

NATO SHIELD OF THE WEST VS THE WARSAW PACT

SHIELD OF THE EAST

Key Questions

Why were NATO and the Warsaw Pact established?
What were their strengths and weaknesses?

Content Recap

The defence of Europe

The postwar division of Europe was further emphasized in March 1948 when Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Brussels and pledged their unity against any form of aggression. But the intensification of the Cold War during the Berlin confrontation alarmed Western leaders. The Brussels agreement did not have the power to counterbalance the might of the Soviet Union, and so a closer long-term military co-operation with the United States was favoured. In April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) came into being. It included not only the Brussels pact and the United States but also Canada, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Portugal and Italy. (Greece and Turkey joined in 1952 and West Germany was admitted in 1955.) NATO embodied a commitment by the signatories to assist one another in the event of attack. All agreed to place their defence forces under a joint NATO command. Politically, too, NATO represented an important new departure. Both Britain and the United States embarked on a new peacetime commitment to the European continent.

Russia's longstanding fear

The Soviet Union denounced the treaty as an aggressive American-dominated alliance: The ruling circles of the USA and Britain have in the past two months been engaged in setting up a North Atlantic Alliance. It is easy to see that these aims are closely interwoven for the establishment of Anglo-American world supremacy, under the leadership of the USA.' In 1955, Russia's fear of a rearmed Germany, was realised when West Germany was brought into the NATO fold. From a Western viewpoint, this was a means by which Germany could develop her own military forces under close international scrutiny through NATO. Allied troops remained in Germany as part of NATO's forces rather than as an army of occupation. However, NATO itself was at no time at match for the forces of the Soviet Union and her partners. The real strength of the alliance

was that it had the backing of the vast military power of the United States, in particular, her atomic weaponry. This was to prove crucial when in September 1949 the Soviets exploded their first nuclear device, thus breaking the monopoly America had on this weapon of terror.

The Warsaw Pact

'14 May 1955. In accordance with the pact of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance between the People's Republic of Albania, the Hungarian People's Republic, the USSR and the Czechoslovakia Republic, the states have decided to set up a unified command of armed forces...'

This treaty was known as the Warsaw Pact. It was a military agreement that forged solidarity between Eastern European countries. The Soviets controlled their satellite states through force of arms alone, creating a 'buffer zone' against attack. Their fear of encirclement by the West was strong.

The bipolar world and the creation of two armed camps, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, stood as the bastion of defence for what was accepted as a divided Europe. There were fundamental differences between them. Warsaw Pact members were more closely aligned to 'Big Brother' than members of NATO, who participated in the running of the organization. Warsaw forces were directed from the control center of Moscow. Membership of the pact was compulsory for the states in the Eastern European Empire, as was seen in Russia handling of rebellious satellites like Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The creation of these two rival armed camps in Europe became the instrument between which the process of the Cold War was played out.

Key terms

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

SOLIDARITY – fellowship arising from common interests.

ENCIRCLEMENT – to enclose in a circle

BASTION – symbol of defence.

MASSIVE RETALIATION – threatening to use nuclear weapons in responses to any communist aggression.

Mapping Skills

- a. On the map provided, locate and name the countries that form the Warsaw Pact.

- b. Name the 16 members of NATO by 1955.



NATO VS WARSAW PAC

Explain the purpose for the establishment of the

i. NATO

The intensification of the Cold War during the Berlin confrontation alarmed Western leaders. In April 1949 the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** came into being. **NATO was formed to counter the aggressive behavior of the Soviet Union. It is a defensive military alliance to assist one another in the event of attack.**



"ANY PREVIOUS MILITARY EXPERIENCE?"

1. Identify what does **NATO** stand for?
2. According to the cartoon, identify the need of the NATO for recruitment?
3. According to the cartoon and the notes explain why NATO was established?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| | | - Forces are directed from the control center in Moscow |
| WEAKNESSES | - Geographically, the members locate in different areas such as America | - Members are not free, they are dictated from Moscow - Not all the communist countries were included (Albania and Yugoslavia were considered renegades. They were out of Warsaw Pact) |

ii. **WARSAW PACT**

A military agreement that forged solidarity between Eastern European countries because their fear of encirclement by the West was strong

Compare the strengths and weaknesses of the NATO and the WARSAW PACT

| | NATO | WARSAW PACT |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| STRENGTHS | - Western countries feel safe | - Members were more closely aligned to Big brother than members of the NATO - Membership of the pact was compulsory for the states in the Eastern European empire - Alliance that could prevent the spreading of capitalistic views in Europe |

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

A. From 'NATO - An Information Leaflet', published by the British Atlantic Committee, 1984

NATO is an alliance of Western nations, equal in status, formed in 1949 with twelve members. It was formed to—counter the aggressive behavior of the Soviet Union, which, having taken over parts on Finland and the Baltic States during the Second World War, continued such actions in Eastern European countries in 1945. By the end of 1947, the rest of Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary were also behind the Iron Curtain, to be followed in 1948 by Czechoslovakia after a coup d'état. That same year saw the beginning of the siege of West Berlin which lasted until May 1949. It is a defensive military alliance.

B. From the Roots of European Security by Vadim Nekrasov, 1984

Churchill's speech in Fulton on March 5th 1946 attacked the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. In the presence of President Truman, Churchill called on the US and British governments to take a hard line towards the USSR, threatened to use the American A-bomb and insisted on forming a military alliance against the USSR. But the Soviet Union did not give up its hope that co-operation would continue.

The founding in April 1949 of NATO was clearly aimed at preparing for war against the USSR. For example, the chairman of the appropriations committee said that Washington would use NATO to obtain air bases in Europe, from where air strikes could be made on Moscow. Thus Washington's foreign policy was still based on the US monopoly of the A-bomb. After that the Soviet Union made it clear that NATO's members had broken with the ideas of the anti-Nazi coalition in the war years..

a. According to document A, why was NATO formed?

b. Quote an example from document B that supports the claim that the members of NATO were preparing for war against the Soviet Union.

c. Why do you think the nations of Western Europe welcomed NATO?

NATO and Warsaw Pact Countries, 1955



