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FDR and the Creation of the U.N.

By Townsend Hoopes, Douglas Brinkley

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In recent years the United Nations has become more active in—and more generally respected for—its peacekeeping efforts than at any other period in its fifty-year history. During the same period, the United States has been engaged in a debate about the place of the U.N. in the conduct of its foreign policy. This book, the first account of the American role in creating the United Nations, tells an engrossing story and also provides a useful historical perspective on the controversy.

Prize-winning historians Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley explain how the idea of the United Nations was conceived, debated, and revised, first within the U.S. government and then by negotiation with its major allies in World War II. The experience of the war generated increasing support for the new organization throughout American society, and the U.N. Charter was finally endorsed by the community of nations in 1945. The story largely belongs to President Franklin Roosevelt, who was determined to form an organization that would break the vicious cycle of ever more destructive wars (in contrast to the failed League of Nations), and who therefore assigned collective responsibility for keeping the peace to the five leading U.N. powers—the major wartime Allies. Hoopes and Brinkley focus on Roosevelt but also present vivid portraits of others who played significant roles in bringing the U.N. into being: these include Cordell Hull, Sumner Welles, Dean Acheson, Harry Hopkins, Wendell Willkie, Edward Stettinius, Arthur Vandenberg, Thomas Dewey, William Fulbright, and Walter Lippmann. In an epilogue, the authors discuss the checkered history of the United Nations and consider its future prospects.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

At a time when it is fashionable to declare the United Nations as part of the problem, rather than the solution, to international conflicts, two noted historians lucidly explain how the original objective of the body has been lost among indecision, ideological quarreling, and a lack of clear leadership. In *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.*, Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley examine the inception of the U.N. and chart its rocky history, identifying FDR as the primary player in the creation of the assembly.

In citing the U.N.'s biggest problems, the authors do not call for disbanding the body. Instead, in keeping with FDR's original vision, they offer solutions for improvements and insights. The challenges are formidable, however, as even daily operations are stalled due to the debt of \$3.3 billion owed by U.N. members. The authors pay particular attention to the United States' responsibility for international peacekeeping. To make the U.N. effective, they argue, the U.S. must not only pay its share of the debt, but accept the fact that it has the military and political power to create results--if only it chooses to do so.

From Library Journal

Hoopes and Brinkley (Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, LJ 11/1/92) offer a short history of the formation of the United Nations. They trace decades of interplay between idealism and realpolitik, from the League of Nations, through World War II and postwar diplomacy and planning, to the U.N.'s birth in 1945 in San Francisco. In a preface, the coauthors state their hope that "more reasoned, more consistent" U.S. support of the U.N. will result from an understanding of the decisive role played by Franklin Roosevelt and other Americans in its creation; yet they express doubt, in an epilog, that the organization will achieve the reforms needed to win that support. In between, the authors deliver a fine narrative based largely on familiar secondary sources, such as Ruth B. Russell's *History of the United Nations Charter* (Brookings, 1958) and Robert A. Divine's *Second Chance* (LJ 4/1/67). Most useful to libraries serving undergraduates. ?Robert F. Nardini, North Chichester, N.H.

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From [Booklist](#)

With the Internet buzzing about black helicopters and Letterman whining about losing Boutros Boutros-Ghali as monologue material (quick quiz: What's the name of the *new* U.N. secretary general?), this graceful analysis of the international organization's American roots is timely. Hoopes and Brinkley (affiliated with the Universities of Maryland and New Orleans), who collaborated on a recent biography of James Forrestal, *Driven Patriot* (1992), offer a study that opens with Wilson's League of Nations battle (and FDR's sidelines view of that defeat), then traces the growing conviction of the Allied leaders before and during World War II that some collective security organization was needed to prevent recurring global wars. Though their focus is the '30s and '40s, when plans for a new international agency gestated, the lack of historical perspective in current U.S. criticism of the U.N. prompts an epilogue surveying its five-decade record and stressing that, absent the U.N., however flawed, the U.S. itself would have to act as civilization's police force. *Mary Carroll*

Users Review

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Helga Lever:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each reserve has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are really reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Why not the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you will want this FDR and the Creation of the U.N..

Jeremy Smith:

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Shaun Sae:

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Dorothy Vinson:

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