

# The Battle Groups of the European Empire



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# POBLACHT NA H-ÉIREANN

## THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

**IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN:** In the name of God and the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory. We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious to the differences, carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishing of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland, and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people. We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

Thomas J. Clarke

Sean MacDiarmada  
P. H. Pearse  
James Connolly

Thomas McDonagh  
Eamonn Ceannt  
Joseph Plunkett

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## Origins of the European Empire

The European conquest of the world, begun by the Portuguese in the second half of the 15th century, came to an end at the second half of the 20th century. The collapse of the European Empires – British, Belgian, Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish - could not be reversed, and the ruling elites of these states were well aware of this new reality. To restore their lost imperial power, they knew that they would first have to work together to create a new European Empire. They began that process by creating the European Economic Community which steadily, via European treaty after treaty transferred economic, political, legal and military power away from the peoples of Europe and their national democratic states to the European Institutions: the EU Council of Ministers, the EU Commission, the EU Parliament and the EU Court of Justice. They knew what they were doing. As the EU Commission President, Romano Prodi said on the 13/2/01 to the EU Parliament: *“Are we all clear that we want to build something that can aspire to be a world power?”*

At a press conference on Strasbourg on the 10/7/2007 EU Commission President Barroso said: *“Sometimes I like to compare the EU as a creation to the organisation of Empire. We have the dimensions of Empire.”*

A key part of that process was the willingness of the political elite and their corporate media to deny that what those political forces that sought to defend national democracy were saying about the inevitable outcome

was true. When, for example, Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1972, the government published a White Paper which specifically stated that entry into the EEC would not affect the long established tradition of Irish neutrality which, as we now know, has been totally destroyed.

The Single European Act in 1986 ensured European common foreign policy provisions became a part of European Law. When the Irish Supreme Court decided in its Crotty judgement that the Irish people had to be consulted by way of referendum, before a slice of sovereign Irish power was transferred to European institutions, it was the area covering the transfer of power over foreign policy that it decided was the key factor. The Court decided that Irish State power to determine its foreign relations was held in trust from the people and the Irish government could not transfer such power to European institutions unless they gained the consent of the people through a referendum. This meant that every time power was transferred from their own democratic institutions to EU institutions, they had to be consulted via a referendum unlike all the other EU states where such sovereign power rests with the political elite's state. The fact that the Irish Constitution ensured such sovereign power resides with the Irish people is one of the most valuable gains achieved as a consequences of our long struggle against Imperialism.

The Amsterdam Treaty in 1992 added defence policy provisions, thus expanding the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy to include Defence. In June 1999 the EU established the Political and Security Committee consisting of the member states' ambassadors to the EU and the Military Committee consisting of the member states' Chief of Defence Staffs to advise the PSC on military issues.

In December 1999 the EU agreed to establish an EU military capability target know as the Helsinki Headline goal. The goal included the creation of an EU Rapid Reaction Force of 50-60,000 soldiers with a self-sustaining military capacity including intelligence, air, naval and combat support units capable of deployment within 60 days in any region up to 6,000 km from the borders of the EU for up to a year.

In practice the EU states lacked the capacity to do so as most of their military was already allocated to NATO. The proposed EU RRF lacked the necessary strategic air force to carry these 60,000 soldiers 6,000 km as well as the required air-to-air refueling planes. Yet despite the fact

that the RRF was not ready in December 2001 the EU declared itself to be “militarily operational”.

Since this was not actually true, at the Franco-British military Summit in Le Touquet in February 2003, it was first suggested that smaller EU Battle Groups should be created. The EU leaders at the London summit in November 2003 agreed to their formation.



## The Army of the European Empire

*“We have a shared currency but no real economic or political union. This must change. If we were to achieve this, therein lies the opportunity of the crisis..... and beyond the economic, after the shared currency, we will perhaps dare to take*

*further steps, for example for a European Army.”*

German Chancellor Angela Merkel,  
Kalspreis speech, Aachen, 13/5/2010

The call for the creation of a European Army was part of the German CDU/FSU government’s programme agreed in 2009. A European Empire needs an army of its own. The demand for such an army has widespread support not only among the political elite in Germany such as the SPD, but throughout the EU States including Ireland. Since the same political elite is responsible for the economic crisis caused by its neo-liberal capitalist system that has resulted in millions of people throughout the EU facing massive and growing poverty and destitution, their call of a European Army might not be popular with the peoples of Europe. The purpose of this pamphlet is to make the case against European Imperialists and their European Army.

The steady destruction of national democracy in all the states of the EU in treaty after treaty, as more and more power is transferred to EU institutions, is leading to the creation of a centralised, militarised, neo-liberal imperial Superstate. The capstone of this process was the EU Constitution/Lisbon Treaty. An EU political caste has developed whose

primary loyalty is not to the people from whom they get their mandate, but their Empire.

If it is to be defeated, those political forces throughout the EU that seek an alternative vision of Europe, a social and democratic Europe, a Partnership of independent democratic states, without a military dimension, need to work together to build it. Since all the Empire Loyalists offer is perpetual austerity and perpetual war, the need to build such an alternative alliance centered on the European Left is not only an absolute necessity, but is clearly emerging as a real option as the EU elite's vision cracks under the strain of perpetual wars and austerity. For PANA, the key issue in deciding which political forces are for or against imperialism, is their attitude to the militarisation of the EU and NATO.

The Peace & Neutrality Alliance, since its foundation in 1996, has campaigned for such a Social Europe by advocating the right of the Irish people to their own independent Irish foreign policy, with positive neutrality as its key component, pursued primarily through a reformed United Nations. Our focus has been to oppose the growing military dimension of the EU and its links with NATO. Our analysis is reflected in articles published on our website ( [www.pana.ie](http://www.pana.ie) ). We have also played a role in helping to create a broader alliance that also covers democracy and economic issues via the Campaign Against the EU Constitution/Lisbon Treaty, now renamed the Campaign for a Social Europe ( [www.campaignforasocialeurope.org](http://www.campaignforasocialeurope.org)).



# The Growth of the EU Battle Groups

It was initially agreed that thirteen Battle Groups would be established with 1,500 combat soldiers each. To allow for back up and rotation, there have to be seven to nine soldiers for each combat soldier, so each Battle Group was in effect a military force of at least 12,000 troops. The number of Battle Groups has since been increased to eighteen and their size increased to over 3,000. As two are made ready every six months, this means that the EU now has an armed force of well over 50,000 troops ready to be sent anywhere in the world given five days notice. The decision to deploy them is to be made by the EU Council of Ministers.

Each Battle Group, having being sent to a war zone, has the authority and is given the financial resources to stay in the war zone for up to 120 days. Since each Battle Group can be deployed anywhere in the world, they have to be able to operate in hostile environments including deserts, mountains and jungles, so they have to have a high degree of training, equipment, command structures and planning units.

They also have to be trained to prepare for being an advanced guard for an even larger military force. It has to be: *“the minimum military, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of acting alone, or for the initial phase of larger operations”*.

Each Battle Group consists of at least a:

- Force Headquarters
- Force Commander and Staff
- Mechanised Infantry Battalion
- Battle Group Commander with Staff
- Three Mechanised Infantry Companies
- Logistic Company
- Fire Support Company (Mortars/light Artillery)
- Combat Engineering Platoon
- Air Defence Platoon
- Reconnaissance Company
- Intelligence Platoon
- Helicopter Support Unit
- Medical Service Platoon
- Military Police Platoon

Each of the mechanised infantry companies is expected to be sent to war with 10-12 combat vehicles armed with 30-90mm cannons, supported with 6-9 light howitzers or 120mm heavy mortar systems, anti-tank missiles, air defence systems and helicopters gunships.

Since the Battle Groups have doubled in size from the 1,500 originally envisioned, these are formidable and heavily armed troops and it should be assumed the EU will continue to increase their size. They are not there to help civilians affected by floods and natural disasters. They are armed and trained to go to war and kill the enemy.

As Jaap de HoopScheffer, a Secretary General of NATO said: *“EU Battle Groups could be used to go to war. Why did the EU create the Battle Group? It is not just to help rebuild a country. The Battle Groups are not there for building schools. We shouldn’t think the EU is for soft power and NATO for tough power.”*



The Battle Group formations agreed to so far include:

1. French-Belgium
2. Germany, Netherlands, Finland
3. Italian, Hungary, Slovenia
4. Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania
5. Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Norway
6. Spain, France, Portugal, Germany
7. Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain
8. UK
9. Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal
10. Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus
11. Czech Republic, Slovakia
12. France, Belgium, Luxembourg
13. Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia
14. UK, Netherlands
15. Italy, Romania, Turkey
16. Spain, France, Portugal
17. Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Austria, Lithuania
18. Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Norway, Latvia, Ireland
19. Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Ukraine
20. Portugal, Spain, France, France, Italy, EURFOR
21. France, Belgium, Luxembourg
22. Italy, Slovenia, Hungary
23. Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, FYRM and Ireland

When troops from a number of countries take part, one country takes the lead role and provides the Commander and most of the troops. One of the outcomes has been to ensure that officers and soldiers from different countries get to know each other and learn to work together, creating over time a growing number of military that develop a European, as distinct from a national, sense of identity within a military framework, a crucial process in the formation of a European Empire.

However, just like with the Euro, it is possible to be a member of the EU and not support or participate in its militarisation via the Battle Groups. Neither Malta, because it has neutrality enshrined into its constitution, nor Denmark, take part. In the case of Denmark, the people voted against the Maastricht Treaty and gained a number of major concessions. These included a legally binding Protocol added to the Amsterdam Treaty and subsequent treaties that excluded Denmark from paying for, or involvement with, the militarisation of the EU.

The first treaty PANA campaigned against was the Amsterdam Treaty. Our key position was that a similar Protocol also be applied to Ireland, along the following: *“With regard to measures adopted by the Council in the fields of Article J3(1) and J7 of the treaty of the European Union, Ireland does not participate in the elaboration and the implementation of decision and actions which have defence implications, but will not prevent the development of closer cooperation between member states in this area. Therefore Ireland shall not participate in their adoption. Ireland shall not contribute to the financing of the operational expenditure arising from such measures.”*

This has remained the central campaign position of PANA in every subsequent treaty referendum.

## **Irish Historical Traditions**

PANA is part of a deeply rooted historical tradition. In 1790, Theobald Wolfe Tone in his first political pamphlet, “The Spanish War”, advocated Irish neutrality and independence. James Connolly, Arthur Griffith and Countess Markievicz founded the Irish Neutrality League in 1914. Since the 1790s there have always been people, from the United Irishmen to the Fenians who advocated Irish independence, democracy and neutrality. Throughout that same period however there was also another strong tradition which supported British imperialism. But this tradition, defeated



as the dominate ideology in most of Ireland as a consequence of the 1916 Rising and our national war independence which ensured our neutrality in World War 2 and non membership of NATO, did not go away. It just waited in the long grass for its time to come again. However the fall of the British Empire meant that the return to it was not an option, so they turned instead to the emerging European Empire.

The major political parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, decided to gradually dismantle and destroy the values of Irish independence, democracy and neutrality. As far as they were concerned, the Irish Defence Forces were to become part of the regiments of the emerging European Empire via the EU Battle Groups. They totally supported the restoration of the militarist ideology that inspired British Imperialism, not only by supporting the EU Battle Groups but also the integration of the EU military with the US military via NATO. Examples of this process include their decision to join NATO's PfP without the promised referendum and voting against a Bill to enshrine neutrality into the Constitution.

However, above all other decisions that endorsed the restoration of imperialism as Ireland's domination ideology, was the decision to support and participate in the US/UK invasion, conquest, and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by allowing millions of US troops land in Shannon Airport in total contravention of the 1907 Hague Convention on neutrality. An indication of the total shallowness of the Labour Party's alleged support for the values of its founder James Connolly was that on becoming part of the FG led government it immediately changed its policy and supported the use of Shannon Airport by the US, the participation of Irish troops in the Afghan War, the NATO conquest of Libya, and sanctions on Iran, as well as Irish Army participation in the German-led Battle Group.



## The “Triple Lock”

However everything has not all gone according to plan. The tradition of Irish Independence, neutrality and democracy did not go away, and PANA is proud of the role it played in continuing to advocate them. PANA was the only broad-based alliance that campaigned against the Amsterdam Treaty. While we lost, there was a significant increase in the no vote compared to previous referendums, and we went on to win the first Nice treaty referendum.

This first defeat for imperialism forced the Empire Loyalists to agree to the “triple lock” legislation which enshrined the concept in domestic Irish law. Irish troops could not participate in the EU Battle Groups if they were sent to war unless they were mandated by the United Nations, the government and Dáil Éireann.

This “Triple Lock” however was later amended substantially by the Defence (amendment) Act 2006. The term “International United Nations Force” is redefined and is now so broad that any vague resolution from the Security Council will do. The present Irish Defence Acts state only that such a force should be ‘established’ by the Security Council or General Assembly. A number of recent military missions were ‘authorised’ by the UN Security Council, but this new meaning is deliberately vague. At a conference in Switzerland, Rory Montgomery, a senior Irish Foreign Affairs official, described the act as meaning that all the Irish government needed to ensure Irish troops participation in a EU Battle Group was a ‘benediction’ from the United Nations. In short, like the UK and the US when they invaded Iraq, the Irish government can decide what a UN resolution means.

Section Three of the Act now gives the government, rather than the Dáil, real power to support deployment of the EU Battle Groups which include Irish troops, especially since it gives the government the right to deploy troops for 'humanitarian' tasks when the definition of 'humanitarian' is so broad. For example, when NATO began bombing Kosovo in March in 1999 the reason given was to 'avert a humanitarian catastrophe'. The NATO/EU axis gave the same reason for the conquest of Libya.

The Irish government is also given the right to approve the Irish Army taking part in an EU Battle Group assembly and embarkation. They however cannot 'deploy' troops or actually go to war, unless the Dáil agrees and UN approval is given. This section is farcical and dangerous.

To allow Irish troops to assemble and embark, but not actually engage in a war, appears insane. When the EU Battle Group actually goes to war, those that they are going to war with will fight back and the Irish members of the BG will have to fight back in return. It makes an absolute mockery of the 'triple lock'.

The reality is that the Fianna Fáil/PD government, supported by Fine Gael, were well aware that they were destroying the so called 'triple lock' as part of their objective to ensure the Irish Army became part of the regiments of the emerging European Empire.

However the show of loyalty to the Empire by the Irish political elite has been badly undermined by the decision of the German Supreme Court ruling on the Lisbon Treaty on the use of German troops. The whole point of the Lisbon Treaty was to give the EU institution, the EU Council of Ministers direct control over the deployment of the EU Battle Groups. The Irish Defence Act was clearly designed to recover from their defeat over



the Nice and restore de facto EU elite control over the deployment of the EU Battle Groups. The German Supreme Court however made a ruling on the Lisbon Treaty which stated that only the German Bundestag had control over the deployment of German Troops. Since German military power is at the core of the militarisation of the EU, this decision has been not just a major victory for German democracy, but for democracy throughout Europe.

The German Empire Loyalists are now doing everything they can to subvert this decision though their decisive majority in the Bundestag.

## The Nordic Battle Group



The first Battle Group the Irish Defence Forces participated in was the Nordic Battle Group. It is clear that while some BGs are nationally based, most are made up of troops from adjoining countries. This meant that the obvious choice for a partner for participating Irish troops was Great Britain. However even the Fianna Fáil/ PD government knew that asking members of the Defence Forces to fight shoulder to shoulder with the British Paratroop regiment that had murdered unarmed Irish civilians in Derry would not be popular. While the FF/FG axis

supported the Good Friday Agreement so that, in time, such an option for Ireland would eventually be available, it is not at the moment, so they went Nordic.

The other countries in the Nordic Battle Group that Ireland joined were Sweden, Finland, Norway and Estonia. Norway, while not a member of the EU, like other countries such as Turkey which also takes part in EU Battle Groups, is a member of NATO, thus providing real evidence that NATO and the EU have a strong symbiotic structured military relationship.

Its Commander, General Jan Stefan Anderson said that they should be used to help with natural disasters. In fact, the EU Nordic Battle Group was armed with CV combat vehicles, Mowag Piranha troop carriers, Bofors AT4 light anti-tank weapons, Psg 90 sniper rifles and a JAS 39 Gripen fighter aircraft. The point of an EU Battle group is to go to war. If the EU really wanted to help in natural disasters they could have easily designed a group specifically designed for such a purpose.

# The German-led EU Battle Group

PANA published, *“The EU Battle Groups Regiments of the EU Empire”* in 2006. In 2012, with the Irish Army about to participate in yet another EU Battle Group led by Germany on July 1st, it has decided to produce this updated version.

One of the key realities about the German-led EU Battle Group, in which 175 Irish soldiers are taking part, is that it can send over 3,000 soldiers into battle, twice the number of troops originally envisioned. Given the need for at least seven to nine back-up troops for every soldier in the field, this means an army of at least 25,000 troops. The EU has established two EU Battle Groups (the second Battle Group is the Italian led Slovenian, Hungarian BG) ready and able to go to war with five days notice. Thus the EU has a 50,000 strong military force that could legitimately be called a small army. Just under 100 years after their formation, the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Defence Forces, has increasingly become little more than part of a Regiment of the European Empire.

It is worth tracing the process of how the Irish Volunteers, created to fight for an Independent Irish Republic against an Empire, has been transformed into an instrument of imperial domination; but for now, let us focus on the German-led EU Battle Group.

The contribution of the Irish Defence Forces is 23 Irish soldiers to the BG’s Headquarters and a full equipped ISTAR(intelligence, Surveillance, Target-Acquisition and Reconnaissance) company of 153 soldiers. Their military equipment included Mowags, the LTAV, sniper and CTR equipment, an Orbitor UAV and comms equipment and containers. Mowags are armoured personnel carriers armed with machine guns or 30mm cannon or grenade launcher. An Orbitor UAV is a military drone which, together with the sniper rifles, means that the ISTAR is not about helping people

affected by natural disasters, a concept continually peddled by the Irish corporate media to explain the role of the EU Battle Groups. Its purpose is to go to war.

The German contribution is by far the largest, with 1,800 troops made up of 650 infantry, 450 HQ Staff, 250 medics, 30 operative information, 60 military police, and 250 for logistics.



Their military equipment includes Bell UHI-D light transport helicopters. The cost for upkeep and military exercises is €4.5 million.

The other countries involved in the German-led Battle Group are Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and for the first time the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

It has two Headquarters, the first being Force HQ with 150 staff which oversees the overall approach, provides the strategic communications and interacts with the EU Military Committee. The Force HQ is also responsible for integrating air elements, naval elements, Special Forces and a psychological Task Force. Under them is the Battle Group HQ, a beefed up battalion HQ.

The Fine Gael/Labour Government has allocated €10.7 million to cover the potential cost of Irish Army participation for 120 days if they were actually deployed. Of course, if it was deployed, it is an absolute certainty that the €10.7 million will turn out to be a massive underestimation of the actual cost, and there is no chance whatsoever that the war the Battle Group takes part in would be over in four months.

While the Irish Defence Forces have remained small, about 10,000 in total, throughout this period of its integration into the EU/US/NATO military axis, defence expenditure increased to over €1 billion per annum. This money was spent primarily on the substantial upgrading of its military equipment to ensure military interoperability with NATO, to such an extent that Ireland was spending more money per soldier than any country in Europe. Their equipment is now up to EU Battle Group and NATO standards.

## **NATO & the EU Battle Groups**

The reason given for the creation of NATO was the threat of invasion of Western Europe by the Soviet Union. Therefore when this collapsed



NATO should have disbanded, having accomplished its mission. Instead it expanded and created a new vision of giving itself the right to military intervention throughout the entire world. NATO is a military alliance dominated by the USA. This US domination has grown as the political caste in Europe increasingly responded to demands from

their electorate that more and more cuts be made in defence expenditure. In 1980 European countries accounted for 40% of NATO's defence spending and now it is down to 20%. In 2008 the EU states spent €298 billion on defence and reduced to €281 billion in 2011.

The creation of a "European identity" and a European Empire by the elite is now being used to seek to reverse that trend, on the basis that the peoples of Europe might be more persuaded to agree to spend money on European "defence" rather than NATO.

However, the EU is very clear that the Battle Groups are to be developed as a military force in a mutually reinforcing way, with NATO troops such as those in the NATO Response Force. This continues the overlapping of the EU/NATO/ Partnership for Peace military cooperation. There is a strong requirement for interoperability between NATO and EU military, especially as NATO, like the EU, has given its military the right to operate anywhere in the world. A report published by two ex-NATO chiefs in October 2005 states: "Failure to meaningfully improve Europe's collective defence capabilities would have profoundly negative impacts on the ability of European countries to protect their interests, the viability of NATO as an alliance, and the ability of Europe to partner in any meaningful way with the US."

In February 2005 the then UK Minister for Defence, in a letter to the House of Commons Defence Committee, described the EU Battle Groups as being: *"Mutually reinforcing with the larger NATO Response Force... and having the potential to act as a stepping-stone for countries that want to contribute to the NATO Response Force, by developing their high readiness forces to the required standard and integrating small countries contribution to multinational units."*

*Wherever possible and applicable, standards, practical methods and procedures for Battle Groups are analogous to those defined in the NATO RF. Correctly managed there is considerable potential for synergy between the two initiatives."*

So not only is the link between NATO and EU military formations confirmed, the Battle Groups also allow small countries, such as Ireland, to be integrated into these EU/NATO structures. This includes the NATO RF, a 21,000 strong combat military force well equipped with high tech weapons capable of being deployed within 5-30 days.

Since December 2003 the EU has a permanent military group in the SHAPE (NATO's HQ) and NATO has established permanent liaison arrangements with EU military staff.

An official Finnish Foreign Ministry document states: *“In practice, many EU countries will double-hat various troops to EU and NATO rapid deployment forces. It is up to those countries to ensure that their resources and personnel are not in simultaneous readiness to two different groups. In practice, the Battle Groups will most be trained in NATO exercises.”*

This link between the EU and NATO is obvious as the following countries are members of both; Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

Since 2006 the Foreign Ministers of all the EU and NATO states, including Ireland, have been having regular meetings several times a year.

In 2009 the decision of France to rejoin NATO’s integrated military command was a crucial decision to ensure a solid and undivided link between the EU and NATO.

The final consolidation of this process was the decision made by NATO at its 2010 summit in Lisbon where it developed its new strategic concept to recognise the EU as a unique and essential partner and to welcome a stronger and more capable EU defence.

## **The EU Constitution - The Lisbon Treaty**

The capstone in the process of the creation of the European Empire was the EU Constitutional Treaty. It was defeated by the French and Dutch people in referendums. The response of the elite was to rename it the Lisbon Treaty and refuse to hold referendums except in Ireland where they were forced to. When the Irish people voted no, they simply forced them to vote again. The total commitment by the Irish political elite to the European Empire was made absolutely clear when they forced the Irish people to vote again on exactly the same treaty they had already rejected. They won the second time, by allowing no limitation on the money spent by the yes campaign, by abolishing the Forum on Europe that had organised democratic debates throughout the country in the first referendum, and with the help of their corporate media, absolutely united in their hatred of Irish independence, democracy and neutrality, strongly supporting the treaty.

The key aspect of the treaty was that it gave the EU a distinct and separate legal identity, separate from and superior to the individual member states

of the Union. Ireland, in legal terms, now has a similar legal relationship to the EU that Rhode Island has to the United States of America, as do all the other EU states.

It established a new post, an EU Council President, who serves for five years and who presides over EU meetings of the leaders of the states of the EU.

Lisbon established an EU Minister for Foreign Affairs responsible for EU foreign, security and defence policy and in charge of an EU Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Article 19(2) states that when the EU has defined a common position, those member states on the United Nations Security Council shall request the EU Foreign Minister to present that position. The member states are now legally obliged to support the EU's foreign and security policy, "*actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity*".

It has legalised and institutionalised the EU Battle Groups and the European Defence Agency. However the major step towards the Empire was MSC.

## Military Structured Cooperation

A group of member states of the EU can now create new distinct, separate and permanent military structures under Article 28 A (6) which states: "*Those Member States whose military capabilities fulfill higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the more demanding missions shall establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework.*"

The groups of states that do so must inform the EU Foreign Minister and EU Council and its creation must be approved only by a qualified majority



vote, so no state which disapproves the creation of this new military force can use a veto to prevent its establishment.

Article 28 E6 states: *“The decisions and recommendations of the Council within the framework of permanent structured cooperation, other than those provided for in paragraphs 2 to 5 (dealing with admissions, suspension or withdrawal of membership) shall be adopted by unanimity. For the purposes of this paragraph, unanimity shall be constituted by the votes of the representatives of the participating Member States only”.*

Therefore only states that are members of this new military force can make decisions and there is a lack of clarity as to what those decisions could mean.

Article 28 C allows the Council to entrust the implementation of a (Petersberg) task to a group of Member States that have the capability, and leaves the management of the task to the members taking part. It also makes clear that such a military force shall act *“in accordance with the principle of a single set of forces”*. A permanent military force acting as a single set of forces is an Army. For example if Germany, France Austria and Hungary combined their armies via structured cooperation, once approved by the EU Council, it could undertake a more demanding mission, for example, the conquest of Syria and Iran, and manage that conquest without reference to other EU States such as Ireland or Spain, etc, who were not members of this army established by Structured Cooperation.

## The Expansion of the Petersberg Tasks

The Petersberg tasks define the tasks allocated to the EU Battle Groups or the army or armies that can now be created under Structured Cooperation. The original tasks of humanitarian, rescue, and peace-keeping and peace-enforcement missions have now been expanded into *“joint disarmament operations, military advice and assistance tasks and post-conflict stabilisation.”* Article 28 B (1) states: *“all these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting Third Countries in combating terrorism in their territories”*.

The EU institution, the International Security Information Service (ISIS) in its July 23, 2004 European Security Review, states that joint disarmament operations *“could include anything from providing personal security to UN inspectors to full scale invasions á la Iraq”*.

The Irish government makes great play of the following paragraph in the treaty: *“the common security and defence policy of the Union does not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member states”*. It claims it refers to non NATO states such as Ireland.

But the next two paragraphs state: *“Recalling that the common security and defence policy of the Union respects the obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty of those Member States which see their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which remains the foundation of their collective defence of its members, and is compatible with the common security and defence policy within that framework; Convinced that a more assertive Union role in security and defence matters will contribute to the vitality of a renewed Atlantic Alliance, in accordance with the Berlin Plus arrangement (sharing EU/NATO assets).”*

The treaty in fact commits Ireland to contributing to the vitality of a renewed NATO, and a more assertive EU security and defence policy that is compatible with NATO's.

Nowhere in the Lisbon treaty does it state that a UN mandate for the EU Battle Groups or the new military formations that can be established under permanent Structured Cooperation is needed before their deployment.

## European Defence Agency

The European Defence Agency was established with an initial budget of €1.9 million in 2004 which grew to €30.5 million in 2011. The controversial beginnings of the EDA and the massive influence of the European military-industrial complex in its formation are well documented in Ben Hayes' excellent 2006 study for Statewatch and the Transnational Institute: *“Arming Big Brother”*. The EDA was legalised and made part of the Lisbon Treaty.



Its role in encouraging the militarisation of the EU was consolidated by Article

28(3) which states: *“Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities. The Agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments shall*

*identify operational requirements, shall promote measures to satisfy those requirements, shall contribute to identifying and, where appropriate, implementing any measure needed to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, shall participate in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, and shall assist the Council in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities.”*

Thus the Lisbon Treaty, the de facto Constitution of the European Empire, has a clause which means the EU States have a legal obligation to improve their military capabilities and has established an agency with the function to ensure that process.

## The Mutual Defence and Solidarity Clauses

Article 28 A (7) provides a mutual assistance clause in case of armed aggression. It states: *“If a Member state is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which for those states which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation.”*

This clause has all the qualities of a military pact, granting mutual assistance to its members. Throughout the Lisbon Treaty campaign PANA argued that this would mean that the Western European Union, a distinct and separate European organisation which had steadily transferred all its assets to the

EU, would be abolished since its last remaining competence, that of collective defence, would be transferred to the EU. The WEU has now been abolished and there are now no longer any neutral states in the EU.

The Solidarity Clause Article 188R states: *“The Union and its*



*member states shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a man-made disaster. The Union shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the member states, to:*

- a) *prevent the terrorist threat in the territory of the Member States; protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from any terrorist attack; assist a Member State in its territory at the request of its political authorities in the event of a terrorist attack;*
- b) *assist a Member State in its territory at the request of its political authorities in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.*

*To implement the Solidarity Clause, assistance shall be requested by the political authorities of the Member(s) concerned and, if the assistance has military or defence implications, decisions must be taken by unanimity.”*

This is a very broad mandate as it covers the threat of terrorism as well as an actual terrorist attack, leaving the way open for pre-emptive military actions. Does preventing the terrorist threat in the territory of the Member State include attacking a country outside the EU that is seen to be harbouring terrorists? What are the implications under the Solidarity Clause for responding to, say, a threat by Al Qaeda to attack EU countries supplying troops to the war in Afghanistan? How are terrorists defined: are they in the midst of anti-war protesters?

Even the NATO Treaty does not require an automatic military response from all its members to an attack. Article 5 States that in the case of such an attack, each NATO member: *“Will assist the party or parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”*

## **Another Europe is Possible**

For generations some the Irish people fought the British Empire seeking to establish a united independent democratic Irish Republic, while others supported it. Now the British Empire has been replaced by the European Empire established by the EU Constitution/Lisbon Treaty and Irish supporters of imperialism have transferred their loyalty to it. Imperialism has become, once more, the dominate ideology in Ireland.

Since 1996 PANA has been sought to rebuild an anti-imperialist alliance in

opposition to this process. For example, we played a key role in winning the first referendums on the Nice and Lisbon treaties and helped organise major demonstrations against the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. There can be little doubt that the fact that the Irish State did not send any troops to take part in the Iraq war, and only eight Irish soldiers to serve in the Afghan war was in no small measure due to the these campaigns. The two victories over imperialism when the first Nice and Lisbon treaties were defeated were also major achievements in which PANA played a key role. Our current campaign against the sanctions and plans for war against Iran by the EU/US/Israeli/NATO axis, more than any other, needs to be a success, as the consequences of such a war would be a disaster.

PANA has always regarded its victories and defeats as only battles in a long war that stretches back over 200 years. The same is true of Irish imperialists, the latest example being ex-Taoiseach John Bruton's praise for John Redmond, who encouraged thousands of Irish men to volunteer to fight and die for the British Empire in the 1914-18 war.

The EU Battle Groups, the Regiments of the new Empire, are succeeding in steadily building a European officer corps whose loyalty, like Lord Kitchener, will not be to the countries to which they belong, but to the Empire which they serve. With the passing of the Lisbon treaty it now has new institutions and a legal framework to use them and pressure is now growing to do so. The EU had agreed to send them to participate in the Libyan civil war, but subject only to the agreement of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It did not give its permission on that occasion but deployment of the Battle Groups had been agreed and there will be other opportunities to do so, especially as there is no legal requirement for a UN endorsement.

But the Empire is offering nothing but perpetual austerity at home and perpetual war abroad. Resistance has grown not just in Ireland but throughout the states of Europe.

In Ireland the elite had for decades the unquestioning support of not only the major political parties of Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Labour, but also that of the social partners, especially the leadership of the trade unions. The hammer blows of war and austerity however are breaking their hold of the union leaders over their members and some are responding in a progressive manner. New NGOs are emerging that are providing a growing critical analysis of imperialism. New political formations like the United Left Alliance and a revitalised Sinn Féin, which is affiliated to PANA, are gaining popular support. In Fianna Fail, which suffered its greatest

electoral defeat in 2011, some elements are beginning to rediscover its Republican tradition.

In Northern Ireland, the Unionist Parties remain strong supporters of British sovereign power as expressed through the British Parliament. Since the purpose of the EU Empire is to destroy not just Irish democracy but British democracy, there is a level of common ground between the political forces of unionism and Irish democracy.

However, opposition to the Empire in Britain is essentially led by those who identify with conservative values. The overwhelming majority of those who define themselves as progressives or socialists still support it. Britain is not unique, as the same applies to many other countries. In France, opposition to the Empire is led by the National Front while the French Socialist Party EU militarisation and links with NATO. It is only in recent times that a progressive anti-imperialist party, Parti de Gauche, has emerged to oppose it. The same diversity of opposition occurs in virtually all the other EU states.

The core reality is that there is no European Demos, there are no people called the Europeans. There are in fact distinct and separate peoples: the Irish, French, German, Greek etc, people in Europe. In such circumstances if “the left” refuse to accept this reality, then the leadership of the opposition to the Empire will pass to purely nationalistic forces.

Predicting the future is difficult if not impossible. PANA has won some battles and lost others. However, there is a very powerful case to be made that the Empire is losing support, as the war in Afghanistan goes on and on, as it imposes a totally unjustified embargo on Iran, and threatens war on Syria and Iran.

Together with these wars and institutionalised austerity, a European version of US Tea Party economics, widespread and growing poverty is spreading rapidly throughout Europe. While the EU might muddle through, it is very difficult to see any other possibility than that the Empire will implode. It could destroy itself.

Therefore the real issue facing those of us who oppose imperialism is to develop a strategy that gains the support of the people who are increasingly drawn to support those who are currently leading the struggle against the Empire from the right, such as the National Front.

In four years time Ireland will be celebrating the centenary of the 1916 Rising, a rebellion against the British Empire led by Republicans and

Socialists. PANA seeks not only to rebuild that alliance against the European Empire within Ireland, but to advocate that our strategy should be taken up by progressive forces throughout the other states of the EU. It also seeks to build links with peace groups in the other NATO States including the USA where the same neo-liberal militarist ideology remains dominant, an option available to PANA because of the strong historical connections between Ireland, the US and Canada.

PANA is only a very small part of the global anti-imperialist peace movement, a fact recognised through our decision to seek affiliation to the World Peace Council. If global imperialism is to be defeated it needs a global peace movement.

The defeat of the EU Empire, the abolition of NATO and the revitalisation of the only global and inclusive organisation committed to inclusive global security, the United Nations, has been the key objectives of PANA for 16 years. If Irish history is our guide, what's 16 years in a history of struggle that stretches back well over 200 years?

In 1790 Wolfe Tone, the founder of Irish Republicanism wrote his first political pamphlet. The objective is the same now as it was then. Let us continue the struggle to achieve The Irish Republic.

## **“EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL TO IRELAND THAT THROWS US ON OUR OWN STRENGTH**

*We should then look to our own internal resources, and scorn to sue for protection to any foreign state; we should spurn the idea of moving a humble satellite round any power, however great, and claim at once, and enforce, our rank among the primary nations of the earth. Then should we have what under the present system we never shall see, A NATIONAL FLAG and spirit to maintain it.”*

The Spanish War by Theobald Wolfe Tone 1790

Another Europe is possible. A Europe that is a partnership of independent, democratic States, legal equals without a military dimension.

June 2012



# Peace and Neutrality Alliance Comhaontas Na Síochána is Neodrachta

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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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