

Lesson 8  
READ THIS STORY #2, Basic

## Switzerland

The government of Switzerland is asking its citizens to consider a change in military law that will result in abandoning a policy of neutrality which has been in place for more than two hundred years.

Switzerland is a small country surrounded by larger nations. By remaining non-involved in the disagreements of foreign nations, the Swiss have been able to avoid war. Wars of defense are permitted in this neutral country, but offensive combat has been rejected. All able-bodied Swiss men are required to serve in the militia as citizen soldiers. They are responsible for protecting the country's perimeter from within.

Switzerland has never joined the United Nations and has shunned multilateral alliances. But for decades, Swiss soldiers have taken part in international peacekeeping missions. By law, they have left their guns at home and have had to rely on soldiers from other countries to protect them. Some leaders now suggest that it is immoral to remain isolated and aloof when neighboring countries are being oppressed. They hope that their citizens will agree to allow Swiss troops to train abroad and allow foreign forces to conduct military exercises in Switzerland.