

# ATANGLEDWEB: THE MAKING OF FOREIGN POLICY IN THE NIXON PRESIDENCY

BY WILLIAM BUNDY  
NEW YORK: HILL & WANG, 1998, 768 PAGES

RUSSELL CRANDALL

Book Reviews

Most of the earlier books written on the foreign policy of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger tended to take one-sided positions, painting the two men as either saints or sinners. Most illustrative was journalist Seymour Hersh's scathing portrayal *The Price of Power*,<sup>1</sup> which established itself as almost a bible for many critics on the Left. On the other side of the spectrum, both Nixon's and Kissinger's widely read memoirs were successful in shaping history from their own personal accounts of events. This was reinforced by Kissinger's book *Diplomacy*, in which he attempted to place their accomplishments within a wide historical tapestry. Therefore, it is no surprise that nuance and objectivity were conspicuously absent from these partisan histories. Yet, more recent years have brought more reason and objectivity to the analysis of the Nixon-Kissinger era, illustrated best perhaps by Walter Isaacson's *Kissinger*. The growing consensus suggests that their tenure was marked at once by impressive achievement and contestable conduct. This view is most impressively validated in William Bundy's *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency*. It is a well researched, illuminating book that contributes to an understanding of both the performance and interplay of these two charismatic figures of American diplomacy.

Although the reader can feel confident that Bundy's analysis is objective, his portrayal remains critical. It is at times scathingly so. The fact that Bundy is the quintessential product of the foreign policy establishment makes his criticism all the more valuable. Probably more than any other American statesman in history, Henry Kissinger has successfully discredited his critics by painting them as leftist muckraking journalists or unaccountable academics who create conspiracy theories out of

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thin air. However, given Bundy's solid insider credentials—he was the editor of *Foreign Affairs* for twelve years, the veritable mouthpiece of the foreign policy establishment—Kissinger will have to come up with much more substantive rebuttals, if he wants to discount the criticisms laid out in this book. It should be noted that Bundy was a senior level State Department official during the Johnson administration. Therefore, the reader must wonder if he is not using this biography to somehow get back at Nixon and Kissinger for the contempt with which they viewed and treated the Foreign Service. However, the tone of writing avoids overt vindictiveness and flamboyant accusations, which bolsters confidence in Bundy's depiction.

Bundy is at his best in his analysis of Nixon and Kissinger's policies in Southeast Asia. He deftly traces Richard Nixon's consistent pattern of subterfuge back to the days when Nixon was running for president. In order to boost his chances of victory in the November elections, Nixon essentially torpedoed the 1968 peace talks by hinting to the South Vietnamese government that they would get a better deal from the North Vietnamese if they held out until the new Nixon administration had assumed office. As Bundy shows throughout the book, this type of self-serving, deceptive diplomacy would come to characterize the Nixon administration.

According to Bundy, Nixon and Kissinger entered the Vietnam whirlpool knowing that the United States would probably not win the war and that the American public was quickly becoming tired of a conflict that was showing few tangible results other than black body bags being sent home and domestic economic repercussions. Nixon and Kissinger began skillfully using coverwords like "vietnamization" and "peace with honor" to create an image that the administration was doing all it could to extract U.S. troops from the conflict while maintaining America's strategic interests in the region. Bundy makes a convincing case that this type of "extrication with dignity" was essentially a sham, arguing that these policies were intended to influence public opinion rather than to serve as an effective strategy in Vietnam. Indeed, a major theme in the book is that Nixon's and Kissinger's highly personalized foreign policy was driven primarily by a concern with public approval ratings and not so much by the desire to truly strengthen America's position in the world. While this point could credibly be made of the foreign policy of many U.S. presidents, Bundy's criticism cuts deeper because it targets the two men who championed themselves as the masters of geopolitical strategy and realism.

Although Kissinger and Nixon told the American public that they were doing everything to end the conflict in Vietnam, they could never

accept defeat in Southeast Asia, believing that this would weaken the United States's international standing. Thus, they had to devise a way to make the U.S. public believe that the war was winding down and also to convince Ho Chi Minh and other enemies that Nixon was committed to stopping their aggression. The solution they chose was to bomb and bomb again. Their thinking was that this would keep U.S. troops out of harms way but still inflict a terrible toll on the Vietcong. The reader learns how Nixon and Kissinger were actually expanding the war—by bombing Vietcong strongholds in South Vietnam, and secretly bombing Cambodia and Laos—at the exact same time that they were convincing the American public that the war would soon be over. Bundy recounts how Nixon presented the conflict in Vietnam during a nationally televised speech in 1969: “In short, he proclaimed a policy of controlled reduction in the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He made no reference to the continued large-scale use of airpower in South Vietnam and gave no hint of the bombing of Cambodia. At the end, he appealed eloquently and explicitly to the patriotic instincts of a ‘silent majority’ of the public, while linking his policy goal to a ‘just and lasting peace.’”<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, this strategy would have consequences. Bundy shows how Nixon began bombing Cambodia—an ostensibly neutral country—in order to hit Vietcong targets nestled along its border with Vietnam. The war then quickly became Nixon's war. Nixon and Kissinger always claimed that they inherited the Vietnam quagmire from the Johnson Administration and that their efforts served to resolve problems that others had created. It is true that the conflict in Vietnam was inherited from previous administrations, but the decision to bomb Cambodia and to send U.S. ground troops across the border was all Nixon's doing. Bundy thus believes that he must share a certain amount of the blame for the subsequent rise to power of the Khmer Rouge and the genocide they inflicted upon Cambodian society. Nixon's policy in Cambodia manifests a theme that Bundy touches on throughout the book: both Nixon and Kissinger were unabashed realists obsessed with short-term victories, while neglecting the potential long-term consequences of their actions. In Cambodia, they focused on the immediate pressure that the bombings would put on the Vietcong, but they never realized how destabilizing the sorties—American planes dropped over 20,000 tons of bombs in an eleven-day period by late 1972—would be for the already teetering government of Lon Nol in Phnom Penh.

While Bundy is correct to criticize Nixon and Kissinger for their policies in Cambodia, he is off the mark in his assertion that the American public was essentially deceived into tolerating this duplicitous policy. The

relatively small but increasingly vocal anti-war movement aside, the American public probably wanted to believe the myths created by the White House that somehow the United States could simultaneously withdraw from Vietnam, keep the South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu's regime in power and maintain its international credibility vis-à-vis the Soviet government, the Chinese government and its European allies. While it would eventually provoke Congress into passing amendments curbing the power of an "imperial presidency,"<sup>3</sup> the bombing of Cambodia did not provoke the type of outrage that we now know it merited. Bundy writes, "strong action of any sort, whether by way of escalation or toward peace, tended to produce an upward 'spike' in public support."<sup>4</sup> Thus, along with Nixon and Kissinger, the American public and much of the membership of Congress deserve at least some of the blame for prolonging the war.

The opening of China is almost invariably portrayed as the high point of the Nixon administration's diplomatic efforts, with Henry Kissinger getting most of the praise for being the prescient, behind-the-scenes catalyst who sensed and then exploited a growing split between the Soviet Union and China. Bundy gives both men credit for breaking the ice that had hardened after the Korean war in the early 1950s, but he is quick to add that any Sino-American rapprochement was probably inevitable, that it did little to put pressure on the North Vietnamese to negotiate and that actual recognition of China did not occur until 1978.

None of these caveats mattered to Nixon and Kissinger, as they milked every ounce of publicity out of this diplomatic initiative in order to increase their own prestige. These types of high profile initiatives solidified Kissinger's transformation from the relatively low-profile National Security Advisor into an international celebrity. While this was probably great for Kissinger's ego, Bundy wonders if it was so great for long-term American interests. "[The Kissinger-Nixon years were the] ages of personalities, roughly comparable to the period of the nineteenth century during and after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Whether its results were equally lasting is another question."<sup>5</sup>

Bundy balances his harsh criticism of Nixon-Kissinger policies in Southeast Asia with a generally favorable evaluation of their efforts in the Middle East, especially during and after the Yom Kippur war in 1973. Kissinger gets especially high marks for his shuttle diplomacy at a time when Nixon was preoccupied with the increasingly incriminating Watergate investigation. Indeed, Kissinger's deft handling of the distinct yet equally combative leaders in Cairo, Tel Aviv and Damascus is now a case study for budding Foreign Service Officers seeking to learn the finer points of effective diplomacy. Bundy also notes that Kissinger took tremendous steps toward ameliorating the intractable conflict among Egypt,

Israel and Syria thus setting the stage for the historic Camp David Accords. At the same time, however, Kissinger gave unqualified support—including unrestricted military sales—to the repressive regime of the Shah of Iran, who, along with the royal family in Saudi Arabia, was considered a pillar of U.S. policy in the region. As in Cambodia, Bundy believes that this “myopic realism” forestalled Nixon and Kissinger from understanding that short-term support of a repressive regime might create a long-term backlash. In this case, the long-term consequences were seen in 1979 when Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy and held Americans hostage for 444 days.

Bundy’s most persistent and binding theme in his portrayal of the Nixon-Kissinger years is perhaps the levels of secrecy and deception with which they carried out their policies. Whether it was the secret bombing of Cambodia, the opening of China or moves to overthrow the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile, Nixon and Kissinger kept just about everyone in the dark, including the State Department and Congress. Bundy believes that this chronic pattern of deception guaranteed the ultimate failure of their policies, since the lack of consultation meant their support ultimately rested on a weakening consensus and a thin veneer of legitimacy. He contrasts this style to that of Harry Truman, who Bundy claims established popular and effective policies, such as the Berlin Airlift and the creation of NATO, by frequently consulting Congress on his positions and truthfully selling the American public on the ideas. What Bundy fails to mention is that, aside from whether or not they were more honest, Truman’s policies were almost always more successful than Nixon’s, and this goes a long way in explaining their widespread approval. Moreover, like Nixon, Truman and his Secretary of State Dean Acheson were perfectly willing to make claims of executive prerogative and circumvent established procedures for informing Congress, as exemplified by their decision not to seek a declaration of war for the conflict in Korea. So, while Nixon might have been the ultimate post-World War II “imperial president,” there is little doubt that he learned much from Truman.

*A Tangled Web* might have benefited from a little more compression. For example, the pages devoted to the minute detail on U.S. grain policy towards the Soviet Union in the détente era presses beyond the patience and needs of most informed readers. Nevertheless, William Bundy has written an important work that strongly contributes to the ultimate historical verdict on the Nixon-Kissinger era. An old adage states that the victors—in this case the establishment—write the history; after reading *A Tangled Web* one must begin to wonder if history has begun to turn

against Nixon and Kissinger. Yet, knowing how committed he is to shaping his own legacy, one can have little doubt that Henry Kissinger has not yet spoken his last word to defend his place in history. ■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998), 82.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Imperial Presidency* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> Bundy, 155.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

# ALLIES DIVIDED: TRANSATLANTIC POLICIES FOR THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

EDITED BY ROBERT BLACKWILL AND MICHAEL STUERMER  
CAMBRIDGE, MA: MIT PRESS, 1997, 325 PAGES.

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The Middle East was only a secondary arena for superpower rivalry throughout the Cold War period. Middle Eastern countries were divided by their alignment with either the United States or the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, the Soviet threat to Western Europe has been replaced by multiple threats, many of them coming from the Middle East. Therefore, the role of the Middle East in international politics has taken on a new dimension since the early 1990s, and its strategic importance to the Atlantic Alliance of the United States and Western Europe has increased.

After the failed attempt of Britain and France to adopt an independent policy regarding the Middle East during the Suez Crisis of 1956, European countries and the United States have acted mostly in unison in this region. However, since the threat of a Communist takeover has receded, growing divisions within the Atlantic Alliance have developed most notably in policies toward the Middle East. Comprehensive analyses of Western policies toward the Greater Middle East<sup>1</sup> are still relatively rare. It is in this context that *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies For the Greater Middle East* fulfills a critical function and serves as a start of academic and practical discussion of transatlantic policies in the region.

Edited by Robert Blackwill, a distinguished former U.S. career diplomat specialized in West European and Russian affairs and current professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Michael Stuermer, a well-known German scholar of history and political science, *Allies Divided* brings together a group of scholars and practitioners with expertise in Middle East politics, security, nonproliferation and economic

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studies. One interesting note is that with the exception of the British author Joanna Spear and the French analyst François Heisbourg, all European authors are German. This may simply be a reflection of the nationality of the European editor, or it may be an indication of the growing German influence in shaping overall European foreign policy.

*Allies Divided* is a comprehensive analysis of six of the most current issues regarding the Greater Middle East: the Middle East Peace Process, the Persian Gulf, Turkey and the Caspian Basin, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), military force projection and overall strategic interests and policies. For each topic, an American analyst gives an American perspective and a European analyst offers a European view.

Thus, each chapter contains an historical overview of differing U.S. and European policies on the given issue, an explanation of the causes of these differences and an analysis of the future implications of a continuing divergence in policies and policy prescriptions on how greater U.S.-European cooperation can be achieved in this specific area.

### **STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND POLICIES**

The authors show that, although the long-term policy objectives of the allies are not fundamentally incompatible, the means to achieve them are very much so, and this is the main source of conflict between the parties. The editors point out that Western Europe and the United States share three vital interests in the Greater Middle East: maintaining the sustained flow of oil, obstructing the build up of WMD and preventing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, which would feed political instability. The analysis emphasizes the need for increased transatlantic cooperation to protect these vital interests and hints at the dangers if Western cooperation fails.

The most significant difference between the United States and Europe is their perceptions of threats emanating from the Middle East. For the U.S. analysts the greatest threats in the region are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the role of Libya and Iran in advancing international terrorism. The European analysts, on the other hand, point to the Middle East's "secondary strategic importance compared to the task of reconstructing Europe after the end of the Cold War."<sup>2</sup>

### **DIFFERING CONCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL INTEREST**

A primary reason for the difference in policies regarding the Greater Middle East are divergent conceptions of national interest. Throughout the book there is a distinct U.S. criticism of Europe's current focus on

deepening European integration, while paying scant attention to developments in the Middle East. Yet, these developments could impact Europe's vital economic and security interests, perhaps even more than those of the United States. Another recurrent U.S. criticism relates to Europe's strong economic ties with some of the rogue states in the region, which may make European security policy a function of its regional economic interests.

Among the most divisive issues between the Western allies are the questions of how best to prevent the proliferation of WMD in the Middle East and how to deal with the contingency of military force projection. Differing perceptions of how best to deal with the security threats emanating from the region are the main reason for differing views on the issue of force projection. While the United States is more easily ready to consider a possible military intervention, Europe is reluctant to abandon diplomacy.

Allied policies toward Iran are another source of transatlantic tensions. The United States refuses to develop any relations with Iran, unless the regime in Tehran officially changes its present attitudes toward the Middle East Peace Process, international terrorism and the purchase of WMD. Europe, however, has long favored a policy of "critical dialogue" asserting that this strategy may be more successful in influencing Iran's policies. Again, none of the analysts adopt an attitude that differs significantly from their respective official national policies.

Another recurrent theme throughout the book is the differing attitudes toward Israel and the Arab states. The European analysts are critical of Israel, while the American scholars, although adopting a more pragmatic approach, mostly echo the official U.S. pro-Israel stance. Regarding the Middle East Peace Process, both the European and the U.S. analysts recognize the fundamental differences in the role and influence of the United States and Europe. However, while the American Richard N. Haass suggests that European governments adopt a more coherent and pragmatic policy on the Middle East Peace Process and become more involved, the German Volker Perthes maintains that the United States does not allow Europe to play a greater role on this issue.

Europe and America differ in their interests and policies with regard to the Caspian region as well. Stephen Larrabee criticizes European policy toward the Caspian as insufficient and ad hoc—a criticism which is shared by the European analyst Friedemann Mueller. Mueller points out that on the issue of consolidating the independence of the Newly Independent States (NIS) in the Caspian region and securing the flow of oil, the United States adopts a geopolitical perspective, while Eu-

rope emphasizes humanitarian and regulatory projects, such as the development of a European energy charter to regulate extraction, transportation and consumption of energy resources across Europe and the NIS.

The U.S. analyst Geoffrey Kemp and his German colleague Johannes Reissner agree on the potential dangers of continued divergent U.S.-European policies toward the Gulf region. They both state the need of a joint approach in the Persian Gulf, yet they propose different strategies. Reissner suggests the establishment of an institutional framework that includes the Gulf countries in order to facilitate a regional security arrangement. Kemp argues for a division of labor between the United States and Europe to obtain the cooperation of regional players, specifically Iran. This implies that Europe would act as the “good cop” who distributes the carrots, such as economic assistance or investment programs, while the United States would act as the “bad cop” using the stick of economic sanctions and opposing Iranian involvement in major regional projects, such as the Caspian pipelines.

One topic on which the analyses of the U.S. and European authors do concur is that Europe should strengthen its ties with Turkey. Both Stephen Larrabee and Heinz Kramer are highly critical of European policies toward Turkey today and argue that Turkey’s inclusion in the European security structure is in the long-term interest of Europe. Because of this agreement, it seems that a common transatlantic policy toward Turkey could more easily be achieved than a common approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### **POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS**

Both European and American analysts criticize the insufficient cooperation and the lack of communication on Middle Eastern issues between the allies. As a result, the most cited policy prescription relates to achieving greater coordination and establishing an institutionalized system for the exchange of intelligence and the assessment of strategies toward the Greater Middle East. NATO may be the appropriate institution to coordinate efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD and to address military force projection issues. However, this implies the need to redefine NATO’s role in the post-Cold War environment—an issue that is touched upon but not explicitly addressed in *Allies Divided*. Alternatively, other existing forums, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the Wassenaar Arrangement,<sup>3</sup> are suggested as

means to systematize communication and intelligence sharing, as well as develop a consensus on policies, specifically regarding the control of proliferation of WMD.

One interesting policy prescription suggests that the allies offer Iran a “comprehensive opening to the West,” conditional upon its improved behavior “based on agreed transatlantic criteria,”<sup>4</sup> specifically relating to its support of international terrorism.

### **MULTIPLE DILEMMAS REMAIN**

The most important contribution of *Allies Divided* is that it provides views from both sides of the Atlantic, with the analyses of the U.S. and European writers complementing each other, highlighting the other side’s analytical weaknesses and expounding on the roots of different policy approaches. In addition, most of the authors place the different approaches toward the Middle East within the broader context of U.S.-European relations.

Nonetheless, all of the authors all the chapters reflect to a considerable degree their national outlook. The U.S. analysts take a decidedly more strategic perspective than the European analysts on each of the issues. The European scholars show a greater tendency to emphasize the similarities in policies between the allies, while at the same time explaining the limitations of adopting a unified European foreign policy for the region and the European Union’s unique character due to the individual foreign policy interests and priorities of its member states.

The clear message of the book is that multiple dilemmas remain. Europe is asking for a greater say in Middle Eastern affairs, although it is reluctant to provide the necessary military commitment. The U.S. government faces a similar dilemma; it stresses the need for greater European involvement and responsibility in the Middle East, while trying to impose its own perceptions and policies on its allies. Nevertheless, all the writers recognize the need for greater transatlantic coordination of policies toward the Greater Middle East and the potential dangers that can arise should that cooperation fail. Reaching a consensus on strategic purposes seems to be only the first step toward achieving a joint foreign policy. There remains much more work, for example in the form of streamlining operational requirements, as well as defining the roles of each actor.

*Allies Divided* stands out not only by being a seminal publication on a subject that markedly lacks similar research, but also because of the breadth and depth of its analysis. It is likely to achieve

the status of a reference book in the field of transatlantic policies toward the Middle East. ■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The editors define the Greater Middle East as “the huge area from North Africa through Egypt, Israel and the Tigris-Euphrates valley, through the Persian Gulf region into Turkey and the Caspian basin.” Robert D. Blackwill and Michael Stuermer, eds., *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>3</sup> The Wassenaar Agreement is the follow-on regime to Co-Com, the Cold War-era Coordinating Committee on East-West Trade, which was intended to manage and control dual-use technologies and conventional weapons exports.

<sup>4</sup> Blackwill and Stuermer, 305.

# SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: REGIONAL FUTURES AND U.S. STRATEGY

EDITED BY ZALMAY KHALILZAD AND IAN O. LESSER  
SANTA MONICA, CA: RAND CORPORATION, 1998, 336 PAGES.

PHILIP RITCHESON

**D**epicting the strategic environment in 2025 is challenging work. Expanding ranks of international actors, the diffusion of destructive capabilities and blurring boundaries complicate the task. Furthermore, power is redistributed in unpredictable ways, and the types of contingencies for which countries must prepare continue to rise. Grasping strategic ambiguity at a time of great political change is important, and thus, this book is timely. Written for specialists in foreign and defense affairs, *Sources of Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, edited by RAND Corporation analysts Zalmay Khalilzad and Ian Lesser, examines regional dynamics and trends and analyzes their implications for the U.S. Air Force and national security policy.

Khalilzad and Lesser project three alternative worlds in 2025—one is benign, one malevolent and one is an extension of today's strategic environment—to identify strategic determinants. These determinants are political and economic developments in China and Russia, the pace and extent of European integration, the internal dynamics of Middle Eastern states and the pervasiveness of proliferation. Wild cards are incorporated in the future scenarios, such as the emergence of a lethal airborne virus, revolutionary collapse and disorder in an allied country and the rise of a radical regime in a nuclear-armed country.

*Sources of Conflict* is structured around geographical regions. For instance, the Asia-Pacific chapter, which includes northeast, southeast and south Asia, focuses on the political, military, economic and social trends in the region. The chapter also provides detailed sections on China, Japan and the Koreas. The authors argue that although the region holds the

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potential for economic dynamism and technological advancement, it will still be prone to political instability and external, primarily territorial, sources of conflict. Nevertheless, Khalilzad and Lesser expect China, Japan, and India to provide alternative centers of power to the United States in the long run.

The chapter on the Greater Middle East—an area including North Africa, the Levant, and the Persian Gulf—gives a particularly informative analysis of internal and external trends. The region is prone to socioeconomic instability due to problems with demographics, urbanization, migration, resource depletion, the erosion of state control and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Islam and nationalism will continue to be important foundations for political legitimacy, although regional boundaries will continue to blur as a result of political and economic spillover.

The book less extensively analyzes the social, political and military fabric of Europe and the former Soviet Union. The authors argue that Europe is becoming a cohesive political and economic force, marked by an expanded European Union and Russia. Important for the future development of Europe will be how Central and Eastern European nations are incorporated into continental politics. Other areas of analysis examine demographics, refugee flows, the defense industry and ethnic and religious antagonisms.

Despite the strengths of the analyses described above, however, important issues were excluded from the regional analyses. Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa are not discussed, even though these regions are strongly affected by the shifting security agenda that the authors expect to challenge other regions. They also fail to mention the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the Group of Seven or the International Monetary Fund. The analysis omits significant problems associated with Asia's recent economic troubles, such as corruption, mismanagement and a lack of proper regulations. Instead, the authors focus on the region's economic rise and predict that the region will retain "relatively high [economic growth] for at least another two decades."<sup>1</sup> Khalilzad and Lesser allow for political reversal and instability in Southeast Asia, but assume a continued militarization and do not anticipate economic downturns. In light of the region's current difficulties, such a scenario seems myopic. Military acquisitions have already been curtailed and orders canceled as a result of the severe economic problems now facing the East Asian economies. Thus, predictions of a U.S. power and position loss in the region are premature.

There are further shortcomings in the book. For instance, the absence of country studies represents a major weakness of the Middle East chapter. Given the strategic importance of Egypt, Iran, Israel and Turkey, these countries should have been given special attention. In the chapter on Europe, the likelihood of crime and corruption disintegrating the fragile political and socioeconomic foundations in Russia is mentioned in passing, even though these topics deserve concentrated analysis. The potential for conflict between the NATO allies Turkey and Greece is not discussed, the Western European Union is infrequently mentioned and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe not at all. Although non-state actors and political fragmentation are considered, nationalism is not seen as a source of conflict. Moreover, the authors do not discuss the effects on European political and economic cohesion of a political turn to the left, as manifest by recent elections in European countries.

The future visions and descriptions of the U.S. Air Force in 2025 lack meaningful analysis. The characteristics presented—global awareness, global reach, rapid reaction and appropriate force—are ordinary and unsurprising, hardly offering insights about the kind of Air Force the nation will need in 2025. *Global Engagement*,<sup>2</sup> the outline of the Air Force's strategic concept, and the description of its organizational formation in *Air Expeditionary Forces* provide more thorough and thoughtful insights into the Air Force's future role.

The authors introduce controversial concepts in the book, such as offensive and defensive information operations, without building any support for them. In addition, Khalilzad and Lesser hardly mention information technology and its impact on warfare or its accumulation and planned use by nation-states or groups hostile to the United States.

Most disconcerting, key subjects were not emphasized. The book offers almost no examination of space as a theater of operations. It only superficially contemplates Air Force missions and organizational configurations or training and experimentation. Theater and national missile defenses or the future role of nuclear weapons are not considered. Weaponized unmanned aerial vehicles and trans-atmospheric vehicles, the prospects for stealth, lasers, miniaturization, on-demand satellite launches or the military impact of commercial satellite networks are not included either.

To sum up, the regional chapters, written by multiple RAND analysts in 1996, analyze many components of the future strategic environment with precision. However, the fact that each chapter has a different approach and structure leaves the impression of a cobbled-together set of

analyses that hinders cross-regional comparisons. The authors do not provide an index, which would have been helpful given the large number of subjects covered. Prescriptions for the Air Force and national security policy are mundane. Although the regional analyses are useful, they are incomplete, and thus *Sources of Conflict* may prove a frustrating read. ■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Zalmay Khalilzad and Ian O. Lesser, eds., *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century: Regional Futures and U.S. Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1998), 52.

<sup>2</sup>More information on the strategic concept *Global Engagement* can be found on the Air Force pages on the World Wide Web: <http://www.af.mil/current/global/index4.html>.