

Jacques Chirac (1932- ...)

Hospitalized at the Cochin hospital after a car accident, the president from the Gaullist party, former prime minister to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, has become a political dissident since his August 25, 1976 resignation. While the European Parliament is getting ready to host its first election through direct universal suffrage, Jacques Chirac condemns the loss of national sovereignty and denounces the UDF as the "party of the foreigner."

There are serious moments in the history of a people when its safeguard relies entirely on its ability to discern hidden threats. The Europe we are waiting for, the one we desire, in which a dignified and strong France could thrive: yesterday we discovered that we do not want to make it. [...] The upcoming election of a European Assembly through universal direct suffrage cannot take place without the French people being directly enlightened as to the consequences of its vote. It will be a trap if electors are led to believe that they are simply going to approve a few general principles, ones that are more or less uncontested in terms of the necessity of European organization, while the votes thus captured will serve to legitimate both future excesses and current deficiencies, to the detriment of national interests.

The French government maintains that the attributions of the Assembly will be set by the Rome Treaty and will not be modified as a consequence of the new modalities of election. Yet most of our partners declare an opposite opinion is almost self-evident and no insurance has been obtained to work against an offensive calmly stated in advance. The President of the Republic recognized, quite rightly, in a recent press conference, that a federal Europe would not avoid domination by American interests. This means that majority votes, within European institutions, by paralyzing the will of France, will serve neither French interests, of course, nor European interests. In other words, the votes of 81 French representatives will bear little weight against the 329 representatives of countries that are themselves overly sensitive to influences from the other side of the Atlantic. [...]

For both our agricultural interests and for the functioning of common institutions, the admission of Spain and Portugal into the Community raises very serious problems that must first be solved, otherwise an already very unsatisfactory situation will only be made worse. Up until now, it would be extremely inconsequential to announce this admission, with a view to any more or less illusory political gain, as already accomplished.

Favorable to European organization, yes, we wholly are. We want, just as much as others do, for Europe to be constructed. But a European Europe, where France fulfills its destiny as a great nation. [...] As always when it is a question of the humbling of France, the part of the foreigner is at work with its tranquil, reassuring voice. French people, do not heed it.

Jacques Chirac, *Appel de Cochin* ("*Cochin Appeal*"), (December 6, 1978), translation by Will Bishop

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