

## The Casablanca Conference (January 14-26, 1943)

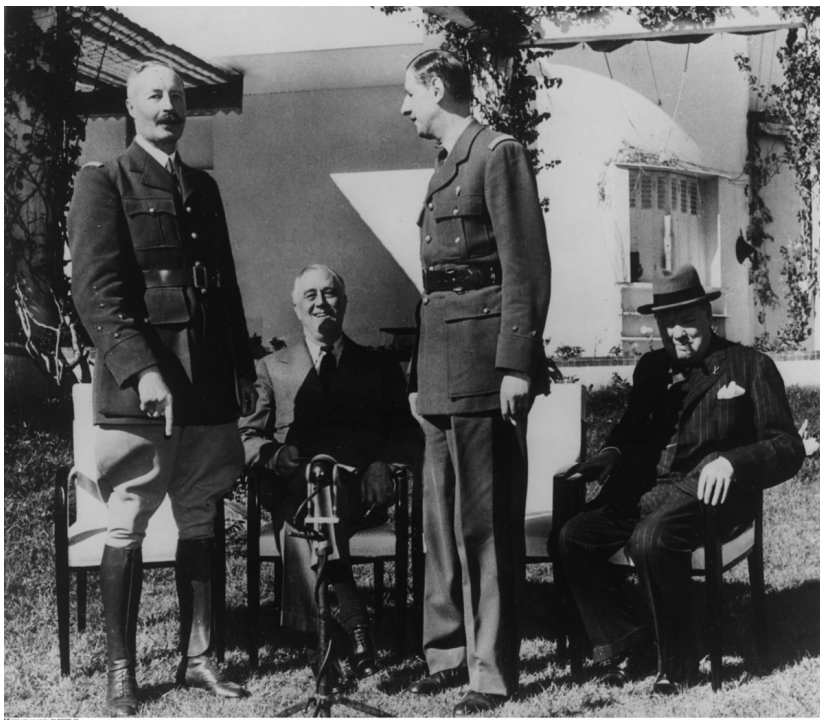
### Abstract

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Joseph Stalin explained his absence at the Allied war conference in Casablanca in early 1943 by saying that he was “unavailable” because of the fighting around Stalingrad. In actuality, however, his absence reflected his distrust of the Western Allies and his doubts about whether they had the political will to open a second front against Germany. During the discussions between Franklin Delano Roosevelt (sitting, at left) and Winston Churchill (sitting, at right), France was represented by two men, General Honoré Giraud (standing, at left), who had escaped from a German POW camp, and General Charles de Gaulle (standing, at right), the leader of Free France, who had fled to England. Giraud was favored by the Americans, who greatly overestimated his influence and underestimated de Gaulle’s popularity. The British, on the other hand, supported de Gaulle, despite all their issues with him. The apparent agreement between Giraud and de Gaulle, which was made under American pressure – Roosevelt described it as a “shotgun marriage” – led to the formation of the Committee for French National Liberation [*Comité Français de la Libération Nationale*] in early 1943. De Gaulle quickly gained political dominance in the committee and was able to make Giraud insignificant.

### Source

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Source: Casablanca Conference (Jan. 14-26, 1943) U.S.-UK-France. French generals Giraud (l.) and de Gaulle; seated, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (l.) and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Unknown photographer.

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