

Allies in war: britain and america against the axis powers by mark a. stoler 1940...

[War](#), [World War 2](#)



Book Review: Allies in War

In Mark A. Stoler's *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers (1940-1945)*, he recounts the Allies' side of the history of the Second World War into a mere 200 pages. While this may seem as though the author would truncate a substantial amount of information, Stoler compresses the war itself very nicely. With this book, Stoler aims to provide a semi-official history of World War II, one which states that victory was not certain, and that the Soviet role in defeating the Axis powers eclipsed much of the effort that the Anglo-American forces underwent from 1941-1944. Stoler also wishes to challenge the typical Churchillian perspective of the Anglo-American alliance, demonstrating the many disagreements that took place between the Allied powers at the time.

The war itself is divided into "the war in the west" and "the war in the east," noting the specific conflicts between both Germany and Japan, respectively.

This helps to organize the book and provide information in a compartmentalized, easy-to-read way. Stoler seeks to introduce all of the new scholarship that has occurred in the past 25 years about the strategy of the Allies during the Second World War with this book, and in that respect he succeeds. A substantial amount of war history is included, distilling the grand strategy these great powers had into the short space Stoler provides.

Providing a brisk account of the strategy offers a business-like, information-heavy tome that is very quick to pass through; Stoler means to do this in order to demonstrate quickly and with generalizations the success or failure of each part of the grand strategy.

The "special relationship" between America and England is dissected and examined heavily in Stoler's book. After Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill "truly established their close personal relationship" at the ARCADIA conference (p. 37), Stoler does admit. However, Stoler does not go into the closeness and "trueness" of that relationship, which is something that the book suffers from. Other cross-alliance collaborations are also mentioned but not discussed in detail, including that of Field Marshal Sir John Dill and General George C. Marshall (p. 51). Stoler mentions that the two war leaders found many similarities in "commonalities and personalities," but this occurs long after introduction, in the summation of the book (p. 229). In order to truly understand the relationship the leaders of the Allied forces had with each other, more than a cursory glance is needed, and that is one of the few things lacking in this book.

However, Stoler's account can be forgiven for this brevity in light of the fact that he did not necessarily seek to detail Anglo-American relations during the time of the War, but instead how they worked together to win it. Focused on the wartime strategy, Stoler demonstrates that the alliance was shaky at best, and there were many disagreements regarding the imperial nature of Britain, and there were many issues regarding the strategies of Operation Dragoon and Operation Overlord that threatened to break apart the Allied forces. While the Americans were focused on the Pacific Theatre, Churchill would often stress that the European Theatre required more attention. Despite the separation that sometimes occurs in Stoler's work regarding

these theatres, he manages to prove that they were fairly deeply integrated in terms of how they dealt with the special relationship between Britain and America. Further tension occurred after 1943; until then, Britain dominated the decision of policies as far as the war was concerned - however, with America's increasing power, they began to make more and more decisions on their own. This led to some animosity in the name of British self interest, and made the alliance between these two nations somewhat complicated.

In conclusion, *Allies in War* is an excellent account of the actions of the Americans and British, as well as the rest of the Allied powers, during World War II. By keeping the information short and sweet, Stoler manages to fit major events of the war in a very short book in a way that is organized and easy to read. Stoler's thesis is that, despite the current perspective on the special relationship, the Anglo-American alliance was extremely shaky at times. The Pacific and European theatres affected each other in ways that are not often known or recognized. The change in leadership of the Allies from Britain to America in 1944 changed Allied relations irrevocably; despite this, the Allies still had what it took to defeat the Axis forces and win World War II. With this in mind, the book has a strong place in World War II historiography as one of the more challenging accounts of the Anglo-American alliance during the war.

References

Stoler, M. A. (2007). *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers 1940-1945*. Bloomsbury.

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