

Czecho-Slovakian Alliance Triumph Of French Policy

Addition of This State to Those Which Stand With France Against Germany Is Culmination Toward Which French Policy Has Been Directed For Four Years

By FRANK H. SIMONDS
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Washington, Jan. 7.—The importance attached in European capitals to the recent treaty of alliance between France and Czecho-Slovakia is not difficult to understand in the present Continental situation.

Actually it puts the considerable Czecho-Slovakian army behind the already formidable group of military states which guarantee the existing territorial status, which was created by the Treaty of Versailles and the accompanying agreements.

By the new document Czecho-Slovakia undertakes to contribute her influence, political as well as military, to defending the Treaty of Versailles. You have then treaties between France, Belgium, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, each in the shape of a separate treaty with France, pledging these states to act together against any effort to change the existing territorial situation. You have, in addition, agreements between Poland and Rumania, Rumania-Yugo-Slavia and Czecho-Slovakia of the same general character but applying particularly either to Russian or Hungarian settlements.

Roughly speaking, then, states with a population of 115,000,000 and armies which on a peace footing count nearly 2,000,000 have united with France as the central and guiding influence to prevent the reconstruction of the old German Empire, the restoration of the former militaristic elements and in the same fashion to prevent the reconstruction of Hungary.

Now this new combination of states which has been in the making for several years, represents the triumph of French policy. For more than four years statesmanship has been steadily at work seeking to construct a system of alliances which would insure the permanence of the victory won in the World War and give France strong allies in case she had to face a new German attack.

Failure British Statesmanship
To prevent such a coalition, British statesmanship has labored with equal industry. The Lloyd George policy aimed at the isolation of France and the prevention of a return to the old system of alliances. The British conception has been to make use of the League of Nations as the controlling organization, relying upon the presence in this body of a large number of nations neutral in the war and like Britain, interested in the economic restoration of Germany, to check France.

The announcement of the present agreement is of peculiar interest at the moment because with a Labor government seemingly about to take office in England it is certain that a new attempt will be made to abolish the system of alliances and employ the League. France, then, is obviously fortifying her position in advance of a new trial of strength with Great Britain.

The weakness of the British arguments lies in the fact that the nations which join Germany and have, as a result of the war, acquired German territory, are equally threatened by any German recovery. They have not the smallest confidence in any guarantee of security which might come through the League of Nations and believe that their sole hope of survival lies in organizing their own strength and keeping on friendly terms with the nation whose army is capable of meeting the German.

France, moreover, by means of loans of money, credits for the purchase of war materials and the sending of commissions of officers has helped all the friendly Central European powers to organize their armies and train their staffs. This is true with respect of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Yugo-Slavia. Thus these states have not only a common basis of co-operation with France but they have also material reasons for supporting French policy.

Labor Favors Germany
Underlying all British policy and certain to be an even more considerable factor in any Labor efforts is

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prosperity insofar as this was not accompanied by any return of military strength and any reversion to imperialistic policies. Within certain limits, then, these states might seek to moderate any French policies which seemed unnecessarily severe and destructive. But, in the last analysis, they would still be bound to stand with France, if the choice should come between France and Britain.

The difficulty for the British is found in the fact that there is no longer any considerable British army and, even if the Central Succession States desired to leave France and rally to Britain they would be stopped by the fact that such a change of front would leave them defenseless in the face of Germany. The failure of the British to support the Greeks after Lloyd George had encouraged the Greeks to invade Asia Minor and the earlier refusal of the British to aid in Polish resistance, when the Bolsheviks were advancing upon Warsaw will long serve to deter Continental states from listening to British arguments.

In any event the signing of this new Treaty at this moment serves to give additional evidence of the character of the contest which is coming before long in Europe. The Labor Ministry is certain to challenge French policies and French

supremacy in Europe. It is bound to seek to undermine French influence and seek to break down the system of alliances France has constructed. In the face of the coming storm the French are quite as patiently mending their fences and consolidating their positions.

adjustment between Soviet Russia and the French Republic. Could this be achieved, the French position in Europe would be almost impregnable and it is apparent that every French effort will now be made to bring this about. Today Prague is the friendliest European capital to Moscow and Prague and Paris have just completed an alliance. This is, at least, highly significant.



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