

'After Churchill's speech' from Le Monde (9 March 1946)

Caption: On 9 March 1946, the French daily newspaper Le Monde analyses the international reaction to the address given by Winston Churchill at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, four days earlier.

Source: Le Monde. dir. de publ. Beuve-Méry, Hubert. 09.03.1946, n° 377; 3e année. Paris: Le Monde. "Après le discours de M. Churchill", p. 1.

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After Churchill's speech

As should have been expected, Mr Churchill's speech met with strong reaction, notably in Britain and the United States.

First of all, we should look at those reactions that are based on too little information or on too superficial an impression.

Some showed signs of indignation because Mr Churchill suggested military agreements (he avoided the word alliance) between Great Britain and the United States. But the *New York Times* and the *Daily Mail* report today that the British-American HQ has always been stationed in Washington since the end of the war. Its meetings are said to be almost as frequent as during the hostilities. Great Britain is represented there by Field Marshal Wilson, the United States by General Eisenhower.

'One significant outcome of Mr Churchill's speech', writes the *Daily Mail* in a report from New York, 'will be to put a stop to the requests from certain quarters that would like to see the joint HQ and its pooled military plans axed. It is quite probable that this HQ, as a result of Russia's expansionist intentions towards Persia and Manchuria and the threat against Turkey, will be strengthened, with total support from London and Washington.'

Accordingly, Mr Churchill's idea of British-American military cooperation is not up for debate: it is already a fact; the only question that remains is how that cooperation will be clarified and developed. Certain aspects of this programme, such as the joint use of naval airbases, do not seem to pose great difficulties: has this even been completely discontinued since August 1945?

Mr Churchill has been criticised above all for exacerbating the tension between the USSR and the English-speaking powers. Indeed, everyone hopes — and Mr Churchill himself did not fail to express this hope — that the conflicts between the Big Three will one day be resolved. But, clearly, the question is whether the best way to bring an end to conflict is to deal with it openly, even violently, or to close our eyes, repeating that we must get along at all costs without doing anything about it. The negotiations, either in small committees or under the auspices of the UN, are worthwhile and necessary. Will they yield results if the negotiators, on both sides, do not rely on positive elements or real forces?

The most delicate problem underlined in Mr Churchill's speech is that of the Great Powers' relationship with the UN. It is sheer absurdity to claim that conflicts must be brought before the United Nations. Everyone knows that the UN is incapable of solving them, that the veto, as long as it exists, will stop the Security Council taking any effective action. But herein is where the question lies: how can the dual military organisation that Mr Churchill advocates be reconciled with the one proposed for the United Nations that that organisation will attempt to establish?

Could it be that this organisation will not succeed because the US and the UK hold the secret to the atomic bomb and that, consequently, an international armed force would be, in fact, at their disposal? This argument would militate in favour of a completely US/UK force that would openly hoist its banner. But it would be necessary only a few years from now when the situation has evolved enough for everyone to accept it.

Mr Churchill would have therefore anticipated these events, and this is perhaps why his words are making so many waves: men do not like to be troubled in their subconscious or in their sleep.

But we should like to know what Moscow thinks of this. Does the absence of an open discussion from their side not emphasise how difficult it is to get along?