



Bound to Cooperate - Europe and the Middle East II

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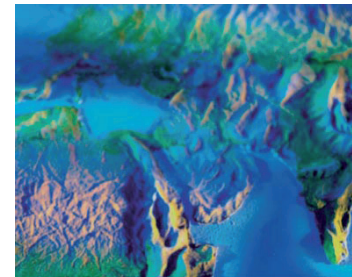
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For many the relationship between Europe and the Middle East is one that is dynamic and shifting, yet ultimately it offers immense possibilities for both to grow. Both regions seek to learn from one another and recently have begun to strengthen their relationship. But what are the challenges they face? What must Europe do to further understand the complexities of the Middle East region? These are the main themes discussed in *Bound to Cooperate - Europe and the Middle East II*. Published by the Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung and edited by Christian-Peter Hanelt and Almut Moller, the book attempts to analyze and explore the questions and issues related to development in the Middle East, and how ultimately they affect Europe.

The book is a collection of papers by experts in various fields including analysts, policymakers and business representatives, and this is one of its key strengths. The writers are from the Middle East, Europe and the US and, therefore, offer different viewpoints. At the same time, the book never loses its main focus on Europe and how the changes

taking place there affect its relations with the Middle East.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section examines the role of the European Union and its relationship with the Middle East. It initially explores the past, present and future engagement of the EU as a player in the Middle East and highlights the challenges that the region faces. The EU's foreign policies are then examined and critiqued. Geoffrey Edwards offers a critical assessment of the Barcelona process and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Edwards has his reservations about whether the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) can live up to its regional expectations. Iris Kempe delves into this further, analyzing the eastern and southern agendas of the EU's Neighborhood Policy and highlights the challenges and differences within the EU that reflect onto the ENP. By analyzing the European Union first, the book enables the reader



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to understand how the structure and functions of the EU impact its role in the Middle East, which can also explain the behavior of the EU towards the region.

The economic relationship between the Middle East and Europe is discussed in Giacomo Luciani's analysis of GCC and EU relations. Luciani explains this unique link that the EU has, and also shows how closely related the two regional blocs have become. What is also mentioned is the idea that Europe has always had an instinctive preference for relations with other regional groupings. This relates to the 'Bound to Cooperate' idea from which the book takes its title. This section concludes with Michele Dunne's macro analysis of the growing triangle of EU, Middle East and US relations which also touches on the recent strains in EU-US relations.

Part II of the book focuses specifically on the major political issue facing the Middle East, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict. The book's strength in this part relates to the fact that both the Palestinian and Israeli sides of the conflict are covered. Yossi Alpher covers the Israeli perspective and offers a detailed analysis of Israeli regional interaction in recent years, and highlights Israel's concerns about the level of commitment among Arab states. Ghassan Khatib provides the Palestinian perspective of the conflict and highlights the importance of the Arab Peace initiative. The role of Iran and Syria are also covered as major players in Middle Eastern politics. More significant, however, is the chapter devoted to the European role in the Annapolis and Paris processes. Christian Peter-Hanelt expertly discusses both processes and also highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives. He notes the lack of concern among the Arab states with regard to the peace initiative, and how their role is crucial,

especially that of Saudi Arabia, to move the process further. He also stresses that Europe should attempt to better exert its influence over Washington in order to see such processes come to fruition.

Part III takes on the various transformation processes occurring in the Middle East by looking at the political, social and cultural aspects of change in the region. Included here are such themes as democratization and reform, the role of women, and the changing media landscape of the Middle East. Julia Schmitt-Thiel, for example, clearly highlights the general complexities of the role of women in Middle Eastern political society and their successes and failures. In the final chapter entitled *The Rise of Political Islam and the Implications for European Foreign Policy*, Ivesa Lubben successfully discusses the rise of Islamist movements in the Middle East while at the same time highlighting the role that Europe plays in this regard. (It was interesting to learn about the increased dialogue between some European countries and Islamist movements.)

Bound to Cooperate - Europe and the Middle East II is a well-structured and illuminating insight into the dynamic relationship between Europe and the Middle East. It does well to highlight the many challenges facing the Middle East and how Europe can play a role in shaping the region's future. The scholars are quick to highlight the many criticisms that often face the EU regarding its role in the Middle East and offer suggestions on how relations can be improved. Equally, the articles are well-written and researched and do attempt to offer a legitimate balance in terms of arguments explored. The book also provides an interesting look at recent developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Because of their geography and history, the EU and the Middle East are ultimately bound to cooperate.