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COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

NATO'S NEW DEFENSE PROGRAM:
ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

D I G E S T

with accurate facts, organization

pls check to see if we have sister classified document

In May 1978, NATO leaders adopted a new plan to improve alliance defense capabilities during the 1980s and beyond. NATO is recognized to be this country's single most important security arrangement. Its new plan, the Long Term Defense Program, reflects the alliance's most recent acknowledgement of, and effort to resolve, its well-known shortcomings and deficiencies in light of the buildup of the Warsaw Pact forces.

The Congress needs to be fully aware of the nature and scope of the Long-Term Defense Program and the prospects for achieving its critical goals because of its importance, its potential impact on the U.S. defense budget, and changes in NATO direction implicit in some of its proposals.

Unsubstantiated Secret.

The plan focuses on NATO's priority defense concerns.

Set all info from 11/5/78

Readiness; reinforcement; reserve forces; maritime posture; air defense; command, control and communications; electronic warfare; standardization and interoperability; consumer logistics; and nuclear forces.

The United States will spend an estimated \$40.5 billion for forces committed to NATO in fiscal year 1979, and the Secretary of Defense maintains that almost everything in the U.S. defense budget supports America's commitment to NATO.



GAO describes the new program and its objectives, summarizes what the NATO Defense Ministers and Heads of States agreed to do, and identifies the issues and potential implications for the Congress.

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The basic theme of the defense program is increased cooperation among alliance members. It calls for quantitative increases in forces, weapons, and equipment, and for more effective procedures and plans for multinational coordination and mutual support.

As important as these objectives are, the program's future depends on the willingness and ability of nations to implement its provisions. In adopting the Long-Term Defense Program, a number of countries expressed certain reservations, or voiced general agreement, with specific commitments pending further study or refinement of proposals. Thus, the plan is far from complete and some important and sensitive issues remain unresolved.

National and NATO authorities are now working on the details to implement the program decisions. Member nations must determine the extent to which program requirements can be accommodated within existing national defense plans. To put the program into effect, nations may need to realign some national priorities, reallocate resources, and alter national defense plans.

Similar past improvement efforts have been impaired by NATO's inability to overcome the national concerns of its members. Studies and defense reviews have identified problems and sought solutions. For example, a 1970 study generated by NATO's own Defense Planning Committee identified critical deficiencies which would face the alliance during the 1970s. This study uncovered shortcomings such as deficient anti-armour capabilities, reinforcement deficiencies, maldesployment, crisis management capabilities, air defense problems, and communications shortfalls. At that time, the Defense Ministers agreed to place higher priorities on these areas. Nearly a decade later, these same issues are addressed in the new program.

Limitations of NATO's planning system are partly to blame. The system is a complicated, elaborate process, which takes 2 years to complete. Some criticisms are that

- long-term planning is not realized;
- there are too many force goals and priorities;
- military needs are not met;
- national plans direct the NATO force goals;
- staff monitoring is insufficient; and (perhaps most important)
- the force planning process is more nationally than functionally oriented and thus cannot adequately center on collective efforts.

GAO's review of U.S./NATO-related activities also identified many problems in the priority defense areas. For example in the reinforcement area, GAO has some concerns about the implementation of DOD's new program to preposition additional equipment in Europe. DOD does not share GAO's concern in this regard. Review efforts on this subject are continuing.

The Long-Term Defense Program approach will supplement the regular planning process and will focus on long-term planning, selected priorities, functionally oriented and more closely integrated national programs, collective actions, and monitoring of program progress.

National priorities may affect the program's success. Although it stresses collective action, national interests and issues are realities and will continue to influence NATO-related decisions made by sovereign nations. Past efforts have demonstrated

that national political, economic and military considerations do influence responses to NATO defense requirements.

SUMMATION OF ISSUES

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Long-Term Defense Program, the Congress may need more information on the defense activities of allies and the NATO organization, as well as those of the United States. (As the Congress considers legislative proposals to implement the U.S. share of the Long-Term Defense Program, the following issues will warrant attention:

- The responsiveness of NATO allies in fulfilling their new program requirements.
- The impact of the program on the U.S. defense costs.
- The potential expansion of NATO's role.

The report was discussed in detail with officials of the Departments of State and Defense, and their comments have been incorporated, as appropriate.