

LETTER

FROM THE EDITOR

This past semester since the previous edition of the Yonsei Journal has seen an incredibly historic and turbulent time in the recent history of the Korean Peninsula. For many of the authors and editors based in Seoul, the unfolding events have provided new insights and encouraged new questions that I am sure we will see reflected in upcoming submissions.

For us at this point, however, we have worked to keep the Journal focused on issues that are still particularly key in our world today. Some are headline grabbing and address hot topics such as policies for climate change mitigation or the role of foreigners in IS. Others, however, approach ongoing issues that would benefit from more discussion and a wider awareness in international relations and geopolitical fora. Some also take deep dives into issues that are enjoyable reading in the midst of what can often be an overwhelming media barrage. These include analysis of international audiences that enjoy Korean dramas, and a historical overview of the international dimensions of the ancient Nastaliq script.

The Papers section begins with “The General Situation and Trend of the Foreigners in IS Under the Background of the Syria Crisis” by Song Niu, a Professor with the Middle East Studies Institute at Shanghai International Studies University. He explores how foreigners become a part of IS, their reasons for leaving their home country, and where the research indicates the trends might turn to next. The role of religiosity in institutions, and of national and personal religious identity in the face of geopolitical questions, is also explored.

The second paper considers the ongoing questions around China’s rise and the implications it has for geopolitics. This has been explored by several authors over the editions of the Yonsei Journal, with each approaching the

topic from a different angle. Safiqul Islam from the University of Chittagong uses the recent work of China in the Bay of Bengal region as the case study in this instance. As the author writes, both China and India have economic and strategic interests in and claims to the region, making it a microcosm of the ongoing relationship between rising powers.

The final paper in our first section is “The Clock is Ticking for Bangladesh: Policy Recommendations and Strategies for Mitigating Effects of Climate Change” by So Youn Kim. She explores the impending crisis that Bangladesh will face due to the inevitable effects of climate change, some of which are being felt now. In response to this, she proposes practical solutions, based both in policy that has been used before as well as new ideas that could help mitigate the effects. Proactive information campaigns and innovative relationships with non-governmental organizations are all considered.

Our Essays begin with another topic that the Yonsei Journal has also previously engaged with; the international aspects of popular culture, and what greater lessons can be drawn from it. Brittany Tinaliga addresses the rise of Korean dramas in the United States, and provides an extensive overview of the current makeup of western audiences. Her detailed analysis and original polling on why international fans support a cultural product that seems so alien provides new insight into this phenomenon.

Continuing with an essay that features an in-depth discussion of a topic is the paper “Nastaliq: A New Form of Art in India” by Ghulam Abbas. Here he chronicles the long and complex history, including its regional and international ties, of Nastaliq script. This is a new and creative step for the Journal – to push how we think of “international relations” often to be beyond the straightforwardly political realm. It adds an important and fascinating historical component.

Next we have an interview. This year the journals Diana Piscarac sat down with with Sokeel Park, the Cybtrt Director and Director of Research and Strategy with Liberty in North Korea. This interview explores the ongoing work their organization does with North Korean refugees. In light of the June 12th summit in Singapore between Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump, there is much to talk about.

And finally the journal concludes with a book review by Jonathan Lim, a former Yonsei student currently with the Australian National University. He reviews Richard Stiennon’s recent publication *There Will Be Cyberwar: How The Move To Network-Centric War Fighting Has Set The Stage For Cyberwar*. In doing so, he considers Stiennon’s thesis both in the context of the relevant theory on cyber war, as well as current geopolitical situations in which it can be applied.

As this edition goes to print, new developments in the regional geopolitical situation may change dramatically before the next one. I look forward to reading the fall publication and seeing how the talented authors, and skillful Yonsei editing team, handles the opportunities for great material the unfolding geopolitical situation brings. For now, these authors and their work goes in a different direction.

One of the best aspects of putting together the Journal this semester was the chance to work with such bright and engaged student editors who were personally invested in making sure all the articles were peer reviewed with commitment. It reflects exceptionally well on their academic character that they have produced such a thoroughly edited work and stands them in good stead for the rest of their academic journeys. With that, it is my privilege and pleasure to present the Yonsei Journal to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.S.' followed by a long, horizontal flourish.

Alexandra Stephenson