

# THE FLETCHER FORUM *of* WORLD AFFAIRS

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

At the beginning of 2015, international institutions, regimes, and relationships are transforming at an unprecedented pace. Some are moving toward greater cooperation, as marked by the United States' diplomatic engagement with Cuba and Iran, the climate agreements achieved at the Paris Conference, and the increasingly cohesive multi-national coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Other aspects of the global architecture are crumbling, with actors challenging both international and regional institutions. The recent prospect of Greek exit from the Eurozone, while no longer an imminent threat, drew attention to the limits of European unity—not only threatening economic and political integration, but also highlighting conflicts over culture, values, and identity. The principle of self-determination continues to reverberate worldwide, and in some cases promises to undo borders from the last century's wars, for better or worse. Escalating nationalism in Taiwan may bring the island into direct conflict with a strengthening China, while reunification campaigns on the Korean Peninsula seek to shift the status quo—and both events may force the United States to adopt a more decisive policy in Asia. The map of the Middle East is changing, both despite and due to the efforts of the counter-ISIL coalition, as new consolidations of power threaten the region's historic mosaic of identities, ethnicities, and beliefs. As actors diverge and borders fray, what elements of the international system will hold?

The conversations in the first half of this issue both acknowledge and seek to narrow this widening gap between architecture and reality in the international order. First, **BAYAN SAMI ABDUL RAHMAN** draws on Kurdish history and identity to shape her vision of Kurdistan's new stabilizing role in the Middle East, in conjunction with **MINA AL-ORAIIBI**'s case for the recovery and survival of the Iraqi state. Turning to fragile states elsewhere, **SCOTT STRAUS** discusses the relationship between civil society, national

identity, and the lessons learned from cases of averted genocide on the African continent. **PAUL HARE** examines civil society and identity in Cuba through a foreign relations lens, speaking from his experience as Cuba's former British ambassador. **GEORGE PROVOPOULOS** shares the steps Greece has taken toward recovery and his hopes for the transformation and growth of the Greek economy as part of a prosperous, unified Eurozone.

The second half of this issue takes a multidisciplinary approach to these global transformations, offering perspectives from economics, law, environment, peace research, and gender studies. **EMILIO PANTOJAS-GARCÍA** charts the parallels—and highlights the differences—between the Greek crisis and the economic legacies of colonialism in Puerto Rico. Taking a structural approach, **JAMES FRY** and **INNA AMESHEVA** explore the simultaneously conflicting and complementary nature of international climate change and health law, while **MIGUEL DE SERPA SOARES** reviews the United Nations' contributions to treaty negotiation, lawmaking, and customary legal norms. **ELLEN MCDONALD** brings attention to the failure of international legislation to halt the illegal wildlife trade, calling for cross-border conservation efforts to unravel the tangled web of conflict, crime, poverty, and species loss. On other contested frontiers, **SUZY KIM** tells the story of the recent Peace Walk's attempt to unify North and South Korea, crossing both physical and cultural borders, while **SETH PATE** highlights the escalating civil resistance movement in Taiwan and its implications for U.S. policy in Asia. Finally, **MELANNE VERVEER** and **KIM AZZARELLI** remind us that women's advancement is global advancement, with the increased participation of half the world's population marking a "collective shift" in progress for all.

We hope that this issue provides a small measure of stability and optimism in a time of great global change. I owe sincere thanks to the entire *Forum* team—both our print and online editors—without whose energy and determination this issue would not have been possible. In turn, our collective gratitude goes out to the faculty and administration of The Fletcher School for their unfailing support of *The Forum*. Together, we thank you for reading, and welcome your continued contributions to the conversation.

NATALIE LAM  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF