

NATO strengthens presence in eastern Europe

NATO is to set up a rapid reaction force and six command centres in eastern Europe to bolster the alliance's ability to respond swiftly to military threats from Russia. The move comes as the U.S. considers supplying lethal weapons to Ukrainian forces

RAPID REACTION FORCE

- Brigade-sized "spearhead" force up to 5,000-strong
- Lead units able to deploy at two days notice – rest to follow within seven days
- Britain, France and Germany likely to take turns to lead force – U.S. to provide strategic air lift and intelligence-gathering aircraft

NEW COMMAND CENTRES

- Six centres staffed by around 50 officers each – half from host country and half from other NATO countries
- Responsible for staging exercises and for receiving spearhead force if deployed
- *NATO to expand headquarters set up by Germany, Poland and Denmark in Polish city of Szczecin*

