

About the Symposium

Seventy-five years ago, at the town of Yalta (on the Crimean peninsula) the three most powerful men in the world gathered for a series of extended discussions and strategy sessions. Josef Stalin, the dictator of the Soviet Union, was the host; British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt his guests.

The stakes are high in every diplomatic summit, but this time they were astronomical. First, the three men had to find common ground and strategic agreement on how to end the global war then raging. The Germans were clearly on their last legs, but the thorny problem of how exactly to bring Japan to heel still beckoned. Even more difficult was a question that had been held in abeyance up to now: how to begin rebuilding a shattered world once the conflict had ended. Indeed, we can go farther than that. The Allies hadn't even decided which sort of world they wished to build. What would the postwar world look like? What would be the dominant social and economic order? What would be the shape of relations between these three great powers once the guns had fallen silent?

While Russian-style hospitality was the rule—replete with endless, effusive toasts to Allied unity and tumblers of vodka—the surface appearances masked deep divisions within the Grand Alliance that was in the process of winning the war. There was also a certain asymmetry to their relationship. Stalin ruled the world's dominant land power, Churchill governed the British Empire, a once-proud boast that now seemed to matter for little, so tapped out was Britain in terms of manpower and money. Roosevelt had armies, air forces, and fleets galore, able to project power to the four corners of creation. He also had something called the “Manhattan Project” that was examining the mysteries of matter and creation deeply to produce a new wonder weapon. But as the Muse of history, Clio, would have it, Roosevelt was also a deeply ill man at the time of Yalta.

These, then, were the men who met at Yalta. Their decisions governed the end of the war, solved many problems of the postwar order, and created many others. Today there are those who cringe or seethe at the very mention of the name “Yalta.” Others defend the decisions taken there on the grounds of strategic necessity. What no one can deny is the importance of what happened at this resort town in a distant corner of the Crimean peninsula. Yalta formed the world in which we live.

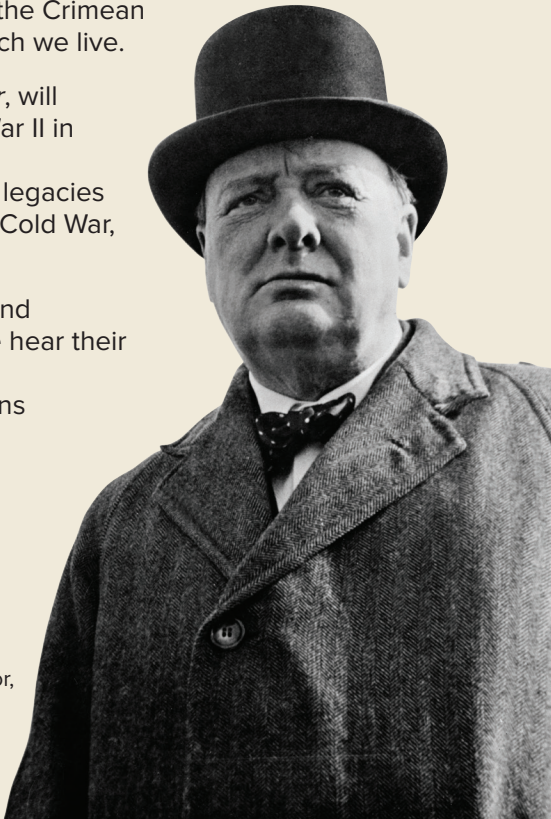
Yalta at 75: From World War to Cold War, will examine this crucial moment of World War II in detail: the runup to the conference, the proceedings themselves, and finally the legacies and Yalta for the post-war world, for the Cold War, and for our own day.

We are looking forward to hosting you and our distinguished visiting scholars as we hear their insights and even disagreements about the Yalta Conference here in New Orleans on Saturday, February 8, 2020.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Citino
Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Historian,
The National WWII Museum and Executive Director,
The Institute for the Study of War and Democracy



A Modest Defense of Yalta

Yalta: even today, the name has an ugly sound to a lot of people. Ask them and they'll tell you. The Yalta Conference was a humiliation and a disaster for the west, the place where Roosevelt and Churchill handed over Eastern Europe to the tender mercies of Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union, the place where Poland—whose independence was the original cause of the war in 1939—was “sold down the river” to the Reds.

No one should underestimate the misery of living under communism. The Iron Curtain was real, a dividing line between free and unfree worlds. Those “people's republics” under Soviet domination (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania), not to mention the grossly misnamed “German Democratic Republic” or East Germany, were anything but democracies. In fact, they were parodies of democracy: one-party Communist dictatorships with active repression, vicious secret police, and an army of spies—often your best friends or members of your own family. Nostalgia for any of this vanished world? Count me out.

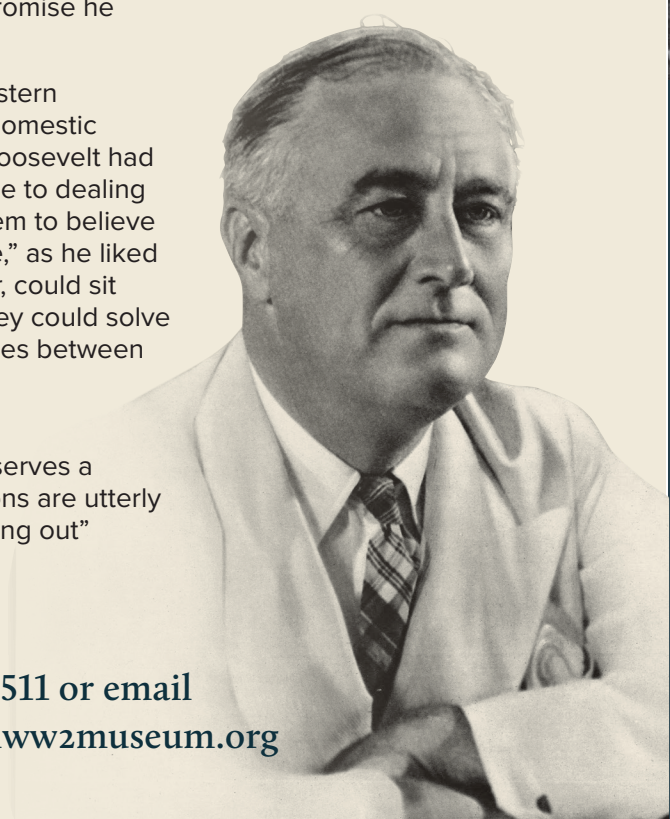
Even if we grant the horrible nature of communism, however, it's hard to see how Yalta could have come out differently than it did. Soviet armies—big ones—were already in Eastern Europe when the conference took place. U.S. forces were still fighting in the Rhineland, far to the West, and wouldn't manage to cross the mighty Rhine River until a month after Yalta ended. Telling Stalin how to manage his affairs, forcing him to stage free elections or to tolerate multiparty political systems was impossible. Demanding anything of Stalin required the power to back up those demands, and at that time the West simply lacked that power. With hundreds of Soviet rifle divisions already in possession of the region, western options were few.

Finally, one last point: Yalta aimed at agreements to end the war in Europe. Another war was still raging, however: the Great Pacific War with Japan. No one knew how that one was going to end. Sure, U.S. scientists were working feverishly on the atomic bomb, but whether they could harness advanced science and technology to a workable weapon was still a big question. The best guess among Western planners was that Soviet assistance was going to be required to close out the war with Japan, and at Yalta, Stalin promised them just that—a promise he would keep.

Certainly, we can point to western mistakes at Yalta. For all his domestic political acumen, President Roosevelt had a certain naïveté when it came to dealing with Stalin. FDR really did seem to believe that if only he and “Uncle Joe,” as he liked to call the murderous dictator, could sit down and talk like friends, they could solve all their outstanding differences between their two countries. Few believe that today.

That being said, Yalta still deserves a modest defense. If your options are utterly limited, you're not really “selling out” anybody.

To register:
call 1-877-813-3329 X 511 or email
conferences@nationalww2museum.org



YALTA AT 75: FROM WORLD WAR TO COLD WAR

Saturday, February 8, 2020
BB's Stage Door Canteen, The National WWII Museum

A symposium of the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy
at The National WWII Museum

Symposium Program

BB’s Stage Door Canteen

9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.	Welcome Remarks – Stephen Watson, President & CEO, <i>The National WWII Museum</i>
9:05 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Opening Remarks and Introductions by Master of Ceremonies – Günter Bischof, PhD
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	The Road to Yalta: Allied Conferences 1940 – 1944 – Mark Stoler, PhD
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break and Book Signing
10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Yalta: The Conference in the Crimea – Serhii Plokhii, PhD
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Break, Book Signing, and Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Yalta’s Effects on the Ending of the War – Robert M. Citino, PhD
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Break and Book Signing
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	The Legacy of Yalta: The Dawning of the Cold War –Michael Bishop
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Break and Book Signing
4:00 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.	Roundtable Discussion featuring all speakers
4:55 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks – Robert M. Citino, PhD, <i>Moderator</i>

Symposium Registration Fee

\$249 per person

Optional Post-Symposium Reception and Dinner with the Speakers

The American Sector Restaurant & Bar

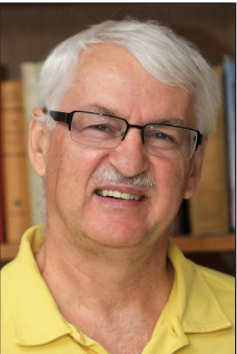
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Reception with speakers

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Dinner with the Speakers
Additional \$125 per person
(Limited availability; registration required)

Member discounts available.
To register, call
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Speakers



Günter Bischof, PhD

Günter Bischof, PhD, is the Marshall Plan Professor of History and Director of Center Austria at the University of New Orleans. He is a historian of international history, focusing on American and European diplomatic history of the 20th century, especially Cold War international relations, and has written on POW treatment and memory of World War II.

Bischof is the author of *Austria in the First Cold War: The Leverage of the Weak*, and also *The Marshall Plan: Saving Europe, Rebuilding Austria since 1947*. He is the co-editor of *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, served as co-editor (with Stephen Ambrose) of the 10-volume *Eisenhower Center Studies in Austrian and Central European History and Culture* and he also edits the series TRANSATLANTICA. Dr. Bischof has coedited a dozen other books and some 100 scholarly articles.

Dr. Bischof received his MA from the University of New Orleans and his PhD from Harvard. He also served as the Post-Katrina Visiting Professor in the LSU History Department. He serves as a Presidential Counselor to The National WWII Museum.



Mark Stoler, PhD

Mark Stoler, PhD is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Vermont. He earned his BA at the City College of New York (1966) and his PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1971). He joined the University of Vermont faculty in 1970 and became Professor Emeritus in 2007, where his scholarship and teaching have earned him numerous awards. Stoler’s areas of special expertise are U.S. diplomatic and military history and World War II. Included among his many publications are *Allies and Adversaries: the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (2000), *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941-1943* (1977), *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (1989), and *Allies in War: Britain and America against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (2005). He is former president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (2004), a former trustee of the Society for Military History, and a former Presidential Counselor at The National WWII Museum.



Serhii Plokhii, PhD

Serhii Plokhii, PhD, is the Mykhailo Hrushevsky Professor of Ukrainian History and the director of the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University. His interests include intellectual, cultural and international history of Eastern Europe and political and cultural history of World War II and the Cold War. A few of Plokhii’s titles include *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (2010), *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union* (2015), *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires* (2012), *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past* (2008), and most recently, *Forgotten Bastards of the Eastern Front: American Airmen behind the Soviet Lines and the Collapse of the Grand Alliance* (2019). His books won numerous awards, including the Lionel Gelber Prize for the best English-language book on the international relations and the Ballie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction (UK).

Speakers



Robert M. Citino, PhD

Robert M. Citino, PhD, is the Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and the Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Historian at The National WWII Museum, as well as one of America’s most distinguished military historians. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, he attended St. Ignatius Loyola High School on the city’s west side, received his BA in History from The Ohio State University and his MA and PhD from Indiana University. He joined the Museum in August 2016.

Dr. Citino is an award-winning military historian and scholar who has published ten books including *The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War, 1943*; *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942*; and *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years’ War to the Third Reich*. He has also written numerous articles covering World War II and 20th century military history. He speaks widely and contributes regularly to general readership magazines including *World War II*. Dr. Citino enjoys close ties with the US military establishment, and taught one year at the US Military Academy at West Point and two years at the US Army War College.



Michael Bishop

Michael Bishop is a Consultant in the Office of the Chairman at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Previously, he was director of the National Churchill Library and Center (NCLC) at the George Washington University and executive director of the International Churchill Society. He established the NCLC as a vibrant center of Churchillian activity, hosting a number of distinguished leaders in the fields of politics, the military, journalism, and history to discuss the continuing relevance of Churchill’s legacy for live and television audiences. He also organized

the successful 34th and 35th International Churchill Conferences in New York and Williamsburg, Virginia. He worked closely with the cast and producers of “Darkest Hour”, the Oscar-winning film about the perilous first weeks of Churchill’s premiership. His reviews and articles on Churchill, Lincoln, World War I, and British and Irish politics and history appear in The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, National Review, and elsewhere.

Michael has spent much of his career in politics, serving in several positions on Capitol Hill and in the White House. He was corporate communications manager at Strategic Investment Group, a leading provider of outsourced chief investment office services. He is the former executive director of the congressional Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and served as a consultant on “Lincoln,” the Steven Spielberg film. He serves on the Board of the Abraham Lincoln Institute.

Michael was educated at the University of California at Berkeley, the George Washington University, and Georgetown University. He lives in Washington, D.C.

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