

'The Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact' from the Luxemburger Wort (5 April 1949)

Caption: On 5 April 1949, the Luxembourg newspaper Luxemburger Wort analyses the implications of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed the day before in Washington, on future East-West relations.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 05.04.1949, n° 95; 102e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Marshallpakt und Atlantikpakt", p. 1.

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The Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact

Exactly a year to the day after the Marshall Plan came into force, the signing of the Atlantic Pact took place yesterday evening in Washington. The close connection between these two dates that are so significant for Europe is immediately obvious. The Marshall Plan sought to guarantee for Europe the economic security that is guaranteed in the political field by the Atlantic Pact. The Atlantic Pact sprang from the Marshall Plan, but it might not necessarily have done so. No geographical limits had been imposed on the principle of collective security until the day when Czechoslovakia was prevented by the Kremlin from participating in the preliminary meetings of the Marshall Plan. People still thought in terms of total numbers and the idea of Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco — simply that of the United Nations — still applied. The words spoken at that time by Stalin himself to the Czechoslovak Government in Moscow meant the, at least temporary, end of the inclusive concept of the UN. The principle of collective security now had to accept stricter limits. But whose fault was this? Did it lie with the West, whose conciliatory policy — Foreign Minister Bech expressed it quite unambiguously yesterday at the signing of the Pact in Washington — had received no recognition from the East? Or was the Kremlin guilty? The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, after his return from that memorable Moscow meeting with Stalin, clearly recognised that the East did not wish Western Europe's economy to recover. 'They (the Soviets) were afraid that the reconstruction of Western Europe might be successful,' explained Masaryk to his ministerial colleague, Huber Ripka, in Prague.

The battle against the Marshall Plan triggered by Russia in the past was to be aimed even more intensely at the Atlantic Pact. Nobody really doubts that, although it does not really need to be so obvious from the outset. In the UN, the Kremlin has been able to claim far too many triumphs for it now to be able to accept a second organisation that opposed it but whose activity it could not paralyse with its veto. Such positions of power created by the right of veto are not given up lightly.

That is why there was bound to be a sour atmosphere in Lake Success, when the UN General Assembly met there today for the second part of its third session. The American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, does indeed believe that the Atlantic Pact will not be mentioned at the meeting, but it would surprise no one if the Soviets were to seek some way of reviving their claim that the Atlantic Pact is incompatible with the United Nations Charter and is allegedly offensive in nature. Both assertions were, incidentally, refuted long ago. The San Francisco Charter makes express provision for groups of countries to combine in regional defensive pacts, and it was clearly and unambiguously stated in the text of the Atlantic Pact published some weeks ago that it was purely defensive in nature and was aimed only against possible aggressors. Foreign Minister Bech, when he presented the text of the Pact to the press, thought it was a kind of safety net for the countries of Western Europe.

It is, indeed, a safety net against which Moscow will start to use its destructive influence. The Pact by itself cannot be sufficient to guarantee us peace and security. It will be worth exactly what the signatory peoples are prepared to make of it. We deliberately say signatory *peoples*. The twelve governments alone cannot make it fully effective. The peoples must stand behind their governments, and every individual in those peoples must accept economic, political and social duties and responsibilities. Its success will then depend on the extent to which the peoples of Western Europe refute the arguments — often just spurious ones — of those parties and movements directed by the Cominform, and on the extent to which Moscow has lost the ability to wreck from within the Pact on security of freedom and human rights that was signed yesterday.