



Winston S Churchill

(1874-1965)

CHURCHILL: THE END OF GLORY, BY JOHN CHARMLEY

Lojko | Source Reading | February 23, 2017

Churchill had, in his own view, gone very near to ‘begging’ Roosevelt to ‘do his utmost to get the United States ... into the war as soon as possible’. He was, therefore, less than pleased to learn that the head of the British naval mission in Washington had refused, with Foreign Office approval, a suggestion from the Americans to move a substantial part of their Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic.¹ His protests cut little ice with Menzies, or with the Foreign Office, for whom the defence of the Pacific against possible Japanese aggression was more important than it was for Churchill. As Cadogan put it, the Prime Minister ‘suffers from the delusion that any cold water thrown on any hare-brained US suggestion will stop the US coming into the war!’² Churchill’s reaction to Roosevelt’s cold douche regarding Vichy and the Middle East revealed that this was not the only ‘delusion’ from which the Prime Minister was suffering. He told Eden gloomily on 2 May that there appeared to have been ‘a considerable recession across the Atlantic’ and that, albeit ‘unconsciously’, ‘we are being left very much to our own fate’.³ What Roosevelt’s reply actually indicated was what Churchill refused to recognise, which was that the Empire which meant

¹ Martin Gilbert, *Churchill VI*, p. 1075.

² *Cadogan Diary*, 1 May 1941, p. 375.

³ PRO Prem. 3/469, Churchill to Eden, 2 May 1941, fo. 350.

so much to him meant nothing to the Americans – except as a symbol of something which they disliked. But Colville had never seen the Prime Minister in a ‘worse gloom’. Part of it may, indeed, have been brought on by a visit to Plymouth the day before, where the results of German bombing brought home the price which ordinary people were having to pay for ‘victory at all costs’; but the idea that there had been a ‘recession’ across the Atlantic contributed more. Churchill sketched out to Ismay, Colville and Roosevelt’s special envoy, Averell Harriman, ‘a world in which Hitler dominated all Europe, Asia and Africa and left the US and ourselves with no option but an unwilling peace’.⁴

(John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory. A Political Biography*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993, p. 454.)

⁴ *Colville Diary*, 2 May 1941, p. 382.