

Editor's Note

THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN

The 20th edition of the *Journal of Politics & Society* serves as an opportunity to reflect and look ahead. Established in 1989, the *Journal* has showcased critical analysis, penned both by undergraduate students and leading scholars and statepersons. In recent years, the *Journal* has grown in leaps and bounds. Its call for papers has extended beyond the gates of Columbia University to across the country and around the world. Originally only distributed to Ivy League campuses, the *Journal*, thanks to former Editor-in-Chief Jacob Weaver, enters its third year of distribution in bookstores nationwide.

Despite these changes, the Helvidius Group remains committed to its primary purpose: to provide a forum for undergraduate scholarship in the social sciences. The *Journal* now often drifts away from the United States and toward Latin American indigenous movements and Middle Eastern water conflicts, but we continue to highlight the vast potential for astute and relevant undergraduate research.

While we celebrate two decades of growth, we are soberly aware of the grave environment that exists beyond these pages. We face not only a global financial crisis but also a changing security environment. In light of these challenges, we are proud to present guest essays by Dr. Richard N. Haass and Mr. Jan Egeland. Dr. Haass describes possible security outcomes of the global recession as well as recommendations for the Obama administration. Mr. Egeland sees the costly preponderance of unilateralism in recent years as a catalyst for multilateralism's renaissance. We have already seen many of their recommendations take flight as defense spending has been reallocated to asymmetric warfare and interstate grievances have been channeled through the United Nations.

In addition, we hope that the featured essays not only contribute to an informed discourse but also galvanized readers to engage with such critical issues. We are pleased to present Dayea Diana Park of Georgetown University with this year's Peter and Katherine Tomassi Prize, which has been generously funded for its

second year by the *Journal's* founder Peter and his wife Katherine. Park challenges neorealist explanations of South Korea's weapons export strategy and illuminates the government's efforts to develop relationships with energy-rich countries through arms sales. Park's scholarship is incredibly salient today, as we struggle to curb the official and illicit proliferation of dangerous weapons technology.

Also, as the current administration calls for a new relationship with Latin America, Andrew Lyubarsky examines the impact of indigenous movements in Ecuador and Bolivia, while Tina Thomas studies the peculiar Argentine-Venezuelan relationship. In light of the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict, Alexander Schellinger criticizes U.S. state-building efforts in Georgia as an impediment to democratization. Timothy de Swardt analyzes why certain countries, despite the low benefits and high costs incurred, signed the Rome Statute. On the eve of the U.S. military's withdrawal from Iraq, Caitlin Naidoff evaluates a proposed ethnic partition of the country from a historical-statistical perspective. In our online section, Andrew Langer explores the tensions over water in the Middle East, and Gaurav Bhatnagar questions the "Islamicization" of Kashmiri politics and unearths the underlying political motivations.

This year's essays focus on the crossroads at which we stand. Our decisions will have a deep impact on the future of political representation, international arbitration, conflict resolution, and natural resource distribution. In this respect, we can view our tenuous circumstances as an opportunity for positive change. I can only hope that this scholarship helps to inform our choices.

It has been a privilege to work with the staff of the Helvidius Group and Jacob Weaver; this publication is the fruition of their hard work and endless patience. And whether this is the twentieth time you will be reading the *Journal* or the first, I hope that you enjoy this year's edition.

Josh Mathew
Editor-in-Chief

New York City
April 2009