

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF

THE CURRENT DIGEST OF THE SOVIET PRESS

Vol. 21, No.24, July 9, 1969, page(s): 16-17

NATO: IN FEVER AND WHY

NATO: IN FEVER AND WHY. (By Izvestia Political Commentator V. Matveyev. Izvestia, June 14, p. 5. 1,400 words. Condensed text:) Inactivity is not generally the characteristic of the Atlantic bloc's war machine; the last few weeks, however, have been unusually active for it. So-called "anniversary parades" of troops and arms have been added to the tight schedule of military maneuvers and various staff conferences. These parades are intended to catch the fancy of the ordinary people of the respective countries, for even in West Germany the authorities increasingly bewail the lack of proper response from the population to appeals for support of the Bundeswehr. . . .

The Atlantic bloc mechanism, brought into being to force up military preparations and operating on this basis only, consistently reacts with hostility to any peaceful and constructive initiative. It was exactly thus that the pillars of NATO reacted to the Budapest message of the Warsaw Pact member-states on the question of convening an all-European conference to discuss the problem of European security. * The NATO organization, which supposedly entered the world under the motto of "defending security," reveals itself particularly blatantly as an instrument of an aggressive course whenever its leaders run up against a practical formulation of the question of European security.

It stands to reason that the socialist countries of Europe have not addressed a new call in the interests of peace and security to the other countries of the continent simply to declare: "We are for peace***." Unlike the declarations adopted at the conferences of the leading agencies of NATO, the proposals of the governments of the socialist countries express an attitude of full responsibility. In this respect those who set the tone for the Atlantic bloc have been playing hide-and-seek. Confronted with the steadily growing influence of the Budapest message, these statesmen have begun to handle it as though it were a hot potato. While they have not undertaken to repudiate the document outright, it is unthinkable for the leaders of NATO to come out in its support. As a result the NATO Council session in Washington adopted a highly elastic formulation about talks with the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries in which there is no reference to the Budapest message.

It has been two months since the Washington session of the NATO Council, and the latest conferences of the agencies heading this bloc-first in Brussels and then in London-have indicated the reason for such nervousness among the staffs of NATO when appeals are heard from East Europe for strengthening the peace and security of the continent. The efforts of the bloc's propaganda machinery aim, as before, to implant among the millions of people of the West the

notion that they are threatened by “aggression” on the part of the U. S. S. R. and the other socialist countries. This is the spirit of the statements made by the American General Lemnitzer, retiring Supreme Allied Commander of NATO Armed Forces in Europe.

Touring the capitals of Western Europe, Lemnitzer in each of them immediately set about influencing his partners to increase their commitments of troops and arms for the “NATO pot.” . . .

Of course, exercises in propaganda of this sort have little, if any, perceptible influence on the thinking of broad sections of the public of the Western countries. This public has already ceased to believe even the most adept purveyors of the propaganda line that the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries are supposedly conceiving certain aggressive plans and endanger the peace. But this does not mean that these inflammatory preachings can be brushed aside as “innocuous.” Not at all. . . .

The decisions adopted at the recent conferences of the NATO Defense Planning Committee in Brussels and the Nuclear Planning Group in London confirm that the enemies of an all-European peace are not sleeping; they are digging away at its foundations. They fear the growth of a widespread public sentiment in favor of concrete steps for the creation of a system of collective security on the continent. They have good cause to suppose that time is not working on their side. They are, therefore, making haste to impose the new decisions taken to impede the path to agreements aiming toward relaxing tension in Europe. They have succeeded in concluding a series of measures that have undoubtedly complicated the situation, both in Central Europe and on the flanks of the Atlantic bloc, particularly in the Mediterranean. What are these measures?

- A decision on increasing military expenditures by NATO member-countries and on continuing the arms race during the period 1971-1975.

- On the initiative of the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Great Britain, the adoption of recommendations concerning conditions for employing tactical nuclear weapons “at a possibly earlier stage in the event of armed conflict,” and for conducting so-called “demonstrations” of these weapons under certain circumstances.

- The approval of a plan for creating a NATO naval force in the Mediterranean that includes a schedule for these forces to put in at the ports of a number of Mediterranean countries. It has been proposed that efforts be made to enlist units of the Turkish navy in these “combined forces.”

- Finally, during the course of the aforesaid discussions by the defense ministers of the NATO member-countries, the government of Canada was strongly pressed to abandon its plan to reduce the size of Canadian armed forces under the command of NATO in Western Europe. In particular, the defense ministers of the U.S.A., Great Britain, and, of course, West Germany tried their hand at this. They all but threatened the Canadian representatives with “most serious consequences” and tried to frighten them with mythical dangers, as though powerful forces would descend upon Western Europe were a few thousand Canadian soldiers to be withdrawn.

These conjurers did indeed fear that the Canadian example might be followed by the other small countries of NATO - Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark and Norway-where sentiment in favor of cutting back on ruinous military obligations, which were imposed on these countries at the height of the “cold war, “ has also been growing stronger. . . .

The ruling circles of the U.S.A., the Federal Republic of Germany and Great Britain have demonstrated their fervid interest in tightening the screws of the Atlantic bloc’s war machine and impeding the way to relaxation of tension in Central Europe and to measures for collective

security. However, of this triangle, Bonn is the most pleased. Day after day it is the militaristic and revanchist circles of the F.R.G. that enjoy the principal profits of this buildup of the military efforts of the Atlantic machine. It was not fortuitous that [Gerhard] Schroeder, Minister of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany, coauthored the recommendations adopted by the last session of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group in London that are intended, so to speak, to “simplify the procedure” of decision-making on the employment of nuclear weapons in the event of conflict. The other author of these recommendations was [Denis] Healey, Secretary of State for Defense of Great Britain.

The present British government is at least as shortsighted as was Neville Chamberlain, the Conservative who toward the end of the 1930s dreamed stubbornly of placating the Hitlerites with generous concessions and entering into a bloc with them against the Soviet Union. Bonn politicians long ago discovered the Achilles heel of their London partners. It was the same [Franz-Josef] Strauss [Minister of Finance of the Federal Republic of Germany] who recently in London gushed over England as the “governess” of Western Europe. . . .

For all their maneuvers and shrewdest efforts, the enemies of detente cannot sweep the idea of the creation of a European collective security system under the rug; they cannot bury it. It has forced a passage for itself in an intricate situation. Encountering the stubborn opposition of the adherents of “Atlanticism,” it has won more and more new support, both among the broad public and among political figures who understand the importance of overcoming the division of Europe into opposing military blocs. . . .