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Reviewed for H-Diplo by **James Jay Carafano**, The Heritage Foundation

Relationship Building -- A History

It is no stretch to declare Gunter Bischof, the Marshall Plan Professor of History and Director of the CenterAustria at the University of New Orleans, the commander-in-chief of a small corps of talented and dedicated Anglo-Austrian scholars who have chronicled the political, economic, cultural and security relationships between a Western superpower and a European small state. In *Relationships/Beziehungsgeschichten: Austria and the United States in the Twentieth Century*, Bischof has collected and synthesized in one volume some his best work. The result is both a sweeping overview of the relationship and a superb historiography of the work done in the field over the last two decades.

If for no other reason, this is a valuable work because even in this wired world where everything can be googled, several of these important contributions are buried in obscure books and journals that might easily be overlooked by the average student of U.S. foreign relations.

Relationships/Beziehungsgeschichten is divided into three sections. The first deals with events leading up to World War II and its immediate aftermath, focusing on the prominent 'hot button' issues -- the ambivalent influence of U.S. culture, the country's vanishing under the Anschluss, and expulsion and persecution of Austrian Jews.

The second part of the book examines the U.S.-Austrian relationship during the Cold War, with particular focus on the decade when the country was occupied by U.S. and Soviet forces. One chapter focuses on the Marshall Plan, the massive U.S. foreign-assistance program that helped cement Austria's post-war political

stability and economic recovery. A second chapter analyzes American public opinion about Austria. The third considers the 1955 Austrian State Treaty that marked the end of postwar foreign military occupation.

In the last section of the book, Bischof serves less as a historian and more as a public intellectual with commentary on the post-Cold War period. He offers hard-hitting and unsparing assessments of Austrian efforts to whitewash Austria's tainted Nazi past and is equally critical of U.S. foreign policies post-9/11.

Apart from the obvious value to students of Austrian-American relations, Bischof's work has wider importance to the historian's craft. In his introduction, Bischof argues that the work in this field reflects how U.S. diplomatic history scholarship is done "marking time" and is now a "vibrant academic field" (17). From outside the 'Ivory Tower' that is hard to see. It is rare that diplomatic history makes a visible impact on how those that deal in statecraft think about statecraft. Senator Rand Paul has recently taken to citing the 2012 George F. Kennan biography by John Lewis Gaddis in his foreign policy speeches.¹ That kind of notoriety for scholarship on American diplomacy is a rarity.

Yet, *Relationships/Beziehungsgeschichten* demonstrates why the practice of statecraft could benefit richly from a more vigorous interchange with historical scholarship. Bischof's work on the Marshall Plan is superb example. The call for another 'Marshall Plan' has been thrown out as the answer for everything from the post-invasion plans for Iraq and Afghanistan to responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Arab Spring. Most of those calls were fairly mindless, oblivious to the particular historical circumstances that made the Marshall Plan a particular success in post-World War II Europe.

Indeed, the great strength of much of this work is that it does not supplant traditional diplomatic history--it enriches it, providing the context in which foreign relations are crafted in real life.

In particular, the kind of history being done by Bischof and his fellow Anglo-Austrian scholars is of practical use to the United States today. The dynamics of the great-small power relationships the book explores reflect many of the kinds of contemporary challenges for U.S. foreign relations. The friction and tensions of the expansion of free trade and liberal markets remind one of the many issues faced on both sides of the Atlantic in putting the Marshall Plan into action. Cultural diffusion over the Internet now bumps into some of the same dynamics that Coca-Colonization experienced in the 1950s. From the darks side of human rights abuses to the high-stakes of geo-politics, there is enough of all of these realities of foreign policy in US-Austrian relations to sharpen the critical thinking skills of contemporary practitioners.

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan; An American Life* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011).

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