



Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World

David L. Bosco

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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.

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