

Proposed Central
European Confederation

It has been regarded in some quarters as a serious mistake on Poland's part that it did not exert itself after the first world war to establish a closely knit alliance extending from Estonia on the north to the Balkans on the south, to serve as a protection against its two powerful neighbours and secular enemies, Germany and Russia.

The need for such an alliance became fully apparent to Poland on August 25, 1939, when the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty was announced. It was therefore not surprising when on November 11, 1940 the Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile issued a declaration undertaking to enter as sovereign, independent states into a closer economic and political association after the war. This preliminary declaration was followed by an agreement, dated January 23, 1942, which outlined the nature and functions of a proposed Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, to embrace other European states with which the vital interests of the two principals were linked. The confederation would assure a common policy with regard to foreign affairs, defence, economic and financial matters, social questions, transportation and communication.

The proposal was regarded with benevolence by the United Kingdom government, and discussions of principle and detail proceeded satisfactorily for some months among exiled governments, to the gratification of Polish nationalists, who regarded confederation as an instrument for holding both the Soviet Union and Germany in check. The talks were suspended before the end of 1942, however, because the Soviet government made objections and the Czechs were unwilling to proceed in the face of Moscow's disapproval.

Then, on March 21, 1943, came Mr. Churchill's proposal for creation of a European Council, on which small states might be represented through regional blocs so as to enhance