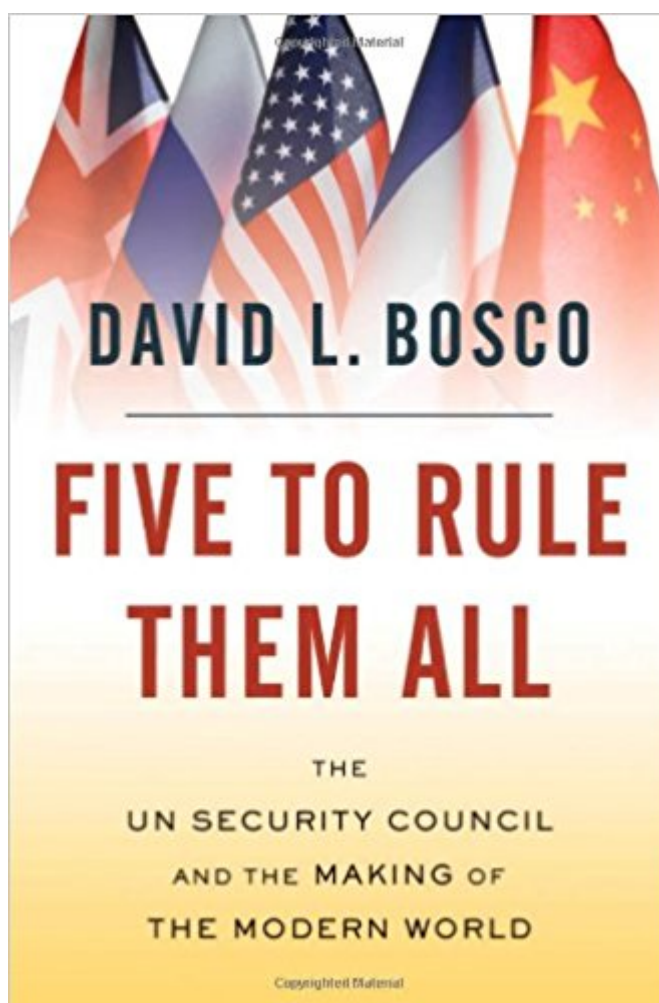


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# Five To Rule Them All: The UN Security Council And The Making Of The Modern World



## Synopsis

From the Berlin Airlift to the Iraq War, the UN Security Council has stood at the heart of global politics. Part public theater, part smoke-filled backroom, the Council has enjoyed notable successes and suffered ignominious failures, but it has always provided a space for the five great powers to sit down together. *Five to Rule Them All* tells the inside story of this remarkable diplomatic creation. Drawing on extensive research, including dozens of interviews with serving and former ambassadors on the Council, the book chronicles political battles and personality clashes as it opens the closed doors of its meeting room. What emerges here is a revealing portrait of the most powerful diplomatic body in the world. When the five permanent members are united, David Bosco points out, the Council can wage war, impose blockades, redraw borders, unseat governments, and levy sanctions. There are almost no limits to its authority. Yet the Council exists in a world of realpolitik. Its members are, above all, powerful states with their own diverging interests. Time and again, the Council's performance has dashed the hope that its members would somehow work together to establish a more peaceful world. But if these lofty hopes have been unfulfilled, the Council has still served an invaluable purpose: to prevent conflict between the Great Powers. In this role, the Council has been an unheralded success. As Bosco reminds us, massacres in the Balkans and chaos in Iraq are human tragedies, but conflicts between the world's great powers in the nuclear age would be catastrophic. In this lively, fast-moving, and often humorous narrative, Bosco illuminates the role of the Security Council in the postwar world, making a compelling case for the enduring importance of the five who rule them all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bosco, former senior editor at Foreign Policy, examines the United Nation's global salience "from its roots in the League of Nations to its controversial decision to sanction military action against Saddam Hussein that nearly splintered the organization's collective political clout. Founded on the principle that a permanent Security Council comprising WWII's victors could and should preserve peace worldwide, the organization's constitution and relative importance has evolved with every major shift in international politics" European decolonization in Africa and Asia that resulted in dozens of new political entities, the ongoing Middle East conflict and the threat of terrorism. Bosco punctuates formal details of U.N. resolutions with balanced analysis and entertaining anecdotes about the personalities behind iconic historic events. He concludes with well-reasoned and plausible suggestions for how the organization can change to better reflect political realities, such as the introduction of a dedicated seat for the European Union, a regional organization that takes an increasingly unified position on security issues. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Bosco punctuates formal details of U.N. resolutions with balanced analysis and entertaining anecdotes about the personalities behind iconic historic events. He concludes with well-reasoned and plausible suggestions for how the organization can change to better reflect political realities."--Publishers Weekly  
"This thorough, well-researched history is appropriate for all with a serious interest in international relations."--Library Journal  
"An outstanding contribution to scholarship on the United Nations. David Bosco's impeccable research, astute judgment, and beautiful prose make this book a must read for academics and practitioners alike."--Sam Daws, Executive Director of the United Nations Association of the UK and former First Officer to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan  
"This lucid and succinct history of the UN Security Council is worth the good read it generously offers. It sets out clearly the 'highs and the whys' and the 'lows and the blows' experienced by the Council and its Permanent Five dominant players over the last fifty-plus years. A must for those who want to know how the Council, despite its many failures and shortcomings, keeps coming back as the one place where we are, can, and should be working to resolve the world's major problems of peace and security."--Thomas R Pickering, former US Ambassador to the United Nations  
"... a balanced and generally non-ideological history of the Security Council (a rare achievement in today's super heated partisan wars over most

everything)...Bosco makes a good case that the world has been a bit safer due to the existence of the Council than had it never been created." --American Thinker "The real value of this work is the combination of in-depth historical survey combined with insightful analysis." -- Choice&R "Five to Rule Them All is a well researched book that reaches scientific standards but is also accessible and a genuinely interesting read as it is full of many examples and provides an avenue to exploring and understanding the nuances of the UNSC in a way that allows readers to more openly relate to it. In all, this book should be included in the 'must read' list of anyone concerned with the state of international affairs and the potential of the UN and the UNSC to act in-sync with the demands of the 21st century international citizen." --Central European Journal of International Security and Studies "One of the more important books concerning the United Nations published in the last quarter century...A cross between narrative and analytical insight...crammed with insight." -Gary B. Ostrower, Diplomatic History "A well researched book that reaches scientific standards but is also accessible and a genuinely interesting read as it is full of many examples and provides an avenue to exploring and understanding the nuances of the UNSC in a way that allows readers to more openly relate to it...This book should be included in the 'must read' list of anyone concerned with the state of international affairs." --Central European Journal of International and Security Studies"This significant contribution to the history and evolution of the UN Security Council is a fabulous reader for any relevant course -- and all readers in search of a succinct, gripping, and vividly portrayed account of the inner workings of the Security Council. The author's rich background in international affairs renders him well equipped for having undertaken this daunting task." --ASIL UN21 Newsletter, Issue #42, September 2011

Very informative and well-researched book. I am actually lucky enough to have the author as my professor here at Indiana University. So, speaking from the experience of sitting through his lectures, this book is written exactly as he would tell it in class. He most definitely knows his stuff and I can say that as a Political Science/International Studies major, his class and this book have been the most intriguing things I've experienced thus far in my college career.

Mr. Bosco does a great job in telling the history of the world from 1945 to the present through the history of the Security Council. From giving brief histories of all the diplomats that have had a profound impact on the world, to reliving events like Serbrenica Massacre to Colin Powell's bungling of showing any proof of WMD's in Iraq, it is a good way to see the world in a different perspective. Find some time to read it, although it is 7 chapters, they are heavy on detail.

Thanks!

An historical endeavor that has led to the development of the United Nations. The book references a variety of topics to which the security council has debated, and despite coverage of a multitude of topics the author's suggestions and conclusions are easily understood. If you are looking to broaden your understanding of the UN and the complexity of its responsibilities, look no further.

David Bosco has written the best book on the UN in years - the only thing that is in the same ballpark is James Traub's *The Best Intentions* (2006), which is a very different genre (journalism as opposed to a historical account). Bosco is a remarkably graceful writer - he manages to combine superb academic research and writing skills with the historical arc of a good journalist. There is no better research tool on the Security Council and its history -but this book is genuinely readable.

This is an excellent work that provides a useful history of the United Nations Security Council, and its role and authorities. This is a great introductory work for scholars, lawyers and lay persons with an interest in the council.

This book makes the pretty much clueless and not really-into-politics average person (like myself) enjoy reading about politics :) Lots of interesting facts and a clear view about how the UN was conceived, born and all the growing pains.

This is an outstanding book. In "Five To Rule Them All", David Bosco seamlessly weaves together a series of pivotal events to create a compelling, informative, and thoroughly entertaining narrative of the UN Security Council. The account was clearly well-researched, but it is Bosco's natural gift as a story-teller that makes this book a terrific read. From the very beginning, when Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and their respective diplomatic representatives first conceive of a new and improved League of Nations, Bosco brings the characters to life, illustrating how personality differences and personal and national interests nearly quashed the formation of the United Nations. Bosco describes the disputes among the global leaders, such as the "X-Matter", with such depth that I felt as if I were actually at the negotiating table with the participants. At the same time, the author is able to put all of these discussions within an historical context so that the implications and consequences of the Security Council's decisions can be easily understood. With its long history and complicated

subject-matter, the UN Security Council poses many challenges as a book topic. Bosco makes a strong case for the Council's inherent value, but he also writes a balanced account that documents the many failures of the organization and includes multiple perspectives on events throughout the book. Ultimately, he makes a persuasive argument that, while the Security Council has fallen short in achieving many of its goals, it has succeeded in accomplishing its primary objective: to avoid conflict (i.e. war) among the Great Powers. You don't have to be an historian, journalist, or academic to like or appreciate this book. You just have to enjoy reading exciting stories about individuals and events that have helped to shape the modern world. Jon Cross, Brooklyn, NY

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