

GAO
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-255](#), 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 and 22, 2002, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will consider the admission of new members to the alliance. To facilitate congressional deliberations on NATO enlargement, the United States Senate mandated in 1998 that GAO review and assess a report that Congress directed the President to provide on countries seeking membership in NATO. The President submitted a classified report to Congress on August 26, 2002. To fulfill its mandate, GAO determined if the report met the Senate's requirements and if the cost estimates were sound.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not recommending executive action. Because NATO's political goals for countries seeking membership focus on developing democratic institutions and principles, GAO has included material in this report that goes beyond the information contained in the President's report. If Congress finds this material useful during upcoming deliberations on NATO enlargement, it may wish to request that future reports contain more detailed information on these issues.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-255

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

Report Is Responsive to Senate Requirements, but Additional Information Could Be Useful

What GAO Found

The President's report responded to the mandated requirements with information that was generally accurate and current. The report provided a detailed discussion of each country's eligibility in terms of defense, budgetary, information security, legal, and economic issues. However, the discussion of each country's efforts to implement democratic principles and reforms was limited. That discussion did not reflect the challenges these countries face in the transition to democratic societies—or their efforts to address those challenges—in areas such as civil liberties, judicial independence, human rights, and minority rights. These are important principles of the alliance and a fuller discussion could be useful. GAO provides additional information on these issues in appendix II to help Congress in its deliberations on NATO enlargement. The figure below shows current NATO members and the nine countries that will be considered for membership in November 2002.

The National Security Council generally concurred with the contents of this report.

European NATO Members and Countries Seeking NATO Membership



NATO members
 Countries seeking NATO membership
 Other countries

Source: GAO.