



Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy

By Klaus Larres

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Churchill's techniques of government were distinctly unconventional. Energetic, self-confident, and persuasive, he preferred to act outside official civil service channels when the stakes were high. When forming foreign policy, his preferred *modus operandi* was summit diplomacy—the cultivation of personal contacts to achieve national objectives. At its best his direct intervention could be heroically successful, resulting, for example, in the entry of the United States into the Second World War. At its worst it failed utterly. Either way this was international politics at a level of high drama and high risk.

This book explores Churchill's predilection for direct diplomatic action from his first tentative involvement in 1908 until his retirement as prime minister in 1955. Its principal focus is the period 1945-1955, during which the full force of Churchill's personal diplomacy was directed at sustaining Britain's great power status—in relation to the Soviet Union and the United States—at a time when its own economic power was declining. In particular, after October 1951 Churchill sought to revive with President Eisenhower and with Stalin's successors in Soviet Russia the “Big Three” summitry he saw as the most effective means to forestall a nuclear holocaust and achieve a lasting peace.

Based on an exhaustive scrutiny of official documents and private archives in Europe and the United States, this book breaks vital new ground in terms of both Churchill scholarship and the international history of the Cold War.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

One of the greatest statesmen of the 20th century, Winston Churchill has been the subject of hundreds of books, including two recent hefty contributions by prominent historians Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best. Still, to the groaning shelf of Churchill studies should be added this excellent new work by Larres, who teaches at Queen's University in Belfast. Larres has sifted through a mountain of primary and secondary literature in his exploration of Churchill's ceaseless efforts during the twilight years of his career (1945-55) to use personal diplomacy to lessen international tensions among the great powers. Through the power of his personality and intellect, Churchill sought to keep Great Britain a major player in international affairs, and he never fully comprehended that the British imperial sun had already begun to set by 1945. This is an exceedingly well-researched and well-written study of Churchill and of British foreign policy in the first decade after World War II and should be a part of most collections. Highly recommended. Ed Goedeken, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames

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Review

Klaus Larres. . . has produced a well-written, scrupulously documented [work]. . . a gripping account. --
Roger Fontaine, Washington Times

About the Author

Klaus Larres is Jean Monnet Professor in European Foreign and Security Policy and Reader in Politics at the Queen's University of Belfast. For the academic year 2002-3 he is Henry A. Kissinger Professor of Foreign Policy and International Relations at the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Among his publications is *The Cold War: The Essential Readings*, edited with A. Lane.

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