

From the Editor

As the *Mediterranean Quarterly* continues to celebrate its twenty-five years of existence, the editors would like to express their deep gratitude to the journal's loyal readership. It has been a tumultuous journey over the past two-and-a-half decades. In many ways, the so-called New World Order that was discussed twenty-five years ago as the Soviet Union and the United States prepared for the post-Cold War era has come full circle. Is the recent Russian annexation of Crimea in response to the overthrow of the pro-Russian leader in Kiev, Viktor Yanukovich, the beginning of the end of the post-Cold War international order? Time will tell. And how do the other pressing issues on the front burner with direct relevance to the Mediterranean world in 2014 relate to the shifting patterns of history? These include the ongoing civil war in Syria, political uncertainty in Egypt and Turkey, sectarian violence in Iraq, and the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 powers,¹ not to mention the slow recovery from the 2008 financial crisis that has deeply affected the economic stability of the European Union, especially in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. These are only a few of the major challenges that this critical region faces. The editors of the *Mediterranean Quarterly* hope the journal's readership continues to gain perspective with regard to the multitude of issues and opportunities that lay ahead for the greater Mediterranean world and beyond.

This issue begins with an important essay by Craig Harrington, a researcher based in Washington, DC, specializing in Anglo-American diplomatic history, entitled "The Colonial Office and the Retreat from Aden: Great Britain in South Arabia, 1957–1967." Harrington, with the benefit of primary sources including the British archives, examines the evolution of think-

1. The P5+1 countries are the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—as well as Germany.

ing among Great Britain's foreign policy-making elite toward the Arabian Peninsula, with a focus on Aden. It is a timely reminder of a period during the Cold War when British imperialism was being supplanted by greater US involvement in the region. As Harrington convincingly shows, the history of the United Kingdom's involvement in Aden during this critical period demonstrated "larger geopolitical trends" that remain relevant even to this day.

The next essay, by Gawdat Bahgat and Robert Sharp, both based at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University in Washington, DC, in some ways picks up where Harrington leaves off. "Prospects for a New US Strategic Orientation in the Middle East" highlights the decades-long foreign policy trend followed by the United States in forging close relations with a number of key allies in the Arab world, specifically Egypt and Saudi Arabia. As the so-called Arab Spring that began in 2011 has evolved, and in some cases has already petered out, the authors argue that the United States should follow a two-track diplomatic approach: first, by providing its key Arab allies with enough space to address the specific needs of their populations in order to stabilize their regimes, and, second, by elevating relations with the non-Arab Middle East countries such as Israel and Turkey as well as possibly Iran through its nuclear negotiations.

Along similar lines, Alon Ben-Meir, senior fellow at New York University's Center for Global Affairs, writes in "The Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: The US Framework for Peace Must Be Enforced" that the United States must take a stronger leadership role on this particular issue if the two sides are ever going to break out of the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process and bring it to a successful conclusion. While this may sound like previous policy prescriptions over the past several decades, Ben-Meir could be standing on firm ground in noting that the current political environment may make a strong push by Secretary of State John Kerry ultimately more successful than previous attempts. It remains to be seen, however, whether all of the interested parties can set aside what appears to be intractable differences and break the string of false dawns that have beset the on-again/off-again peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

While the first three essays focus on the Middle East and the involvement of external powers such as the United Kingdom and the United States,

the next two focus sharply on Greece in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, from which it has yet to emerge. Spyridon Litsas, assistant professor in the theory of international relations at the University of Macedonia, in “The Greek Failing State and Its ‘Smart Power’ Prospects: A Theoretical Approach” highlights some of the well-known challenges facing Greece but nevertheless takes a somewhat optimistic point of view about the country’s future. Litsas prescribes the adoption of his “smart state” approach—a combination of hard- and more often soft-power approaches—to guide Greece out of its political, economic, and financial torpor. This would include not only enhancing Greece’s role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and reforming its own electoral system but also improving Greece’s marketing of its tourist industry, its educational system, and its cultural heritage. Even though Litsas’s theoretical approach may be a tall order for Greece given current conditions, there are nevertheless invaluable insights to be drawn.

Taking a practical approach based on modern Greek history, Elias Kulukundis, the author, documentary filmmaker, and businessman who founded Kulukundis Shipping Investments, brings a worldly perspective to his essay, “Greece: The Open Circle.” It is an elegantly written critique of Greece’s sociopolitical fabric over the past several decades. Indeed, Kulukundis provides a level-headed dissection of Greece’s domestic and international political situation while offering possible scenarios that are realistic and sensible, which, however, does not necessarily make them any more palatable to the Greek public or the EU.

The final essay, “Blessed Is He Who Considers the Human Rights Paradigm: Maltese Aid between Charity and Human Rights and between Catholicism and Secularism,” by Isabelle Calleja-Ragonesi, Anna Khakee, and Maria Pisani, all from the University of Malta, provides an interesting outline of the roots of foreign aid policy focused on the small island nation of Malta. A member of the EU situated at the nexus of Europe and Africa and dividing the eastern and western Mediterranean, Malta’s unique history—home to one of the world’s first charitable humanitarian organizations, the Sovereign Order of Malta—makes it a fascinating case study. The authors show, using firsthand evidence, the sources of Maltese aid programs and, more important, illustrate that the majority of funding for these programs comes

not from the central government (as is usually the case with other countries' aid programs) but rather from faith-based organizations linked to the Catholic Church—perhaps a reflection of the island's medieval heritage.

To conclude the introduction to this issue, it may be helpful to remember the eloquent words of the Italian sociologist Franco Cassano concerning the importance of the Mediterranean, how Europe's success still depends upon it, and its criticality to global stability:

The Mediterranean does not fear the multiplicity of races and skin colors, the plurality of languages and religions. It is Southern Europe's task to prevent the old continent from perching itself atop Austrian gardens, having become prey of a spiral of fear. The Europe that is slowly being built will be for real only if it is based on the face-to-face meeting between the Mediterranean and the Northern soul.²

The editors of the *Mediterranean Quarterly* hope the essays in this and other issues continue to facilitate this endeavor.

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2. Franco Cassano, *Southern Thought and Other Essays on the Mediterranean*, trans. and ed. Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 140–1.