

'America's view on the European problems' from the Luxemburger Wort (6 June 1947)

Caption: On 6 June 1947, the Luxembourg newspaper Luxemburger Wort examines the speech made the previous day by US Secretary of State, George Marshall, at Harvard. It draws a parallel between US aid designated for Europe and Soviet attempts to establish a Balkan federation.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 06.06.1947, n° 157; 100e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Amerika zu den europäischen Problemen", p. 1.

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America's view on the European problems

US Secretary of State Marshall expects Europe to draw up a joint reconstruction plan

Washington, 6 June. Diplomatic circles in Washington are currently considering the possibility that the Communist coup d'état in Hungary might result in measures being taken to establish a Balkan Federation of Soviet Russian dominated states in south-east Europe. Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia has, to date, resolutely advocated the idea of a Balkan Federation, and such a development would certainly seem to be within the bounds of possibility. Like the change of government in Hungary, this would have to be interpreted as a Russian response to the American aid programme for Greece and Turkey and, simultaneously, as a step towards consolidating the Soviet Russian bloc before the final ratification of the peace agreements with the satellite states forces Russia to withdraw its occupation troops.

Diplomatic circles also predict that the next Soviet step in Eastern Europe will be an attempt to impose Communist domination on Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand, America is planning a study of the world economic situation in order to determine the extent of additional financial help for foreign states. The Treasury Department and the National Advisory Board, which consists of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Directors of the Federal Reserve Board and of the Export-Import Bank, are to cooperate in compiling this report.

In his address at Harvard University, when receiving an honorary doctorate, General Marshall called upon Europe to develop a comprehensive reconstruction programme.

Predominant in his speech was the idea that the European countries had to be persuaded to take a more active interest in their continent's reconstruction as a whole and to develop a plan of action focused on increasing production of food and coal.

Marshall pledged economic support from the USA to those states that declared themselves willing to participate in this joint programme.

He went on to say that, over the next three or four years, Europe would need effective help from outside if her economic, social and political situation were not to deteriorate catastrophically.

Any financial or other help from the United States would have to be radical in its effect if it were to 'provide a cure rather than a mere palliative'.

However, before the United States would grant Europe its help, the European states would first have to come to an agreement on the requirements of the current situation and on the role that they themselves would be willing to play in the reconstruction programme.

Marshall also pointed out that the European reconstruction plan would have to be drawn up on the basis of mutual agreement between most, if not all, of the European states. Europe was currently witnessing the increasingly rapid development of a very serious situation that 'bodes no good for the world'.

The inability of the great powers to reach agreement on the peace treaties for Germany and Austria would result in a serious delay in the European reconstruction process.

President Truman defends aid for Europe

Washington, 6 June. President Truman yesterday announced the appointment of the former Governor of Nebraska, Dwight P. Griswold, as Director of the American mission to Greece.

He also revealed at a press conference that Richard F. Allen would be responsible for the administration of

the 350 000 000 dollar relief fund.

During the further course of the conference, Truman made a statement in reply to Republican Senator Taft's accusations that the President had abandoned the policy of lowering prices in favour of higher expenditure abroad, which would keep prices high. He said that Taft's argument that high demand would justify or require higher prices was both wrong and dangerous.

The government's decision to help Greece and Turkey had not been taken in order to lower prices, but to help millions of starving people to rebuild their economy and to protect them 'against totalitarian aggression'.