

1949. From the archives. Soviets accuse NATO of Stockpiling Nuclear Weapons

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From the archives: Soviets protest NATO talks

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April 1, 1949 – Talks among several Western nations, leading to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), continue amid protests by the Soviet Union.

The participants in the pact insist that the purpose of NATO is for defense only. But the Soviet Union charges that the treaty is “openly aggressive,” that it violates the U.N. Charter and that “the Soviet Union does not intend to attack anyone and in no way threatens the United States, Great Britain, France or the other parties to the treaty.”

The Soviets also say that NATO involves military preparations which “by no means bear a defensive character,” including the stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had said in a speech a day earlier that “Europe would have been communized and London under bombardment some time ago but for the deterrent of the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States.”

Despite the Soviets’ protests, the North Atlantic Treaty is signed in Washington, D.C., on April 4 by Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, the United States and Canada. Article 5 of the treaty states that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.”

Meanwhile, a report about U.S. atomic tests at Bikini Atoll remains secret after President Truman said March 31 that he had no intention of releasing it.

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