



SEVEN NATIONS JOIN NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

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BULGARIA, ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, ROMANIA, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO on March 29 in Washington, DC. Secretary of State Colin Powell accepted ratification documents known as instruments of accession from the prime ministers of the seven nations, making their countries formally eligible to join the 55-year-old alliance. The United States is the depositary nation for the North Atlantic Treaty, which means that new members must submit their accession documents to a U.S. official.

SIGNIFICANCE

- The event marked an important step forward toward President Bush's goal of a Europe "whole, free, and at peace."
- With the addition of the seven nations, nearly 40% of NATO's membership is comprised of former communist countries.

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

- In November 2002, at the Prague Summit, NATO leaders invited the seven nations to join the Alliance. The nations then were required to demonstrate that they could take on the new responsibilities and commitments of NATO membership.
- In May 2003, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution ratifying the NATO invitation and by February 2004, all 19 NATO allies had ratified similar resolutions.

QUALIFYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

- The seven countries committed themselves to the shared values of freedom and democracy that are the foundation of the Alliance.

MARCH 29 ACCESSION EVENTS



- Secretary Powell accepted instruments of accession from prime ministers at the Treasury Department.
- The prime ministers of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia attended ceremony as candidates for membership in NATO.
- Secretary Powell and seven prime ministers participated in a public ceremony at the White House at which President Bush spoke.

- The seven countries pursued rigorous political, economic and defense reforms.
- They already have contributed to NATO operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

ADDING TO NATO'S SECURITY CAPABILITIES

- Bulgaria: engineers and mine-sweepers;
- Romania: unmanned aerial vehicles and mountain troops;
- Slovakia: nuclear, biological and chemical defense units;
- Slovenia: mountain warfare troops;
- Estonia: military divers and mine countermeasures;
- Latvia: explosive ordnance disposal;
- Lithuania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia will provide special operations forces.