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## The Secretary Reports On Round One

PERHAPS it was in deference to the distinguished career of his guest that Josef Stalin employed a military figure to describe the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in his conversation with Secretary Marshall. "The conference represented only the first skirmishes and brushes of reconnaissance forces on the European peace settlement."

At any rate, Secretary Marshall regarded the Generalissimo's estimate of the situation as reasonably cheerful. It indicates, he said in his report to the people, that Stalin himself recognizes the possibility of compromise. Clearly Secretary Marshall believes that his own unbending attitude is beginning to produce results; convinced that the United States will yield no more the Russians themselves are beginning to explore the possibilities of backing down without losing face.

But Secretary Marshall still regards the Moscow conference as a failure. At the very best, he said, the fundamental differences between East and West have not been stated so clearly that future negotiations can start with a knowledge of exactly what the issues are that must be settled. In the meantime, however, chaos will continue in Europe. The situation there is steadily worsening until a final peace settlement is reached.

The Secretary's report underlines the unhappy fact that we are now measuring progress toward a settlement in Europe by the distance we have moved away from the old concept of the United Nations. Clearly it is Secretary Marshall's idea that his first task is to help bring about a conference among the nations that were the stock in trade of the negotiators in the days when all the great powers were still giving lip-service to the ideal of international co-operation. With President Truman's policy of containment in Moscow to get down to cases and lay the line, though American position on the line.

There is little doubt that he did just that. It is not surprising, therefore, that he found conflict with the Russians at every major point of the proposed treaty. This did not result from the mechanics of the treaty itself—the establishment of national boundaries, reparations, etc. Rather it was symptomatic of the belief now held by Russia and the United States that fundamental agreement there is no reason for the Russians to regard the Truman Doctrine as anything less than it is—a statement of American intention to establish a world order sympathetic to Western democracy and opposed, therefore, to Russian Communism. Every American action from now on will be viewed by the Russians in that light.

To the Russians, no less than to the United States, it must be plain now that there are only two alternatives—compromise or war. We hope Secretary Marshall interpreted Generalissimo Stalin correctly when he read into his remarks a new flexibility of viewpoint. But it is well to remember that we have now placed our international relations on a two-sided basis—which means that when one side wins the other must lose. Our new toughness may result in compromise that represents immediate victory for our point of view, but it also means that every such triumph will serve to widen the breach between us and the Russians.

In this short view, which seems to prevail in Washington now, Secretary Marshall's report can be regarded as a reasonably heartening document. In the long view, which seems to have gone out of fashion everywhere in the world, it does nothing to dispel the gloom which hangs as to the future of any world order based on power politics.

## People's Platform

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