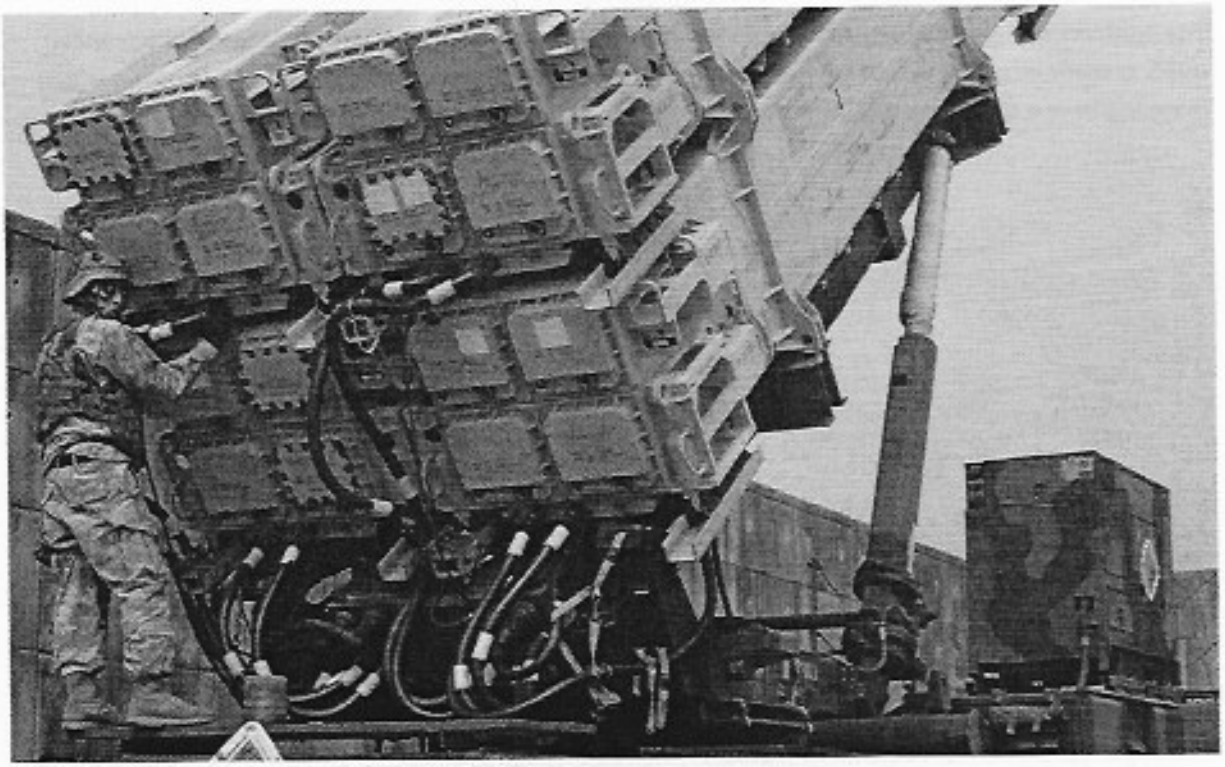


Poland Wishes to Purchase Patriot Missiles

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This post is also available in: עברית (Hebrew)

In recent years, NATO member Poland has sped up efforts to overhaul its military in response to Moscow's renewed military and political assertiveness in the region. It is over this backdrop that a possible $10.5 billion sale of Raytheon's Patriot missile defense system to Poland has been approved by the US State Department, the Pentagon said. According to defensenews.com, the possible sale is a long time coming with Poland and the U.S. struggling through complicated negotiations over the past several years.

Polish Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz has said that the final agreement on the purchase of Patriot missile defense systems by Poland could be signed by the end of this year, according to thenews.pl.

Patriot missile defense interceptors are designed to detect, track and engage unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), cruise missiles and short-range or tactical ballistic missiles.

International news agencies reported that the proposed sale includes 208 Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) Missile Segment Enhancement missiles, 16 M903 launching stations, four AN/MPQ-65 radars, four control stations, spares, software and associated equipment.

In addition, Poland is authorized to buy support services as well as range and test programs. The Pentagon said the sale will take place in two phases.

If a deal is finalized, it would allow Poland to conduct air and missile defense operations with NATO allies the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and Greece, which currently have the Patriot system, a State Department official said.

The contract still requires approval from the Congress, because it involves a purchase of advanced military technology for which special permission must be obtained. Poland, which had said it was planning to spend around $7.6 billion on the whole project, said the negotiations are not over.