**Commission on the Defence Forces**

**Public Consultation Response Template**

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| 1. **Capabilities** – In this regard, you may wish to consider future integrated capability development and the planning and delivery requirements to support a joint force approach in terms of new equipment, professional military education and training, maintenance and development of infrastructure, developments in military doctrine, and transformative concepts, including specialist capabilities, that prepare and support the Defence Forces for future operations. |
| It is clear that there is a clear desire, and a carefully orchestrated incremental approach, to completely integrate the Irish Defence Forces through the mechanisms opened by the Lisbon Treaty into the operational structure of an EU European Army under the overall control of the US-dominated nuclear-armed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).  PANA has a completely different view as to the role of our Defence Forces. We are a small, independent country with a long history of anti-colonial struggle. This puts us in complete contrast with all the major powers within the EU who have all histories as colonial overlords, of fighting to the bitter end to maintain their colonial possessions and, even post independence for the colonies of remaining in a neo-colonialist relationship with them.  PANA believes, and successive opinion polls have supported our view, that Ireland should remain as a neutral country and should not be part of any multinational military alliance.  It is from that perspective that we look at the necessary capabilities for the Defence Forces for the next decade.  In our view the Defence Forces, within the overall context of defending our national territory, and providing assistance to the civil power when requested, have a range of roles, including, inter alia, fisheries protection, prevention of maritime people smuggling or drug smuggling, assisting the civil authorities in response to major emergencies, natural disasters and in the maintenance of essential services, all of which PANA supports.  PANA would also clearly support ensuring that the Defence Forces have the capability to fulfill its roles including:  The retention of a Permanent Defence Force  A Light Infantry based Army  A Naval Service  An Air Corps  A Reserved Defence Force  We believe that everybody serving in the Defence Forces should be properly remunerated and that nobody in the Defence Forces should earn a salary which is lower than the recognised Living Wage. We also recognise that our Defence Forces, like many other forces throughout the world, has ongoing difficulties in retaining highly trained staff in specialist roles. We support a realistic approach to resolve this issue.  The Irish Defence Forces do not need the capability to be integrated into NATO units because, as a Neutral country, we should never be engaged in wars of aggression or in Resource Wars. In our view our only international commitments should be as international peace keepers, in UN sanctioned Chapter VI missions, in which we have a long, honourable, and internationally respected history. |

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| 1. **Structures** – In this regard, you may wish to consider the most effective high-level Command and Control (C2) structures within the Defence Forces to ensure an agile and balanced approach that can function across all domains at home and overseas.   Additionally, you may wish to address appropriate future force structures for the Army (including its brigade structure), the Air Corps, and the Naval Service, individually as component services and collectively as part of an integrated joint force approach.  Furthermore, you may wish to address the changing nature of reservists, which presents an opportunity for the Reserve Defence Force to further integrate and support the Permanent Defence Force through the provision of enhanced collective and specialist capability across all domains. |
| The method in which the guidelines in this section are framed, *“to consider the most effective high-level Command and Control (C2) structures within the Defence Forces to ensure an agile and balanced approach that can function across all domains at home and overseas*” presumes a future where the Republic of Ireland is part of some international or supra-national military force.  PANA fundamentally oppose and reject such a future for the Irish Defence Forces.  We wish to record that we believe this section is nothing more than a series of leading questions and form no part of a genuine consultation exercise. |
| 1. **Staffing –** In this regard you may wish to consider the HR policies that support the requirement for an agile and adaptive modern military force. You may wish to consider issues such as recruitment and retention, organisational culture and values, gender and diversity, career progression, and industrial relations machinery. |
| It is the view of PANA that the appropriate staffing levels for our defence forces, to undertake the roles which we believe are appropriate for a neutral country, is a matter for the Oireachtas to ratify on the advice of the relevant Ministers and Departments (Defence, Marine / Fisheries, Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform) and also on the advice, if necessary, of the state’s industrial relations organisations. |

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| 1. **Any other comments you may wish to make in relation to the Defence Forces having regard to the Commission’s Terms of Reference** |
| The Peace & Neutrality Alliance, on the 13/10/13, made submission to the earlier White Paper on Defence, and PANA officers were later called in to discuss our submission by the Defence Committee. <https://issuu.com/panaireland/docs/55830_pana_white_paper_on_defence_l> We stand over that submission.  In the last seven years the reality of Ireland being a de facto USA Aircraft Carrier has continued with well over 3 million USA troops having landed in Shannon Airport on their way to participate in the USA doctrine of perpetual war since 2002, which has killed hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. One of the core roles of the Irish Defence Forces has been to defend these USA troops landing in Ireland on their way to these wars in direct opposition to International law on Neutrality as stated in the Hague Convention of 1907.  Every public opinion poll on Irish Neutrality by RedC and others public opinion polling companies commissioned by PANA and other groups have shown that a decisive majority of the Irish people support Irish Neutrality. The latest was the RTE/RedC EU Election exit poll in May 2019 that showed 82% of the Irish people supported neutrality in all its aspects. The recent book 'Coalition of the Unwilling' written by Clare Daly MEP and Mick Wallace MEP and web sites like ours, [www.pana.ie](http://www.pana.ie) and others such as: [www.enaat.org](http://www.enaat.org) provides a great of further information on the reality of the destruction of the once long standing policy of Irish Neutrality and Ireland's integration into the US-EU military axis.  PANA has argued since our foundation that the United Nations and the OSCE should be the core institutions through which we should pursue Ireland's security.  We have always accepted Ireland needs a Defence Force to defend Ireland against threats to its sovereignty and that it should play an active role as peacekeeping force under the auspices of the United Nations.  These duties of the Irish Defence Forces have to be in accordance with actual threats to our sovereignty. We are not under threat from outer space. Our Defence Forces took part in a National War of Independence against the British Army of Occupation, but there is not a shred of evidence that the United Kingdom intend to conquer the Republic of Ireland again, indeed it has also stated that it has no selfish or strategic reason for remaining in control of Northern Ireland. The EU, including Ireland has just signed a major trade deal with China, and the Russian gas connection with the EU including Ireland is nearly completed, so there s not a shred of evidence that these states pose a threat to our territory either.  In short, the Republic of Ireland has no threats to its territorial security and a Defence Force of 9,500 is capable of carrying out its role as set out in the White Paper on Defence 2015.  Finally, Covid was and remains a global threat needing a global response. The Irish people and its Defence Forces don't need to be supporters of the USA doctrine of perpetual war or an emerging EU Army via PESCO. The threat of Covid, other global pandemics are far more real threats, so our resources to fight actual threats to our people does not need a massive expenditure on a larger Army but on a better health system. Global Warming is an even greater threat to the Irish people, and the people of the rest of the world. We just don't need a larger Army, we need global cooperation to transform our economies to cope with actual real threats to our people and our national territory.  Roger Cole  Chair  Peace & Neutrality Alliance |