

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Slovakia and U.S. Allied Cooperation in Support of Ukraine

APRIL 8, 2022

I salute the generosity of the Slovak government in providing an S-300 air defense system - a critical defensive capability - to Ukraine. It's a strong testament to how determined Ukraine's neighbors are to help the Ukrainians defend themselves against Russia's unprovoked invasion of their homeland. Of course, the United States will continue to coordinate with our Allies and partners to support the needs of the Ukrainian military and people. We also recognize Slovakia for its extraordinary humanitarian assistance efforts and for hosting thousands of Ukrainian refugees.

At my direction, and at the invitation of Slovakia, U.S. European Command will reposition one Patriot missile system, manned by U.S. service members, to Slovakia. We expect this battery and its crew to arrive in coming days. Their deployment length has not yet been fixed, as we continue to consult with the Slovak government about more permanent air defense solutions.

This deployment of Patriot capabilities to Slovakia aligns perfectly with our previous efforts to bolster NATO's defensive capabilities and to demonstrate our collective security requirements under Article 5 of the NATO treaty. It complements the NATO multinational battlegroup in eastern Slovakia, which includes air defense elements from Germany and the Netherlands.

Again, I thank the government of Slovakia for their willingness to assist Ukraine in its long-range air defense needs. This is just another example of the strength of our Alliance, and how President Putin's actions have brought about the very strengthening of NATO that he claimed he was trying to prevent. Every step we take is intended to deter aggression and reassure our Allies.
