

\$100 million new US bases in Bulgaria, Romania

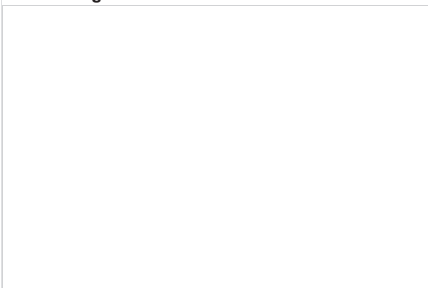
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United States Department of Defense

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The United States government is forking over \$100 million to build new military bases in Bulgaria and Romania. Last month, the Obama administration ended plans to construct missile-defense shields in other parts of eastern Europe.

In September, the Obama administration stated they would cease any construction of a missile-defense shield and troops in Czech Republic and Poland, however, the Pentagon is planning to spend more than \$100 million to build new military bases in Bulgaria and Romania, according to *Stars and Stripes*. More than 2,000 soldiers are taking part in exercises near the two eastern European nations.

This latest commitment by the Pentagon consists of a \$50 million military base in Romania, which will

house 1,600 US troops and a \$60 million base in Bulgaria to house 2,500 soldiers.

Commander of Joint Task Force-East Colonel Gary Russ said that government officials and citizens of the two countries have not criticized any such plans of creating the bases since the US missile-defense arrangement was scrapped last month, "We have made commitments and they have never made any overt conversation along the lines of pulling out of JTF-East. I think both of these [bases] illustrate great commitment [to Eastern Europe]."

These bases, which are strictly funded by the United States, will be shared between the US and the two host-nations.

Analysts believe this new operation is part of a global redeployment strategy and, in the end, will cost less but be closer to the strife in the Middle East, at least according to James Robbins, a senior fellow in national security affairs with the Washington-based think tank American Foreign Policy Council. He further added that this strategy was already being implemented under the Bush administration.

"It would be telling Russia that that U.S. is not interested in Eastern Europe and telling those countries that they are basically on their own."

Nevertheless, this latest move will not be just military bases. Ellen O. Tauscher, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, recently told the House Armed Services Committee earlier, according to *Foreign Policy*, "We will further demonstrate our commitment to Poland by continuing with plans to rotate a U.S. Army Patriot unit to Poland once a bilateral Supplemental Status of Forces Agreement is agreed, ratified and implemented."

However, not all Americans support this new move by the US government. Doug Badow of *Campaign for Liberty*, a former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan and an Editor for the Inquiry magazine, recently pegged the questions, "Why is the US building unnecessary facilities in countries which the U.S. has no need to defend? Is there anything for which the American people are not expected to pay?"

The Washington Post also reported that Poland and Czech Republic are being considered by the Obama administration to take part in European defense of Iran's possible development and deployment of medium and short-range missiles

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