

*Editor's Note*  
**THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN**

Over the last sixteen years, the *Journal of Politics & Society* has provided the public with thought-provoking undergraduate scholarship. We now turn to the *Journal's* birthplace, Columbia University, where the issue of academic freedom has become an enduring controversy following the screening in October of a documentary featuring student allegations of intimidation in the classroom.

In light of this controversy, we publish our Spring 2005 edition of the *Journal of Politics & Society* recognizing the necessity to continue presenting new and challenging ideas both inside and outside of the classroom. We believe that students and professors across the nation have the right and duty to explore popular *and* unpopular ideas and to demand intellectual honesty from their fellow scholars. In celebration of our commitment to fostering political activism and debate, we are excited to announce our first national distribution in the history of Helvidius. We hope that this step will advance our efforts in promoting constructive dialogue and freedom of thought across the nation.

This year's issue of the *Journal* covers a wide range of key issues. In his article *Abu Ghraib: Eroding Human Rights and American Credibility*, Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, argues that systematic torture of prisoners persisted on a considerable scale in Iraq, while discussing the implications of this defiance of international law. Eric Nguyen's McVickar essay examines the conflicting visions between Great Britain and France on European territorial expansion. Yuma Terada offers an assessment of the current state of Chinese military capability, arguing that China is a regional rather than a hegemonic power. Pursuing a similar regional interest, Jesse Finkelstein examines the fundraising efforts of East Asian terrorist groups through an analysis of their organizational structures and specific national milieus.

On a domestic level, Quinton D. Lucas analyzes the roles of race, religion, and social values in the Democratic party, speaking to the issues that determined the 2004 presidential elections. On a global scale, Roberto Reyes-Gaskin examines the effects of neoliberal development finance on dam construction and resettlement.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Editorial Board of Helvidius hopes that this volume will continue to foster dialogue and independent thinking across the nation's campuses.

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