

# *Russia warns Ukraine against integration with NATO*

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**Moscow, Apr 1, (RHC),** –The Russian Foreign Ministry has warned Tuesday that Kiev’s previous attempts to move closer to NATO had strained ties with Moscow, as well as the relationship between Russia and the defense alliance.

“Past attempts led to a freezing of Russian-Ukrainian political contacts, a headache between NATO and Russia and ... to a division in Ukrainian society,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Kremlin seeks a neutrality clause in Ukraine’s constitution to prevent it from joining NATO.

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s parliament approved a series of joint drills with the Western military alliance, including two sets of joint exercises with the United States this summer.

This is while NATO foreign ministers gathered in Brussels during a two-day ministerial meeting to evaluate their relations with Moscow.

Tensions between the Western powers and Moscow heightened after Crimea declared independence from Ukraine and formally applied to become part of the Russian Federation following a referendum on March 16, in which nearly 97 percent of voters in Crimea said yes to reunion with Russia.

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