

North Atlantic Treaty Organization



On April 4, 1949, the foreign ministers of 12 countries in North America and Western Europe gathered in Washington, D.C., to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. The fear of communism and the spread of communism has forced these nations to form an alliance. It was primarily a security pact, with Article 5 stating that a military attack against any of the members would be considered an attack against them all. When U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1893-1971) put his signature on the document, it reflected an important change in American foreign policy. For the first time since the 1700s, the U.S. had formally tied its security to that of nations in Europe--the continent that had served as the flash point for both world wars.

The original membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) consisted of the democratic nations Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and

the United States. This was a democratic alliance formed to fight communism.

NATO formed the backbone of the West's military protection against the USSR and its communist allies for the next 40 years, with its membership growing larger over the course of the Cold War era. Greece and Turkey were admitted in 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1955 and Spain in 1982.

Read the document and answer the following questions. Record your answers on the graphic organizer.

Who: Who formed NATO? Who were the first members?

What: What is NATO?

Where: Where was NATO formed?

When: When was NATO formed?

Why: Why was NATO formed? What is the main goal/ purpose of NATO?

“This alignment provided the framework for the military standoff that continued throughout the Cold War”

