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Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East

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Policies for the Greater Middle East.

Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press,
1997. 305pp. \$22.50

Allies Divided is a book about alliances, interests, and priorities. It is also about consensus, and the dangers and opportunity costs to allies who fail to achieve one. Given the current situation in the Middle East, the book is important for two reasons. First, it presents a well balanced, insightful, and timely treatment of problems stemming from the increasingly divergent policies followed by America and Europe in what its editors call the "Greater Middle East." Second, it addresses these problems in a refreshingly broad context of geography, strategic issues, and time. Breaking as it does the sometimes narrow bounds of Middle East analysis and focusing on long-term political, economic, and military effects of current policy options, the book has a utility far beyond the narrow focus of today's headlines.

The editors are Ambassador Robert D. Blackwell of Harvard and Michael Strummer of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Ebenhausen, Germany. They define the "Greater Middle East" as the area from the Maghreb through Egypt, Turkey, and the Persian Gulf to the Muslim republics of the Caspian basin. Both take a broad view of the region and of changing interrelationships and issues stemming from the end of the Cold War. Even with that broad definition, Russia, Afghanistan, and Greece loom large as major players in the analysis of regional problems and opportunities. Relationships with America and Europe are, of course, also central to the discussion. Key issues concerning the United States

are the changing nature of American leadership in the post-Cold War era, the decisive role of domestic politics in foreign policy formulation, and a growing imbalance between the United States and allied military capabilities. The European connection covers these same points, but from two perspectives—of Europe as a political entity and of Europe as a collection of sovereign states with divergent attitudes and interests. Watching how both views sometimes play simultaneously is one of the more interesting aspects of this work.

Blackwell and Strummer see a basic concurrence between U.S. and European interests in the region: continuing access to affordable oil, curbing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and avoiding the spread of Islamic extremism. The editors also see a number of issues that divide the allies. They include significant differences of opinion over the relative importance of Israeli versus Arab interests, preference for engagement versus confrontation with Iran, choosing between either unseating Saddam Hussein or trying to modify his behavior, Turkey's proper role in Europe and in the region, and attitudes toward coercion as policy and the ability of states to apply it. All of these issues, and others, are analyzed and debated in a series of twelve articles written by noted area experts from both sides of the Atlantic. The essays cover a host of political, economic, and military issues, to include Nato and Western European Union expansion, Nato operations in Bosnia, a foundering Arab-Israeli peace process, renewed provocations by Iraq, growing domestic pressure by ethnic interest groups,

and growing tension between the United States and its allies over the wisdom of embargoes and sanctions. The essays are well researched and well written, and they provide keen analysis and practical suggestions for policy improvement. They are also interactive, in that the authors comment on each other's work throughout—a useful technique for highlighting points of agreement and differences of opinion.

In their final analysis the editors suggest that a decade of regional tranquility would render moot the many diverging transatlantic interests and policies that bedevil regional politics today.

Unfortunately, they see little chance that the next decade will bring tranquillity or stability. That leaves the United States and its allies at odds over a series of serious problems, which none can solve unilaterally. The editors' bottom line is that neither the United States nor Europe can go it alone in the Middle East. A failure on the part of the allies to get their collective act together, however, will lead to damaged interests for all in the region, with the added threat of collateral political damage in Europe, Central Asia, and other dimensions of the transatlantic partnership.

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Sharkansky, Ira. *Policy Making in Israel*.
Penna.: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press,
1997. 216pp. \$19.95

At a time when government policies in Israel seem to be encouraging "war"

between Jew and Jew, or between Israel and the diaspora, it is useful to come across a short work that attempts to explain the "routines for simple problems and coping with the complex." At the outset, Ira Sharkansky of the Hebrew University warns us that while Israel is a Western-style democracy, it is "not truly egalitarian, [since it] proclaims itself a Jewish state . . . [and] the style of its democracy rewards aggressive activists, who know how to maneuver for opportunities outside the framework of formal rules." It is also interesting to find an Israeli writer who candidly discusses the issue of emigration, and equally, who uses the term "occupied" when referring to the "administered" territories.

The author reminds us of the dangers of too closely comparing Israel with other democracies, for it suffers from memories of the Holocaust as well as the effects of wars with its neighbors and sustained terrorist attacks. Moreover, Israel's circumstances require a financial outlay five to ten times greater than that of other democracies, while the needs for censorship and security-directed regulations—including "moderate physical pressure" when interrogating detainees—exceed what is acceptable elsewhere. It is also useful to be reminded that the "Arab-Israeli problem is a loosely related cluster of problems involving Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Moslems, the government of Israel and several Arab states, and rival groups within the Israeli and Arab populations. No problem has an objective existence."

Insofar as the Middle East peace process is concerned, it is "multidimensional with numerous parties, each