

RP#112

UNITED STATES POLICY AND THE USSR

A DIGEST OF PERTINENT DATA APPEARING IN
DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATIONS
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Division of Historical Policy Research
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4 by twelve nations constituted a landmark in the evolution of United States policy in relation to the USSR. Speaking at the signing ceremony, President Truman contrasted the Atlantic method of achieving voluntary unity and the police-state method of imposing unity by force.

Announcement was made in April of informal US-Soviet negotiations for a lifting of the Berlin blockade and a subsequent meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on the German question. At the end of the month, Secretary Acheson analyzed the Soviet tactics which led the three Western Governments to promote the establishment of a Western German Government.

Other developments of the month included (1) the support by the US and other countries of Korea's application for admission to the UN, which the Soviet Union opposed, and (2) the publication of a number of reports and articles regarding US policy developments bearing upon the USSR.

I. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

Atlantic Pact Nations Reject Soviet Allegations. - The Foreign Ministers of the twelve Atlantic Pact nations issued a joint statement on April 2 flatly rejecting the protests of the Soviet Union against the alliance. Noting the identity of the views expressed in the latest Soviet note with the January protestations, before the text of the pact was even in existence, the Foreign Ministers declared that the Soviet views apparently "do not arise from an examination of the character and text of the North Atlantic Pact but from other considerations." As the best answer to such allegations, the collective statement cited the text of the treaty itself, which makes clear (1) the completely defensive nature of the pact, (2) its conformity with both the spirit and the letter of the UN Charter, and (3) the fact that the pact is not directed against any nation or group of nations but only against armed aggression.¹

President Truman Contrasts Atlantic and Soviet Nations. - At the signing ceremony of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, President Truman denied the Soviet charges that "this treaty is an aggressive act on the part of the nations which ring the North Atlantic." To make such a suggestion, he said, is "to slander our institutions and defame our ideals and our aspirations." Our method of "achieving international unity through the voluntary association of different countries dedicated to a common cause", he asserted, is "in direct contrast to the method of the police state, which attempts to achieve unity by imposing the same beliefs and the same rule of force on everyone."

He

¹Department of State Bulletin, Apr. 10, 1949, p. 457.

He further emphasized the contrasting attitudes of the police state and free nations in relation to the pact, as follows:

"For us, war is not inevitable. We do not believe that there are blind tides of history which sweep men one way or the other. In our own time we have seen brave men overcome obstacles that seemed insurmountable and forces that seemed overwhelming. Men with courage and vision can still determine their own destiny. They can choose slavery or freedom -- war or peace.

"I have no doubt which they will choose. The treaty we are signing today is evidence of the path they will follow." ¹

Secretary Acheson Indicts Soviet Policy . - Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the inauguration of public hearings on the Atlantic Pact, April 27, Secretary Acheson described widening evidences of Soviet pressure and penetration: (1) in the UN, the basic purposes and principles of the Charter cynically violated; (b) in Eastern European countries, their right to self-determination extinguished by force or threats of force, human freedoms suppressed, and economic problems dealt with by dictation rather than international cooperation; (c) in other areas, the same methods attempted -- penetration by propaganda and the Communist Party, attempts to block cooperative international efforts in the economic field, wars of nerves, and in some cases thinly veiled use of force itself. The North Atlantic Treaty, the Secretary noted, is the practical expression of the resulting determination of the Western powers that an aggressor shall not divide these nations and pick them off one by one. He said: "The knowledge that armed attack will be met by collective defense, prompt and effective, will surely have a steadying effect on anyone from whom that transgression might come." ²

Ambassador Jessup Analyzes the Pact . - Ambassador Philip C. Jessup, on April 7, pointed out two aspects of Soviet policy which have caused the sense of insecurity leading to the North Atlantic Treaty: (1) failure to cooperate with and through the UN to make the peace secure; and (2) commitment to the Marxist dogma that "a series of the most terrible collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable" (Lenin). This sense of insecurity, Mr. Jessup said, can be removed if the USSR will begin to build up confidence where it has already built up fear and will cooperate in making the UN the effective instrument for world peace it was intended to be. "Since the world has not yet received convincing evidence of a change in Soviet policy," he continued, "the way in which the United States

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¹Ibid., Apr. 17, pp. 481-482.

²Department of State press release 294, Apr. 27.

can help to eliminate or to lessen the sense of insecurity is by a firm and honest declaration of purpose which the North Atlantic Treaty provides." 1

In a later address Mr. Jessup said that "the Pact contemplates military action solely for collective self-defense in case of aggression against a party. The Pact is, in fact, a reasonable response to the realities of international relations during the past three and one-half years." 2

II. POLICY AFFECTING GERMANY

Lifting of the Berlin Blockade. - "The way appears clear for a lifting of the blockade and a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers", the Department of State announced on April 26, "if the present position of the Soviet Government is as stated in the Tass Agency release as published in the American press this morning." The Tass release had said that the Soviet Union would lift the blockade which it has imposed on Western Berlin since March 1948 if the Western powers would set a date for a CFM meeting to review the whole German problem.

The Department's announcement revealed that Ambassador Jessup and Jacob Malik, the Soviet Representative in the Security Council, have conducted exploratory talks since February on (1) the reciprocal lifting of the restrictions on trade and transportation in Berlin imposed by the Soviet Union and the three Western powers, and (2) the subsequent fixing of a date for a meeting of the CFM. 3

The Department noted in a release of April 27 that Mr. Jessup had communicated to Mr. Malik informally the position of the three Western governments. 4

Secretary Acheson Reviews Background of Western German Developments. - Secretary Acheson, discussing on April 28 the developments toward a government in Western Germany, stated that they were necessitated by the Soviet determination "to thwart any settlement which did not concede virtual Soviet control over German economic and political life." This attitude of the USSR, he said, was confirmed in two futile meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow and London and was emphasized in the Allied Control Authority in Berlin, where the Soviet veto power was exercised three times as often as by the three Western powers combined. By 1948, he added, "it became clear that the Western powers could no longer tolerate an impasse which made it impossible for them to discharge their responsibilities for the organization of

German

¹Address before the Academy of Political Science, New York City, Bulletin, Apr. 17, pp. 486-490.

²Address of Apr. 27 before the American Society of International Law; press release 295, Apr. 27.

³Press release 293, Apr. 26.

⁴Press release 299, Apr. 27.

German administration and for the degree of German economic recovery that was essential for the welfare of Europe as a whole." These powers, accordingly, "determined to concert their policies for the area of Germany under their control." 1

OMGUS Report Cites Soviet Noncooperation. - A special report by the US Military Governor for Germany, "Three Years of Reparations", stated that the Quadripartite Plan for Reparations and the Level of Post-War German Economy, adopted March 26, 1946, broke down because of the Soviet refusal to implement the Potsdam Agreement regarding the economic unity of Germany, to share German resources, to pool export proceeds and imports, to eliminate zonal boundaries, and to share in any deficit for Germany as a whole. 2

III. FAR EAST

SCAP Asks USSR About Japanese Prisoners of War. - All available information concerning vital statistics of Japanese prisoners of war was requested of the USSR by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in a letter of April 25 to the Soviet member of the Allied Council for Japan, which stated that "there has at no time been any report whatsoever from the Soviet authorities concerning Japanese prisoners of war held in the Soviet Union or in territories under the control of the Soviet Union." The letter added that it was not apparent from information available that any effort was being made to apprise SCAP (as the sole executive authority for the Allied Powers in Japan) of pertinent developments. 3

Korean Application for UN Membership. - Ambassador Austin led the support in the UN Security Council for Korea's admission to UN membership. He pointed out that Soviet claims and charges against Korea had been overwhelmingly rejected by the General Assembly last December in Paris, at which time the Assembly recognized the government of the Republic as the only lawful government in Korea. A Chinese resolution to admit the Republic of Korea to the UN was defeated on April 8, when the USSR cast its 30th veto. 4

IV. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

US Promotes Freedom Abroad Despite Soviet Obstacles. - Assistant Secretary of State John E. Peurifoy stated on April 29 that the aim of American policy is not merely to "hold the line" against Communism, but "to secure political and economic conditions throughout the world" in which democracy can thrive and American interests

¹Address before the American Society of Newspaper Publishers; press release 303, Apr. 28.

²Report of Nov. 1948; Documents and State Papers, Feb. 1949 (released Apr. 1949), pp. 657-661.

³Press release 288, Apr. 25.

⁴Bulletin, Apr. 17, p. 492.

interests can best be served. "The preservation of freedom overseas is as important to the United States as its preservation here at home", he said, and added that the task of carrying out our aims abroad "has been made immeasurably harder by the policy of the Soviet Union", which, he noted, would like to see its system spread throughout the world. 1

Soviet Obstruction in the UN. - James F. Green, US Delegate to the Trusteeship Council, reported in an article published in April that as a result of the first full-session participation of the USSR in the Council, the work at its third session, Lake Success, June 16-August 5, 1948, was prolonged by the familiar Soviet obstructionist and delaying tactics, and the spirit of compromise prevailing during the two previous sessions was disrupted. He said that the Soviet representative repeatedly attacked the performance and intentions of the administering authorities (Australia, Belgium, France, New Zealand, UK, and US), clouded technical issues with propaganda, involved the Council in long and irrelevant procedural disputes and, in general, sharpened the differences between the six administering authorities and the six non-administering authorities, who were often aligned against each other in voting. 2

Mr. Green, in an address of April 22, stated that despite all Soviet obstacles, the concerted efforts of the majority to create a comprehensive system of collective security would be continued, in the hope that some day the Soviet Union can be persuaded to participate. 3

UN Guard Force. - Benjamin Cohen, US Delegate to the General Assembly, rejected Soviet allegations of ulterior motives on the part of the countries favoring the Secretary-General's plan for a UN guard force and said that his government warmly welcomed the proposal as representing an effort to strengthen UN security and prestige. The Ad Hoc Political Committee of the General Assembly on April 11 adopted a Philippine resolution to refer the proposal to a special committee for study. The organization of the special 14-member committee was approved on April 29 by an Assembly vote of 47-6, the Soviet-bloc countries opposing. 4

Wheat Agreement. - According to an April report on the International Wheat Conference by US Delegate Edward G. Cale, the US and other exporting countries felt that a guarantee to the USSR of an export quantity in excess of 40 million bushels would mean giving up to the USSR markets which other exporting countries

had

¹Address at Farmville, N.C.; press release 307, Apr. 29.

²Documents and State Papers, Feb. 1949, pp. 625-636.

³Press release 272, Apr. 21.

⁴Bulletin, Apr. 17, p. 491.

had been accustomed to supply. Because of their desire to have the USSR participate in the agreement, however, the exporting countries stated that they would be prepared to agree to a guaranteed export quantity of 50 million bushels for the USSR, Mr. Cale reported, but the USSR refused to accept less than a quantity of 75 million bushels and did not sign the agreement signed by the US and many other countries at the close of the Conference. ¹

Educational Exchange with USSR and Eastern Europe. - The US, refusing to pull down an Iron Curtain on this side of the Atlantic, has formally accepted the recommendation of the US Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange of October 19, 1948, that "we not close our doors to all contacts with those nations whose philosophy disagrees with ours", according to an article published by the Department in April. The promotion of international understanding through the exchange of persons and ideas the article termed "one of the strongest weapons we have in the struggle to maintain democratic institutions against the subtle attempts by totalitarian states to undermine human liberty and freedom." ²

Greece: International Communism. - The Department published in April a comprehensive paper on the discussion of the Greek problem at the Paris meeting of the UN General Assembly. According to the paper, the discussion revealed a sharp cleavage between the overwhelming majority, including the US, on the one hand, and the Soviet bloc of six members on the other. The majority held that the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece were threatened by the forces of international Communism. ³

Soviet Satellites: US Protests Denial of Human Rights. - George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary of State, and Selden Chapin, US Minister to Hungary, in a radio broadcast of April 15 made the following point: The ruthless attack on religion now going on behind the Iron Curtain, backed by the Red Army and the political police, involves American foreign policy in that (a) one of our most vital interests is to strengthen what Mr. Acheson has called "the environment of freedom in the world", (b) our relations cannot be close and friendly with any government which denies to its own people the basic human rights, and (c) such a government is not likely to respect the rights of other people. ⁴

The US, charging the Governments of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania with repeated violations of peace treaty obligations to

secure

¹Ibid., Apr. 24, pp. 507-511.

²"Developing International Understanding", Bulletin, Apr. 10, p. 442.

³Harry N. Howard, "The Problem of Greece in the Third Session of the General Assembly", Documents and State Papers, Jan. 1949, pp. 543-612.

⁴Press release 260, Apr. 15.

secure and protect human rights for their citizens, in notes of March 29 released to the press April 2, called upon them again for prompt remedial action and notification that such action has been taken. ¹

The US will join with like-minded nations in focusing world attention on the "Godless Inquisition" set in operation in Hungary and Bulgaria by the authoritarian regimes controlling the Eastern European peoples apparently to abolish, through thought police, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, Secretary Acheson promised in response to a petition of March 29 from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. ²



¹Bulletin, Apr. 10, pp. 450-453.

²Ibid., pp. 454-455.