

The Caspian Region at a Crossroad: Challenges of a New Frontier of Energy and Development

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decision not to use reliable academic sources and to base most of their arguments on Hebrew newspapers is not totally convincing.

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The Caspian Region at a Crossroad: Challenges of a New Frontier of Energy and Development, edited by HOOSHANG AMIRAHMADI. 299 pages, index. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000. \$59.95 (Cloth) ISBN 0-312-022-351-X

Amirahmadi has compiled an excellent collection of essays on the Caspian region's energy, development, and security. The chronological focus of most of the essays is on the recent past and the present, which makes the collection a most useful reference work for those seeking to understand the complexities of current regional developments. The contributors to this volume include lawyers, historians, and specialists in international relations and international development from such nations as Iran, Russia, Norway, and the United States. The sixteen essays they have produced are divided into five topical sections: people and resources; development and environment; pipelines and outlets; security and geo-politics; and legal perspectives, and constitute a fine addition to recent literature on this region. *The Caspian Region at a Crossroad* will prove valuable for scholars in such diverse fields as Middle Eastern studies, international law, and energy policy and development, as well as for policy officials and analysts.

Several features of this volume are particularly noteworthy. One is the repeated call in all of its essays for cooperation in solving the Caspian region's difficulties. Eschewing all thought of hegemony for one or more powers, the contributors remain committed to the idea of cooperation in the pursuit of common, regional interests. Hormoz Goodarz highlights this aspect in his essay on the Caspian's environmental needs, forcefully stating the necessity of getting "regional actors to cooperate for the good of the region as a whole" (p. 143). Other authors wholeheartedly agree. A second contribution of this volume is its inclusion of a legal perspective on the Caspian region, something often slighted in other works. The three essays that comprise the book's legal section demonstrate the importance of legal delimitation of "the territorial rights of each [regional] state" so that "a clear path to development of the Caspian's resources" can be charted (p. 270). Ignoring the legal dimension of the region's problems, the authors believe, would be most unwise. Finally, this volume makes clear the impossibility of studying or dealing with the Caspian region without considering the position of Iran. The centrality of Iran comes out clearly in the essay by Bradford R. McGuinn and Mohiaddin Mesbahi, which calls for "the de-ideologization and even normalization of American-Iranian relations" (p. 201), though other authors also make similar arguments about the impossibility of considering the Caspian region without Iran.

The Caspian Region at a Crossroad is replete with useful information and statistics, a fact that will no doubt make it a valuable reference source for scholars in a variety of fields. It also advances the important cause of regional coop-

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