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# The Round Tablette

*Founding Editor: James W. Gerber, MD (1951–2009)*

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**Welcome to the November session of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.** Tonight is the annual Dr. Harold C. Deutsch Lecture. Our speaker is Dr. Mark Stoler, Professor Emeritus from the University of Vermont and author of *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance, and US Strategy in World War II*. He will explore the struggle between commands and staffs of the Allied forces to achieve victory in coalition warfare.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this annual event, we offer a word of explanation. It was Dr. Deutsch's custom to speak on a topic of his choosing at the November meeting. These lectures were always well attended due to his renowned scholarly reputation. His knowledge on virtually any World War II topic was second to none. Many of his former students from the University of Minnesota came to this lecture. With his death, it was decided to remember him through, not only this Round Table, but also by a lecture series named after him.

The Anglo-American alliance during the Second World War did not begin with the United States entry into the war in December 1941, but had been developing in secret since the 1937. During World War I, the United States fought alongside the United Kingdom, although as an "Associated Power" and not as an "Allied Power" and this reflected the differences in war goals of the two countries. The Paris Peace Conference highlighted the different ambitions of the two victors, with the UK striving to maintain its Empire and the US seeking to create a world free of war and dedicated to Wilson's Fourteen Points. Throughout the 1920s, American and British interests rarely coincided, and there were many points of tension, notably over British efforts to retain and strengthen its empire. Americans also held some resentment towards the British from both historical and recent experiences. These issues and feelings affected diplomatic relations, both before and during World War II. The differences between UK and US seen in the 1920s made future cooperation

difficult, and required much work to make productive.

Common dangers helped bring the US and UK into a new relationship, following the Japanese invasions of Manchuria in 1931 and China in 1937, but this relationship was still fraught with difficulties and impediments. Hitler's rise, along with his revision of the Versailles Treaty, and open rearmament created another major threat to both US and UK interests, and further complicated the international scene. Weakness, both in military strength and in political will, prompted British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to pursue a policy of appeasement in Europe while looking for help from the United States to cover the exposed British territories in the East.

Because the US was mired in the Great Depression and there was both a strong public isolationist sentiment as well as a public desire to avoid war, President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) was limited in his ability to respond to the aggressive actions of the European dictators and the Japanese. He therefore issued only a Milquetoast public call for a diplomatic quarantine of Japan in October 1937. Behind the scenes, FDR approached the British proposing bilateral naval talks to deal with Japan but was rebuffed. The collapse of British power in the interwar period, and lack of trust between the two democracies led to a period of stalled initiatives and half-hearted attempts to co-operate.

Military talks between the two countries sputtered on even as the war began in Europe and the Japanese made more incursions in the Far East. A major turning point for the Anglo-American alliance came on May 10, 1940, when Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister. Chamberlain's distrust of Americans was transformed overnight by the new Prime Minister. FDR and Churchill had corresponded since September 1939, when Churchill became first Lord of the Admiralty. Though national interests still divided them, the two leaders shared a mutual trust and admiration of each other, and loved their navies. Thus, the personal relationship of the two leaders would help facilitate a much broader diplomatic cooperation of the two nations.

**If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns** – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or [coldpatton@yahoo.com](mailto:coldpatton@yahoo.com)

Still a secret to the broader American public, the Anglo-American alliance took shape during the American-British Conversations (ABC-1) that went on from January through March 1941. During ABC-1, the two countries military leaders with the approval of the heads of state formulated a grand strategy which included a ‘Germany first’ emphasis; a defensive posture towards Japan; an air offensive against Germany; and, the early elimination of Italy. The two parties also agreed on a global division of geographic responsibilities, liaison machinery and procedures, but disagreed on how to strategically defend the Far East, notably Singapore.

Myths abound about the “special relationship” between Great Britain and the United States. Foremost was the idea that the British were the senior partner in the alliance (which likely came from Churchill’s postwar writings), but in reality it was the Americans who were the leaders in military strength, economic resources, and therefore political direction. Eventually the US fostered a convergence of grand strategic visions so that broad strokes of policy could be agreed to. In addition, the British believed that they could take the lead in the Atlantic and Europe while the US could focus on the Far East, but that would prove impossible by the time the US formally entered the war. Overall, the relatively far greater strength of the US compared to the UK meant that the US would get its way on most issues. The United States also dominated on an economic level with hard bargaining in the destroyers-for-bases deal, the demand for cash payments before the passage of Lend-Lease, and the end of Britain’s imperial trade preferences to the benefit of US businesses. Politically, FDR held all the face cards in the hand he played with Churchill.

The origins of the alliance reflected the relative power of the two countries. The US was superior in every respect to the UK save the vast land area, population, and resources of the Empire, and the Empire imposed significant defense vulnerabilities on the UK. Reflecting this power imbalance, as US entry into the war became almost a certainty, FDR was the master of the alliance, and Britain, compelled by necessity, was the reluctant junior partner.

### Further Readings:

Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance, and US Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).  
Philip Padgett, *Advocating Overlord: The D-Day Strategy and the Atomic Bomb* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2018).

Jim Lacey, *The Washington War: FDR's Inner Circle and the Politics of Power That Won World War II* (New York: Bantam Books, 2019).

David Rigby, *Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

William T. Johnsen, *The Origins of the Grand Alliance* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016).

### Announcements:

Vietnam War Roundtable - 18 Nov. 2019, *POWs in NVV* - [rldietrich@mnmilitarymuseum.org](mailto:rldietrich@mnmilitarymuseum.org)

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table - 19 Nov. 2019 - *N B Forrest, the Third Minnesota and “Fake” History* - [www.tccwrt.com](http://www.tccwrt.com) - [info@tccwrt.com](mailto:info@tccwrt.com)

St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - 25 Nov. 2019 - *9th Minnesota* - 715-386-1268 - [rossandhaines@comcast.net](mailto:rossandhaines@comcast.net)

27 Nov. 2019 - Beevor, *Ardennes 1944: the Battle of the Bulge* - [sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com](mailto:sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com)

Civil War Symposium - 4 Apr. 2020 - [info@tccwrt.com](mailto:info@tccwrt.com)

Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345 - 320-616-6050 - <http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

Minnesota Air Guard Museum - 612-713-2523 -

[www.mnangmuseum.org](http://www.mnangmuseum.org)

8th AF Historical Society of MN, KC Hall Bloomington, Wednesdays at 1130 - <https://www.8thmn.org>.

Friends of Ft. Snelling - [www.fortsnelling.org](http://www.fortsnelling.org)

World Without Genocide - 651-695-7621 - <http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/>

Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, MN - Air show - 20 June 2020 - 320-564-6644 - <http://www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org>.

Wings of the North Airshow - Eden Prairie - 18-19 July 2020 - 952-746-6100 - [www.wotn.org](http://www.wotn.org)

Military History Book Club, Har Mar Barnes & Noble - Winston Churchill Book Club - [lin.hopkins@hotmail.com](mailto:lin.hopkins@hotmail.com)

Alliance Francaise 612-332-0436 - [www.afmsp.org](http://www.afmsp.org) - Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - 651-338-2717 - [crazyjer45@hotmail.com](mailto:crazyjer45@hotmail.com)

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - 651-455-6942 - [www.cafmn.org](http://www.cafmn.org)

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**We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or [coldpatton@yahoo.com](mailto:coldpatton@yahoo.com)**

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### Round Table Schedule 2019-2020

**2019**

10 Dec. Relief of St. Vith

**2020**

14 Jan. Evolution of Russian Military

11 Feb. Battle of Manila

10 Mar. OPERATION VARSITY

24 Mar. Bedel Smith

9 Apr. Tanks at Bataan

12 May Last Battle

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**We would greatly appreciate your supporting the HCDWW2RT!**