

Poland plans to pull troops from Iraq next year

Polish leaders hold hopes that Iraqi elections will lead to stability and end Poland's mission in Iraq

BY VANESSA GERA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WARSAW, Poland — Poland should withdraw its troops from Iraq by the end of next year, Polish leaders said Monday, the first time the key U.S. ally has indicated a timeframe for pulling its soldiers out of the wartorn nation.

President Aleksander Kwasniewski said no final decision has been made on when to withdraw forces but Warsaw was considering the late 2005 deadline with the hopes that elections scheduled for January in Iraq would bring stability to the country.

"We decided to speak with the Iraqis and our coalition partners (and) the United States about a reduction of the Polish forces from Jan. 1 — and maybe to finish our mission at the end of 2005," Kwasniewski said on a visit to Paris.

The issue was sparked when Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski mentioned the possible pullout date in an interview, the first Polish official to do so publicly.

Szmajdzinski argued that 2.5 years in Iraq would be "enough" for the Polish military and said his suggestion was aimed at countering "cheap populism" by opponents of the Polish presence. However, he later said his remarks were his "personal opinion" and "not the official position of the government."

"In my opinion, the deadline should be the date of expiry of the U.N. Security Council's resolution 1546," Szmajdzinski was quoted as telling the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily.

That resolution provided for the handover of power to Iraqi authorities and includes steps that run through December 2005.

Prime Minister Marek Belka, who has maintained that he wants to transfer more authority to Iraq to make an eventual withdrawal possible, said he had not been consulted on Szmajdzinski's remarks.

"The prime minister expressed his displeasure with my public statement before the government adopts a formal stand," Szmajdzinski told reporters later in the day after a meeting between the two leaders.

In Washington, a senior White House official said the U.S. administration did not believe Poland had changed its position.

"Their position remains the same — that their troops would be there as long as it takes," the U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The Poles have made clear their position is one where any decisions they make will be mission-driven."

Separately, Ukrainian authorities released a letter in which Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih asked the former Soviet republic not to withdraw its troops, saying the foreign forces were needed in Iraq to "face the ongoing reality of global terrorism."

Salih thanked Ukraine's president for his country's "contribution to the improvement of Iraq's security, economy, governance" and said withdrawing any of the nearly 1,600 Ukrainian troops would have grave consequences for Iraq and international community.

Ukraine has said it plans to reduce its contingent by 200 troops starting with the next rotation scheduled to be completed in October. President Leonid Kuchma had no immediate response to the letter.

Observers said the Polish defense minister's comments had less to do with state policy on Iraq than internal politics.

Belka's government faces a parliamentary vote of confidence on Oct. 15 and a leading member of his junior coalition partner, the Labor Union, has threatened to withdraw support for Belka unless he first presents a plan for pulling Polish troops out of Iraq.

The Iraq mission has broad political support in Poland but opposition has been growing among the Polish public. An opposition party, the Polish Peasants' Party, has launched a petition seeking an immediate pullout.

Poland last year took command of a multinational security force in central Iraq that currently includes about 6,000 troops, including more than 2,400 Polish soldiers.

Szmajdzinski said the mission in "such difficult conditions" is a major challenge for a former Warsaw Pact army that is still "reaching new capabilities and introducing new equipment."

"It is enough," he said. "It is a rational period of time."

In Paris, Kwasniewski said that he hoped the elections are going to bring stability to Iraq.

"Our plans are known: We want to reduce our forces after January 2005 and we are thinking very seriously about ending the mission . . . Will it be at the end of 2005 . . . or another date? It's hard to say today," Kwasniewski said.

St. Helens: Danger is limited to air traffic around volcano

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Alerts on Sept. 23 reported that it had 200 small earthquakes, an amount not seen since November 2001, according to the USGS.

Since then, the earthquakes have become more frequent, reaching a rate of one earthquake per minute after Monday's eruption. Scientists at the USGS have also recorded a large-scale uplift of part of the mountain's glacier and a nearby segment of the lava dome.

The danger with the current activity is limited to air traffic around the volcano, the USGS reports.

Mountains closer to home have also shown some recent activity unrelated to the activity on St. Helens. According to the Cascade Observatory, Mount Hood experienced a small earthquake Monday because of a shift in tectonic plates. Recent earthquakes at Mount St. Helens were a product of magma rising or groundwater becoming heated.

Other activity in Oregon includes the South Sister volcano range east of Eugene, where there have been reports of a bulge that has steadily increased yearly by one inch since first recorded seven years ago, according to *The Register-Guard*.

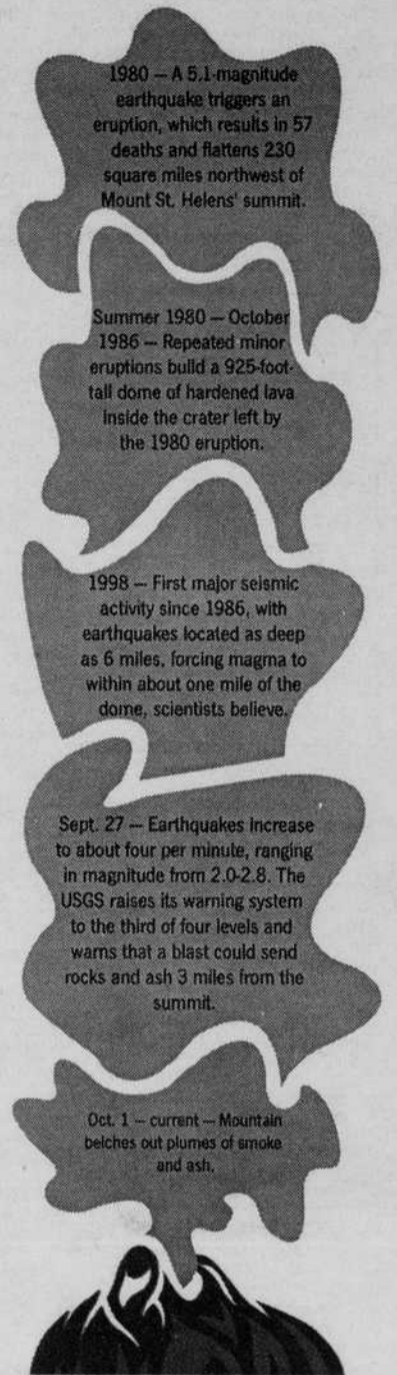
Wright said the University has a strong connection to Mount St. Helens. After the major eruption in 1980, the USGS sought out University Geology Professor Kathy Goldman to speak to the public on behalf of the government group. Goldman, now on sabbatical in Italy, is trying to speed up her return to Oregon so she can study the volcano.

Wright, who is working toward her Ph.D., said her interest in geology began when she worked for the USGS studying Computer Information Systems, a system for mapping, and doing field work twice yearly with the group.

Her interests include the mix of sciences a geologist uses to study a volcanic area.

"I enjoy that after months of research and studying a site, that you can go out and do field work, really seeing the area for yourself," Wright said.

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1980 — A 5.1-magnitude earthquake triggers an eruption, which results in 57 deaths and flattens 230 square miles northwest of Mount St. Helens' summit.

Summer 1980 — October 1986 — Repeated minor eruptions build a 925-foot-tall dome of hardened lava inside the crater left by the 1980 eruption.

1998 — First major seismic activity since 1986, with earthquakes located as deep as 6 miles, forcing magma to within about one mile of the dome, scientists believe.

Sept. 27 — Earthquakes increase to about four per minute, ranging in magnitude from 2.0-2.8. The USGS raises its warning system to the third of four levels and warns that a blast could send rocks and ash 3 miles from the summit.

Oct. 1 — current — Mountain belches out plumes of smoke and ash.

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHICS EDITOR
Mount St. Helens has had spurts of seismic activity since the 5.1-magnitude earthquake in 1980.

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Materials: Mother Kali's started by selling women's studies texts

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pay the same copyright fees to produce course packets, the business is able to save money on printing and binding. He also said The Copy Shop can produce packets more quickly, which is useful for professors who need to have packets printed in the middle of the term or after the bookstore's deadline.

An integral role

Mother Kali's Books began in the 1970s as a women's cooperative feminist bookstore, meaning that they originally sold only books by women on subjects relating to women's lives. It was founded at the same time the University started the Women's and Gender Studies Program. Izzie Harbaugh, an early manager of the store, took advantage of the opportunity and began making coursebook arrangements with the department.

"She literally rolled a cart of books into the classroom," Luna said.

Coursebooks are still an integral part of business at Mother Kali's

Books, especially in the wake of competition from online bookstores in recent years.

"Internet buying in general, Borders, Barnes & Noble, have put lots of independent bookstores out of business, and this store had to stop and think about how it was going to adjust with the time," Luna said. "The textbooks are what kept this afloat during the crisis. Professors rallied, incredibly, to support us."

"It's a good idea that they do that," Standish said regarding professors' support of Mother Kali's Books. "I don't want to see that store go out of business either."

Tsunami Books sells some coursebooks, for subjects including creative writing, and also serves students in search of fiction and poetry books. Co-owner David Rhodes said that the students' business "adds to the diversity of who we get to see. Students bring a good energy, a fresh, young energy."

Eva Sylwester is a freelance reporter for the *Daily Emerald*

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