

NATO's Readiness Action Plan



“In order to ensure that our Alliance is ready to respond swiftly and firmly to the new security challenges, today we have approved the NATO Readiness Action Plan. It provides a coherent and comprehensive package of necessary measures to respond to the changes in the security environment on NATO’s borders and further afield that are of concern to Allies.

It responds to the challenges posed by Russia and their strategic implications. It also responds to the risks and threats emanating from our southern neighbourhood, the Middle East and North Africa.

“The Plan strengthens NATO’s collective defence. It also strengthens our crisis management capability. The Plan will contribute to ensuring that NATO remains a strong, ready, robust, and responsive Alliance capable of meeting current and future challenges from wherever they may arise.”

- NATO Wales Summit declaration, 5 September 2014



NATO’s Readiness Action Plan includes immediate reinforcements of NATO’s presence in the eastern part of the Alliance, which have been in place since May 2014 (“assurance measures”), and longer-term changes to NATO’s force posture which are currently being implemented (“adaptation measures”). The adaptation measures will increase our readiness and allow the Alliance to deal with any security challenges, including those emanating from the east and the south.

Assurance Measures - immediate increased military presence and activity for assurance and deterrence in the eastern part of the Alliance.

Adaptation Measures - changes to the Alliance’s long-term military posture and capabilities to enable it to respond more quickly to emergencies wherever they arise.

Assurance Measures

The assurance measures are a series of land, sea and air activities in, on and around the territory of NATO Allies in Central and Eastern Europe, designed to reinforce their defence, reassure their populations and deter potential aggression. These are a direct result of Russia’s aggressive actions in Ukraine.

All 28 Allies are contributing to these measures on a rotational basis. The measures can be stepped up or reduced as necessary, depending on the security situation.

Since May 2014, as part of the Assurance Measures NATO has:

- Increased the number of fighter jets on air-policing patrols over the Baltic States, and deployed fighter jets to Romania and Poland.
- Belgium, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom took over air-policing duties on 1 May 2015.
- Portugal and the United States have also deployed aircraft to Romania for training purposes.
- Commenced regular AWACS surveillance flights over the territory of our eastern Allies, and maritime patrol aircraft flights along our eastern borders.
- Conducted intensified maritime patrols in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean with the Standing NATO Maritime Groups and Standing NATO Mine Counter-Measures Groups.
- Deployed ground troops to the eastern parts of the Alliance for training and exercises, on a rotational basis.



- Conducted more exercises focused on crisis management and collective defence. Major exercises in 2015 include *Joint Warrior* (11 – 23 April: naval exercise in the North Atlantic - 13,000 troops); *Dynamic Mongoose* (4 – 15 May: anti-submarine warfare exercise off Norway - 5,000 troops); *Baltops* (5 – 20 June: naval and amphibious exercise in the Baltic Sea - 4,500 troops); *Sabre Strike* (8 – 19 June: land exercise in the Baltic states and Poland - 3,000 troops); *Noble Jump* (10 – 21 June: first deployment test for the new high readiness force to Poland - 2,100 troops); *Trident Joust* (17 – 28 June: headquarter exercise in Bulgaria, Romania and Italy - 1,500 troops) and *Trident Juncture* (21 October – 6 November: Italy, Portugal and Spain - 25,000 troops).
- Several Allies have also sent ground and air forces to Eastern Europe for training and exercises on a bilateral basis. For example, the United States moved hundreds of troops and vehicles through Eastern Europe with operation Dragoon Ride in April 2015. In May 2015, France is sending Leclerc tanks and infantry fighting vehicles to Poland for training, and Germany announced plans to send 1,700 troops to the region.

Adaptation Measures

Adaptation measures are longer-term changes to NATO's forces and command structure which will make the Alliance better able to react swiftly and decisively to sudden crises, whether these arise to the east or the south.

They include:

- Making the NATO Response Force (NRF) more responsive and capable.
The NRF will be roughly doubled from the current level of 13,000 troops, depending on the task it is needed for. This will include land, sea, air and special forces components.
At the same time, a new quick-reaction "Spearhead Force" (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, or VJTF) of around 5,000 ground troops supported by air, maritime and special forces will be created. Their lead elements will be able to start deploying in just 48 hours.
The Spearhead and NRF forces will be based in their home countries, but be able to deploy from there to wherever they are needed for exercises or crisis response. Leadership and membership of the VJTF and NRF will rotate on an annual basis. Germany, the Netherlands and Norway have already established an interim Spearhead force, while the full force is scheduled to stand up in 2016. Six Allies - France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom - have already offered to serve as lead nations.
- Enhancing NATO's Standing Naval Forces with more ships and more types of ships.
- Establishing multinational NATO command and control posts on the territories of the eastern Allies (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania), manned on a rotational basis.
These NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) would be staffed by national and NATO specialists. Their task would be to improve cooperation and coordination between NATO and national forces, and prepare and support exercises and any deployments needed.
- Raising the readiness and capabilities of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin in Poland and enhancing its role as a hub for regional cooperation.
- Pre-positioning military supplies on the territory of eastern Allies.
- Improving NATO's ability to reinforce its eastern Allies through preparation of national infrastructure, such as airfields and ports.
- Updating defence plans for Eastern Europe.

Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section – Media Operations Centre (MOC)

Tel.: +32(0)2 707 1010/1002

E-mail: mailbox.moc@hq.nato.int

www.nato.int