



**A RED NETWORK ARTICLE  
DOWNLOADED FROM  
WWW.REDNETWORK.IE**

## **We want full military neutrality for Ireland**

*By Jim O'Connell*

The current FG/FG/Green coalition continues to ramp up the push toward more direct involvement with Nato and the Western military establishment.

They are using the fact of a proxy war between Nato and Russia being fought out in Ukraine to frighten people into a normalisation of support and engagement with the side that is Nato, an alliance that is equally, as belligerent and criminal as Putin's forces.

Already the Swedish and Finnish establishments have used the scare tactic of 'the belligerent Russian Bear' while Japan and Germany have made major changes to the pacific stances adopted since WW2.

FF and FG are relentlessly attempting to shred any vestiges of what remains of neutrality using statements like 'we are military neutral but not politically neutral'. This is an attempt to paint Ireland as a firm member of the 'good' Western alliance under attack by the 'bad' forces on the Eastern side. In doing so they completely dismiss the facts that most of the population of Ireland want to maintain neutrality and very few want to see Ireland join Nato.

So, when Varadkar and Martin speak out on this issue they are not voicing the opinions of the people they purport to represent. They are speaking for their own interests and the interests of their class, a class that is closely aligned with the imperialism of the US and its allies.

What is needed now is not more talk of closer ties with military aggressive alliances but rather a real redefinition of Irish neutrality, both political and military.

Leo Varadkar is using the fact of Ireland's proximity to transatlantic communication cables to raise the spectre of the 'Russian menace' he maintains might launch attacks close to Ireland's shores. He plays this up using the example of the attack on the Nord Stream infrastructure in the Baltic. This, despite the very real possibility that the Nord Stream incident was an action taken by 'Western' allies, the very ones Ireland would join with to 'protect' the infrastructure off our shores.

So now the Western Alliance with Nato at its core is pushing to have Ireland play its full part in protecting Western Capitalist infrastructure... while footing the bill for it and creating more

opportunities for profit. To live up to what Nato considers to be Ireland's duty, military and related spending would require huge increases to cover bringing Ireland in line with the type of spending in other countries. They maintain this is needed to 'hold the line' against perceived aggressors. This would have to be done by massive increases in the amounts spent on existing resources and equipment while also buying in the latest high-tech radar and other surveillance resources for ground, sea and air 'defence'. All this at the expense of the Irish taxpayer, a large proportion of who cannot afford decent housing or a proper standard of living because of the already huge disproportionate burden they bear to finance the upkeep of the major corporate tech hub that Ireland has become.

Ireland has never been a truly neutral state. Rather than work to improve Ireland's standing as a progressive non-aligned entity, the political establishment has used this fact to further align with international capitalist militarism and influence. During WW2 Ireland was a safe haven for British and US forces while weather reports and intelligence were shared with the allies. Today Shannon airport is a major hub for US and Nato transits in support of belligerent wars and interventions all over the world. It has been a factor in military operations in many areas such as Kosovo and in Iraq and Afghanistan where countless civilians were slaughtered by the Western powers.

As well as involvement with the so called 'Partnership for Peace' Ireland is and has been involved in many co-operations with Nato. Irish troops were under Nato command in an active war in Afghanistan.

Nato is most definitely not a force for any state opposed to aggression to be aligned with. Despite terming itself a 'defensive alliance' it has provoked war in many theatres and launched full scale conflicts in the likes of Afghanistan and Libya.

But the Irish political establishment is firmly under the influence of the western military structure. But if, as many think, there is soon a major shift on the political landscape where the electorate pin their hopes of improving their lot by putting a Sinn Fein led government into power, what then for Irish neutrality?

Sinn Fein had for a long time supported a policy of neutrality. But recently, in conjunction with its cosyng up to establishment capitalism, it has very much softened its opposition to further moves away from neutrality and has silenced most of its stated opposition to Nato while taking steps back from supporting withdrawal from PESCO. It is also ok with 'non-lethal' military aid to Ukraine despite the very blurred lines separating 'lethal' and 'non-lethal' military assets.

These days the Ukrainian flag flies in many places around Ireland and public buildings have been illuminated in the blue and yellow. Putin's aggressions in Ukraine are unquestionably criminal and the humanitarian effort to help Ukrainians suffering is to be very much supported. However further support for the military industrial complex of the Western alliance will only lead to more misery for more people victimised by lining up with one aggressor against another in a proxy conflict between Western and Eastern capitalism.

The cause of the tensions that lead to bloody conflicts in Ukraine and elsewhere are caused by the relentless pursuit of economic, political and military dominance by one murderous regime over another. The cycle can be broken by the crushing of the system that nurtures it. This can only be done by taking the power from the elites that now govern us all and placing it firmly in our own hands. A societal system where all the decisions made for people are made by the people themselves would not have a parliament where members can be elected to govern because they have the backing of business interests or rich political dynasties. Any persons elected to represent ordinary people would be recallable before their term of office expired and would have to represent the will of their electors. This would mean that any government would not be able to take decisions

that are contrary to the wishes of the people such as joining military alliances. The efforts to achieve such a society should be paved with fightbacks against insidious campaigns to push us into a status quo of support for one side or another in proxy and actual wars between the global capitalists.

Yes, Ireland is not really neutral while it facilitates bloody aggression by allowing the use of airports by Nato and by taking part in Nato and EU wars and operations from Mali to Afghanistan. Some would use this fact to promote an all-out ditching of the neutral pose and allow full integration into the Western war machine. Not alone would this make us a legitimate target in present and future conflicts, it would also play into the hands of the neo-liberal establishment at home and abroad. This establishment is bent on imposing further inequality on ordinary people by handing over more and more decision-making powers to vested interests and corporations controlled by and for the rich and powerful. A major part of the political and economic power of those entities' rests in armaments and global military aggression. A society or state that truly represents the interests of ordinary people can have no truck with such barbarism.

No to Nato.

No to Wars of Aggression.

Yes to Full Military Neutrality for Ireland.

**The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.**

[www.rednetwork.ie](http://www.rednetwork.ie)