

1985

Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, 3 vols.

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Recommended Citation

Abbazia, Patrick and Kimball, Warren F. (1985) "Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, 3 vols.," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 38 : No. 2 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol38/iss2/18>

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who strive to understand Soviet strategic intentions.

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Kimball, Warren F. *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. 2,189pp. \$150

Warren F. Kimball's *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence* is an interesting attempt to integrate a coherent narrative text into a comprehensive volume of significant correspondence. It is an excellent concept, but in practice it does not seem to work all that well; for in a sense the book-length narrative comes almost to overshadow the Roosevelt-Churchill correspondence. One sometimes feels that there is too much Kimball and not enough Roosevelt and Churchill.

It seems to me that the ideal multivolume work of this kind is Elting E. Morison's great compilation of the letters of Theodore Roosevelt. The format there allows the writings of a powerful personality full scope to carry the story; the editors provide explanatory notes to the correspondence and interpretive introductory chapters, which are some of the finest pieces in TR historiography. These essays focus on specific aspects of TR's career and personality and so add insight and dimension to, without detracting from, the letters themselves. TR explains himself, with the editors providing suggestive high points of

interpretation. Here Kimball seeks to explain FDR and Churchill to us, rather than allow them to explain themselves, and the process seems sometimes strained and a little presumptuous, and a lot less fun.

I also found Kimball's book structurally disconcerting. The author's essays are placed before, rather than after, the relevant letter(s), which sounds logical; but in reality it is quite disconcerting to read an essay on a topic in a letter that one has not yet read! Thus, at times, one feels slightly disoriented.

Then, too, since Kimball's narrative is in a real sense a book, I often found myself with the thought that his bibliographical information and source documentation are not nearly extensive enough to support the weight of his narrative interpretations. This is especially so in relation to military and naval matters, where the author's judgments are sometimes highly debatable: for example, his assertion that had Stalin sided with Churchill as to the need for a Balkan campaign in 1944 Roosevelt would have readily scuttled OVERLORD; or his interesting but quite exaggerated idea of the political sophistication and key impact on political decisions of senior US Army officers in World War II. Kimball has fewer comments on naval matters, but some, such as ". . . the submarine was the U.S. Navy's most effective weapon against Japan . . ."—Gad, man, what about the Carrier!—sometimes merit qualification or even contradiction.

Finally, in his handling of the onset

of the cold war, Kimball seems overly dogmatic. Churchill and Truman are clearly the villains; Stalin's paranoid suspicions usually turn out to have "some basis in fact"; the Poles are reproached for not being realistic enough to smile happily as they handed over their country to the Russians; and of course no notice is taken in the narrative of such minor embarrassments as the Katyn Forest massacre (even though Churchill writes of it at length) or the Poltava affair, when the negligence of the Russian air defense command permitted numerous American strategic bombers to be destroyed on the ground by a Luftwaffe hardly at the top of its form.

Roosevelt, of course, is lauded as appropriately flexible in his management of the prickly Russians. This latter point, by the way, is quite valid. Roosevelt did hope to win over the Russians by fair treatment, and he certainly wished to keep all of his options open in dealing with them. However, as with Lincoln's desire for a policy of leniency toward the South in 1865, this did not mean that this policy was immutable; for just as Lincoln may well have been pushed to harder measures by Southern intransigence, so might FDR have been by Russian intransigence. That, too, is flexibility!

All of these views of Kimball's may or may not be tenable interpretations, but they all do need better documentation than Kimball provides. Basically, Kimball has undertaken two jobs in this work. The first—editor of a massive and defini-

tive volume of important correspondence—he has done superbly well; the second—author of a book about that correspondence—he has done less well. But in attempting both he has aimed high, striving mightily to transcend the usual and dull manner of this genre of scholarly work.

Thus, Kimball must be esteemed for daring something rather different and creative but gently chided for not quite carrying it off.

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Dupuy, Trevor N. *Options of Command: the Crucial Command Decisions That Could Have Altered the History of World War II*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1984. 303pp. \$19.95

Some historians find it entertaining to contemplate the great "might have beens" of history—the so-called "turning points" where a different course of action might have changed the entire course of history. The temptation to indulge in this kind of activity is even greater for the military historian, who can assume the role of the great generals of the past, rectifying their strategic and tactical errors, with, of course, the assistance of large helpings of hindsight, to change a disastrous defeat into a tremendous victory. Napoleon I at Waterloo and Napoleon III at Sedan are two well-known examples, but the Second World War is an even more fruitful source for this kind of barren speculation. Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy and his colleagues in the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization have