

Latvia to Raise Defense Spending in Light of Russia's Actions in Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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RIGA — Latvia's parliament agreed on Thursday to boost defense spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product, or GDP, by 2020, in line with a NATO target, reflecting the small Baltic republic's concerns over a more assertive Russia.

Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula and its backing for pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine have particularly rattled the Baltic states, which were ruled from Moscow in Soviet times and regained their independence in 1991.

"Russia's action [in Ukraine] makes all European countries reconsider their attitude toward security ... security is the priority of this government," Latvian Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma told parliament.

Latvia will increase defense spending to no less than 1 percent of GDP next year, up from about 0.9 percent this year, and gradually increase it every year until 2020.

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