

Europe Without Neutrals: NATO Lures Ireland into Global Military Network

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On June 1 the Irish Times disclosed that Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs recently recommended to the nation’s Commission on Defence that Ireland expand military integration with NATO and the European Union. In the first case with the military bloc’s Partnership for Peace program which the country joined in 1999.

At the moment Ireland is one of only six European Union members that are not also members of NATO. The others are Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Malta and Sweden. [All of those but Cyprus are members of one or more NATO military partnerships](#): Austria, Finland, Malta and Sweden are members of the Partnership for Peace, and Finland and Sweden are also Enhanced Opportunities Partners; the latter two are de facto NATO members in most substantive ways. European nations not in the European Union are also in the Partnership for Peace: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. NATO members not (or not yet) in the EU are Albania, Britain, Macedonia, North Macedonia, Norway and Turkey. Of the eleven nations that have joined both the EU and NATO since 1999, all joined NATO first.

[According to the Irish daily](#), the foreign ministry asserted that more extensive cooperation with NATO “can ensure that the Defence Forces has the relevant capability and the necessary force protection elements to participate in increasingly demanding overseas missions.”

In also advocating the deployment of military *attachés* abroad “in regions where Ireland is seeking to expand its global footprint,” the ministry stated:

“The engagement of the Defence Forces with the EU, Nato, through Partnership for Peace and the OSCE will become increasingly important as regional organisations continue to take on more responsibilities.” Such subordination of Irish military forces to multinational organizations, including the thirty-nation, U.S.-dominated military bloc, will represent “a significant foreign policy development.” It will enhance “the capacities, expertise and international networks of the defence organisation” in furtherance of a *rules-based international order* (a quote).

As all of Europe is being recruited into the U.S.'s escalating confrontation with Russia, with the Pentagon, NATO and the EU working in unison on all fronts, nations like Ireland which had long prided themselves on their neutrality will not be allowed that status much longer. Neutral it was in World War II and at least formally during the Cold War, but no more.

As the *Irish Times* paraphrased it, Ireland's "growing strategic engagement" with international (as the required verbal anodyne) peace and security operations will necessitate "ongoing support through progressive, forward-looking co-ordination between Foreign Affairs, the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces."

As though appearing providentially (though in fact by less-than-divine design), the same publication three days later ran an editorial piece titled [*What price Irish neutrality in today's world?*](#) The opening paragraph reads:

"The [cyberattack on the Irish health service](#) [blamed by the writer on Russia, needless to say] and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight in Belarus should prompt a fundamental reassessment about the relevance of neutrality to the challenges of today's world. The role and under funding of the Defence Forces over many years has to be part of that assessment."

The choice of Belarus as a precipitating cause for enticing Ireland into NATO's deadly embrace is not fortuitous. Since last August, and especially since the aforementioned Ryanair incident, the West – U.S., European Union and NATO; always united, virtually inseparable – has devised a common strategy of fostering regime change in that nation, with possible-to-probable military intervention as the fifth act, and through striking Belarus aiming a major blow at Russia as well. It's not a matter of Irish and other erstwhile neutral European nations needing to protect themselves from the menacing actions of Belarus (...); it's one of NATO requiring that all of Europe be enrolled in the campaign against Belarus and Russia.

The editorial's second paragraph is a masterstroke of speciousness and sophism in the service of militarism and intervention abroad:

"Irish neutrality, as commonly understood, is a long-outdated concept which suggests that this State not only doesn't take part in military alliance but has no particular view on the course of international relations. It dates from the second World War when Ireland was neutral as between the fascist powers and the Allies."

To expose the negative to light: neutrality is not properly understood; it is *passé*, retrograde and unenlightened in any case. That by not joining a military alliance that consists of thirty members and forty partners on six continents which has waged unprovoked war on three of those six is to just not care about the world. In fact for Ireland to maintain a posture of neutrality now in the face of Belarusian and Russian transgressions is the moral (and practical) equivalent of appeasing and accommodating Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. There appears no other way of interpreting the above comments.

After discussing NATO's role in training Irish military personnel for "noble and humanitarian" missions abroad, the author reiterates the preceding moral-political indictment of neutrality in stating, "Leaving aside purely operational factors there is the deeper question of being clear which side this country is on and how it can best protect itself in the future."

Are you with the democratic, tolerant, clear-seeing West or are you a compromised asset of dictatorial and fascistic regimes like those of Belarus and Russia? The way that (inevitably) implied query is posed in and by the West, there are only two responses permitted. And the vicious and voracious ambitions of Minsk and Moscow may well extend to the green fields and hills of Eire itself, is also used as a bugbear to frighten the Irish into submission.

The *Irish Times* columnist also engaged in this agile display of legerdemain: new EU nations in Central and Eastern Europe supported Ireland “during the protracted negotiations over Brexit,” and as they are to a one threatened by imminent invasion by Russia’s barbarian hordes (as is implied: “Those countries feel threatened by incessant Russian pressure on their borders and meddling in their internal affairs.”), then Ireland must prove its gratitude and loyalty by...going to war with Russia?

This is the manner, crude, but lacking counterinformation all too effective, in which nations are seduced by militarism and driven to war.

There is a [history for NATO to build on](#), unfortunately. Ireland provided the bloc with troops for its post-conflict military operations in Bosnia and Kosovo; joined the Partnership for Peace program in 1999, which was employed to enlist the fourteen Eastern European countries that have joined NATO since 1999; and was later granted an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme. In addition:

- It participates in the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process
- It participates in the Interoperability Platform, which “brings Allies together with 24 selected partners that are active contributors to NATO’s operations”
- It provides support for NATO-led operations and missions
- It deployed troops to Afghanistan for NATO’s International Security Assistance force from 2002-2016 and its successor, Resolute Support Mission afterward

Should the West, with Ireland’s assistance to the extent it supplies it, succeed in deposing the government of Belarus and supplanting it with a pro-NATO client regime, there will not be a single wholly European nation not under NATO’s jackboot.

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