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The Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin in Peace and War

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success momentarily offered. "Aggregate" failure (here, both to learn and to anticipate) is found in the near-dissolution in 1950 of the U.S. Eighth Army in the face of the Chinese onslaught across the Yalu. Finally, the hapless rout of the French army and air force by the German invasion of 1940 exemplifies "catastrophic," total, systemic failure.

This is a careful and thoughtful work that takes up an important subject in a challenging and productive way. Its evidence is intriguing, its narratives are informative, its analyses incisive; it commands engagement on its own terms, whether one agrees or not. The extended treatment of intelligence is especially apt. It is possible, however, to have reservations about some points. The "matrices" concluding each case study (command levels on one axis against "critical tasks" on the other) are perhaps more convenient as tabular summaries than they are convincing as analytical tools; the "pathways of failure" they generate are inordinately sensitive to the induced "critical tasks" and other subjective inputs. Also, the 1940 French example muddies the waters somewhat: it is such an extreme case that it seems to violate the prior assumption of basic competence. Thirdly, the maps, though clearly drawn, themselves reflect a "failure to learn" (from many years of readers' complaints) in not locating many important place-names mentioned in the text.

Finally, though the authors do address the issue (and dismiss it), one

feels inescapably, if instinctively, that such analyses as this must leave room for contingency, for the critical thing that could have gone either way: the PBY that appears over a hole in the clouds just as the *Bismarck* arrives under it, the campaign orders found wrapped around a cigar. It is part of the value of this demanding and thorough study that it places most such "chances" in a larger fabric. But perhaps we may acknowledge, without analytical abdication, that in the very nature of conflict sometimes one side has lost simply because the other side won—that two belligerents went into battle, and only one came out.

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Edmonds, Robin. *The Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin in Peace and War*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991. 608pp. \$27.95

Fifty years after World War II the relationship between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin still captivates historians. Robin Edmonds has reassessed the war in terms of the international political structure dominated by the triumvirate of the Grand Alliance. The author has not offered any dramatic revelations but rather has suggested a shift of perspective. The result is a major contribution to the historiography of this century's bloodiest conflict.

Edmonds has traced the wartime leaders' relationship from the early

1930s. Traditional historians view the formation of the Grand Alliance simply as a response to the need to combat Hitler. Edmonds, however, claims that Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt viewed the Grand Alliance not only as an ephemeral relationship dictated by military necessity but also as a prelude to the establishment of a new international order.

Each member of the triumvirate was a product of the nineteenth century, and each possessed the ability to galvanize a people's endeavor at the moment of supreme challenge. The author credits Hitler, the self-proclaimed arbiter of the New European Order that was constructed on the basis of German military power, for creating the conditions that made the Grand Alliance feasible. Ironically, Hitler and his Axis partners never matched the Big Three's success in developing a grand strategy.

What is interesting is Edmonds's observation of the changes within the Grand Alliance during the course of the war. Roosevelt and Churchill clearly were the dominant members from 1940-1943, though Stalin was contributing the lion's share of manpower against Hitler. But Edmonds states that by November 1943, at the Teheran Conference (which the author views as the most significant wartime conference), Stalin had clearly become the principal partner and emerges as the most effective of the World War II leaders. Teheran was the last time that Churchill conferred with the others on an equal level, and the first time any real attempt was

made to address the political future of postwar Europe.

Edmonds credits the partnership with two great objectives achieved and charges it with two issues left unresolved. The successes were the defeat of Hitler and the destruction of Nazism, and also the establishment of the United Nations. However, the Alliance leaders failed to address adequately the impact of nuclear weaponry on world strategy and politics and, by largely ignoring the German question, they failed to lay the foundation for the establishment of a lasting peace in Central Europe. Perhaps it was impossible to make a quick peace after such a long war, but the Grand Alliance proved far more successful at waging war than establishing peace.

In summary, Edmonds has written a masterful study that is likely to become the definitive work in its field.

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English, John A. *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command*. New York: Praeger, 1991. 347pp. \$47.95

Lieutenant Colonel English is one of those rare birds: a career soldier who is also a genuine intellectual. A former member of the Directing Staff of the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, English has written a welcome and necessary addition to the literature. As his subtitle bluntly