

him to reconsider the picture of Westerners as mindless machines driven by sex and money, and prompted his decision to leave. After years of intense (but chaste) romance with Mi-ran, a teacher, the two conceived of and planned their escapes separately, not sharing a word; they still could not trust each other. A few years later they met again in Seoul, but by that time they were living separate lives.

Demick's narrative is not always inspiring: One of the chapters is titled "The Good Die First." Those among Demick's subjects who witnessed the North Korean famine of 1996–99, in which anywhere from 600,000 to two million people died, observed that the honest and goodhearted were less likely to stay alive. Most who survived did so by rediscovering the market: The famine was a time when "reluctant" capitalism boomed in North Korea. Contrary to what is sometimes assumed, the country long ago ceased to be a centrally planned economy. The old Stalinist economy of iron and coal is largely dead, with only a handful of military factories still operating somehow.

About 17,000 North Korean defectors live in South Korea, and most do not fare particularly well. They arrive with an education that is both anachronistic and distorted; they must adjust to a society that is decades ahead of their native land and acquaint themselves with the basics of modern life. Demick's subjects do better than most, but their success is often equivocal. For example, a once rebellious teenager now runs a karaoke club where North Korean girls work as hostesses and part-time prostitutes.

Sooner or later the Kim dynasty will be consigned to the dustbin of history, but it will take many more decades for the country's 23 million people to heal the social and psychological wounds inflicted by the brutal social experiment that is North Korea.

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World-Class Club

Reviewed by Rahul Chandran

IN THE SWELTERING SUMMER of 1944, two months after D-Day, British and Soviet diplomats joined the Americans in Washington to discuss how the three powers that were shaping the world could preserve the peace in the years to come. Their answer

was a grand body of member states—the United Nations—with responsibility for peace and security falling to a "Security Council." This elite club would have five permanent members—the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, plus France and China—with the power to veto any proposed resolution, and 10 other members elected on a rotating basis from the galaxy of states. In the 65 years since its creation, the Security Council has frustrated those who thought it would mean an end to violent conflict, disappointed many who assumed that nations would actually unite, and alienated the American Right, which considers it a constraint on U.S. power. Yet the fact remains that the Security Council is a critical venue for international dialogue.

In *Five to Rule Them All*, David L. Bosco, a professor of international politics at American University, guides readers through the history of the Security Council, from its first peacekeeping endeavor in the Congo, through the Cold War, to the present. This fine book blends insight into great-power politics with saucy anecdotes, including an account of the American-led sally to a famous New York City nightclub, Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe, designed to ease tensions during those 1944 negotiations. The only wish a reader might have is for more discussion of the current challenges that face the Security Council.

Bosco highlights the Security Council's successes, such as the tireless work of then-secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and his team to end the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. He is also frank about

FIVE TO RULE THEM ALL:

The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World.

By David L. Bosco.
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the body's failures, among them its inability to facilitate peace in the Middle East and to stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the Srebrenica massacre, in Bosnia, in 1995. He is astute about the impact of seemingly subtle decisions by the Security Council, as when the Soviet Union's permanent seat was transferred to Russia in 1989 "with scarcely a whisper of debate." In rushing through this transition, Bosco writes, the Security Council missed an opportunity to realign power that "might have allowed adjustment to reflect new realities and refresh the council's legitimacy with the rest of the world," though, in keeping with the non-prescriptive nature of the book, he doesn't say what that realignment ought to have looked like.

Today, we have moved beyond the post-Soviet moment. America is no longer the sole superpower, yet it has no equal. As Bosco notes, large non-Western blocs of nations have consistently criticized the Security Council for paying too little attention "to what many poor nations saw as the root cause of much conflict: disparities in economic development." Today these objections are heard less often, in part because the loudest critics, including India and Brazil, have gained enough power to pursue their own interests aggressively. But the Security Council's relevance and legitimacy are still in question in two key ways.

First, the informal arrangement that allowed the Security Council to intervene in and mitigate violent conflict over the last two decades in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti, Kosovo, Guatemala, and elsewhere is increasingly unstable. In the past, permanent members would make the decision to intervene, others (Japan and Germany) would pay, and a third group (often including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) would provide troops. It makes less sense, with each passing year, to the Japanese and Germans to foot the bills



For six decades, the UN Security Council has brought the world's great powers to the table.

without a guaranteed say in the decisions, or for India, which has more than 15 percent of the world's population, to assume risks without a share of control.

Second, the role of the Security Council in dealing with problems that lack clearly defined borders—climate change, resource scarcity, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, subnational violence—is uncertain. President Barack Obama's decision to chair a recent Security Council summit on nuclear nonproliferation signals that the body has a role in dealing with this issue, but the precise nature of that role remains unclear.

Hovering over Bosco's book is an abiding sense of the failure of the great powers to recognize change, combined with a quaintly desperate desire to preserve privileges and rights of a bygone era. Set against this is the remarkable success of the Security Council in preventing conflict among the great powers; its existence accounts, at least in part, for the fact that we have avoided another world war. Unless the five permanent members can find a pathway to sharing and extending their power, the legitimacy of the Security Council will continue to erode.

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