘Defender Europe 20’ is getting under way with 20,000 US troops participating in the US’s largest deployment to Europe in over quarter of a century. With 18 states involved totalling 37,000 troops, this will be an extraordinary provocation along Europe’s border regions with Russia.

According to Lieutenant General Charles Flynn, Deputy Chief of staff of the American army. ‘Defender-Europe 20’ is a great opportunity to demonstrate the unparalleled ability of the US military to rapidly project its forces around the world as it works alongside allies and partners in multiple domains simultaneously’… (also South China Sea)

PANA calls for a change in the way European leaders address vulnerability. Rather than starting an arms race and fomenting enemy images in line with Trump’s National Defense Strategy we see a need for cooperation across borders. All PANA NEC meetings have been cancelled for now, but let’s continue our work to address those common threats to our health, social security and our global environment.

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**For more information;**

CND state, US to practice invasion of Europe…

<https://cnduk.org/us-to-practice-invasion-of-europe/?fbclid=IwAR12vmNZWfq6nsNyt1oBVtEzKFiBtgMP2lOCaSMlmRXAOemaOGWK2Mj2kH8>

Finland Withdraws from Cold Response 2020…

<https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/finland-withdraws-cold-response-2020>

<https://activistsforpeace.wordpress.com/2020/03/12/cancel-all-military-exercises-in-europe-2/>

Shannonwatch…

<https://www.facebook.com/Shannonwatch-268685181500/>