

Connectivity: Intellectual Lubricant

Connectivity is the intellectual lubricant of our time. And today, more than at any other point in human history, we are all connected—with each other, with our leaders and followers, with our friends, relatives, and even strangers—for better or, all too often, for worse. Connectivity has sparked revolutions, cured disease and famine, and led to more advances in a shorter period of time than any previous point in history. Of course, today's social media frenzy is not the first such effort. Connectivity and its media enablers began with Alexander Graham Bell and his telephone, or even earlier with Samuel Morse and his telegraph, followed by Guglielmo Marconi and his radio. But each incremental advance, down to today's revolutionary connectivity is all part of a fundamental urge of the human species—to communicate, to connect. That's what we set out to explore in the Fall issue of *World Policy Journal*.

We open with the Big Question, a selection of global thinkers reflecting on how social media and smartphones have disrupted daily life in their respective parts of the world. Map Room zeros in on Facebook and Twitter as devices to chronicle the spread of the Ebola virus across Africa. Rebecca MacKinnon shares her thoughts on how Ethiopia's brutal Zone 9 detention facilities and the blogs that condemn these facilities reflect the practices of a growing number of leaders, who recognize social media as a potentially lethal challenge to their rule. From Iran to Cuba, Russia to Vietnam, a host of countries use the Internet to isolate their people from the outside world, while we seek the Anatomy of those who would thwart such aims. Jason Q. Ng then takes a closer look at lessons to be learned from China's efforts to manipulate its own Internet and partners around the world.

North of our border, writing from Toronto, Canadian Andrew Clement is appalled at how much of his nation's Internet traffic passes through the United States and through the hands of our own NSA. In Cairo, Mahmoud Salem, the twitterverse activist and revolutionary opponent of Hosni Mubarak who tweets under the name @sandmonkey, describes the length to which government officials are prepared to go to "stop the signal." Finally, in a Conversation with *World Policy Journal*, Amelia Andersdotter, a leader of Europe's Pirate Party and once the youngest member of the European Parliament, describes how judicious application of copyrights and patents can support our coveted rights to privacy.

In our Portfolio, photographer Diana Markosian returns to our pages, accompanied this time by writer Tyler Stiem, who infiltrated the Kachin territory of Burma to put to rest any illusion that the newly democratized junta is treating its minorities or any who would challenge their rule respectfully. Nicholas Jubber lives among Mali's nomads, including the redoubtable Tuareg, and delivers a riveting account of how nomads, preys themselves to sandstorm and drought, are needed as Sahara's most effective defense against jihad. In Europe, General Armin Staigis believes Germany is finding a new and most compelling voice as the anchor of the Western alliance. Colombia is preparing for the post-revolutionary era, Jake Rollow reports, whether or not a treaty with its rebels is on the horizon. From Banksy to local Palestinians, Rebecca Gould parses the deep meaning behind the graffiti of the wall that divides Israel from the Palestinian territories. And in Zimbabwe, Tafadzwa Chigumira dissects life under a currency system where inflation knows no bounds. In his Coda, *World Policy Journal* editor David A.andelman chronicles many of Europe's existential threats and suggests how America and the world might address them.

Finally, in this issue we are delighted to welcome Eliza Griswold as our first ever poet in residence. Griswold is an extraordinary talent and National Magazine Award winner, whose unique vision of the world will illuminate our every issue. She begins with a single word, *Boom*. And onward from there.

-The Editors