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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-722](#), a report to Senate and House Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the House Committee on International Relations

Why GAO Did This Study

On November 21, 2002, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invited seven countries to join the alliance. To facilitate congressional consideration of NATO enlargement, the U.S. Senate mandated in 1998 that GAO review and assess the reports the Senate directed the President to provide on countries invited to join NATO. The President submitted the required reports to Congress on March 25, 2003. To fulfill its mandate, GAO determined if (1) the reports met the Senate's requirements and the information was accurate and current, (2) the methodology for assessing the likely impact on NATO's military effectiveness was reasonable, and (3) the methodology for analyzing the ability of the invited countries to fulfill the full range of financial burdens of NATO membership was reasonable.

What GAO Recommends

To ensure sound analyses of invited countries' financial capabilities in reports required for any future NATO enlargement, GAO recommends that those reports fully explain the methodology, ensure the range of information is sufficient to support the conclusions, and consistently apply the methodology.

We provided a draft of this report to the National Security Council. The council did not provide comments on this report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-722.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Joseph Christoff, 202-512-8979.

NATO ENLARGEMENT

Reports Are Responsive to Senate Requirements, but Analysis of Financial Burdens Is Incomplete

What GAO Found

The President's reports responded to the Senate's requirements. The information provided in the reports was generally accurate and current.

The methodology for assessing the likely impact of each invited country on NATO's military effectiveness was reasonable. The reports provided a clear explanation of the methodology used and provided information on countries' defense reform plans, past and current contributions to U.S. and NATO operations, and expectations of countries' ability to contribute specialized military capabilities. The methodology was consistently applied to assessments of each of the seven invited countries.

The methodology used to analyze each invited country's ability to fulfill the full range of financial burdens of NATO membership was not described and the information provided was limited. The reports included some cost information but did not discuss the costs of maintaining representation at NATO's headquarters or military command posts. Furthermore, the same types of information were not consistently provided for each country.

European NATO Members and Countries Invited to Join the Alliance



NATO members
 Countries invited to join NATO
 Other countries

Source: GAO.