

# U.S. COMMITTEE TO EXPAND NATO

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## NATO ENLARGEMENT & MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

The addition of new NATO members from among the Central and Eastern European states who have proven themselves ready for membership will strengthen the Alliance. A number of NATO's current members have less combat power than Hungary, for example, and Poland represents a significant military contribution to NATO. These states showed their commitment to freedom particularly during the waning days of the Cold War. Several of them have made significant contributions both during the Gulf War and in the Bosnia crisis. Because of their history, they understand firsthand the cost of inadequate national defense and are likely to be among the more sturdy members of the alliance on hard-core military issues. On balance they will make a net contribution both to the military capability of the Alliance and to its political cohesion.

Adding these new members will not overextend NATO or leave it with defense commitments that are beyond its capabilities. Although the defense budgets and military force levels of the United States and the rest of the NATO allies have been significantly reduced since the end of the Cold War, this simply reflects the fact that the massive Soviet military threat that dominated NATO military planning during that period no longer exists. The military forces currently available to defend NATO and those planned for the future are more than adequate to the task of defending an expanded Alliance from current and projected threats.

No additional army divisions, combat air wings, or naval ships above current levels are required to defend adequately a NATO that has prudently expanded to include appropriate Central and Eastern European states. NATO has revised its defense strategy from one of a massive "forward defense" to reliance on smaller, more capable conventional forces able to move quickly to the area of conflict or need. For this reason, NATO has no military requirement to station permanently substantial combat forces or nuclear weapons on the territory of the new member states and has said so publicly.

As a consequence, the cost of NATO enlargement is modest. The costs directly attributed to enlargement are those required to make it possible for the forces of the new members to operate with those of the Alliance. This requires such things as adopting NATO procedures, assuring the forces can communicate with each other, and training with NATO forces. These costs are estimated by the Pentagon to run about \$700 million to \$900 million per year, of which the U.S. share would be \$100 million to \$150 million per year. The remaining costs often attributed to NATO expansion are either costs associated with steps that current members should take whether or not NATO expands, or costs the new members must assume to upgrade their own forces. But these costs can be spread over the next decade or two and the costs to new members are much less than the costs that the new members would have to incur if they were to try to provide for their security outside of the NATO alliance.

These costs are more than outweighed by the benefits and there are potentially even greater costs if NATO does not expand. Failing to pay now the cost of assuring the stability of Europe may require the United States--as it has twice before in this century--to bear again the much more painful cost of instability and conflict in Europe.