

Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords
September 26, 1944, p.160

G/AT

C247853

Occupation of Germany

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: ...It is the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government that collaboration between the United Nations great and small, which has been so notable a feature in winning this war, should be maintained during the days of victory. We want to see all of them make their contribution, where possible, to a solution of the problems of the future, as they have made so great a contribution in surmounting the dangers of the past.

It is inevitable, I think, that the three great Powers should bear the main burden. Just as they have played the leading part in conducting this war, so they must play the leading part in occupying Germany. Even when Germany is defeated, we shall not be through all our troubles. There still remains the struggle against Japan, the last of the guilty Powers which has to be subdued. Some Allied countries no doubt have vital interests in the Far East which they will not be able to neglect. However, there are others and especially those which have lately been occupied by the enemy, which will have innumerable problems of reconstruction and rehabilitation which inevitably call for full deployment of their manpower and of their resources and material. For these reasons, it is likely to be impracticable for every member of the United Nations to participate in the occupation of Germany. Even the European Allies, whose interest in the solution of the German problem is obviously equally as direct as ours, have many immediate preoccupations. Their territories have been ravaged and their manpower has been enslaved. Their first concern must evidently be to set their own house in order and grapple with the task facing them there. But while it is thus inevitable that Great Britain, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics must carry the main burden of the occupation of Germany, I would make it quite clear that for their part His Majesty's Government would have sympathy with the view that those members of the United Nations who have shared in the operations against Germany should make a contribution to the forces of occupation in Germany when the war is over. That is as far as I can go in answer to the specific question the noble Lord (Lord Vansittart) asked me this afternoon.