

NATO Enlargement Fact Sheet

NATO Enlargement Ratification Office, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20520
phone: 202-647-9003 fax: 202-647-7019

Why NATO Enlargement is in America's National Interest

1. Enlarging NATO will make it stronger and better able to address key security challenges. Europe has been a vital American security interest throughout this century. It remains so today. The addition of new states to the Alliance will strengthen our common security, enhance NATO's ability to fulfill its core mission of collective defense and other security challenges, and reduce the possibility of another major conflict in Europe of the kind that claimed so many American lives. A NATO that embraces European democracies -- with capable militaries and a commitment to improve them -- will be better able to fulfill its basic mission.

NATO also is addressing Europe's new security threats, from weapons proliferation to ethnic conflict to terrorism. Enlargement will increase the number of states willing to share these responsibilities. Central European countries that want to join NATO already have contributed troops and bases to NATO's efforts in Bosnia and stated their intention to do their part in NATO's future security missions.

2. Enlarging NATO will help secure historic gains of democracy in Europe. As President Clinton has stated since 1994, we have an opportunity, for the first time in history, to help build an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe. Such a Europe would be a stronger and better partner in trade, investment, diplomacy, and other aspects of security. While many institutions play a role -- including the European Union, OSCE, and others -- NATO remains the keystone of America's involvement in transatlantic security. Now, just the prospect of NATO membership has encouraged Central European states to strengthen their democratic and market reforms. Already, states in the region have reinforced civilian control of their militaries, improved relations with ethnic and religious minorities and accelerated economic privatization -- in part to improve their cooperation with and prospects for membership in NATO. Our economic ties with Europe are among the most significant in the world and Europe's fastest-growing economies are now in Central Europe. By ensuring continued stability in Central Europe, NATO enlargement will bolster trade and investment in the region, which also benefits American businesses and workers.

"NATO can do for Europe's East what it did for Europe's West: prevent a return to local rivalries, strengthen democracy against future threats and create the conditions for prosperity to flourish."

President Bill Clinton

3. Enlarging NATO will foster regional stability. When President Truman signed the NATO Treaty in 1949, he said that if NATO had existed in 1914 or 1939, it would have prevented hostilities that later tore the world apart. NATO has helped reconcile former adversaries like France and Germany and moderate tensions between Greece and Turkey. Today the prospect of NATO's enlargement has made Europe safer by encouraging new democracies to improve their ties. Over a half dozen Central European states have already reached agreements on border and ethnic issues that otherwise might have been sources of tension.

4. Enlarging NATO will erase Stalin's artificial dividing line in Europe, bringing Europe together in security. NATO enlargement will help prevent the emergence of a gray zone of insecurity in a region where past insecurity has helped generate the century's worst conflicts. While not all interested European states will be invited at Madrid to join the Alliance, NATO will keep the door open for future members; the first to join shall not be the last. Enlargement, combined with other arrangements such as the Partnership for Peace and NATO's new relationships with Russia and Ukraine will yield security benefits beyond NATO's own borders. By contrast, a decision not to enlarge NATO would suggest a permanent acceptance of the Cold War dividing line.

During the Cold War, NATO and Russia were nuclear adversaries. A new NATO, as it prepares to add new members, also has laid the foundation for constructive partnership with a new, democratizing Russia. An important part of that new relationship is the NATO-Russia Founding Act. That document creates a Permanent Joint Council for NATO-Russia consultation and, when possible and appropriate, joint action.

NATO enlargement constitutes a tangible expression of America's commitment to remain engaged in Europe and to exert our leadership in efforts to build a safer and more prosperous transatlantic area for the 21st century.

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WHY EXPAND NATO?

"The bottom line is clear: Expanding NATO will enhance our security. It is the right thing to do. We must not fail history's challenge at this moment to build a Europe peaceful, democratic, and undivided, allied with us to face new security threats of the new century -- a Europe that will avoid repeating the darkest moments of the 20th century and fulfill the brilliant possibilities of the 21st."

- President Bill Clinton, Remarks to the U.S. Military Academy
at West Point, NY, May 31, 1997

"[NATO] is the linchpin of European Security and the principal mechanism for American involvement in Europe that is playing the leading role in bringing Europe together....now the new NATO can do for Europe's east what the old NATO did for Europe's west: vanquish old hatreds, promote integration, create a secure environment for prosperity, and deter violence in the region where two world wars and the Cold War began."

- Secretary Madeleine K. Albright, "Why Bigger is Better"
The Economist, February 15, 1997

"NATO enlargement is critical to protecting and promoting our vital national security interests in Europe. If we fail to seize this historic opportunity to help integrate, consolidate, and stabilize Central and Eastern Europe, we would risk paying a much higher price later."

- Secretary of Defense William Cohen, Statement before the
Senate Armed Services Committee, April 23, 1997

"[I]f we wish to ensure that we build a stable Europe, a stable and undivided Europe, it's right to enlarge NATO and offer the Central and East European countries the same opportunity that Western Europe has, while at the same time building a special relationship with Russia."

- General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs,
Press Interview, June 16, 1997.

"Enlarging NATO is in America's moral, strategic and political interests."

- Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), "The Senate's Role in NATO
Enlargement," *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1997

"The enlargement of NATO will strengthen security, freedom, and peace in Europe. It will secure the gains of democracy in Central Europe."

- Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), Remarks to the Philadelphia World Affairs
Council, June 25, 1996

"The Cold War's legacy of great power confrontation in Europe will be truly ended only when it is replaced by a collaborative structure between former antagonists. The expansion of NATO should be seen in that light."

- James Baker III, former secretary of state, "Political Synergism
and NATO," *The Washington Times*, May 9, 1997

"NATO's enlargement represents above all an overriding American political interest."

- Henry Kissinger, former secretary of state, "NATO: Make It Stronger, Make It Larger," *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1997

"The Alliance...is first and foremost an instrument of democracy intended to defend mutually held and created political and spiritual values....NATO expansion should be perceived as a continuous process, in which the nations of Central and Eastern Europe mature toward the meaning, values, and goals of the enlarged and revived alliance."

- Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, "NATO's Quality of Life," *The New York Times*, May 13, 1997

"[O]ur energies must be directed towards strengthening NATO, which is as important in the post-Cold War world as in the circumstances of its creation. NATO's role should be expanded....It must be prepared to accept the Czech Republic and other Central European countries as full members...."

- Margaret Thatcher, former British prime minister, "The Common Crisis: Atlantic Solutions," Remarks before the New Atlantic Initiatives Congress of Prague, Spring 1996

"The security benefits of NATO enlargement are also matched by economic benefits -- for Europe, and for American business. Most important, by preserving and deepening the stable security that now exists in Central Europe, NATO enlargement will ensure that the region's robust economic growth can continue. Our business community has a stake in preventing an American retreat from the world, and in the broadest sense that is what the vote over NATO enlargement will be about."

- Lawrence Summers, Deputy Secretary of Treasury, Remarks Before the International Forum, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, April 11, 1997

"Expansion of NATO is a logical and essential consequence of the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the need to widen European unity based on shared democratic values."

- Richard Holbrooke, former Assistant Secretary of State, "America, A European Power," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1995

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TOP TEN QUESTIONS ON NATO ENLARGEMENT

1. Why are we enlarging NATO?

There are four primary reasons that the United States supports NATO enlargement.

- **Enlargement will make NATO stronger and better able to address Europe's security challenges.** Europe has been a vital American security interest throughout this century. It remains so today. The addition of new members to the Alliance will strengthen our common security, enhance NATO's ability to fulfill its core mission of collective defense, respond to security challenges, and reduce the possibility of another major conflict in Europe of the kind that has claimed so many American lives. As NATO enlarges, more states will share the responsibility to bear NATO's core missions and address new security challenges including weapons proliferation, ethnic conflict and terrorism. The Alliance enlarged three times before, and each time NATO grew stronger. Adding new states to the Alliance today will do so as well.
- **Enlargement will help secure the historic gains of democracy in Europe.** NATO enlargement is part of a broader effort to build a new Europe -- undivided, democratic and peaceful. While many institutions also play important roles -- including the European Union, OSCE and others - NATO remains the keystone of America's involvement in transatlantic security. History has shown that enlargement can help reintegrate countries into the democratic community. Now the very prospect of NATO membership has encouraged Central European states to deepen their democratic and market reforms and their respect for religious and ethnic minorities. The stabilizing effect of NATO enlargement and its encouragement of free market reforms will help create a better long-term environment for trade, investment and economic growth in Central Europe. The region's prosperity will benefit the United States.
- **Enlargement will help encourage prospective members to resolve their differences peacefully.** In the past, NATO has helped reconcile former adversaries like France and Germany, and moderate tensions between Greece and Turkey. Today, the prospect of NATO membership has made Europe safer by encouraging new democracies in the region to improve their ties. Over a half dozen countries in the region have already reached agreements on border and ethnic issues that otherwise might have held the seeds of future conflict.
- **Enlarging NATO will erase Stalin's artificial dividing line in Europe.** NATO enlargement will help prevent the emergence of a gray zone of insecurity in a region that has been at the heart of this century's worst conflicts. While not every interested state will be invited to join NATO at Madrid, the Alliance will keep the door open for future members; the first to join will not be the last. Enlargement, combined with other arrangements like the Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the NATO-Russia Founding Act, and the NATO-Ukraine Charter will yield security benefits beyond NATO's own borders. As NATO enlarges, it is forging a more constructive relationship with Russia that will allow NATO and Russia to consult, coordinate activities, and act jointly where possible. NATO enlargement will erase the dividing line in Europe and is a tangible expression of America's commitment to remain engaged in Europe so that it can lead efforts to build a safer and more prosperous transatlantic area for the 21st century.

2. Does Russia oppose NATO enlargement?

While many Russian leaders have said they oppose enlargement, Russia has nevertheless decided to pursue a cooperative relationship with the United States and NATO as enlargement proceeds. At the March 1997 summit in Helsinki, for example, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin were still able to make progress on nuclear arms control and economic issues despite differences over NATO enlargement. Even more important, on May 27, NATO leaders and President Yeltsin signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act to help establish a new and constructive relationship between NATO and Russia.

The fact is that NATO is, and always has been, a strictly defensive alliance, and both before and after enlargement, it poses no threat to Russia. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has taken numerous steps that underscore it is not directed against Russia: it has reduced force levels dramatically, with a two-thirds reduction of US troops in Europe; it has moved away from a massive forward deployment along the old East-West dividing line; and it has directly declared that it does not view Russia as an enemy. Ultimately, NATO enlargement will benefit Russia's security along with the rest of Europe by helping to enlarge the zone of democratic security on the Continent. The US and NATO will continue working closely with Russia to ensure that it can play an active and constructive role in building Europe's new security arrangements.

3. Did the NATO-Russia Founding Act give too many concessions to Russia?

No. The Alliance has made no concessions to Russia, but rather has pursued steps that advance the interests of the Alliance and its members. The NATO-Russia Founding Act, signed May 27 in Paris, lays the foundation for a new and constructive relationship between the Alliance and Russia. At the same time, it provides a new basis for the Alliance and Russia to pursue mutual security concerns in a manner that can improve the security of the entire Euro-Atlantic area. NATO retains its full prerogatives. While Russia will work closely with NATO, it will not work within NATO. The Act makes clear that Russia has no veto over Alliance decisions or decision-making, and NATO retains the right to act independently when it so chooses.

NATO's decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council (NAC), is and will remain the Alliance's sole decision-making authority, as defined in the Washington Treaty. Only NATO members will take part in NAC deliberations and policy decision-making. The Permanent Joint Council established under the Founding Act, while a potentially important new contribution to European security, has no power over NAC decisions.

4. Doesn't enlargement risk turning NATO into a "hollow alliance"?

No. Adding new members to the Alliance will make it stronger and better able to address new security challenges. When Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952, when West Germany joined in 1955, and when Spain joined the Alliance in 1982, their addition made NATO stronger, not weaker.

- The three states the United States supports inviting to join the Alliance have over 330,000 thousand troops in their armed forces. They are modernizing their militaries, including upgrades to their communications, air traffic control systems, and overall interoperability with NATO, to work more effectively with NATO forces.

- Further, the new members of NATO will enter an Alliance that has proven its ability to address the post-Cold War security environment, including through cooperation with other states. In Bosnia, NATO allies and many Partner countries have gained considerable experience working together. Since 1994, the Partnership for Peace program also has contributed significantly to preparing potential new members' militaries to join NATO.
- The United States is committed to guaranteeing that NATO remains fully prepared militarily to meet all possible Article V or other security responsibilities after enlargement occurs. The United States is working with its existing and future allies to ensure their budgets and programs are sufficient to fulfill these requirements. The improvements that must take place in the militaries of Central and Eastern Europe will not take place overnight, but NATO will not create separate standards for new members. The reduced threat in Europe gives us the opportunity to bring new members along without jeopardizing their fledgling economies. Over time they will be expected to contribute fully to NATO's security.

5. After NATO enlarges, will its top commander still be an American?

Yes. The top commander of NATO -- the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, known as SACEUR - has always been an American. America is the largest and most powerful of the democracies that make up NATO. Because of America's leading role in Europe, there has been no discussion at NATO about changing this arrangement. Moreover, while NATO's strength derives in great part from its integrated military structure, in which troops from all Allied countries plan, train, and operate together, American troops in NATO always remain under the ultimate command of American officers and of the President and Commander-in-Chief.

6. What kind of security commitments will be extended to the new members?

New NATO members will enjoy the same security commitments that all current NATO allies extend to one another. Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 holds that "the Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." The Treaty does not dictate what response each member will take in such a case, and specifically provides that each government will take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force." Article XI of the Treaty says that Article V and other provisions will be "carried out by the parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes." This provision was added in 1949, partly at the insistence of the US Senate, to ensure the constitutional role of Congress would be preserved for any use of armed force under the Treaty.

Thus the Treaty does not bind the United States to specific or automatic response in case of an attack on a NATO ally. The Treaty does, however, provide a strong political commitment to respond in an appropriate manner to ensure the security of the North Atlantic area. Over the decades, the United States and the other allies have given this commitment practical meaning through their substantial conventional and nuclear planning, training, and other preparations and deployments.

7. What will happen to Central European states that aren't invited into NATO?

Enlargement is a process, not a one-time event. Those states that are not invited to join NATO in Madrid in July are not being denied membership for all time. Rather, President Clinton has stressed his commitment to ensure that the door to future NATO membership for such states remains open, and that the first states admitted shall not be the last.

The US and NATO are taking a range of steps to ensure that states not initially invited to join the Alliance are not left in a "gray zone" of uncertain security.

- NATO will continue and strengthen its "intensified dialogues" with interested countries to ensure they receive specific information to better prepare them to join the Alliance.
- NATO also is enhancing its successful Partnership for Peace (PfP) program that builds military cooperation and confidence between NATO and its 27 Partner states across Europe and the former Soviet Union.
- In May 1997 NATO created the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council to give Partner states a broader voice in the PfP program and other cooperative efforts with NATO.
- NATO has pursued new cooperative agreements with certain European states that have not sought NATO membership, such as with Ukraine.
- Finally, the US has pursued a range of bilateral initiatives with Central European states, irrespective of their prospects for NATO membership, to increase their security.

8. What is the cost of NATO enlargement and why is the USG estimate lower than the others?

The Pentagon estimates that the total cost of enlargement for the first group of new members would be about \$27-35 billion over 13 years. Most estimated costs will be borne by our current and new NATO allies as part of efforts to upgrade their own military capabilities. The US share of the cost, which will go primarily toward NATO-funded projects to improve interoperability and infrastructure, will total about \$1.5 - \$2 billion, or about \$150 - \$200 million a year for ten years, starting in 1999 when the new members are likely to join NATO. These figures reflect cost-sharing arrangements for NATO-funded projects, in which the United States pays approximately 24 percent of the total cost to the Alliance.

The Administration analysis adopted a *capabilities-based approach* to the military implications of NATO enlargement. This means that the Administration analyzed what capabilities new NATO members would need to contribute militarily to the Alliance and evaluated costs in three categories: 1) new members' military restructuring; 2) NATO regional reinforcement capabilities, and 3) direct enlargement. That analysis resulted in an overall cost estimate of \$27-35 billion over the period of 1997-2009.

The RAND Corporation also used a capabilities-based approach to develop cost estimates based on two categories: improving self-defense capabilities of new members and NATO power projection. RAND's analysis resulted in a best estimate of approximately \$42 billion in total costs over an unspecified 10-15 year period. In broad terms, the RAND methodology and cost estimates are compatible with the Administration's study.

In contrast, the Congressional Budget Office study used a *threat-based approach* to NATO enlargement, which assumed for most of its estimates an active threat environment and presented five progressively more robust options. In four of its five options, CBO based its estimate on what it would cost to launch a conventional defense for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia against an aggressive and militarily resurgent Russia. This approach resulted in defense upgrades that in every major category exceeded those of the Administration. The CBO methodology is thus quite different

from that of both the Administration and RAND, and is reflected in CBO's maximum cost estimate of \$124.7 billion over the 15 year period from 1996 to 2010.

The Administration believes estimated costs should not be based on a threat that does not exist and is not expected to exist in foreseeable future. Estimating the costs of enlargement based on a threat that does not exist would be like estimating the cost of federal unemployment insurance for this year based on a 15% unemployment rate. In Europe's current and foreseeable security environment, the Administration's estimate is credible. If a major threat to NATO and Europe were to arise, the costs of enlargement would increase, but so would overall U.S. and Allied defense budgets regardless of the enlargement process.

9. Why not invite these countries into the European Union instead?

We do not have to make an either/or choice concerning how best to preserve European security. Both NATO and the European Union (EU) are adapting to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War era. Both organizations can help build a broader, undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe. Indeed, the integration of the Central European nations into the EU over time is a goal that the EU has set for itself.

The Administration fully supports EU enlargement. Extending the EU will help integrate the entire European continent, but EU enlargement also requires current and new members to make vast and complex adjustments in their regulatory regimes. If NATO enlargement can proceed more quickly, why wait until tomato farmers in Central Europe start using the right kind of pesticide?

Expanding the EU instead of enlarging NATO, however, will not secure the gains of democracy in Europe and ensure stability on the continent for two reasons. First, unlike the EU, NATO is a transatlantic organization and therefore can ensure that a united Europe maintains its strongest link to North America. Second, unlike the EU, NATO has a highly developed military structure that remains important for European security. The security that NATO provides has always been, and will continue to be, essential to the prosperity that the EU promises.

10. What is the process of enlargement and of ratification of enlargement?

All 16 NATO countries must agree to enlarge the Alliance. After invitations are issued in Madrid, NATO will begin accession negotiations with each country. These talks will further prepare invited countries to join NATO and ensure their governments complete the necessary internal steps to join NATO once the ratification process is complete.

Once the accession talks are completed, all 16 current allied states must ratify the addition of the new members. Ratification procedures vary among the 16 members, and some may require a year or so to complete. We expect the entire ratification process to be completed, and the new allies to take their place in NATO, by 1999 - the Alliance's 50th anniversary.

In the United States, ratification requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate in the form of an amendment to the Washington Treaty of 1949 which created NATO. The Senate NATO Observer Group, formed by Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), will help ensure a vigorous and comprehensive debate of enlargement in the Senate. NATO enlargement can only proceed with the bipartisan support of the American public and their representatives in Congress. The Administration will work closely with the public, the Congress, and with interested organization to ensure this important national security initiative succeeds.

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Important Civil-Military Agreements Between Central and Eastern European States

| Countries | Type of Agreement | Year | Description |
|------------------------|--|------|---|
| Poland/Germany | Border Agreement | 1990 | Defines common border. |
| Poland/Germany | Good Neighborliness and Cooperation Treaty | 1991 | Establishes basis for friendly bilateral relations. |
| Poland/Ukraine | Good Neighborly Relations and Mutual Cooperation Treaty | 1992 | Establishes basis for friendly bilateral relations. |
| Poland/Lithuania | Good Neighborly Relations and Military Cooperation Agreement | 1994 | Establishes basis for friendly bilateral relations, defense cooperation. |
| Hungary /Slovakia | Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation | 1996 | Guarantees inviolability of common border, secures rights for ethnic minorities. |
| Hungary/Slovenia | Bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement | 1996 | Focuses on airspace defense and cooperation, joint military exercises. |
| Hungary/Romania | Bilateral Friendship Treaty | 1996 | Improves bilateral ties, extends mutual recognition of rights of national minorities. |
| Czech Republic/Germany | The Joint Declaration on Czech-German Bilateral Relations | 1997 | Strengthens bilateral ties and puts legacy of WWII in the past. |
| Romania/Ukraine | Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation | 1997 | Proclaims the inviolability of existing borders. |
| Slovenia/Italy | Association Agreement with the European Union | 1996 | Provides associate membership in the EU for Slovenia, and includes language resolving property disputes with Italy. |

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Country Profile: Hungary

Government

- **President:** Arpad Goncz
- **Prime Minister:** Gyula Horn
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Laszlo Kovacs
- **Minister of Defense:** Gyorgy Keleti
- **Ambassador to the U.S.:** Gyorgy Banlaki

- Since 1990, Hungary also has held 2 free and fair parliamentary elections. Hungary's president is chosen by its parliament. The next round of parliamentary elections is planned for 1998.
- In 1989, Hungary revised its constitution to ensure legal rights for citizens and a system of checks and balances on the branches of government.

Economy

- **Population:** 10,318,838 (1995)
- **Growth rate:** 2.5% (projected 1997)
- **Gross Domestic Product:** \$44 billion (1996)
- **Exports:** \$12.7 billion (1996)
- **Imports:** \$15.6 billion (1996)
- **US Exports to Hungary:** \$331 million (1996)
- **Privatization level:** 75% of GDP (1996)

Military

- **Chief of General Staff:** Lt.Gen Ferenc Vegh
- **Armed Forces:** 60,000 troops total

- Hungary contributes 500 personnel to the Stabilization Force in Bosnia.
- Hungary hosts from 1,500-5,000 U.S. troops assigned to SFOR at Taszar.
- Since 1994, Hungary has trained with the United States in more than 50 Partnership for Peace and "In the Spirit of Partnership for Peace" exercises in 1997 alone.

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Country Profile: Czech Republic

Government

- **President:** Vaclav Havel
- **Prime Minister:** Vaclav Klaus
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Josef Zieleniec
- **Minister of Defense:** Miloslav Vyborny
- **Ambassador to the U.S.:** Alexandr Vondra

- Since 1992, the Czech Republic has held three free and fair parliamentary elections. The next round of parliamentary elections is planned for 1998.
- In 1992, the Czech Republic adopted a new democratic constitution stating it is a "free and democratic state based on the respect for human rights and the principles of civic society."

Economy

- **Population:** 10,432,774 (1995)
- **Growth rate:** 4% (1996)
- **Gross Domestic Product:** \$55 billion (1996)
- **Exports:** \$22 billion (1996)
- **Imports:** \$28 billion (1996)
- **US Exports to Czech Republic:** \$ 400 million (1996)
- **Privatization level:** 70% of GDP (1996)

Military

- **Chief of General Staff:** General Colonel Jiri Nekvasil
- **Armed Forces:** 56,000 total, 38,000 ground forces, 14,000 air and air defense forces, and 4,000 inter-service logistical corps

- The Czech Republic is in the process of modernizing its military equipment and standardizing its practices with those of NATO.
- The Czech republic is replacing its aging fighters upgrading communication equipment, and has formed well-equipped units for rapid response missions.
- The Czech Republic contributes 600 personnel to the Stabilization Force in Bosnia.
- Since 1994, the Czech Republic has participated with the United States in more than 40 Partnership for Peace and "In the Spirit of Partnership for Peace" exercises.

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Country Profile: Poland

Government

- **President:** Alexander Kwasniewski
- **Prime Minister:** Wlodzimirz Cimoszewicz
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Dariusz Rosati
- **Minister of Defense:** Stanislaw Dobrzanski
- **Ambassador to the U.S.:** Jerzy Kozminski

- Since 1990, Poland has held two free and fair presidential elections. The President serves a five year term.
- Since 1991, Poland has held two free and fair parliamentary elections. The next round of parliamentary elections is planned for autumn 1997.
- Poland approved a permanent constitution in April 1997, which replaces the temporary "Little Constitution" Poland had in place since 1992. The constitution ensures checks and balances among the president, prime minister and parliament.

Economy

- **Population:** 38,792,442 (1995)
- **Growth rate:** 6% (1997)
- **Gross Domestic Product:** \$115 billion (1995)
- **Exports:** \$23 billion (1996)
- **Imports:** \$29 billion (1996)
- **US Exports to Poland:** \$900 million (1996)
- **Privatization level:** 66% of GDP (1996)

Military

- **Chief of General Staff:** LTG Henryk Szumski
- **Armed Forces:** 222,000 troops total; 152,000 Army, 56,000 Air and Air Defense Force, and 14,000 Navy.

- Poland is in the process of modernizing its military equipment and standardizing its practices with those of NATO.
- Poland seeks to replace aging fighters, upgrade communication systems to meet NATO standards, and form well-equipped units for rapid response missions.
- Poland contributes 470 personnel to the Stabilization Force in Bosnia.
- Since 1994, Poland has participated with the United States in more than 50 Partnership for Peace and "In the Spirit of Partnership for Peace" exercises.