

Neutrality **NATO** **and the attack on** **Ireland's Triple Lock**



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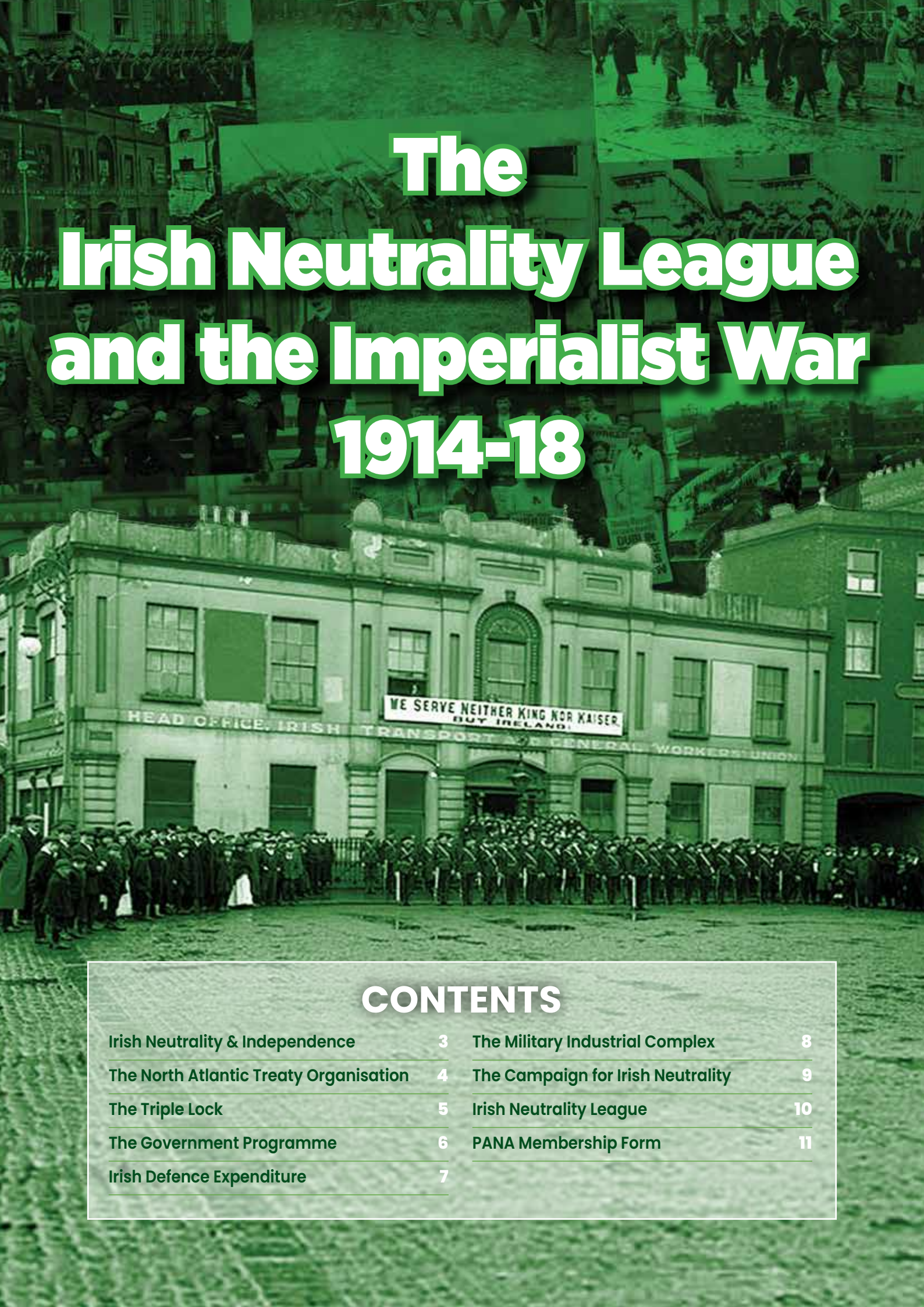
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The Irish Neutrality League and the Imperialist War 1914-18

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Irish Neutrality & Independence

The history of promoting and defending Irish neutrality and independence stretches back over 230 years. The first extant printed defence of Irish neutrality is Wolfe Tone's pamphlet "The Spanish War" published in 1790 when Britain threatened to go to war with Spain. It was republished by Cuman na mBan in 1915 and by PANA in 2006.



In opposition to Irish participation in World War I, The Irish Neutrality League was founded in September 1914. Most of the leaders of the Neutrality League later became members of the 1916 Provisional Government of the Irish Republic.

In the truce negotiations with the British Empire of 1921, the Government of the Irish Republic (Collins in particular) advocated that Ireland would be recognised as permanently neutral, and in return would guarantee that the Irish Republic would militarily oppose the use of Irish territory for any attack on British territory by any foreign power. (Article III of draft A and Article V of draft B treaty; proposals that were taken to London 17/10/1921).

The Free State established by the treaty remained neutral, as did the Republic of Ireland, while also supporting and participating in global organisations such

as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Ireland's Minister for External Affairs, Frank Aiken, was a leader in creating the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and a strong advocate of Irish neutrality. Since the 1960s Ireland's Defence Force actively participated in U.N. peacekeeping missions, which were highly respected because of Ireland's role as a neutral state that had fought a war of National Independence against an Imperial power.

But there has always been a minority opposed to Irish neutrality and they sought to whittle it away over the last few decades.

There was a sustained campaign by that small but powerful minority against Irish Neutrality especially after the start of the Ukraine war.

Convinced that they were right, they were shattered by the results of Irish public polls which showed massive support for neutrality, ranging from 71% (Sunday Times B&A 17/4/22) to the Irish Times/Ipsos poll (15/4/22) of 66%.

Damian Loscher, CEO of Ipsos stated in the Irish Times that the results of the poll demonstrated that "Neutrality is a core element of our identity".

The media has temporarily stopped holding public opinion polls on neutrality.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Taoiseach Martin stated:

"Ireland would not need to hold a referendum to join NATO"

at the EU Parliament meeting in Strasbourg. (Irish Times 08/06/22).

NATO is an aggressive nuclear armed military alliance, committed to using nuclear weapons and has been involved in many offensive wars including, Yugoslavia 1999, Afghanistan 2001-2021, Iraq 2003-2011, and Libya 2011. It is not a "defensive" organisation.

It now sees itself as a global military alliance. The NATO Conference, held from 22-30 July 2022, singled out China (which is not near the North Atlantic) as a "systemic challenge" to NATO States.

A few weeks after his June 8th referendum statement, Taoiseach Martin said that while Ireland did not have to have a referendum, that "the people would have a say" (whatever that means). This minor climb-down could have been the result of opposition from within the Fianna Fáil Party, as many of its members remain loyal to the commitment to neutrality by its founder Eamon De Valera, a commitment still reflected by the vast majority of the people.

Eamon De Valera made clear the reason for Irish neutrality, when he stated:

"A small nation has to be extremely cautious when entering into an alliance which brings it, willy nilly, into these wars....we would not be consulted in how a war should be started-the great powers would do that-and when it ended, no matter who won...we would not be consulted as to the terms on which it should end"

(Dáil Éireann, 12th of July 1955)



The Triple Lock

Despite his party's clear history, it is crystal clear that the current leader of Fianna Fáil still wants to destroy Irish Neutrality. He and his supporters, and his allies in Fine Gael, are continuing to hollow out the values of Irish Independence and Neutrality.

This explains the attack on the Triple Lock by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence. (Oireachtas Foreign and Defence Committee 30/6/22).

The Triple Lock is, at this time, the most significant legislative bulwark supporting Irish neutrality. It is the name given to Irish legislation in the Seville Declaration of the Nice Treaty, that states that members of the Irish Defence Forces shall not serve abroad without the agreement of the Dáil, the Government and the Security Council of the United Nations or UN General Assembly.

The Triple Lock was the result of the defeat of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, when the people rejected the Nice Treaty on the 7th of June 2001. The Government recognised that the deep commitment to Irish neutrality had to be responded to by the Triple Lock legislation. This legal guarantee of neutrality certainly helped to ensure that the second Nice referendum was passed.

In 2015 the Government, after reviewing its military stance, reaffirmed its commitment to the Triple Lock in accordance with relevant legislation under the provisions of the Defence (Amendment) Act 2006.

However, the same Act allowed the Irish Defence Forces to join the EU Battle Groups by diluting the definition of UN authorisation, by allowing the Irish Defence Forces to assemble and embark as part of an EU Battlegroup after Dáil approval, but prior to a UN mandate. They can only be technically "deployed" after a UN mandate has been agreed. Ireland also supports the "expeditionary potential" to deploy military operations under the terms of the EU treaties, "The Petersberg Tasks" which include the use of combat forces in crisis management or "peacemaking" (actually warmaking) in the "fight against terrorism" and "supporting third Countries in combatting terrorism in their territories". Of course the EU Battlegroups were never "deployed", probably because they were too small. Since the Irish Government is now committed to the creation of a 50,000 strong EU First Entry Force, able to invade other states, then this problem of "being too small" is on the way to being solved. Also the EU is massively increasing its military budget from €500 million from 2019-2020, to €7.95 billion from 2021-2027 *(Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung ENAAT publication 'A Militarised Union'). National military expenditures are expected to co-fund military expenditure in theory up to 4 times the EU funding size.

The Government Programme

The Fianna Fáil / Fine Gael / Green 2020 Programme for Government states:

“The Government will ensure that all overseas operations will be conducted in line with our position of military neutrality and will be subject to a triple lock of UN, Government and Dáil Eireann approval.”

But on the 30th of June 2022, at a meeting of the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Simon Coveney, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence made the following remarks on the Triple Lock:

“Theoretically though, the triple lock is a problem, because are we happy with a situation where, effectively, a member of the permanent five of the Security Council can veto where Ireland chooses to send its defence personnel....? I don't believe that we should be prevented from doing so, by a decision that can be made in the Kremlin or in any of the other P5 capitals. That is the problem with the Triple Lock.”

He went on to say that he would be raising the issue in the autumn of 2022.

In short, he was saying the U.N. Security Council should have no say in the deployment of the Irish Defence Forces serving abroad, thus breaking the Programme for Government, smashing the Seville Declaration, and totally negating Irish law on the Triple Lock.

Since, according to the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council of the United Nations has to ratify United Nations military missions, Minister Coveney is rejecting the rules and the authority of the United Nations.

Irish Defence Expenditure

Minister Coveney is seeking to ensure the destruction of the Triple Lock at a time when he is also advocating a massive increase in the size of the Irish Defence Forces, in military personnel as well as the military equipment at the disposal of the Irish Defence Forces. The Government has announced that the annual military budget would be increased from €1.1 billion to €1.9 billion by 2028.

An argument with finance about whether inflation should be built into the figures, saw the Department of Public Expenditure collapse-unusual when asked for huge increases-and the new annual figure will be €1.9 billion. (29/7/22, page 4, The Phoenix.). This is effectively a doubling of Irish defence expenditure, the largest increase since the foundation of the State, at a time of our worst housing crisis for generations to "defend" Ireland, when there is not a shred of evidence that any state in the entire world, even the UK, that undertook virtually all the invading of Ireland in our history, intends to attack the Republic of Ireland.

Neither NATO, nor the current rules in regard to the deployment of the military formations of the European Union abroad, need a U.N. mandate. Ireland's current military equipment, a consequence of Ireland's decision to join NATO's Partnership for Peace (without FF's promised referendum), is already compatible with NATO's military

equipment, then it is rational to say this massive increase in military expenditure has nothing whatsoever to do with "defending Ireland".

It has all to do with active Irish participation in NATO and/or EU wars abroad, neither of which need a U.N. mandate.

Shannon Airport is already a de facto US/NATO airforce base, so in any Irish participation in a war alongside NATO or the EU, it would be a prime target for total destruction.

Clearly, there is a need for increased expenditure on cyber defence systems - but this is a Garda competence and not a matter for the Defence Forces. There is also a need to ensure that the wages and conditions of the Irish Defence Force members are on a par with other EU armies, but that's not a justification for the planned massive increase in military expenditure.



The Military Industrial Complex

The demand for a massive increase in military expenditure does not just come from the desire of Mr. Coveney to continue the slow death of Irish neutrality, to ensure Irish membership of an EU Army, or join NATO as advocated by the Leader of Fianna Fáil, but it also comes from the companies and organisations involved in the substantial growth in the Irish arms industry.

According to the Irish Times (Conor Gallagher, April 25, 2022) there are 550 firms in Ireland active in the Irish defence industry and in 2019 the Dual Use export market was €2.4 billion, larger than Ireland's beef market. Since part of that dual use, such as a firm that produces stabilisers that can be used in wind power as well as military drones, the military dimension does not constitute the entire €2.4 billion. Nevertheless our military equipment exports more than doubled in one year, from €42.3 million in 2019 to €108.5 million in 2020.

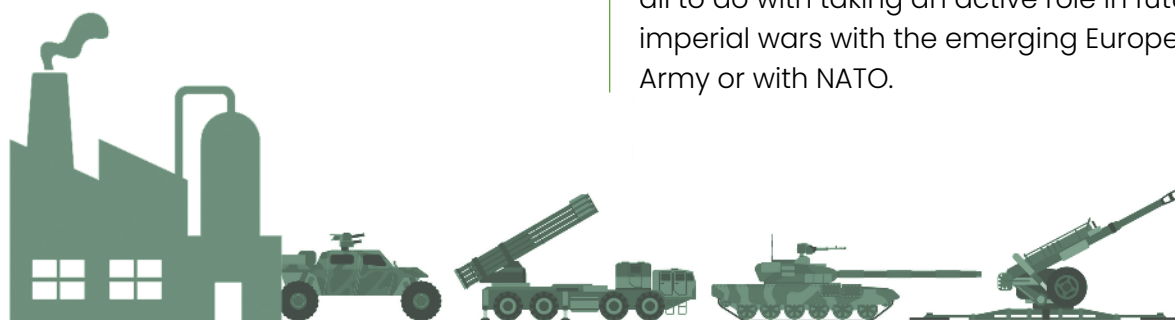
In a Zoom presentation, as part of the Irish Department of Defence November 21 Seminar, Norway's major arms company stated that military technology will ensure that, in the future, a very small number of

military personnel will be needed as they are replaced by modern technology. Ireland's strong computer technology base therefore provides an indication of a massive potential growth in Ireland's defence industry which can also have access to the European Defence Fund which has a budget of €7.95 billion from 2021-2027. Also each EU state is expected to co-fund development projects up to 4 times the EU funding size*. *Regulation (EU) 2021/697.

This process is encouraged by a Security and Defence Enterprise Group within the Government and a new grouping called the Irish Defence and Security Association, made up of small and medium enterprises and research institutes, including UCD.

There would also be an interest from the larger arms companies such as BAE systems, Airbus, Thales Group, Leonardo, Rolls-Royce and others which spent approximately €54.7million in 2016, lobbying EU politicians (A Militarised Union, published by Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung / ENAAT page 19).

In short, Coveney is seeking to destroy the Triple Lock. He is pursuing a policy that has nothing to do with "defending Ireland" and all to do with taking an active role in future imperial wars with the emerging European Army or with NATO.



The Campaign for Irish Neutrality

Since 1996 PANA has campaigned for Irish Neutrality. We believed that the threat to it would grow: as pointed out above, it certainly has. To restore Irish Neutrality, PANA has always worked with other groups that share our values, and will continue to do so, which is why we helped to establish the Irish Neutrality League network and its Statement* (see page 10).

It is no easy task defending neutrality, given the enormous amount of money available to destroy our neutrality. Nevertheless all the evidence is that PANA is reflecting the values of the vast majority of the Irish people. There is now a coherent opposition, deeply rooted in the values of Tone, Clarke, MacDiarmada, MacDonagh, P.H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly and Joseph Plunkett, that can provide in the next election, a Government committed to Irish Neutrality. For example, the most recent Bill to enshrine Neutrality into the Constitution (advocated by PANA since 1996) on 30/3/22 was only defeated by 67 votes to 53. The parties that voted for the Bill included People Before Profit, The Labour Party, the Social Democrats, Independents and Sinn Féin. Public opinion polls suggest that they could form a Coalition Government after the next election which would result in a clear reversal of that vote in the next Dáil.

It is PANA's task in conjunction with others to ensure THAT a decisive majority will be elected to Dail Eireann who support Neutrality being enshrined into the Irish Constitution.

Roger Cole

Chair

Peace & Neutrality Alliance

October 2022



IRISH NEUTRALITY LEAGUE

The Irish Neutrality League campaigns for the protection and strengthening of Ireland's neutrality. We do this in the spirit of the Irish Neutrality League first established in 1914 at the outbreak of World War 1, by the key figures who would later lead the 1916 Rising, and as such note that Ireland's neutrality is

clearly linked to its sovereign independence and remains a core element of its national identity.

We define Irish neutrality as non-participation in wars and military alliances, as set out in the 1907 Hague Convention V, and as the positive engagement in the peaceful, non-military resolution of political conflicts. As a country that faced hundreds of years of oppression and colonial subjugation by empire, we further understand neutrality as a tradition of solidarity with all the nations and peoples of the world who are victims of imperialism, colonialism, war and oppression.

We recognise that neutral countries, including Ireland, have contributed to peaceful coexistence between nations over the decades. Ireland's excellent international reputation, that of its people and of its armed forces in participating in UN Peacekeeping missions, in leading humanitarian support, in advocating for human rights and decolonisation, its role in promoting nuclear non-proliferation treaties and in negotiating the global ban on cluster munitions, is overwhelmingly linked to its neutrality and opposition to empire. Neutrality, along with our record as a voice for peace and international law, imbues Ireland with a credible moral authority to oppose military aggression from whatever quarter and to act as a legitimate voice for the use of diplomatic means and peaceful negotiations to resolve military conflicts.

To further erode Ireland's neutrality beyond what has already occurred since 2003 - with the use of Shannon airport by the US Military - would fundamentally damage that reputation, make us less significant and less effective on the world stage and likely embroil us in more illegal and unjustified wars by larger world powers. We oppose the invasion of sovereign states by larger powers and recognise the right of states to self-determination. We also oppose the escalation of conflicts and the dangerous militarisation of the world, particularly when such critical issues of world hunger, nuclear proliferation and climate change threaten the survival of humanity.

The role of a neutral state such as Ireland is to be a voice of diplomacy, human rights, humanitarian support and peace in opposition to all imperialist wars, colonialism and oppression. We therefore reject moves by any Irish government to use any international conflict as an excuse to abandon neutrality and involve Ireland in supporting or facilitating wars, joining military alliances and increasing European and world militarisation.

We note that every opinion poll taken on the issue showed an overwhelming majority of Irish people value Irish neutrality and favour retaining it.

The Irish Neutrality League is a civil society campaign to bring pressure on the Irish Government to assert Ireland's neutrality positively on the world stage, to be a voice for peace and human rights and oppose wars and militarisation. We call on the Government to commit to and reflect the "*ideal of peace*", the "*generally recognised principles of international law*" and the "*peaceful settlement of international disputes*" as referred to in Article 29, Bunreacht na hÉireann.

We also call on the Government to further copper-fasten Irish neutrality by holding a referendum to enshrine it into the Constitution.



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OBJECTIVES

1. It is within the OSCE and a reformed United Nations, and not the EU, that Ireland should pursue its security concerns.
2. Ireland should pursue a positive neutrality and independent foreign policy and not join or form an association with any military alliance, such as NATO.
3. Ireland should seek to promote European and international security through a policy of disarmament and should therefore oppose the militarisation of the EU.
4. Ireland should refuse to cooperate with or condone in any way policies or military groupings which maintain nuclear weapons or any weapons of mass destruction.
5. Irish troops should only serve abroad as peacekeepers under the auspices of the UN.

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