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Townsend Hoopes, Douglas Brinkley. *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. xii + 287 pp. $30.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-300-06930-3.

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The United Nations has received renewed attention since the end of the Cold War. In the early 1990's, especially following the success of the U.N.-authorized coalition against Iraq's military seizure of Kuwait, hopes rose among internationalists that the United Nations would now play its proper role as primary deterrent of international aggression. No longer fettered by the rivalry between the most powerful members of its Security Council, the United Nations could begin functioning as the guarantor of international peace and prosperity.

This optimistic vision was soon tempered by the U.N. debacle in peace enforcement and nation-building in Somalia and Bosnia. Particularly disturbing was the U.N.'s inability to prevent super-heated national hatreds from blazing into large-scale ethnic massacres as witnessed in Rwanda and the erstwhile Yugoslavia. Moreover, the outbreaks of regional violence rapidly consumed the professional and material resources of the U.N. for peacekeeping and refugee assistance. This further exacerbated the U.N.'s financial crisis, as many of the member states–the United States included–refused to pay their back dues and assessments owed to to the organization. These events and problems brought a more cautious perspective on the potential effectiveness of the United Nations.

Despite the resulting lowered expectations for an assertive and vigorous United Nations, other global trends continued to highlight the need for healthy international institutions to mediate conflicts and eradicate sources of political and economic instability. Individual nation-states acting unilaterally were increasingly incapable of adequately dealing with such matters as disruptions in global currency markets, regional barriers to free and fair trade, environmental degradation stemming from transnational pollution, resource depletion due to explosive population growth and spreading urbanization, a deluge of refugees fleeing death, slow starvation or political and ethnic persecution, and the proliferation and sale of weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, the United Nations continued to draw the attention and interest of all those who saw it as the best vehicle for managing conflicts and problems whose resolution required international cooperation and multinational agreements.

Currently, Americans are invlolved in both rational and emotionally-charged discussions about the future role of the United Nations and its potential impact on U.S. foreign policy. Some radical elements in the United States fear the United Nations is a nascent superstate which will ultimately overrule American sovereignty and crush traditional practices of representative democracy in the United States. Others see the United Nations as a clumsy, over-bureaucratized international behemoth which wastes much of its resources on unnecessary staff, ceremonial functions, and seemingly endless and fruitless discussions. For them, the United Nations needs a heavy dose of downsizing and a strict narrowing of its functions. Still others view the United Nations as the tool of "Third-World" countries which unjustly seek to redistribute wealth from the prosperous states of the "northern" hemisphere to the poverty-stricken states of the "southern" hemisphere. Finally, there are those who argue that a strong United Nations is essential because it will serve the long-term interests of the United States to have an institution with legitimate international credentials to turn to for help in settling conflicts and subduing threats to global stability. Though the United States is presently the world's only superpower, there are limits to its power, and global economic and military trends point toward the relative diminishment of America's ability to prevail in strategic economic and military conflicts without significant international support and cooperation. Thus, an energetic United Nations will enable the United States to survive and prosper in the future. This latter view is shared by the authors of *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.*

In the Preface of their book, Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley tell readers that they hope to add

needed historical perspective to the current debate on the future role of the United Nations. They believe that by doing so they will remind Americans and others of the vital role played by Franklin D. Roosevlet and the United States in the creation of the United Nations. Finally, they seek to elevate understanding and discussion so that Americans would come to a more reasoned and consistent support for an institution which "embodies the highest hopes of mankind" (p. x).

Hoopes and Brinkley explain how the failure of the League of Nations shaped the ideas of FDR and American policymakers. First, the League had collapsed because the lack of U.S. membership had fatally weakened the organization. Second, the League disintegrated because internal structural problems and procedures, especially the need for unanimous consent for implementing effective actions to deter aggression, had paralyzed the institution and gradually eroded its authority as the guarantor of international peace. The absence of a strong League enabled aggressor states to pursue expansionist policies which eventually led to World War II. Therefore, FDR was determined that the mistakes of the past would be avoided. He wanted the United States to be a leader in the formation of a postwar international security organization. Furthermore, he thought that such organization would combine the ideals of Woodrow Wilson with a pragmatic understanding that aggression can only be deterred through the practical application of power. Hence developed FDR's notion of the Four Policemen–Great Britain, China, the United States and the Soviet Union–as the members of the Security Council who would use their military power to maintain peace and stability in the postwar world.

In most textbooks on American history, the chapter or chapters dealing with World War II diplomacy devote only minor attention if any to the efforts to create the United Nations. The focus of almost all texts is on military strategy, the goal of defeating the Axis Powers, wartime negotiations, and the Big Three meetings held to maintain and further Allied cooperation in the prosecution of the war. The issues of when and where a second front would be launched, the insistence on a policy of unconditional surrender, the future political status of Germany and Poland, American desires to secure a Soviet promise to intervene in the war against Japan after hostilities had concluded in Europe, and the dropping of the atomic bomb all receive substantial coverage. A close reading of Hoopes and Brinkley reveals that formation of the United Nations deserves much more attention in textbooks. According to the authors, the goal to found the United Nations was not a peripheral interest of American policymakers. Instead, it was a central feature of America's wartime diplomacy and had a major influence on the final outcomes of America's negotiations with its allies, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. FDR believed that "establishing the United nations organization was the overarching strategic goal, the absolute first priority" (p. 178). Postwar peace and stability depended on the United States playing a leadership role in international affairs. American reversion to a policy of isolationism after the war would be disastrous for the world and the United States. FDR thought that American participation in a postwar international security organization was the way to ensure that the United Statets would not revert to isolationism. The United Nations could not, however, be brought into existence without the cooperation of America's wartime allies, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Hoopes and Brinkley detail FDR's deft maneuvering around delicate points of conflict with Great Britain and, especially, the Soviet Union in order to sustain their commitment to the establishment of the United Nations. Particularly vexing for U.S. policymakers were the Soviet Union's insistence on an "absolute veto" for members of the Security Council, demands that the Soviet Republics of Ukraine and White Russia be accorded membership in the General Assembly, and the Soviet Union's adamant refusal to participate in Allied wartime negotiations with the government of Chiang Kai-shek concerning military strategy and eventual inclusion of China on the Security Council.

Although Hoopes and Brinkley focus primarily on FDR's role in creating the United Nations, the contributions of other figures are not ignored. In particular, the authors provide substantive treatment of the roles played by Sumner Welles, Cordell Hull, Wendell Willkie, Edward Stettinius, Harry Hopkins, Arthur Vandenburg and Walter Lippmann. Of special mention, Hoopes and Brinkley examine how the competition and bad relations between the top officials at the State Department, Secretary Hull and Under Secretary Welles, affected the battle of ideas over the future structure of the postwar international security organization.

In their Epilogue, Hoopes and Brinkley make an appeal for continued American support for the United Nations and for the need to strengthen and sustain the U.N.'s peacekeeping functions. Hoopes and Brinkley believe that international peace depends on the formula first developed by FDR: a United Nations organization firmly backed by the United States. Such a formula worked well to deter aggression in Korea in the early 1950s and in the Persian Gulf in the 1990s.

FDR and the Creation of the U.N. is well-written and its central idea persuasively argued. Readers will especially appreciate its tight organization with ample headings to identify topics or issues. Because of its format, teachers will find this work to be a valuable research tool in preparing lectures on World War II diplomacy and/or the origins of the United Nations. One can easily identify a section of the book that addresses a topic of interest and, if appropriate, also direct students to read the relevant pages. A charter of the United Nations is provided in the Appendix. Hoopes and Brinkely have given us the best single volume on America's role in the founding of the United Nations. Its careful research and lucid presentation will make it appealing to a broad range of readers, from scholars to the informed general public.

FDR and the Creation of the U.N. should spur other researchers to go beyond the largely American-based research of Hoopes and Brinkley. The relatively new access to Soviet archives offers scholars the opportunity to explore in more depth the role of the Soviet Union in the creation of the United Nations. It is likely that such research will bring new perspectives on the origins of the United Nations and lead to a fuller picture than that available in Hoopes and Brinkley's work.

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