

WEBVTT

00:00:03.420 --> 00:00:09.800

<v SPEAKER_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of The Canadian Global Affairs Institute's Podcast Network.

00:00:09.800 --> 00:00:11.840

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm your host, Colin Robertson.

00:00:11.840 --> 00:00:25.680

<v SPEAKER_1>On this episode recorded on May 28th, we speak with Allen Packwood about his book Churchill's D-Day, The British Bulldog's fateful hours during the Normandy invasion that he co-wrote with General Lord Dannatt.

00:00:25.680 --> 00:00:32.220

<v SPEAKER_1>Allen is director of the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge University and a fellow of Churchill College.

00:00:32.220 --> 00:00:36.120

<v SPEAKER_1>He has written extensively on the life of Winston Churchill.

00:00:36.120 --> 00:00:41.420

<v SPEAKER_1>For listeners, we mark this month the 80th anniversary of victory in Europe.

00:00:41.420 --> 00:00:50.620

<v SPEAKER_1>Next week it will be 81 years since the Allies landed on the Normandy beaches to launch D-Day that made possible VE Day.

00:00:50.620 --> 00:00:57.860

<v SPEAKER_1>Canadians were a part of that 15-nation contingent and indeed led the assault on Juno Beach.

00:00:57.860 --> 00:01:03.240

<v SPEAKER_1>We honour all those by remembering their valour and sacrifice.

00:01:03.240 --> 00:01:13.960

<v SPEAKER_1>A good place to learn more about the day and the conflict is Churchill's D-Day, where Allen and Richard Dannatt take us to and beyond the beaches.

00:01:13.960 --> 00:01:24.160

<v SPEAKER_1>Their story begins before the war with Churchill, The Voice in the Wilderness, warning about the threat posed by the autocracies, especially Hitler's Germany.

00:01:24.160 --> 00:01:32.740

<v SPEAKER_1>We follow Churchill as he returns to once again head the Admiralty, then becomes Prime Minister in Britain's darkest hour.

00:01:32.740 --> 00:01:49.480

<v SPEAKER_1>He immediately begins to cultivate the US President Franklin Roosevelt, another formal naval person, recognising with the fall of France, the old world would once again have to turn to the new, if democracy and freedom were to be saved, let alone endure.

00:01:49.480 --> 00:01:59.620

<v SPEAKER_1>Churchill's D-Day has it all, and even though we know the end, how it ends, you will learn an awful lot by looking at this book, which we are going to link to, of course, in the programme notes.

00:01:59.620 --> 00:02:02.500

<v SPEAKER_1>It reads in many cases like a thriller.

00:02:02.500 --> 00:02:04.400

<v SPEAKER_1>So let's get started.

00:02:04.400 --> 00:02:08.200

<v SPEAKER_1>Allen, why another book on Churchill and D-Day?

00:02:08.200 --> 00:02:08.580

<v SPEAKER_2>Okay.

00:02:08.580 --> 00:02:11.960

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, of course, that's a great question.

00:02:11.960 --> 00:02:25.220

<v SPEAKER_2>But actually, although there have been a lot of books about Winston Churchill, including some written by himself and undoubtedly a lot of books about D-Day, I think there have been fewer that link the two.

00:02:25.360 --> 00:02:35.860

<v SPEAKER_2>When people think of Churchill, they tend to think of the finest hour of 1940 and his famous broadcasts from London.

00:02:35.860 --> 00:02:47.880

<v SPEAKER_2>When people think about D-Day, the images that come to mind tend to be those of American GIs storming ashore, as in the opening sequences of Saving Private Ryan.

00:02:48.380 --> 00:02:56.600

<v SPEAKER_2>Indeed, when Churchill has been talked about in terms of D-Day, it's often been quite negative.

00:02:56.600 --> 00:03:08.800

<v SPEAKER_2>There was a film that some of your listeners may have

seen that came out I think in about 2017 called Churchill with Brian Cox in the title role.

00:03:08.800 --> 00:03:28.220

<v SPEAKER_2>And that scene opens with the British Prime Minister, a lonely figure on a British beach looking out to see as the waves turn red with blood, and then shows him trying to do all he can to obstruct the D-Day landings with only 48 hours to go.

00:03:28.220 --> 00:03:35.620

<v SPEAKER_2>Now, obviously, Richard and I were pretty clear that that was not a fair representation of what happened.

00:03:35.620 --> 00:03:44.640

<v SPEAKER_2>And what we wanted to do was to go back into the archives, go back into the evidence and actually look at what was Churchill's contribution to D-Day.

00:03:44.640 --> 00:03:46.320

<v SPEAKER_2>How did he influence the strategy?

00:03:46.820 --> 00:03:49.620

<v SPEAKER_2>What role did he play in the preparations?

00:03:49.620 --> 00:03:53.400

<v SPEAKER_2>How did he approach this operation?

00:03:53.400 --> 00:03:56.860

<v SPEAKER_1>Now, you collaborated with Richard Dannatt on this.

00:03:56.860 --> 00:03:58.100

<v SPEAKER_1>How did you work together?

00:03:58.100 --> 00:04:01.420

<v SPEAKER_1>Because you both come from different backgrounds.

00:04:01.420 --> 00:04:09.640

<v SPEAKER_1>Obviously, Richard Dannatt has the former Chief of Defense staff and a military officer, has an appreciation of the military sense, which comes out.

00:04:09.640 --> 00:04:13.320

<v SPEAKER_1>But I've wondered how that collaboration worked.

00:04:13.320 --> 00:04:14.400

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, hopefully.

00:04:16.040 --> 00:04:18.480

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, the product is superb, so it clearly worked.

00:04:18.480 --> 00:04:20.040

<v SPEAKER_2>You'll see that it worked very well.

00:04:20.340 --> 00:04:21.400

<v SPEAKER_2>And it did, actually.

00:04:21.400 --> 00:04:27.520

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, I think we brought complementary skills and backgrounds to it.

00:04:27.520 --> 00:04:38.160

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, Richard obviously brought a deep understanding of complex military operations, and you don't get much more complex than Operation Overlord.

00:04:38.160 --> 00:04:48.940

<v SPEAKER_2>Whereas I hopefully brought some understanding of Churchill's office and how he worked and how he approached these issues.

00:04:48.940 --> 00:04:57.580

<v SPEAKER_2>We actually met through my predecessor, but one, Bill Barnett, who sadly died.

00:04:57.580 --> 00:05:02.440

<v SPEAKER_2>And Richard and I met at his memorial service here in Churchill College.

00:05:02.440 --> 00:05:11.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And as I was walking Richard back to his car at the end of the event, he mentioned that he was now the chairman of the British D-Day Memorial Trust.

00:05:11.600 --> 00:05:19.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And I said, well, I'd been working on a couple of lectures about Churchill and D-Day, and I thought that there was scope to develop this.

00:05:19.280 --> 00:05:20.980

<v SPEAKER_2>Fortunately, he agreed.

00:05:20.980 --> 00:05:23.140

<v SPEAKER_2>We pitched the idea.

00:05:23.140 --> 00:05:26.400

<v SPEAKER_2>And then, of course, we found that we had about a year to write it.

00:05:26.400 --> 00:05:27.980

<v SPEAKER_1>And did it very well.

00:05:27.980 --> 00:05:29.660

<v SPEAKER_1>Yes, I saw the Cox film as well.

00:05:29.660 --> 00:05:36.300

<v SPEAKER_1>And that's why, part of the reason why I picked up your book, because I did not think it was fair from what I had read about Churchill.

00:05:36.300 --> 00:05:44.600

<v SPEAKER_1>But he did have reservations about sort of where, when and with what capacity the Allies would launch their second front.

00:05:44.600 --> 00:05:50.400

<v SPEAKER_1>Can you explain what eventually brought him around to, indeed, Normandy?

00:05:50.400 --> 00:06:01.000

<v SPEAKER_1>Because as you say, the film itself doesn't depict it well, but your book goes into much detail to explain what brought Churchill, as I say, around to favour Normandy.

00:06:01.000 --> 00:06:05.060

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, of course, films are about drama and they have to condense events.

00:06:05.060 --> 00:06:13.480

<v SPEAKER_2>When you look into it, inevitably, it is a much more complex, much more nuanced story and that's what we try and bring out in the book.

00:06:13.480 --> 00:06:24.940

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think the first thing you have to understand is that D-Day, you know, is an incredibly difficult operation to countenance.

00:06:24.940 --> 00:06:35.180

<v SPEAKER_2>An amphibious operation on this scale against a heavily fortified coastline is not something that can be undertaken easily or lightly.

00:06:36.960 --> 00:06:44.360

<v SPEAKER_2>It's certainly something that the British could not contemplate at all until 1942.

00:06:44.360 --> 00:06:56.160

<v SPEAKER_2>Because until that point, of course, they've been fighting with the Imperial troops, with the Canadians, but without the United States.

00:06:56.160 --> 00:07:04.680

<v SPEAKER_2>Now, finally, as in the early days of 1942, you have American troops keen to come into the battlefield in Western Europe.

00:07:04.960 --> 00:07:13.900

<v SPEAKER_2>And, of course, the Americans initially are very clear that they believe the quickest route to Berlin lies through France.

00:07:13.900 --> 00:07:27.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And President Roosevelt sends General Marshall and Hopkins over to London in April 1942 with an initial plan for operations in Northwestern Europe.

00:07:27.360 --> 00:07:39.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And they're advocating immediate small scale operations over France while building up American forces in the UK with a view to launching a large scale offensive in 1943.

00:07:39.500 --> 00:07:51.460

<v SPEAKER_2>The problem is that if you're Churchill looking at this, it relies, at least in the early months, almost exclusively on British forces.

00:07:51.460 --> 00:07:54.660

<v SPEAKER_2>And the British are already hopelessly overstretched.

00:07:54.660 --> 00:08:01.800

<v SPEAKER_2>We're fighting in North Africa where we've just been knocked out of Hong Kong and Singapore.

00:08:02.360 --> 00:08:07.440

<v SPEAKER_2>We simply can't contemplate offensive operations over France at this point.

00:08:07.440 --> 00:08:21.640

<v SPEAKER_2>And equally, to do nothing and to sit and build up forces in the UK is surely politically unacceptable while the Russians are taking such heavy losses on the Eastern Front.

00:08:21.640 --> 00:08:28.100

<v SPEAKER_2>So Churchill is therefore very keen to go into North Africa first.

00:08:29.280 --> 00:08:33.160

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think, you know, there are also very sound strategic reasons for doing this.

00:08:33.160 --> 00:08:36.840

<v SPEAKER_2>North Africa is a much easier operation.

00:08:36.840 --> 00:08:41.980

<v SPEAKER_2>It will allow you to test landings against an enemy shoreline.

00:08:41.980 --> 00:08:58.320

<v SPEAKER_2>But on a much easier scale, it will allow you to build the inter-service co-operation between the British American forces while you continue to build up forces in the UK for ultimately for an invasion in France.

00:08:58.320 --> 00:09:06.540

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think it's very easy to see why D-Day gets pushed back from 1942 to 1943.

00:09:06.540 --> 00:09:11.800

<v SPEAKER_2>It's perhaps slightly more difficult to see why it then gets back pushed back further into 1944.

00:09:13.200 --> 00:09:23.580

<v SPEAKER_2>Part of the answer to that I think has to be the momentum of war and the fact that once you're in North Africa that leads logically into Sicily and then into Italy.

00:09:23.580 --> 00:09:38.820

<v SPEAKER_2>But I think part of it is also that before you can contemplate an operation against France, there are various preconditions that have to be met if you're going to be able to guarantee success.

00:09:38.820 --> 00:09:42.340

<v SPEAKER_2>And we spend a lot of time in the book talking about those.

00:09:42.340 --> 00:09:54.780

<v SPEAKER_2>You have to win the Battle of the Atlantic because if you don't win the Battle of the Atlantic, you're not going to be able to get American and Canadian troops across the Atlantic into the UK.

00:09:54.780 --> 00:09:58.980

<v SPEAKER_2>You're not going to be able to supply them in the UK.

00:09:58.980 --> 00:10:04.620

<v SPEAKER_2>You're not going to be able to put in place the infrastructure that you need to sustain them prior to the invasion.

00:10:05.120 --> 00:10:16.780

<v SPEAKER_2>You have to have mastery of the skies, because if you don't have mastery of the skies, the Luftwaffe is going to have the home advantage, and there is a risk of being driven off the beaches.

00:10:16.780 --> 00:10:24.500

<v SPEAKER_2>So it takes time to wear down your enemy while building up the Allied forces.

00:10:24.500 --> 00:10:32.300

<v SPEAKER_2>It also takes time to put in place the specialist equipment and infrastructure that you're going to need for D-Day.

00:10:32.840 --> 00:10:47.780

<v SPEAKER_2>One of the things that the disastrous Dieppe operation had shown with those terrible losses of the Canadian division was that it's actually very difficult to seize a heavily defended harbour.

00:10:47.780 --> 00:10:56.460

<v SPEAKER_2>So the Allies, to get round this, develop special mechanisms for putting their large armies on to beaches.

00:10:56.460 --> 00:11:06.220

<v SPEAKER_2>This involves developing the artificial harbours that become the Mulberry harbours, developing specialist landing equipment, developing floating tanks.

00:11:06.220 --> 00:11:09.220

<v SPEAKER_2>And again, all of this takes time.

00:11:09.220 --> 00:11:27.980

<v SPEAKER_2>So a lot of preconditions that have to be met, and I think Churchill and Roosevelt and Eisenhower and Marshall, and all of the Allied commanders are actually right to wait, and to wait until success can be guaranteed.

00:11:27.980 --> 00:11:40.900

<v SPEAKER_1>No, and I'm glad you pointed out Dieppe, because I do think that, as you say in your book, figured largely into a necessary operation, an operation they learned from, but certainly a very costly operation, as you say, particularly for the Canadians.

00:11:43.560 --> 00:11:44.060

<v SPEAKER_2>Absolutely.

00:11:44.060 --> 00:11:47.660

<v SPEAKER_2>So Dieppe, of course, is August 1942.

00:11:47.660 --> 00:11:59.300

<v SPEAKER_2>It occurs against the backdrop of the conversations that Churchill and Roosevelt are having about whether and when to go into France.

00:11:59.300 --> 00:12:09.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think it very clearly illustrates the difficulties

that they're going to face, that, you know, the French coastline is very heavily defended.

00:12:09.820 --> 00:12:15.640

<v SPEAKER_2>It's going to be very difficult to get the tanks ashore onto the beaches.

00:12:15.640 --> 00:12:26.260

<v SPEAKER_2>You're going to require incredible coordination between your free services, between the Army, the Navy, and the Air Forces.

00:12:26.260 --> 00:12:30.100

<v SPEAKER_2>And that just isn't there in 1942.

00:12:30.100 --> 00:12:31.320

<v SPEAKER_1>No.

00:12:31.320 --> 00:12:35.180

<v SPEAKER_1>Let me go up to sort of 10,000 feet.

00:12:35.180 --> 00:12:44.060

<v SPEAKER_1>Because it seems to me, and this comes through in the book, is that Churchill understood, perhaps intuitively, the value of the American relationship, especially that with Franklin Roosevelt.

00:12:44.060 --> 00:12:46.080

<v SPEAKER_1>But it wasn't easy.

00:12:46.080 --> 00:12:47.400

<v SPEAKER_1>My question is, how did he do it?

00:12:47.400 --> 00:12:49.600

<v SPEAKER_1>Because he certainly worked at it.

00:12:49.600 --> 00:13:05.920

<v SPEAKER_1>And I wonder if he realized that by bringing in the Americans necessary, but it probably meant, in a sense, sacrificing the empire as he knew it, in which he put such emphasis, but knowing where the Americans came from, that was part of the price.

00:13:06.960 --> 00:13:10.260

<v SPEAKER_2>That's a really great question.

00:13:10.260 --> 00:13:13.220

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, of course, Churchill was half American by birth.

00:13:13.500 --> 00:13:17.200

<v SPEAKER_2>His mother, Jenny Jerome, had been born in Brooklyn, New York.

00:13:17.200 --> 00:13:21.620

<v SPEAKER_2>He had spent a lot of time in the United States, as indeed he'd spent a lot of time in Canada.

00:13:21.620 --> 00:13:29.300

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, he visited the US in 1900, back there again in 1929, 1931.

00:13:29.300 --> 00:13:34.540

<v SPEAKER_2>So already prior to the war, he has quite a good understanding of the United States.

00:13:35.180 --> 00:13:37.860

<v SPEAKER_2>He has a very good American network.

00:13:37.860 --> 00:13:48.200

<v SPEAKER_2>I think he'd seen in the First World War, how important actually American mobilization was to securing victory.

00:13:48.200 --> 00:13:54.080

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think he sees from the moment he enters Downing Street, the importance of an American alliance.

00:13:54.080 --> 00:14:07.960

<v SPEAKER_2>But of course, that American alliance becomes paramount once you've had the fall of France, which happens within weeks of him becoming Prime Minister, and was something that surprised him as much as anyone else.

00:14:07.960 --> 00:14:25.420

<v SPEAKER_2>And thereafter, of course, he spends an incredible amount of time trying to court Roosevelt, both publicly through his speeches and broadcasts, and privately through telegrams and through entertaining Roosevelt's emissaries, people like Harry Hopkins and Harriman.

00:14:25.420 --> 00:14:27.680

<v SPEAKER_2>And there's a quote that I love.

00:14:28.700 --> 00:14:39.300

<v SPEAKER_2>He says to his private secretary, Jock Colville, No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt.

00:14:39.300 --> 00:14:41.280

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's absolutely true.

00:14:41.280 --> 00:14:44.460

<v SPEAKER_2>He works incredibly hard on this relationship.

00:14:44.460 --> 00:14:55.520

<v SPEAKER_2>And as a result of that, you know, he is thrilled when Roosevelt suggests that the two of them meet in August 1941, when America is not yet in the conflict.

00:14:55.520 --> 00:14:56.860

<v SPEAKER_2>This is before Pearl Harbor.

00:14:57.320 --> 00:15:02.480

<v SPEAKER_2>And they meet, of course, in Placentia Bay off the coast of Newfoundland.

00:15:04.260 --> 00:15:21.040

<v SPEAKER_2>And it is there, of course, that they draft the Atlantic Charter, because Roosevelt is looking to establish ultimately a new world order, one that will ultimately come to be based on the United Nations organization.

00:15:21.040 --> 00:15:26.020

<v SPEAKER_2>And he's looking to establish clear principles for which the Allies are fighting.

00:15:26.460 --> 00:15:33.040

<v SPEAKER_2>Now, Churchill helps him draft that Atlantic Charter in August 1941, but you're absolutely right.

00:15:33.040 --> 00:15:44.580

<v SPEAKER_2>In doing so, one of the principles that he accepts is that countries should have the right to choose their own form of government.

00:15:44.580 --> 00:15:59.120

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course, as soon as that Atlantic Charter declaration is published, it inevitably leads to all sorts of questions from the colonies, from India, from other places about whether this applies to the British Empire.

00:15:59.120 --> 00:16:08.860

<v SPEAKER_2>Now, Churchill, of course, assiduously maintained that he had not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

00:16:08.860 --> 00:16:20.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And that the Atlantic Charter, he tried to argue that the Atlantic Charter applied to the countries that were being, that had been taken by the Axis powers in Europe rather than to the British Empire.

00:16:20.540 --> 00:16:37.520

<v SPEAKER_2>But there's no doubt that it did undermine the British

Empire and that in signing up to it, he did, I think, ultimately, sacrifice the future of the Empire.

00:16:37.520 --> 00:16:39.940

<v SPEAKER_1>Ultimately a pragmatist.

00:16:39.940 --> 00:16:47.880

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, I mean, he knew very clearly that at that moment in August 1941, if you look at that moment in context, he needs the American Alliance far more.

00:16:50.280 --> 00:16:53.640

<v SPEAKER_3>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the President and CEO of The Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:16:53.640 --> 00:16:58.260

<v SPEAKER_3>I hope you're enjoying The Global Exchange, Canada's leading podcast on foreign affairs and trade.

00:16:58.260 --> 00:17:07.120

<v SPEAKER_3>If you're listening and you'd like to help us keep bringing and form discussion of these issues to key government decision makers, thought leaders and the business community, then consider sponsoring the podcast.

00:17:07.120 --> 00:17:11.720

<v SPEAKER_3>Reach out to us at contact at cgai.ca for options and pricing.

00:17:15.240 --> 00:17:19.040

<v SPEAKER_1>Now, you've devoted your professional life to the study of Churchill.

00:17:19.040 --> 00:17:23.280

<v SPEAKER_1>Can you share with our listeners your own sense of him?

00:17:23.280 --> 00:17:24.820

<v SPEAKER_1>What made him tick?

00:17:24.820 --> 00:17:25.460

<v SPEAKER_1>How he worked?

00:17:25.460 --> 00:17:26.660

<v SPEAKER_1>How he relaxed?

00:17:26.660 --> 00:17:28.600

<v SPEAKER_1>What he cared most deeply about?

00:17:28.600 --> 00:17:33.200

<v SPEAKER_1>We know he cared about the empire, but he's quite a

complex character.

00:17:33.200 --> 00:17:38.980

<v SPEAKER_1>Again, books and books written on him, but you've devoted particular attention.

00:17:38.980 --> 00:17:46.440

<v SPEAKER_1>I ask you as the expert again, what made him tick, how he worked, how he relaxed, and what he cared about?

00:17:46.440 --> 00:17:52.920

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, I've been lucky enough to spend the best part of 30 years working on Churchill's archive.

00:17:52.920 --> 00:17:55.480

<v SPEAKER_2>I'm still trying to get to the bottom of that question.

00:17:55.480 --> 00:18:01.480

<v SPEAKER_2>Every time you think you have the answer, something comes up to surprise you.

00:18:01.900 --> 00:18:13.720

<v SPEAKER_2>There's no doubt that Churchill has an incredible sense of self-belief and destiny.

00:18:13.720 --> 00:18:17.920

<v SPEAKER_2>He's determined to make something of himself.

00:18:17.920 --> 00:18:22.980

<v SPEAKER_2>He's determined to carve out his own place in history.

00:18:22.980 --> 00:18:24.640

<v SPEAKER_2>Where does that come from?

00:18:24.640 --> 00:18:47.600

<v SPEAKER_2>I think being born at Blenheim Palace into the highest echelons of the Victorian aristocracy, being surrounded as a boy by portraits and tapestries of his illustrious ancestor, John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, who'd won a series of stunning military victories against Louis XIV in the early 18th century.

00:18:47.900 --> 00:18:50.300

<v SPEAKER_2>That must have helped.

00:18:50.300 --> 00:18:56.300

<v SPEAKER_2>He's certainly aware from a very early age of his lineage and of his place in history.

00:18:57.260 --> 00:19:05.680

<v SPEAKER_2>But I think it's also, I think, strengthened by a desire

to prove himself to his father's ghost.

00:19:05.680 --> 00:19:11.800

<v SPEAKER_2>His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, is a sort of dominating influence in his childhood.

00:19:11.800 --> 00:19:14.900

<v SPEAKER_2>He's very critical of Churchill as a teenager.

00:19:14.900 --> 00:19:22.000

<v SPEAKER_2>And Lord Randolph dies in January 1895 at the age of just 45.

00:19:22.000 --> 00:19:25.000

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that moment is a huge catalyst for Winston.

00:19:26.080 --> 00:19:27.460

<v SPEAKER_2>On the one hand, it frees him.

00:19:27.460 --> 00:19:33.500

<v SPEAKER_2>It brings him out from under his father's shadow and frees him to sort of carve out his own career.

00:19:33.500 --> 00:19:38.620

<v SPEAKER_2>But on the other, I think he's determined to prove himself worthy of his father's memory.

00:19:38.620 --> 00:19:45.760

<v SPEAKER_2>And it's quite clear that it's really at that moment that he decides to go into politics.

00:19:45.760 --> 00:19:49.780

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that means that from a very early age, he's very driven.

00:19:51.380 --> 00:20:05.360

<v SPEAKER_2>One of my favourite quotes, Churchill quotes, is one recorded by Violet Bonham Carter, Violet Asquith, as she was at the time, the Prime Minister's daughter, daughter of Herbert Asquith.

00:20:05.360 --> 00:20:14.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And she in her memoir recounts an Edwardian dinner party where she was sitting next to Churchill.

00:20:14.580 --> 00:20:23.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And during the conversation, he turns to her and says, My dear, we are all worms, but I do believe that I am a glow worm.

00:20:23.500 --> 00:20:26.600

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that sort of tells you about Churchill.

00:20:26.600 --> 00:20:34.580

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, he was certainly one of those people who, if he was awake, had to be active, had to be doing something.

00:20:34.580 --> 00:20:37.180

<v SPEAKER_2>If it wasn't politics, then it would be writing.

00:20:37.180 --> 00:20:41.840

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course, he published in his lifetime some 40 books in 70 volumes.

00:20:41.840 --> 00:20:43.780

<v SPEAKER_2>If he wasn't writing, it would be painting.

00:20:43.780 --> 00:20:50.300

<v SPEAKER_2>If it wasn't painting, he'd be playing polo or learning to fly, bricklaying.

00:20:50.300 --> 00:20:57.220

<v SPEAKER_2>He was someone who had to be constantly stimulated and engaged, I think.

00:20:59.140 --> 00:21:06.800

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think, in a way, that's why he's able to sort of cram so much into this career.

00:21:06.800 --> 00:21:11.840

<v SPEAKER_2>That and the fact, of course, that he always had plenty of people around him to support him.

00:21:12.260 --> 00:21:20.060

<v SPEAKER_2>His wife Clementine, his family, a host of private secretaries, personal secretaries, literary assistants.

00:21:20.060 --> 00:21:22.720

<v SPEAKER_2>And that certainly made life easier.

00:21:22.960 --> 00:21:27.340

<v SPEAKER_1>He certainly, clearly, what we would say today, he had charisma.

00:21:27.340 --> 00:21:30.660

<v SPEAKER_1>How effective was he, though, as war leader?

00:21:30.660 --> 00:21:38.880

<v SPEAKER_1>You describe how hard he worked, but how hard he also drove his team, and in many ways his family as well.

00:21:38.880 --> 00:21:42.020

<v SPEAKER_1>At the same time, no detail was too small for his attention.

00:21:42.020 --> 00:21:45.940

<v SPEAKER_1>So how would you assess him as war leader?

00:21:45.940 --> 00:21:48.460

<v SPEAKER_2>Well he could certainly be accused of micromanagement.

00:21:50.480 --> 00:22:02.720

<v SPEAKER_2>There's no doubt that at times he infuriated his admirals and his generals and his ministers by his sort of probing into their activities.

00:22:03.900 --> 00:22:07.620

<v SPEAKER_2>Of course, he saw that, I think, as very much as part of his duty.

00:22:07.760 --> 00:22:10.240

<v SPEAKER_2>He saw himself as a prod.

00:22:10.240 --> 00:22:24.940

<v SPEAKER_2>He set up his own statistical unit within Downing Street so that he could gather his own information, so that he could challenge official information that's being fed to him through other channels.

00:22:24.940 --> 00:22:32.360

<v SPEAKER_2>So he's constantly bombarding those around him with minutes and telegrams and suggestions.

00:22:32.360 --> 00:22:50.860

<v SPEAKER_2>But on the other hand, that also, I think, injected a clear element of dynamism into his war premiership, perhaps best and most famously summed up by the little red stickers that he used to attach to key demands which would say action this day.

00:22:50.860 --> 00:23:01.340

<v SPEAKER_2>And if you were a minister or a general and you received a memo from the Prime Minister with a little action this day sticker on the top of it, you knew that you had to respond very quickly.

00:23:02.120 --> 00:23:26.080

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think one of the points that Richard and I make in the book is that one of the things that is often forgotten about Churchill is the way he used the convening power of the Prime Ministerial Office to actually bring together the relevant experts to consider the problem of the day and bang heads together to get results.

00:23:26.080 --> 00:23:40.460

<v SPEAKER_2>So prior to Operation Overlord, he's chairing the Overlord Preparations Committee and he's making sure that all of the infrastructure is in place to actually assist the military operation.

00:23:40.460 --> 00:23:45.660

<v SPEAKER_2>And that I think is indicative of the way he ran his war premiership.

00:23:45.660 --> 00:24:03.960

<v SPEAKER_2>He made it very clearly on that he wasn't just going to be Prime Minister, he was also going to make himself Minister of Defence, and he was going to take a very clear interest, not just in the political running of the war, but also in the military operations themselves, chairing the Defence Committee.

00:24:03.960 --> 00:24:12.860

<v SPEAKER_2>And effectively what he does is to create a very strong, centralised machine in Downing Street for the running of the war.

00:24:12.860 --> 00:24:18.720

<v SPEAKER_1>And as you point out, he was remarkably inventive with a real appreciation of science and technology.

00:24:20.080 --> 00:24:21.220

<v SPEAKER_2>Absolutely.

00:24:21.220 --> 00:24:37.380

<v SPEAKER_2>Of course, it's one of the things that leads him to found Churchill College, Cambridge at the end of his life, because the college, in accordance with his wishes, specialises in training and research in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics.

00:24:37.380 --> 00:24:39.920

<v SPEAKER_2>But this was a lifelong interest.

00:24:39.920 --> 00:24:50.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And again, I think it's another side of this sort of fertile mind that is constantly sort of casting around for ideas and interests.

00:24:50.700 --> 00:25:01.280

<v SPEAKER_2>So it's the other side of driving the Generals mad is that he's he's also sort of making sure that he's staying abreast of the latest technological and scientific developments.

00:25:01.280 --> 00:25:05.120

<v SPEAKER_2>Now, of course, he doesn't always get things right.

00:25:05.120 --> 00:25:08.300

<v SPEAKER_2>Some of the ideas that he backs don't come off.

00:25:08.300 --> 00:25:18.460

<v SPEAKER_2>Perhaps the most famous one is Pycrete, which is this amazing idea, the brainchild of Geoffrey Pike, a wartime inventor.

00:25:19.000 --> 00:25:27.860

<v SPEAKER_2>And for this special sort of ice and wood pulp mix, which actually had properties that made it as strong as concrete.

00:25:27.860 --> 00:25:39.240

<v SPEAKER_2>And the suggestion was that you might actually be able to make floating aircraft carriers out of this Pycrete material, which sounds absolutely bizarre.

00:25:39.240 --> 00:25:52.720

<v SPEAKER_2>Mountbatten was a great advocate for Pycrete, and he took along a block to the Quebec conference prior to D-Day where he demonstrated its properties by having someone fire a revolver at it.

00:25:52.720 --> 00:26:01.840

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course the bullet men immediately ricocheted off the ice and flew around the room narrowly missing killing the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff.

00:26:01.840 --> 00:26:08.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And ultimately, of course, Pycrete was a non-starter, but there are plenty of ideas that did work.

00:26:08.580 --> 00:26:18.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And Churchill was influential in backing the ideas for the floating harbours and also the floating tanks that made such a big difference on D-Day itself.

00:26:18.580 --> 00:26:20.680

<v SPEAKER_1>No, glowworm indeed.

00:26:20.680 --> 00:26:28.260

<v SPEAKER_1>You're coming to Canada next week because you're going to speak about the book, not just here in Ottawa, but also in Calgary and Edmonton.

00:26:28.260 --> 00:26:32.460

<v SPEAKER_1>Can you, you've spoken a bit about Churchill's relationship with Canada earlier.

00:26:32.460 --> 00:26:39.680

<v SPEAKER_1>Can you tell us a bit more about how he looked at Canada within the Empire, within the Commonwealth?

00:26:39.680 --> 00:26:42.460

<v SPEAKER_2>I think the short answer to that is extremely positively.

00:26:42.600 --> 00:26:48.520

<v SPEAKER_2>I mean, so much so that I think Churchill almost regarded Canada as Britain.

00:26:48.520 --> 00:27:03.800

<v SPEAKER_2>In fact, when he has his first lecture tour of Canada, which is in 1900, he enters the country from the United States and is quoted in the Canadian newspapers as saying, thank God, I'm back on British soil.

00:27:03.800 --> 00:27:09.680

<v SPEAKER_2>But he certainly enjoyed his visits to Canada.

00:27:09.680 --> 00:27:13.200

<v SPEAKER_2>He was normally extremely well received there.

00:27:13.200 --> 00:27:29.060

<v SPEAKER_2>In 1929, when he actually crosses the country and he visits Calgary and Edmonton and then Vancouver, he even talks about the possibility of settling there if his political career didn't work out.

00:27:31.180 --> 00:27:50.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And he certainly takes a keen interest in the way in which Canadian business and industry is expanding and actually increases his investments, which with hindsight perhaps was not such a wise thing to do as this is 1929 and you're about to go into the crash.

00:27:50.360 --> 00:27:53.540

<v SPEAKER_2>But generally, he's extremely positive about Canada.

00:27:53.660 --> 00:28:06.420

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course, he was very aware of the huge contribution, financial, military that Canada made during the Second World War.

00:28:06.420 --> 00:28:28.020

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course, as you'll know, and as many of your listeners will know, on the 30th of December 1941, he makes one of his most famous speeches to the joint houses of the Canadian Parliament with that famous quote when he refers to the French general saying that, you know, Britain would have a chicken rung like a neck in six weeks.

00:28:28.020 --> 00:28:30.760

<v SPEAKER_2>And his reply is some chicken, some neck.

00:28:30.760 --> 00:28:42.820

<v SPEAKER_2>And of course, it's immediately after that speech, as he makes his way for a drink in the speaker's chamber, that he's photographed by the young Canadian photographer Youssef Karsh.

00:28:42.820 --> 00:28:57.060

<v SPEAKER_2>And that photograph, which has become known as the Roaring Lion, is the image of Churchill that now appears on the British five-pound note, and the image which has become the defining picture and portrait of Churchill as war leader.

00:28:57.060 --> 00:29:05.560

<v SPEAKER_1>And which you will see next week when you come to Ottawa, having returned after a curious theft a year and a half ago.

00:29:05.560 --> 00:29:23.560

<v SPEAKER_1>Look, my last question to you is, the times we live in today are in some way similar to the 30s that Churchill faced with threats both from within and without, autocracies, populism and the rest, and wars.

00:29:23.560 --> 00:29:27.360

<v SPEAKER_1>What can we learn from Churchill to help us today?

00:29:27.360 --> 00:29:36.820

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, of course, it's always, you always have to be careful when sort of comparing that time with this time.

00:29:37.840 --> 00:29:51.180

<v SPEAKER_2>Obviously, we are operating in a very different context today, and there are certain things that have changed enormously in terms of technology, communications, and the pace at which government is conducted.

00:29:52.300 --> 00:30:13.740

<v SPEAKER_2>But I think if you're looking at the sort of principles that Churchill would have applied today, I think the danger that he would have seen is the same danger that you had in the 1930s, which is the danger of fragmentation in the face of these threats, and of countries falling back in on themselves.

00:30:15.160 --> 00:30:30.320

<v SPEAKER_2>You know, Churchill, I think, he was a great supporter of NATO, and of course during the Second World War, was instrumental in building up and maintaining the International Alliance against fascism.

00:30:30.320 --> 00:30:42.760

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think, you know, one of the clear principles that

you can see him standing for would have been for a strong alliance of democratic nations against autocracy.

00:30:42.760 --> 00:30:49.640

<v SPEAKER_2>And he would have been looking, I think, to sort of bolster relationships and structures that encourage that.

00:30:49.640 --> 00:30:53.720

<v SPEAKER_1>Well, I want listeners to read Churchill's D-Day, your book, Allen.

00:30:53.720 --> 00:30:57.420

<v SPEAKER_1>I ask you also, what are you reading or streaming these days?

00:30:57.420 --> 00:31:14.820

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, of course, knowing that I'm about to come to your side of the Atlantic and looking forward to my visits to Ottawa and Calgary and Edmonton, I'm rereading David Dilks' book on The Great Dominion, his book about Churchill and Canada.

00:31:14.820 --> 00:31:17.120

<v SPEAKER_2>That's a little bit of important research for me.

00:31:17.120 --> 00:31:36.480

<v SPEAKER_2>I've also been lucky enough to have been given an advance copy of a new book by Professor Richard Vinen, which is actually a comparative biography of Churchill and De Gualle, which I think may be of particular interest to some of your listeners, and I think well worth a read.

00:31:36.480 --> 00:31:37.300

<v SPEAKER_1>All right.

00:31:37.300 --> 00:31:43.000

<v SPEAKER_1>Excellent recommendations, but I particularly want listeners to pick up a copy of your book, Churchill's D-Day.

00:31:43.000 --> 00:31:44.000

<v SPEAKER_1>Thank you, Allen.

00:31:44.000 --> 00:31:46.880

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:31:46.880 --> 00:31:48.860

<v SPEAKER_1>We were joined today by Allen Packwood.

00:31:48.860 --> 00:31:59.000

<v SPEAKER_1>Again, I encourage you to buy and read Churchill's D-Day,

The British Bulldogs, Faithful Hours During the Normandy Invasion,
written by Allen and Richard Dannatt.

00:31:59.000 --> 00:32:02.140

<v SPEAKER_1>You can find The Canadian Global Affairs Institute on
Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

00:32:02.740 --> 00:32:11.220

<v SPEAKER_1>The Global Exchange is brought to you by our team at The
Canadian Global Affairs Institute, and my thanks go out to our
producer, Jordyn Carroll, and to Drew Phillips for providing our
music.

00:32:11.220 --> 00:32:12.660

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:32:12.660 --> 00:32:14.500

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.