

## Bound to Cooperate? Transatlantic Policy in the Middle East

Given their common strategic interests in regional stability, the secure flow of oil, and political and economic reform, one would think that Europe and the United States are bound to cooperate in the Middle East. Yet, cooperation is not inevitable, nor has it been the case historically.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding common strategic interests, differences in strategic culture and historical experience cause the United States and Europe to view the region through distinct lenses, leading them to perceive, prioritize, and approach threats differently. The September 11 attacks only bolstered this historically and culturally rooted gap across the Atlantic. As noted by one analyst of transatlantic relations, “Where the cold war against communism in Middle Europe brought America and Europe together, the ‘war against terrorism’ in the Middle East is pulling them apart.”<sup>2</sup> For the United States, the terrorist threat and the war on terrorism have established themselves where the Soviet threat and the Cold War used to stand; this is not yet the case for Europe. Apart from European support for the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan and antiterrorism coordination based in law enforcement, hopes for greater, deeper U.S.-European cooperation after September 11, 2001, have proved ephemeral. Although the tragedy of 9/11 initially created a deep sense of transatlantic community, our responses to it have had a polarizing rather than unifying effect on transatlantic relations.

Thus, the United States and Europe are not bound to cooperate in the Middle East, but they are also not fated to conflict as some transatlantic pessimists might predict.<sup>3</sup> Rather, cooperation must be actively cultivated to forge common strategic approaches that can no longer be taken for granted.

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*The Washington Quarterly* • 27:1 pp. 179–195.

## Reasons to Cooperate: Common Interests

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Although cooperation is not inevitable, the United States and Europe certainly have common interests in the Middle East. A number of forces supporting transatlantic convergence can be used to build cooperative ventures in the future.

### TERRORISM

The common threat of international terrorism, particularly after September 11, 2001, has produced some robust transatlantic cooperation. According to a 2002 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations/German Marshall Fund poll as well as the *Transatlantic Trends 2003* poll, Americans and Europeans rank international terrorism as the most serious threat to national security. This opinion helps explain the widespread European support for the U.S. operation to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan as well as strengthened intelligence gathering and sharing in the transatlantic community. Bilateral U.S.-European working groups now meet regularly to coordinate and improve law enforcement measures to contain the movement of terrorists and limit their sources of funding. After September 11, 2001, the member nations of the European Union moved uncharacteristically quickly to harmonize their extradition procedures, and Europe is currently in the process of drafting a treaty on extradition with the United States despite ongoing concerns about the U.S. death penalty. The common threat, particularly the threat of a catastrophic terrorist attack, is likely to bind the United States and Europe in common cause for many years to come, even if approaches to the threat are likely to differ.<sup>4</sup>

### THE WMD THREAT

Although Europeans may not be as inclined to conflate the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) with that of terrorism, as is the tendency in current U.S. policy circles, European concern about the proliferation of unconventional weapons and the missile systems able to deliver them is growing. Even prior to the war in Iraq, common concerns about proliferation partly explain the initial U.S.-European agreement on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 calling for the disarmament of Iraq in the fall of 2002. Since the Iraq war, WMD is creeping toward the top of the European agenda. The war in Iraq and the diplomatic dispute prior to it provided a catalyst for Europe to place proliferation higher on its agenda and reexamine its policies to combat this threat. This shift reflected a general, pragmatic reaction to align Europe's policies more closely with the United States

to help repair transatlantic relations as well as relations within Europe after the Iraq rupture. Europeans did not want to be marginalized and divided as they were in Iraq, and major European states such as France and Germany recognized that a united Europe was necessary for the projection of European power externally. Moreover, European governments were confronted with substantial evidence of significant Iranian efforts to acquire a nuclear weapons capability.

Consequently, the EU issued a new policy to confront WMD at the European Council meeting in Thessaloniki in late June 2003 that included considering coercive measures if diplomatic efforts to stem proliferation in certain problem states failed, marking a dramatic departure from the previous European, particularly German, aversion to the use of force in such scenarios.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the EU is now pursuing an approach to proliferation

that more actively addresses countries of concern (e.g., Iran, North Korea, and Libya) rather than relying solely on existing international agreements to do the job. Although Europeans are still strong believers in international regimes, they increasingly recognize the implementation and compliance problems of accords such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Thus, like the United States, Europe is now focusing less on broadening international arms control regimes and more on improving the implementation of existing treaties, particularly those regarding nuclear weapons.

Perhaps the best example of growing convergence on the threat of proliferation is the case of Iran. Traditionally, the United States and Europe have taken very different approaches. While the United States has preferred policies of containment, economic sanctions, and the threat of force, European states have favored policies of engagement and have been reluctant to link their economic and political relations with Tehran's proliferation activity. Now, however, the European position is shifting toward that of Washington. In mid-June 2003, the foreign ministers of the EU's member states released a statement critical of Iran's nuclear program and demanded that Iran accept more aggressive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>6</sup> Most critical, the EU for the first time specifically linked the trade and cooperation agreement it is negotiating with Tehran to the nuclear issue, signaling that Europe is willing to employ economic levers to address the proliferation problem. The French, in contrast to their stance on Iraq, have actively supported this tougher position toward Iran. Their motivations for doing so are unclear, whether a desire to mend fences with the

**The road map constitutes the first joint U.S.-European effort to produce a peace plan.**

United States and within Europe, a desire to maintain its nuclear status by limiting the number of nuclear powers, or in reaction to increasingly unambiguous intelligence suggesting that Iran is actively seeking a nuclear weapons program. Clearly, however, the resultant EU policy toward Iran is closer to the U.S. position than was previously the case. The tougher EU stance appears, for now, to have paid off as the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, and Germany brokered a deal in late October 2003 whereby Iran agreed to cooperate with the IAEA, sign the Additional Protocol, and suspend all uranium enrichment and processing activities.

### **UNEASE WITH THE REGIONAL STATUS QUO**

The September 11 attacks also underscored the U.S. inability to disengage from the Middle East and provoked a new focus on the question of the sources of radicalism, emphasizing the issues of internal reform and democratization in the Arab and Islamic world. Some analysts have argued that the United States and Europe share a compelling strategic need to cooperate in the Middle East, particularly on questions concerning political and economic reform.<sup>7</sup> The U.S. campaign in Iraq increasingly appears to have been about more than WMD or merely removing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein from power; it was part of an overall strategy to restructure the region along democratic and pro-Western lines. Although many European nations vehemently opposed the Iraq war as such, they widely accept the overall need to promote economic and political reform in the region, a long-standing European concern. Indeed, as Europe is more proximate to the region, continued instability in the Middle East is more likely to affect Europeans directly than Americans, certainly in a demographic sense. This consequence may explain European unease with U.S. efforts to promote democracy through force (the perception of the Iraqi case), which Europeans fear will bring greater, not less, instability. Instead, Europeans prefer political reform to stem from movements within the region. Despite these differences in approach, however, the common concern about generating political and economic reform in Iraq, in the Palestinian territories, and in the wider region is a solid basis for transatlantic cooperation.

### **OIL**

Although differences over oil policies and continued competition among European and U.S. firms over contracts in the region are likely in years to come, the United States and Europe still share a fundamental need to ensure the secure flow of oil from the region. Although Europe is even more dependent than the United States on Middle Eastern oil, any disruption to

such supplies would equally endanger the United States by destabilizing the global economy. Although the Iraq war can hardly be considered a war over oil, concern in U.S. policy circles about the future stability of Saudi Arabia and its reliability in the oil supply chain must be on the rise, given that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11, 2001, were Saudi. Many Europeans will continue to disagree with U.S. policy on Iraq, yet most will likely breathe a sigh of relief if a pro-Western and democratic Iraq emerges and ultimately helps diversify the region's supply of oil, decreasing Western reliance on the House of Saud.

### **KEEPING THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ALIVE**

Despite continued policy differences on the Arab-Israeli peace process, mutual concern about the negative effects of continued bloodshed on the wider Middle East provides another basis for transatlantic agreement. Even before the Iraq war, the deteriorating situation on the ground in Israel and the Palestinian territories in the aftermath of the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000 and the unwillingness of the United States fully to engage in the peacemaking process between Arabs and Israelis at the start of the Bush administration led to the formation of the Middle East Quartet (comprising the United States, the EU, the UN, and Russia) in the summer of 2002 and its subsequent road map for Middle East peace.

The United States and Europe have never before coordinated so closely on the Middle East peace process, even if the United States is still the pivotal player. Considering the historical rifts across the Atlantic on peace process issues, the development of the Quartet is notable. The Europeans have finally obtained a political, not just economic, place at the peace process table while the gap appears to be narrowing between the two sides' visions of a final settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both sides have moved closer to the other's positions: the United States now supports a peace outcome (a two-state solution), not just a peace process (although many Europeans would like the United States to specify the contours of a final-status agreement, as occurred in the Clinton administration), while Europe has actively moved toward U.S. positions on Palestinian reform. The United States and Europe continue to disagree on the question of engaging Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (agreement among EU member states on this question is unanimous), but the EU supported U.S. efforts to promote reform of the

The differences in approach run far deeper than the policies of a particular administration.

Palestinian Authority (PA) and to establish a Palestinian prime minister to counterbalance Arafat's authority.

Despite growing frustration that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have implemented the road map—and European concern that the United States did not invest heavily enough in the effort—the road map constitutes the first joint U.S.-European effort to produce a peace plan. The Quartet has also served to coordinate European positions, helping to avoid the inclination for unilateral initiatives from major European powers that have tended to erode Washington's confidence in a European partner in the past. Thus, even while regional developments (most notably continued terrorism and settlement activity) undermine the Quartet's road map, the common U.S. and European fear of continued violence and its potential to destabilize the broader region provides a strong incentive for transatlantic cooperation in this ongoing conflict.

### **Divergent Threat Perceptions and Policies**

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With all these incentives for convergence on Middle East policy, why do transatlantic policies continue to diverge? Why can we expect transatlantic tension on Middle East policy in the future? Structural issues such as relative power or geography are not the only determining factors. After all, because Europe is closer to the Middle East and thus more likely to suffer the consequences of major regional instability, terrorist threats, and WMD proliferation, we can easily imagine more aggressive European policies in line with those of the United States.

The rift in Middle East policy cannot really be attributed to the two sides' domestic politics either. Europe's large Muslim population (up to three times that of the United States) and the strong pro-Israel lobby in the United States undoubtedly play a role in policy formation, but the power of such groups should not be overestimated. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although salient at the rhetorical level, is not necessarily at the top of the agenda for many Muslims in Europe, where the rights of immigrants and other domestic issues more directly affect their communities. On the U.S. side, the pro-Israel lobby is active and vocal but not disproportionately strong; indeed, it is unlikely that it would be so successful if its arguments did not resonate with the larger U.S. public and its view of the region.<sup>8</sup> Even strong lobbies are not determining factors in U.S. foreign policy formation. Moreover, U.S. and European leaders are sometimes willing to challenge domestic constituencies (and even wider public opinion) in the pursuit of foreign policy goals, such as President George H. W. Bush's challenge to the pro-Israel lobby with his position on settlements and loan guarantees for Israel in 1991 or British prime minister

Tony Blair's position in favor of the war on Iraq despite the opposition of an overwhelming majority of the general population to the war.

Do commercial and financial interests account for some of the divergence in transatlantic policy on the Middle East? Are the Europeans more concerned about protecting national corporate interests than Americans? Robert Kagan addresses this argument well:

The common American argument that European policy toward Iraq and Iran has been dictated by financial considerations is only partly right. Are Europeans greedier than Americans? Do American corporations not influence American policy in Asia and Latin America as well as in the Middle East? The difference is that American strategic judgments sometimes conflict with and override financial interests.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Europe's financial interests are less likely to conflict with strategic concerns because Europeans favor trade, multilateralism, and engagement in their foreign policy, including in the Middle East. Americans at times see strategic and economic interests in competition with one another whereas Europeans are more likely to view those same economic interests as supportive of their strategic goals.

**The United States and Europe regard terrorism through two distinct strategic prisms.**

Finally, we might ask if the basis of transatlantic differences today rests with the policies of the administration under President George W. Bush's leadership. To be sure, the policies of this administration, particularly its emphasis on military force, unilateralism, and a preemptive security doctrine, have exacerbated transatlantic tension and contributed to the rift over Iraq. That said, the differences in approach to Middle Eastern problems run far deeper than the policies of a particular administration, as the historical divisions between the United States and Europe indicate. Given the indeterminacy of this factor and others, it becomes clear that the roots of our different approaches are much more deeply embedded in our political cultures.

### **GAPS IN STRATEGIC CULTURE AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES**

The concept of strategic culture characterizes how a nation or group views the role of war, the use of force, and the nature of an adversary or threat in the international system; it also helps explain how actors confront such threats.<sup>10</sup> Differences in U.S. and European strategic culture since World War II, rooted largely in their contrasting historical experiences, help explain differences in transatlantic approaches to the Middle East. As Kagan has argued, Europe's postwar experience has contributed to a strategic cul-

ture (stronger in some European states than others) favoring negotiation, commerce, international law, and multilateralism whereas the U.S. global position has favored a strategic culture supporting coercive diplomacy, the use of force, unilateralism, and the projection of U.S. values abroad (or a more moralist foreign policy with religious undertones). The European experience with colonialism in the Middle East also contributes to Europe's strategic mindset, underscoring the limits of military force and occupation.

**For Washington, the road to peace may run through Baghdad...**

Moreover, postcolonial ties between Europeans and Arab as well as Muslim states reinforces the European inclination for policies of negotiation and diplomacy.

These differences in strategic culture also lead to differences in U.S. and European historical narratives, or views of how events in a region such as the Middle East have played out over the years. For ex-

ample, because Europeans are generally more averse to the use of force, their historical narrative of the Iraq war is developing differently than the U.S. narrative—the majority of Americans view the Iraq war as worth the loss of life and other costs it incurred while the majority of Europeans do not.<sup>11</sup> Although such characterizations are naturally generalizations, particularly on the European side, with its multitude of foreign policy positions, these basic differences in strategic culture capture the essence of policy orientations on each side, including those on key Middle Eastern issues.

Different U.S. and European approaches toward the Arab-Israeli conflict provide another example of how disparate strategic cultures and historical narratives can lead to divergent policies. For Americans, the 1967 Six-Day War, a seminal historic event, was an unavoidable preemptive war to protect a nation's survival; Europeans view the 1967 war as the event that began the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. Although Israel initially benefited from post-Holocaust sympathy in Europe, the 1967 war and subsequent developments, particularly the first and second Palestinian Intifadas, shifted the image of Israel from an underdog to an aggressor in European public opinion, even in more traditionally pro-Israel states such as Germany and the Netherlands. The U.S. openness to the use of force, particularly since the September 11 attacks, allows for a much higher tolerance for Israeli policies (which it views as necessary measures of self-defense) than does the European perspective, which sees Israeli military responses as disproportionate and counterproductive. As a recent analysis explained, "Many Europeans' relative lack of sympathy for Israel may be related to the fact that Israel is a militarily robust nation-state that would rather fight its enemies than be killed by them."<sup>12</sup>



The U.S. preference for projecting its values, particularly democracy, abroad also helps explain U.S. positions toward Israel and the peace process. The U.S. tilt toward Israel is not just the result of the pro-Israel lobby; the fact that Israel is a democracy that shares Western values appeals to the U.S. public at large and increases its political support across the U.S. political spectrum. The United States' desire to oust Arafat and promote internal Palestinian political reform also stems from this strategic culture, while Europe's preference for negotiation and engagement helps explain its reluctance to exclude the Palestinian leader. In addition, European aversion to unilateral policies and the historical legacy of the Berlin Wall contribute to European unease with Israel's current policy of building a security fence. Americans, more often the target of terrorism than Europeans, are more sympathetic with Israel's claim that a fence is necessary to stem terrorist attacks, although there is rising concern in Washington about Israeli plans to construct the fence deep inside Palestinian territory.

Moreover, an increasingly accepted notion in the Bush White House and among many in the U.S. policy community—that the political and economic backwardness of the broader region is at the core of Middle Eastern problems—is at odds with European sympathy for the Arab perspective which holds the Arab-Israeli conflict primarily accountable for the region's ills. Ultimately the real danger may be the fundamentally different views of the United States and Europe about the role of the peace process in Middle Eastern diplomacy. In Washington's eyes, the road to peace may run through Baghdad, but for Europeans, it still runs through Jerusalem. Containing the conflict may be enough for Washington at this stage, but it is not enough for many in Europe. Thus, despite the greater policy convergence and coordination across the Atlantic on the peace process now than at any other point of the Arab-Israeli conflict, this basic divide between the U.S. and European approaches toward the parties and the issue itself is likely to remain a source of tension for some years to come.

**...but for  
Europeans, the road  
to peace runs  
through Jerusalem.**

### **CONTRASTING THREAT PERCEPTIONS**

Differences in strategic culture and contrasting historical narratives also lead to different threat perceptions regarding key Middle Eastern problems. True, recent polls indicate that Europeans and Americans have similar views of international threats, particularly the terrorist threat. Yet, polling data can be superficial, not enabling analysts to evaluate how perceptions or

**E**uropeans do not view proliferation as an immediate security threat.

rationale may still differ on each side of the Atlantic. For example, according to the *Transatlantic Trends 2003* poll, 70 percent of Americans and Europeans view international terrorism as an “extremely important threat,”<sup>13</sup> but this number does not reflect how each side perceives the nature of the threat, that is, whether the threat is existential, whether the United States or Europe is more vulnerable to such threats, and so forth. Moreover, in a

2002 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations/German Marshall Fund poll, Europeans and Americans both placed international terrorism at the top of their list of threats, but the gap in how seriously the two groups viewed this threat was great: 64 percent of Europeans believed terrorism was a critical threat as opposed to 91 percent of Americans.<sup>14</sup>

Europeans also are more likely to distinguish among terrorist groups seeking clear political objectives (with whom they are willing to work) and those who are not, while Americans are more likely to group all terrorist movements together as an evil that must be eradicated, usually by force. For example, the Europeans view Palestinian terrorist groups in a political context, which explains their reluctance until just recently to place the political wing of Hamas on the EU terrorist list and their continued opposition to placing Hizballah on the list. In contrast, the U.S. government places all wings of these organizations on the U.S. terrorist list. Because Europe’s experience with terrorism has historically been associated with groups seeking defined political objectives, in contrast to the more catastrophic U.S. experience, European and U.S. counterterrorism efforts also differ, with the United States pursuing more aggressive, Manichaeian policies. With the initial shock and natural extension of support after the September 11 attacks increasingly behind us, it is ever more important to recognize that the United States and Europe regard terrorism through two distinct strategic prisms.

The issues of a potential Iranian nuclear program and of WMD proliferation more generally, while increasingly a shared area of concern, provide another example of contrasting threat perceptions. The Bush administration expresses overriding concern that WMD in the hands of states such as Iran or in those of international terrorists poses a serious military threat to the United States. Although they acknowledge the heightened importance of the WMD issue, Europeans do not view proliferation as an immediate security threat.<sup>15</sup> On the specific issue of Iran developing WMD, fewer Europeans (46 percent) than Americans (57 percent) view this as an “extremely important threat” (support is even lower in key countries such as France [36

percent] and Germany [39 percent]),<sup>16</sup> and they are much less supportive than Americans of using military force to confront the problem.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, European concern about Iran's nuclear program reveals other motivations beyond a military threat, ranging from a desire by some (particularly the French) to avoid a second major conflict with the United States to concerns about the precedent an Iranian nuclear capability would set for the region and the future of the nonproliferation regime.

In short, U.S. and European interpretations of the Iranian threat and responses to it differ, as do the rationales for concern. Despite the current transatlantic agreement on supporting the IAEA's effort to force Iranian acceptance of an additional safeguards protocol and to resolve all outstanding issues related to its nuclear program,<sup>18</sup> the basic gap in threat perception could provide the basis for another transatlantic conflict. For example, agreement between the United States and Europe on steps to take if Iran does not comply with the IAEA and the recent European-Iranian agreement, or if it complies but the Americans remain convinced that Iran is continuing a covert nuclear weapons program, is far from assured. If Iran remains defiant and the allies agree to move the issue to the UN Security Council, it is not clear that they will agree on subsequent steps within the UN forum. At present, political will is weak in Europe for sanctions against Iran, let alone the use of coercive measures. Would the United States and the EU then be able to agree, for example, on what types of Iranian violations, if any, would justify a preventive military strike? At the end of the day, the European preference for talking things out and the U.S. willingness to slug things out may remain. The presence of European diplomats in Tehran, in contrast to the paucity of U.S.-Iranian contact, only reinforces this tendency.

### **EMERGING ROLE CONFLICTS**

Role perceptions, or how each side perceives its role in the international arena, helps explain how the divergent U.S. and European approaches to international affairs, and Middle East policy in particular, have spiraled into major clashes. European state participation in the institution of the EU is creating new role perceptions for European states and the union as a whole and has begun to lead to role conflicts within Europe for some member states, particularly those interested in maintaining active ties to transatlantic institutions such as NATO. Although the European project is a continuing process, the end of the Cold War led to serious internal thinking about Europe's role in the world—politically, culturally, and militarily. Although Europe's focus continues to be primarily internal, particularly with its approaching enlargement from 15 to 25 member states, the sense that Europe

needs to project its power externally in a way that is commensurate with its economic stature is growing among Europeans, as evidenced by the *Transatlantic Trends 2003* poll, with the overwhelming majority of Europeans desiring the EU to become “a superpower, like the United States.”<sup>19</sup>

Although some individual European states, particularly France, have long desired that the EU project a global leadership position, most member states have traditionally viewed the European integration process as a means of keeping the peace and promoting prosperity in Europe and not necessarily of

**Europeans are increasingly uneasy with the ‘doing the dishes’ model of foreign policy.**

projecting power abroad. Some big powers such as Great Britain have been critical of a strong EU common foreign and security policy, fearing such common policy would threaten core national interests, while Germany and smaller member states have been more supportive of a common external policy. More recently, however, particularly with the 1999 establishment of an EU foreign policy chief, there is a growing European desire to play a more significant political and perhaps

even military role in global affairs, including on key Middle East policy issues. This evolving role perception has not yet been matched by reality, as continuing division within the EU makes a common foreign and security policy difficult to implement—a problem which will only worsen with enlargement—and as European nations are not willing to increase defense spending to levels that would ensure the ability to project military power abroad. Although some European policy elites desire ultimately to challenge U.S. power, most prefer to play a complementary role where Europe’s political importance in key policy issues begins to match its economic significance.

In other words, Europeans are increasingly uneasy with the “doing the dishes” model of foreign policy, cleaning up with economic and peacekeeping support after U.S. operations. They increasingly want a greater say in initial policy decisions and, if need be, military operations. The more the European role perception evolves from an internal focus on creating a model “paradise” for others to emulate to an active interest in projecting influence beyond the continent, the more likely are clashes with the United States, whose contending role perception, which has strengthened during the last decade, is that of the indispensable nation ultimately responsible for global order.

Overall, Europe’s strategic culture and role perception creates two fundamental disputes with the United States, in questions about the use of force and in defining the caretaker of the international system as a multilateral order as opposed to an indispensable defender. The clash of strategic cul-

tures, then, exacerbates divergent role perceptions as each side views its model as the preferable way to manage threats that the two sides perceive with different severity in the first place.

## **Compulsory Cooperation**

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How can the United States and Europe manage these deeply rooted differences in their approaches to Middle East policy? By actively cultivating cooperation and common strategic views and remaining realistic about the challenges facing a transatlantic agenda on the Middle East. Specifically, they can take the following steps toward collectively addressing the region's key problems.

- *Avoid a divide-and-rule strategy for Europe.*

The United States should avoid its current tendency to pick and choose among European allies, tacitly encouraging European division, and recognize instead that a united and stronger external European policy is not by definition detrimental to U.S. interests. In other words, Americans need to overcome their perception that a united Europe means a French Europe, determined to thwart U.S. dominance. Indeed, recent polling suggests that most Europeans want a stronger Europe to cooperate, not compete, with the United States. In Middle East policy, a more united European position has generally led to a more balanced and cooperative European stance, as increased coordination on Iran and the peace process has demonstrated. The United States is more likely to come to agreement with a relatively united and cooperative Europe than with a deeply divided and resentful one.

- *Build on European contributions to Middle Eastern security.*

Europe could undoubtedly do a better job of public relations in the United States by explaining the extent and nature of its contributions to Middle Eastern security. Considering its poor reputation when it comes to the Middle East, particularly after the war in Iraq, this task will be difficult but not impossible, as most Americans still view Europe favorably. U.S. policy elites should recognize and build on, rather than view skeptically and suspiciously, European contributions in the region, from the German peacekeeping role in Afghanistan to the EU's financial contributions to the PA and projects related to the peace process. Recognizing rather than downplaying such contributions could help encourage future constructive and cooperative behavior as well as lower resentment among Europeans who feel that Americans do not take their contributions seriously.

- *Engage in a dialogue on respective security strategies.*

Since the United States presented its national security strategy in the fall of 2002 with its prominent focus on the strategy of preemption, many Europeans have become suspicious of U.S. motives and objectives in maintaining global order. Although the war in Iraq only exacerbated European fears of a growing U.S. tendency to go it alone and engage in preemptive conflict, it also prompted the Europeans to begin drafting their own security strategy document, scheduled to be approved by the end of 2003. In an effort to avoid further marginalization after Iraq, the European document reflects many U.S. concerns, including the threat of terrorism and proliferation, but it also reflects distinct European positions and approaches to security issues. The formulation of documents such as this one allows a perfect opportunity for a transatlantic dialogue on the key questions that emerge from them, particularly the question of if and when preemption is a suitable strategy for addressing contemporary security challenges. Given that the Middle East is a central playground for the implementation of such strategies, an exchange of views on these documents could help foster cooperation on core Middle East policy issues.

- *Institutionalize the Quartet.*

Many Europeans are increasingly frustrated that the Quartet has transformed into an ineffective body, which has neutralized a European voice on peace process issues while failing to produce concrete results on the ground. Some segments of the U.S. administration never took this coordinating mechanism seriously. Consequently, many policy elites are questioning the value of continuing the Quartet process. Even if the Middle East road map ultimately fails, however, the Quartet can still serve as a useful mechanism for U.S.-European dialogue and cooperation on Arab-Israeli issues. An independent European approach is unlikely to produce better results in the current political context and will only serve to aggravate transatlantic relations further.

Those in the United States who worry about making the peace process a multilateral one would do well to keep in mind that EU positions in the Quartet are much closer to U.S. positions than a unilateral French or British position might be. Although completely shutting the Europeans out of the process might sound appealing to some, it is no longer an option; at the very least, a European role will be essential to implementing any peace agreement and perhaps even to negotiating it in the first place. The days of the United States running the peace process unilaterally are numbered, if not over, even if it will still play the lead role.

- *Jointly focus on regional reform.*

Good policy needs vision, but vision is not enough. The United States and Europe need to improve coordination in promoting practical regional cooperation as well as political and economic reform. Currently, transatlantic coordination in this area is scarce. The Europeans independently have been running a Euro-Mediterranean process since the 1995 Barcelona conference, which has thus far produced primarily bilateral free-trade agreements with regional parties. The Americans have more recently promoted similar ideas, calling for the eventual establishment of a regional free-trade area but based initially on bilateral agreements. The two sides should evaluate and perhaps streamline such efforts, considering that promoting internal reform in the Middle East is one area in which transatlantic disagreement should be negligible.

**E**uropeans and Americans cannot afford to be complacent and expect cooperation.

- *Reestablish a regional security process.*

In addition to promoting regional reform jointly, the United States and Europe should be supporting (preferably with the Russians) the renewal of a regional security process. The absence of regional security dialogues and multilateral security institutions in the Middle East is a serious problem, as many of the region's security dilemmas are regionally based and cannot be resolved on a bilateral level. Even if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were resolved, a multitude of other security problems in the region would remain (e.g., arms races, proliferation of WMD, water disputes, the Kurdish problem, the democracy deficit, economic development) and could benefit from a regional forum for dialogue and cooperation. The altered regional security environment today would potentially allow key parties in the region who previously were excluded from regional security dialogues, most notably Iraq and Iran, to join in the process. The exclusion of such critical actors in the previous regional security dialogue process (the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group, or ACRS) in the early 1990s undermined the credibility of the efforts of that process. Aside from dealing with the substantive problems of arms control and regional security, a new regional security group would also support more general efforts to normalize the region and integrate Israel into the regional landscape, helping to create a more positive environment for the tough road ahead on the bilateral peacemaking front.

## Aligning Threats and Policies with Interests

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The example of Iraq demonstrates the need for material and political support from European allies to address the shared challenges emanating from the Middle East adequately. None of the major problems in the region today—terrorism, proliferation, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, regional political and economic reform—can be solved by one power alone. A stable, democratic, and prosperous Middle East depends on the United States and Europe working together in the region.

Building cooperation on areas such as those identified above to promote a transatlantic agenda will not entirely narrow the transatlantic divide nor avoid future crises, but it can contribute to a more pragmatic and hopefully constructive approach toward a region that is likely to affect global stability for some time to come. Europeans and Americans cannot afford to be complacent and to expect that a variety of common threats emanating from the Middle East will inherently produce transatlantic cooperation. Rather, both sides need to recognize how and why their approaches to the region are riddled with differences and then work actively to cultivate a common strategic agenda and dialogue on key problems in the Middle East to ensure that such cooperation occurs despite them.

## Notes

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1. For examples of transatlantic differences in Middle East policy up until the 1990s, see Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Sturmer, eds., *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East* (Boston: MIT Press, 1997); Philip Gordon, *The Transatlantic Allies and the Changing Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998); Richard N. Haass, ed., *Transatlantic Tensions* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999); Volker Perthes, "The Advantages of Complementarity: U.S. and European Policies Toward the Middle East Peace Process," *International Spectator* 35, no. 2 (April–June 2000): 41–56; Phebe Marr, "The United States, Europe, and the Middle East: An Uneasy Triangle," *Middle East Journal* 48, no. 2 (spring 1994): 211–225; Rosemary Hollis, "Europe and the Middle East: Power by Stealth?" *International Affairs* 73, no. 1 (January 1997): 15–29.
2. Timothy Garton Ash, "Anti-Europeanism in America," *New York Review of Books*, February 13, 2003.
3. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July/August 2003): 74–89. For an influential view of a pessimist, see Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).
4. For a European analysis of the terrorist and proliferation threat, see Harald Müller, "Terrorism, Proliferation: A European Threat Assessment," *Chailot Papers* no. 58 (Institute for Security Studies, March 2003), <http://aei.pitt.edu/archive/00000520/01/chai58e.pdf> (accessed October 14, 2003).
5. For the EU statement on WMD, see "Presidency Conclusions: Thessaloniki Euro-



- pean Council, 19 and 20 June 2003,” annex II (“Declaration on Non Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction”), <http://ue.eu.int/pressData/en/ec/76279.pdf> (accessed October 14, 2003).
6. See General Affairs and External Relations, 2518th Council Meeting, External Relations, Luxembourg, June 16, 2003, located at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/NewMain.asp?LANG=1> (accessed October 9, 2003). Similar statements on Iran were issued at subsequent External Relations meetings in Brussels on July 21, 2003, and in Brussels on September 29, 2003. *Ibid.*
  7. See Ronald D. Asmus and Kenneth M. Pollack, “The New Transatlantic Project,” *Policy Review* no. 115 (October/November 2002), [www.policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus\\_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus_print.html) (accessed February 10, 2003).
  8. See Dana H. Allin and Steven Simon, “The Moral Psychology of U.S. Support for Israel,” *Survival* 45, no. 3 (autumn 2003): 123–144.
  9. Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, pp. 61–62, n. 46.
  10. On the concept of strategic culture and an interesting application, see Alastair Iain Johnston, “Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China,” in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
  11. See *Transatlantic Trends 2003: Topline Data* (July 2003), p. 28, [www.transatlantictrends.org/apps/gmf/ttweb.nsf/0/DA5A3225751A264585256D78000D5F66/\\$file/Transatlantic+Trends+Survey+Results+2003.pdf](http://www.transatlantictrends.org/apps/gmf/ttweb.nsf/0/DA5A3225751A264585256D78000D5F66/$file/Transatlantic+Trends+Survey+Results+2003.pdf) (accessed October 14, 2003) (project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo). When asked whether the war in Iraq was worth the loss of life and other costs incurred, 55 percent of Americans and 25 percent of Europeans responded affirmatively. Seventy percent of Europeans disagreed while only 36 percent of Americans responded negatively.
  12. Allin and Simon, “Moral Psychology of U.S. Support for Israel,” p. 135.
  13. *Transatlantic Trends 2003*.
  14. See “American and European Public Opinion & Foreign Policy,” *Worldviews 2002*, p. 9 fig. 1-2, [www.worldviews.org/detailreports/compreport.pdf](http://www.worldviews.org/detailreports/compreport.pdf) (accessed October 14, 2003).
  15. See Müller, “Terrorism, Proliferation,” p. 97.
  16. *Transatlantic Trends 2003*, p. 21.
  17. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–36.
  18. For an analysis of international efforts to address Iran’s nuclear program, see Patrick Clawson, “Gaining Support for Action on Iran’s Nuclear Program,” *Policywatch* no. 784, August 27, 2003, [www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch2003/784.htm](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch2003/784.htm) (accessed October 14, 2003), and International Crisis Group, “Dealing with Iran’s Nuclear Program,” *Middle East Report* no. 18, Amman/Brussels, October 27, 2003, [www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/106727645616.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/106727645616.htm) (accessed October 29, 2003).
  19. *Transatlantic Trends 2003*, p. 9.

