

Editor's Note

THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN

When the *Journal of Politics & Society* was founded at Columbia University in 1989, its creators sought to build a forum for independent-thinking and thought-provoking undergraduate scholarship. Central to the success of this forum and the creation of real advances in knowledge was the ability of the participants to raise new questions, conceive of new possibilities, and regard old problems from new angles. In the 18th edition of the Journal, we are especially proud to feature authors who not only study and attempt to understand our changing society, but who also seek to challenge and define it.

The original research and innovative analytic instruments of this year's authors serve as a genesis for new academic thought regarding real-world issues. Jade Lamb, this year's McVickar Prize Recipient, questions the extent of gender integration in today's U.S. military. Her finding, that incidents of sexual harassment not only increase but are also more likely to go uninvestigated during times of combat, renders her call for increased attention to the status of women in our armed forces particularly timely. Via the lens of First Amendment rights, Eric Dvoskin adeptly probes and challenges the current legal structure prohibiting beggars from panhandling in New York City subways while Conrad Legendy analyzes the increased consumption of heroin in Iran and its curious relationship to anti-narcotics production legislation in Afghanistan, the world's largest opium dealer.

Turning to questions of foreign policy, the Journal this year presents two papers that reflect the United States' increased involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as well as its continued role in Iraqi reconstruction. Noah Bonsey's investigates the local and international politics of Hamas and concludes that it will never forfeit the option of armed resistance, despite increased debate on the movement's orientation since its victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections. Also, Emily Thomas examines the utility of military tribunals, beginning with the Nuremburg Trials and ending with the 2005 Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal, as tools for

forging a more lasting peace after periods of conflict.

Lastly, in the co-authored “Sovereignty Exchange,” authors Alexander Busse, Benjamin Harburg, and Aaron Markowitz-Shulman assembled fourteen world leaders, including politicians, scholars, and NGO executives, for a round-table discussion on the future of sovereignty. This piece serves as a model for the academic dialogue and synthesis that the Journal hopes to foster amongst undergraduate scholars.

Finally, we are pleased to present our guest essayist, Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach for America, and her thoughts on her work in closing the educational achievement gap. Out of her critical questions and her approach to end educational inequity, which she developed as an undergraduate at Princeton University, has emerged an organization that has impacted more than 2.5 million students.

The Editorial board hopes that this volume continues in the tradition of providing the public with undergraduate scholarship that confronts, defines, and innovates our politics and society. This journal, however, marks only one aspect of our commitment to providing a forum for undergraduates to share their scholarship with a wider audience. This year saw the substantial expansion of our website, including our first paper from outside North America—available exclusively online—and the organization of our first undergraduate scholarship conference. We hope these traditions will continue in the future. As outgoing Editor-in-Chief and a member of the board for the past three years, I depart excited about this organization’s new initiatives and its continuing commitment to foster dialogue on the issues that shape our politics and society. It has been a privilege, a pleasure, and a most memorable experience to work with the Helvidius Group.

Sharon M. Chin
Editor-in-Chief

New York, NY