

From the Editor

As fighting continues in the eastern part of Ukraine following Russia's annexation of Crimea; as violence between Israel and Gaza has reached new heights; as the self-declared Islamic State in northern Iraq has taken Islamic extremism to new levels; and as the rise of China continues to cause friction with its neighbors, 2014 is shaping up to be one of the most dangerous years with respect to international security and stability in recent memory. The present issue of the *Mediterranean Quarterly* includes an interesting and diverse collection of essays that provide important ideas and perspectives, both in a historical context and with direct reference to current events.

In "Italy's Amnesia over War Guilt: The 'Evil Germans' Alibi," Filippo Focardi offers an important viewpoint, contending that to this day Italian national memory has still not come to terms with Italy's role as an ally of Nazi Germany during the Second World War. As Focardi argues, the overwhelming attention for throwing Europe into chaos and engaging in war crimes during the Second World War has been leveled squarely on Germany through the negative stereotype of the "evil German." Focardi's essay rebalances the blame and demonstrates that the Italians under Mussolini could be just as brutal as their ally north of the Alps—and it chips away at Italy's reputation as less than a full participant in war crimes by the Axis powers.

Anthony Eames's essay, "Margaret Thatcher's Diplomacy and the 1982 Lebanon War," examines a key period of British foreign policy and how Great Britain and the United States grew from somewhat hesitant allies during the Falklands War to allies that experienced the rebirth in the Anglo-American "special relationship" between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan. With the benefit of archival evidence from the British National Archives, Eames is able to explain with a great deal of authority how

the Iron Lady was able to elevate Britain's level of standing in Washington, develop a reputation with President Reagan as a reliable partner and valuable European ally, and coordinate Anglo-American strategy with respect to the crisis in Lebanon.

Steven Philip Kramer and Judith Yaphe, in "The European Spring of 1848 and the Arab Spring of 2011: Lessons to Be Learned?" compare and contrast two significant events and their effects on the abilities of societies to reform themselves and become modern democracies in the real sense of the word. As the authors highlight, the 1848 revolutions showed that "the promise of liberal and democratic politics . . . took a long time to fulfill, and the path was rocky." Certainly the violent establishment of the Islamic State in northern Iraq appears to bear this out, as the Arab Spring has faltered and the region is now seeing a return to reactionary, religious conservatism.

In "Challenging Secular Establishment: Student Movements in Egypt and Turkey in the 1970s," Ali Erken compares the dissident activities against the governments in both countries. While there are remarkable similarities between the two movements, there are also important differences, which the author analyzes and dissects. Again, with the Arab Spring turning into a very hot and inhospitable Arab Summer, there are important lessons to be learned from the region's history of forty years ago, perhaps none more important than how the military-bureaucratic establishments in both Egypt and Turkey managed to control religion and religious institutions in order to keep a lid on extremist Muslim ideology. Today, however, both countries, in their own different ways, are dealing with a breakdown of this paradigm. In Egypt, the June 2012 presidential election of Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood barely survived one year before a military coup removed him from office. Meanwhile in Turkey, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Islamic-based Justice and Development Party won a third term in office in August 2014, despite corruption scandals and protests against a government in Ankara that has been perceived to be moving Turkey away from its secular, republican roots, and toward a more authoritarian and religiously oriented policy.

Continuing this theme, Burak Erdenir, in "Europeanization of Value Orientations in Turkey: Continuity or Change in Turkish Political Culture?"

highlights some of the important societal changes that have occurred as a result of that country's attempt to join the Europe Union. Erdenir's analysis delves into difficult topics such as religiosity, interpersonal trust, and societal tolerance in Turkey, including where the latter has been and, perhaps more important, where it may be heading. This sophisticated and in-depth review examines why over the past several decades Turkey and Europe have been moving away from each other with respect to their "value orientations" at a time when Turkey has been experiencing a vast socioeconomic change with a burgeoning middle class.

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan of Jordan presents another key issue to the region with respect to societal stability in his essay, "Water: The One Crisis That Also Represents the Biggest Opportunity for a Middle East People's Peace." The issue of water (and access to it) in the Middle East and North Africa has been around since antiquity. Yet clean, drinkable water, as His Royal Highness highlights, is an issue that could possibly bring together people from all different backgrounds in the region to achieve a common goal for the betterment of all. While some may consider this essay's prescriptions overly optimistic, there is certainly something to be said about an issue concerning a resource that is so clearly lacking in the region, so clearly indispensable to the local population, and so clearly necessary to sustain human life—no matter the background, ethnicity, or religion of those who so depend on it.

Finally, Petros Vamvakas offers "Global Stability and the Geopolitical Vortex of the Eastern Mediterranean," which looks at the growing Great Power competition in the region. The Barack Obama administration's pivot toward Asia, the development of a more regionally assertive Turkey, the reengagement of Russia, and the new attention paid to the eastern Mediterranean by China, among other factors, are all likely to raise tensions in the region and, in turn, globally. As Vamvakas highlights, the eastern Mediterranean, the nexus of three continents and a vital global trade route—for the transport of energy resources, among others—could be a tinderbox that sets off a more serious global conflict.

It is important in this conflict-ridden summer of 2014 that the world remember the one hundredth anniversary of the start of the First World War.

The Great War, as it has been called, was touched off by a series of events the importance of which were neglected by many of the leaders of the Great Powers at the time.¹ Whether today's leaders are up to the task of addressing these and many other global challenges remains to be seen. If history is any guide, however, today's leaders must continue to engage and never give up the search for new ideas and solutions to the multitude of complex issues the world faces today. The alternative—a loss of control over events—could just be too horrific to contemplate, as previous generations have learned all too well.

Constantine A. Pagedas
Washington, DC

1. For an excellent, and perhaps the most comprehensive, account of the immediate run up to the First World War, see T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).