# Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership

*Susan Butler*
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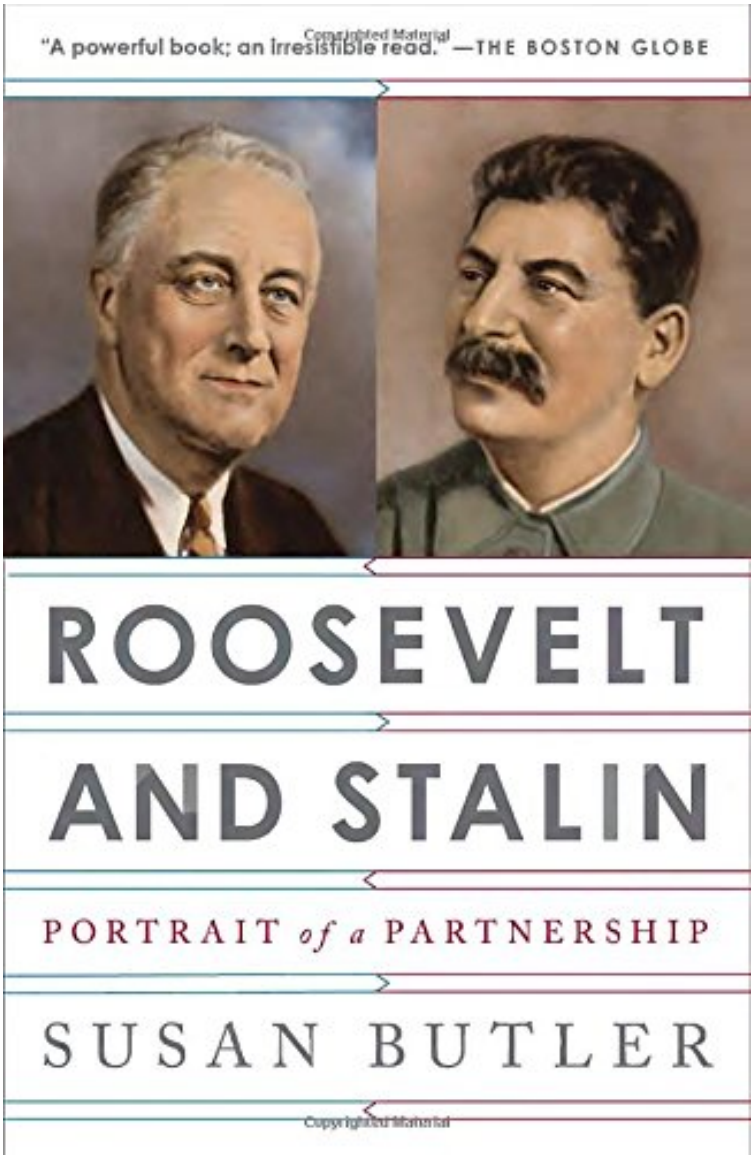




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**Susan Butler : Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I really like this book-just a couple of pointsBy Michael GreenbergI really like this book-just a couple of points. Much of it has been covered over and over again. Whether it glosses over Stalin's atrocities is a point, but certainly does not omit them. However, Stalin's purges in not the central theme of the book. Also covered elsewhere, but reinforced for me, is the horrible Chamberlain/Halifax government who could have

acted and put the brakes on Hitler, at least for a time. This is one of the key themes of Churchill's first book in his WWII series. The arrogance of the Brits in rejecting Stalin's overtures was also quite appalling. I was always under the assumption that Stalin and hornswaggled FDR, but this book takes the view that FDR was also quite effective in his manipulations. Perhaps the most intriguing point, for me, is what would have happened had FDR lived. It certainly could not have been worse than what took place-when suspicion and paranoia immediately replaced victor. Another intriguing point is what would have happened if the Neutrality Act had been repealed prior to Dec. 7. In any event, just some thoughts, but it is a good book, to be included in one's library of this era.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Ride Through History You'll Never Forget!By CustomerA passionate historical tour de force which takes the reader on an inspiring ride through history that reads like the best novel in the world. It takes you there in the highs and lows of history when the very future of mankind was at stake, and two men essentially saved the world.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Roosevelt was a brilliant statesmanBy CustomerKKHe did not prepare Truman for his roleStalin trusted Roosevelt and didn't respect Truman who failed to recognize his advantage and was swayed by anti-Rusian clique in the government leading us to the cold-war

In Roosevelt and Stalin, Susan Butler tells the story of how the leader of the capitalist world and the leader of the Communist world became more than allies of convenience during World War II. They shared the same outlook for the postwar world, and formed an uneasy yet deep friendship, shaping the global stage from the war to the decades leading up to and into the new century. The book makes clear that Roosevelt worked hard to win Stalin over, by always holding out the promise that Roosevelt’s own ideas were the best hope for the future peace and security of Russia. Stalin, however, was initially unconvinced that Roosevelt’s planned world organization, even with police powers, would be strong enough to keep Germany from starting a new war. In the end we see how Stalin’s opinion of Roosevelt evolved and how he began to view FDR as the key to peace. Roosevelt and Stalin is a revelatory portrait of this crucial, geopolitical partnership.

“Fascinating.” —Alan Cate, Cleveland Plain Dealer “A solid, comprehensive account of Soviet-American relations during World War II.” —Alonzo L. Hamby, Wall Street Journal “More exciting than a million calls to order . . . Susan Butler is the perfect historian to explore the connections between the two men.” —Randy Dotinga, Christian Science Monitor “An ambitious new portrait of the partnership that saved the world from Nazi tyranny. . . . A powerful book; an irresistible read.” —David M. Shribman, Boston Globe “A rigorous study of one of the 20th century’s unlikeliest alliances. Throughout her excellent book, Butler shows how the leaders of the capitalist and communist worlds had not a grudging marriage of convenience but a willing friendship, one founded on and motivated by a shared vision: to defeat Hitler and create a lasting postwar peace. . . . Her attention to detail . . . keeps us gripped. . . . The result is a rewarding read about a meeting of disparate minds.” —Malcolm Forbes, Star Tribune “Franklin Roosevelt’s relationship with Joseph Stalin has been well plumbed by historians, but Butler brings intimacy and texture to the topic . . . few will deny the pleasure her book provides.” —Robert Legvold, Foreign Affairs “Absorbing, provocative . . . likely to energize considerable debate.” —Booklist “Butler effectively demonstrates that there was no greater mediator and champion of peace than Roosevelt, whose sudden death in the final months WWII robbed the world of perhaps the man who could have averted the Cold War.” —Publishers Weekly “Comprehensive . . . meticulous . . . striking. . . . A thorough account of the alliance between two very different leaders.” —Kirkus “The most detailed account available of the relationship between these two extraordinary men. . . . [Susan Butler’s book] answers the question, as definitively as counterfactuals can be answered, of just how much of a difference Roosevelt’s death made. . . . An essential recounting of how the initial alliance between Stalin and FDR and its subsequent dissolution under Truman shaped the post-war world and our own.” —Marilyn B. Young, author of The Vietnam Wars 1945–1990 “Susan Butler’s brilliantly readable book firmly places FDR where he belongs, as the American president engaged most directly in diplomacy and strategy, who not only had an ambitious plan for the postwar world, but had the strength, ambition and personal charm to overcome Churchill’s reluctance and Stalin’s suspicion to bring about what was, in effect, an American peace, and to avoid the disastrous consequences that followed the botched peace of Versailles in 1919. It is at once a long overdue tribute to FDR and his vision, and a serious work of history that reads like a novel. I would rank it next to Margaret MacMillan’s Paris 1919, and casts new light on the character and war aims of Stalin, Churchill and FDR himself. Brava!” —Michael Korda, author of Hero, Ike and Clouds of Glory "Well-written, richly detailed, and well-considered. A significant narrative of a historically critical relationship and possibly, a lost opportunity to head off the arms race and the Cold War." —Evan Thomas, author of Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World "The most complete study to date of FDR's relationship with Stalin." —Frank Costigliola, author of Roosevelt's Lost Alliances About the AuthorSusan Butler was a freelance writer whose work regularly appeared in the New York Times. Her interest in journalism dates back to Bennington where she was the editor of the student newspaper. She later earned an MA at Columbia University from the School of Arts and Sciences.She is the author of East to the Dawn: The Life of Amelia Earhart, which was the basis for the movie Amelia, starring Hilary Swank and Richard Gere, and My Dear Mr. Stalin: The Complete Correspondence of Franklin

Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin.Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1Crossing the Atlantic in WartimeOn Thursday morning, November 11, 1943, the twenty--fifth anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I, President Roosevelt left the White House in an open convertible and swept through the capital, the Stars and Stripes and the presidential flag flying from the front of the car. He was on his way to pay homage at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. There was a holiday air in the city: flags were on display, and banks were closed for the day. As the president's car reached the cemetery and proceeded to the tomb, a twenty--one--gun salute, fired from the latest antitank guns, boomed out across the Potomac valley.At eleven o'clock, the exact hour the armistice had been signed, Roosevelt stood bareheaded between General Edwin "Pa" Watson, his military aide, and Vice Admiral Wilson Brown, his naval aide, in front of the tomb. The day was chilly and raw, the trees almost bare; there was a cold wind. Over the president's shoulders was the dark navy dress cape he frequently wore on short trips from the White House. An army bugler flanked the group on one side; a soldier holding a big wreath of yellow and russet chrysanthemums stood on the other. An army band struck up "The Star--Spangled Banner," after which there was the customary moment of silence. Admiral Brown then took the wreath and laid it on the tomb for the president. Four ruffles of muffled drums were heard, and the bugler blew taps.Following the brief ceremony, the sounds of a second twenty--one--gun salute boomed out across the valley as the president's car wound its way out of the cemetery.The House of Representatives marked the day with commemorative speeches, most of which voiced the sentiment that ways must be found to make the coming peace more durable than the last. The Senate was not in session.Roosevelt was in the tenth year of his presidency, the country almost two years into World War II. As darkness fell and rain started, the president again left the White House by car, but unlike in the morning he slipped out unobtrusively. He was on his way to the marine base at Quantico, Virginia, where the USS Potomac, the sleek white 165--foot presidential yacht, a Coast Guard cutter to which an upper deck and a cabin had been added, awaited. It would take him on the first leg of the 17,442--mile trip through submarine--infested waters to Tehran, Iran, more than halfway around the world. There, for the first time, he would meet Joseph Stalin, the supreme leader of the Soviet Union, the renegade. It would be a momentous occasion for both of them and for the world.With Roosevelt was his closest adviser, Harry Hopkins, in charge of the Lend--Lease program providing the massive aid flowing to the Soviet Union; his chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy; his personal physician, Vice Admiral Dr. Ross McIntire; Admiral Brown; General Watson; and his physical therapist, Lieutenant Commander George Fox. The president's car arrived at a dark, seemingly deserted dock far away from intrusive eyes, where the Potomac awaited. Aboard the Potomac all was in readiness.Exactly six minutes after the presidential party stepped onto the ship, it headed down the Potomac River bound for Cherry Point, Virginia, in the Chesapeake Bay, sixty--three miles distant, where it anchored for the night.A little after 9:00 the next morning the Potomac approached the USS Iowa, anchored out in the bay in deeper water. It drew up alongside, and in the very light, cool morning air Roosevelt was placed in a sort of bosun's chair rigged from the rear sundeck of the Potomac and swung aboard the Iowa's main deck just abreast of number three turret. When the transfer of the rest of the party was completed, the Potomac vanished into the distance, ordered to cruise out of sight and away from its well--known home berth for the next week, to create the impression, in case any journalist noticed the president's absence, that he was off on another private pleasure cruise aboard what some called the Floating White House because of the large amount of time he spent on it.Roosevelt had always loved the sea. As a young boy at Campobello Island in Canada, where he summered, he had learned to sail his father's sailboat the Half Moon, a forty-six--foot cutter, taking it out every chance he got and handling it with ease. After he contracted polio at thirty--nine and lost the use of his legs, he had invested in a houseboat that he kept in Florida waters and lived on for months at a time.Now he was looking forward to the voyage of the Iowa, the navy's newest, largest, fastest battleship. It had been specially fitted out for him: an elevator installed, ramps built over the coamings and deck obstructions to accommodate his wheelchair. As in all places where FDR lived, in the bathroom there was a tub with metal railings that FDR could grasp to raise himself up, a toilet bowl exactly the height of his wheelchair, and a mirror low enough so he could shave sitting down. His favorite leather--upholstered reclining chair was also in his quarters.Half an hour after he was swung aboard, the big ship was under way. Waiting to greet FDR were all the top brass of the U.S. Armed Forces: General George C. Marshall, chief of staff of the U.S. Army; H. H. "Hap" Arnold, commanding general of the U.S. Army Air Forces; General Brehon B. Somervell, chief of Army Service Forces; Admiral Ernest J. King, commander in chief of the U.S. Fleet; and Admiral William Leahy, the president's chief of staff; plus four other generals, three more admirals, and about fifty staff officers of subordinate rank. At Roosevelt's request, no honors were rendered as he came aboard, and because of wartime restrictions his flag was not flown. Also aboard were the eight Secret Service men who always guarded the president.So began Roosevelt's trip to meet Joseph Stalin, a meeting he had been trying to arrange for two years and had gone to extraordinary lengths to bring about.He and Churchill had chosen Casablanca as a meeting place the previous January because they thought there was a good chance Stalin would agree to meet them there. "We are trying to get Stalin to come," Roosevelt had confided to Mike Reilly, supervising Secret Service agent at the White House, as he briefed him on the trip, firmly adding, "I won't go any further than Casablanca to meet him." But in the face of Stalin's objections to every location he suggested, the president's resolve had crumbled: now he was going thousands of miles farther.The Tehran meeting had been planned

to promote Roosevelt's dearest objective, the establishment of an international organization, a more effective version of the League of Nations, of which every nation would be a member. Such an organization, he believed, was the best, indeed the only, way to maintain a peaceful world. It would supply a forum where any member nation could state its grievance and where all nations could converse. In certain situations it would also have the authority to act. Roosevelt planned that there would be four superpowers—-the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China—-that would act as the world's four policemen. These four, with greater powers than other nations, would enforce order after the war was won.Stalin was critical to the president's plan. The war had changed nations in unforeseen ways. Postwar, only two superpowers would remain: America and Russia. Without the membership and support of the Soviet Union, Roosevelt realized, there would be no international organization. With it, the United Nations, as Roosevelt had named the proposed organization, would start out as the first true government of the world.Roosevelt expected to be challenged at his first meeting with the Soviet ruler, and he fully intended to be equal to the task. He planned to impress Stalin with his intelligence, his steadiness of character, and above all his power. In that way he would make the world's most paranoid ruler feel secure. He had to make Stalin comfortable with his ideas of how the world should be run when the war was over: Russia had to take part.FDR read everything he could about Stalin, who was a Georgian, a bit more than two years older than he, born on the southern rim of Russia to an impoverished, alcoholic father and a mother who, recognizing his intelligence, had persuaded the clergy to educate him in church schools. Stalin had become a rebel, changing his name from Djugashvili to Stalin (steel), and caught the eye of Lenin, whose successor he became. He was, like FDR, physically disabled: two toes on his left foot were fused, giving him a slight rolling gait, and he held and used his left arm awkwardly, the result of being knocked down by a horse and carriage when he was a child.FDR received conflicting descriptions. He queried the few people he knew who had met him. One, Anna Louise Strong, a founder of the Moscow News, a weekly newspaper for Americans, remembered that FDR was particularly, almost obsessively, interested in Stalin's personality. (Contrary to many people's experience, she had found Stalin "the easiest person to talk to I ever met.") FDR knew of his violent background, that he was ruthless, that he imprisoned or killed anyone who stood in his way. In 1930 he had compared Stalin to Mussolini. In 1940, speaking to a group of students gathered at the White House, he had famously said that Stalin's dictatorship was "as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world," that he was guilty of "the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims." He was under no illusion as to the nature of the Soviet ruler, nor had he any thought of meddling in the Soviet Union's internal affairs. He needed Stalin, and, FDR expected, Stalin needed him as much or even more. As Roosevelt said to his personal physician, Vice Admiral Ross McIntire, aboard the Iowa, "I bank on his realism. He must be tired of sitting on bayonets."He had arranged an Egyptian prelude: a four--day round of conferences in Cairo with Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai--shek and, he hoped, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, the second most powerful man in the Soviet Union, together with their respective military staffs. After that, he, Churchill, and Molotov would make the short hop by plane to Iran to meet with Stalin. The Cairo Conference was to be the place where the four countries, in concert, would begin to formulate strategic plans—-"begin their work," as Roosevelt presented it to Stalin. The meeting would underline Roosevelt's insistence that China be accepted as the fourth great power in the world, even though its power was latent and the country was both in the midst of a civil war and fighting a Japanese invasion. However, when Stalin found out the Chinese leader would be in Cairo, he canceled Molotov's trip, as well as that of the Russian military representative, because he was afraid that if Japan learned that Molotov had met with Generalissimo Chiang Kai--shek, the Japanese might close the port of Vladivostok, so crucial to the Soviet war effort, or worse, unleash the Kwantung army on the Manchurian border. By the time Roosevelt learned of the cancellation, he was already on the high seas.It was a setback for Roosevelt, but not crucial, because Cairo was important mainly from a public relations standpoint. Roosevelt was the most publicity conscious of presidents. The Russian absence would not take away from the positive publicity that would ensue from Roosevelt's public embrace of Chiang Kai--shek in such an exotic place.He was haunted by memories of the League of Nations that had failed so miserably. President Wilson had had the dream and the will but neither the public relations skills nor the political savvy needed to make it happen. As assistant secretary of the navy, Roosevelt had been in Paris winding down the U.S. naval presence in France while the Versailles conference was taking place. He watched as Wilson was forced to agree to the vengeful clauses insisted on by his allies: their price to join the League of Nations. He had sailed for the United States on the George Washington with Wilson. At lunch in Wilson's cabin, he listened as the president loftily said, "The United States must go in or it would break the heart of the world." Roosevelt was personally persuaded of the crucial importance of the league, but he knew that Wilson was going home to inform the U.S. Senate of what membership in the league entailed and that key Republican senators, excluded from the peace process by Wilson, indeed entirely ignored, were lying in wait for him.Wilson was attacked in the Senate and took his battle to the country. As Wilson futilely battled on, Roosevelt watched his health break down.The dream of a world government stayed with Roosevelt. He and the State Department started roughing out the plans for a world organization in 1939, as Hitler began his assault on Europe. FDR would leave no stone unturned in his quest to succeed. What he took away—-what he had learned firsthand from Wilson's failure—-was that it wasn't enough to have laudable goals, nor sufficient for a president to proclaim them to an enthusiastic, listening planet; after all, Wilson's Fourteen Points had

electrified the world. It was necessary to win the backing of his allies and of the U.S. Senate, and it had to be done before the war was over.FDR kept a portrait of Wilson over the mantelpiece in the Cabinet Room, which he used as a venue to work over speeches with his speechwriters. He would look up at it as he sat working on a speech, remembered the speechwriter, FDR biographer, and friend Robert E. Sherwood: “The tragedy of Wilson was always somewhere within the rim of his consciousness. Roosevelt could never forget Wilson’s mistakes.”Roosevelt identified in advance the key groups he had to win over, then built consensus within each group by pointing out the practical advantages that would accrue by following his lead. Before any group was ready to make policy, Roosevelt was there, leading the way.He had taken to heart the advice given him by A. Lawrence Lowell, president of Harvard, from whom he had taken Government 1 his freshman year at college. The occasion was the Harvard Club annual dinner in New York in January 1933, honoring Roosevelt, when Roo-sevelt, as president--elect, was putting together his cabinet and top staff. Lowell, the keynote speaker, turning to face Roosevelt directly, had said that the most important principle for the chief executive was that he must always take and hold the initiative in his dealings with Congress, with his cabinet, and generally with the public. Lowell affirmed that if Roosevelt always applied this principle, he would succeed. Roosevelt, according to his Harvard classmate Louis Wehle, who had worked with him on the Crimson, was following Lowell’s remarks “with absorbed attention and .?.?. at their end he was deeply thoughtful.”Excerpted from Roosevelt and Stalin by Susan Butler. 