

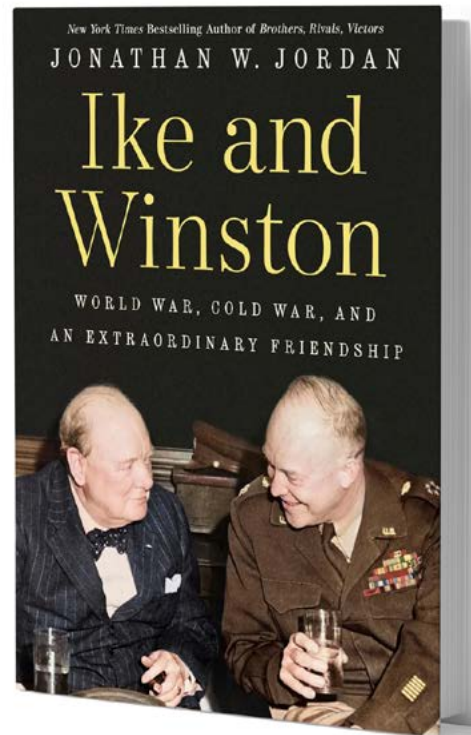
intelligence in public media

Ike and Winston

World War, Cold War, and an Extraordinary Friendship

Reviewed JR Seeger

Author: Jonathan W. Jordan
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Reviewer: JR Seeger is a retired CIA officer and frequent contributor to *Studies*.



Historians have always debated whether events or individuals are more important in historic moments. Jonathan Jordan certainly comes down on the side of individuals. His earlier books on World War II focused specifically on the men who shaped the Allied victory. In *Ike and Winston*, Jordan takes the reader well beyond World War II and into the early to mid-Cold War through the relationship between two of the giants of mid 20th century: Winston Churchill and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The characters in this book will be well known to intelligence officers. Their actions during the 1940s and 1950s

have been detailed in books that focus on their strategic, operational, and tactical decisions and how they used intelligence to the best advantage.^a Individuals more interested in the roles of personalities in military campaigns of WWII will have shelves of books focusing on the Allied generals, including Jordan's own *Brothers, Rivals, Victors*,^b and, more recently, *The Light of Battle: Eisenhower, D-Day and the birth of the American Superpower* by Michel Paradis.^c Jordan's new book spends very little time on the details of these actions in the hot and cold wars of the 1940s and 1950s. Instead, he offers the reader insight into how the relationship between these two men shaped their decisions.

a. Three examples are *Roosevelt and Churchill: Men of Secrets* (Overlook Press, 2000) and *Churchill and the Secret Service* (Overlook Press, 1999), both by David Stafford, and Dino A. Brugioni's *Eyes in the Sky: Eisenhower, the CIA and Cold War Aerial Espionage* (Naval Institute Press, 2011).

b. Jonathan Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, Victors. Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley and the Partnership that drove the Allied Conquest in Europe* (NAL Caliber, 2012).

c. Michel Paradis, *The Light of Battle: Eisenhower, D-Day, and the Birth of American Superpower* (Mariner Books, 2024).

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Jordan avoids making a long story even longer by skipping details of Eisenhower or Churchill before they first met in 1940. He assumes readers will understand Churchill's challenges in WWI and his robust effort after the war to destroy the early Soviet state. He also offers little on Eisenhower's time as a deputy to MacArthur or as a staff officer for Marshall. Readers not familiar with that background may have trouble understanding why or how either of these men made the decisions they made.

This is a book on grand strategy and the very different views held on the subject by a prime minister who was a product of the 19th century British Empire and had a broad commitment to superpower imperialism and a general officer and president who learned his trade in the hallways of West Point in the 20th century. Nor does this book detail the military decisions Eisenhower and his lieutenants made in battle—except for the fight in February 1943 for the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia (the first major US engagement, a defeat, with the German army and the Battle of the Bulge in Europe in the winter of 1944–45. Intelligence officers will be disappointed that there is only one fleeting reference to the Office of Strategic Services and no reference to its UK counterpart, the Special Operations Executive.

Jordan is equally selective in his Cold War vignettes. He spends time on the creation and expansion of nuclear weapons, the joint US/UK Operation AJAX (Iran, 1953), and Operation PBSUCCESS (Guatemala, 1954), but he leaves out the creation of NATO (1949), Soviet expansion into Poland (1945), the joint UK-US special operations against Albania (1949–54) and intelligence operations during the Greek civil war (1944–49). He spends a good deal of time on US and UK decisions regarding Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal and the aborted Anglo-French-Israeli effort to capture it (Operation MUSKETEEER, 1956) but barely mentions the Hungarian rebellion against Soviet occupation that same year. Including the skipped events might have made the book overly cumbersome, given it now has well over 500 pages.

While the intelligence and courage of his two subjects have captivated Jordan, he is more than willing to show their flaws and foibles. Eisenhower is presented

as a man of two characters—committed to a personal relationship with Churchill and his own general officer colleagues, while he remained able, when he felt a strategic choice demanded, to make decisions Churchill opposed. Jordan is blunt about this:

Ike treasured friendships, but he never let them get in the way of the job/.... In Europe, he had busted and sent home a West Point classmate for loose talk about Overlord's invasion date. He had cut Kay Summersby from his life the way a surgeon wields a scalpel on a growth that might not be benign. He fired his dear friend George Patton for shooting off his mouth one too many times. He humiliated Omar Bradley during the Battle of the Bulge, banished Harry Butcher for penning his memoirs, nearly cut Dick Nixon from the ticket, and disappointed Bettie Smith, the man to whom he owed so much. (447–48).

Like Eisenhower, Churchill was fully capable of compartmenting his personal relationship from his loyalty to Britain. Through his selection of Churchill's own dispatches, letters and diaries, Jordan shows how during the war Churchill did his best to put Britain and his own views first. He would undermine Eisenhower's senior leadership position and, when that would fail because of Eisenhower's relationship with the president and General George Marshall, he would switch to pressing Eisenhower directly for unequal support to British Field Marshall Montgomery. And if seriously disappointed, he would retreat to complain later and perhaps act out in frustration.

Jordan has used a blend of the personal writings of both individuals with diaries of their closest associates and archival material from both British and US archives to present an accurate and vivid assessment of these two men in moments of trial, tragedy, and success. Jordan has drawn out his characters so well that at times the book reads like a novel. For those familiar with the events of the "plot line" of World War II and the early Cold War, Jordan's revelations make the book hard to put down. This is especially true during critical moments like D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, the end of the war, and the Suez Crisis. It reveals a different perspective on US and UK decisionmaking during 1940–61. ■