

## LETTER

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### FROM THE EDITOR

Conflicts, both violent and nonviolent, are a fundamental manifestation of the human condition. It is impossible to consider a period of time that has not been subject to conflicts in some form. As human societies have evolved through the ages, the nature of conflict itself has also evolved. Interconnectedness has empowered actors outside of the traditional nation-state and subsequently incorporated them into international conflicts. In Asia, regional conflicts over disputed territories have involved a proliferation of actors and interests, complicating the dispute and protracting the conflict. Disputes over the correct interpretation of the past, manifested in competing textbooks and statements by public officials, heighten tensions and warn of escalation. Within other states in the region, the rhetoric in the conflict is being leveraged to encourage support for existing regimes. Globally, the War on Terror, led by the United States and its allies has caused conflict over the legal doctrines that have long underpinned Western thought. The rights of individuals as well as the rights of states have been challenged, and whether these challenges will be incorporated into a new consensus remains to be seen. In Europe, measures of austerity following the economic crisis have divided citizens. The precedence for these measures, and the competing alternatives has generated conflict both among states and within domestic populous. Recent research has shown that violent conflict is currently lower than at any point in human history. Certainly the proliferation of international organizations and international legal emphasis on peace and human rights is to account for this fact. However, with this interconnectedness the incorporation of larger number of actors has increased the potential for conflicts, with many disputes teetering just on the edge of rhetoric and violence.

This issue of the *Yonsei Journal of International Studies* features a collection of submissions, included in the “Papers” section, that deal with conflict in some form. The first submission, “A Neoliberal Institutional Approach to the Modern Vietnam-China Maritime Dispute” by Hoang-Anh Nguyen and Hong-Van Tran, examines the realities faced by Vietnam in its ongoing territorial dispute with China. The authors argue that a neoliberal institutionalist approach best explains Vietnam’s position relative to China, and the paper examines the actors within Vietnam that compete for influence. In “A New World Order of Violence: President H. W. Bush, Violent Intervention, and the End of the Cold War,” Laurens J. Visser examines the legitimization of violence as a means to settle international problems. The examination of the new decision-making process can, in the Editor’s opinion, help explain the current propensity to use of violence in international conflicts. Gregor Konzack in “The Regional Power Balance in East Asia and Its Impact on Korea’s Japan Policy,” examines the changing environment in East Asia and proposes that an understanding of regional balance of power is useful to explain the confounding region. Finally, in “The Legacy of Austerity: The Eurozone Crisis and the Revival of the Washington Consensus,” Cristian Talesco and Brigette S. Valentine examine the similarities between the Washington Consensus and the current European Consensus. They propose the controversial argument that the latter represents a revival of the former, and warn of the dire consequences heralded by this conclusion. All of these submission promise to provide the reader with a thorough analysis of their main topics. When combined, they will challenge readers to consider the changing nature of conflict, both regionally and globally.

In the “Essays” section, the Journal provides further thought provoking works by a selection of excellent scholars. In the first piece, “‘We Have Just About Had It’: Jack Slessor, The Foreign Office, and the Anglo-American Strategic Debate Over the Escalation of the Korean War, 1950-51,” Alexander Nicholas Shaw examines the dynamics between the US and the UK during the Korean War using previously unutilized documents. The following piece by Eryan Ramadhani, “Lost in Southeast Asia: India’s ‘Look East’ Policy Revisited,” seeks to explain India’s seemingly paradoxical actions in the volatile region. “De-Coding the ‘Beijing Consensus’: Is It an Alternative Growth Model?” by Amrita Jash examines the distinctness of the new Beijing Consensus from the Washington Consensus, and argues that this new model is a factor for China’s ability to weather the recent economic crisis. The final essay, “From Brothers to Strangers: Myanmar’s Political Transition And Its Effect on the Sino-Myanmar Paukphaw Relationship” by Hyo Won

Shin, examines the changed nature of the China-Myanmar relationship following the latter's exit from military rule.

Included in this issue is a very special interview with the Hon Michael Kirby who chaired the recent Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea. During a recent visit to Seoul I was fortunate enough to be able to sit down with Mr. Kirby and discuss his experience with the commission and his hopes for future development now that the report has been released. This issue also includes Brandon K. Gauthier's timely review of Jang Jin-sung's *Dear Leader: Poet, Spy, Escapee-A Look Inside North Korea*. This thorough review also places the work in context with existing work on the suffering of the North Korean people while also emphasizing their role as future agents of change.

This issue of the Journal will be my final as editor in chief. The experience has been a valuable learning experience for myself. Throughout my time as editor in chief I have been assisted by a tremendously skilled and motivated staff, without which the Journal would not be possible. I have also been fortunate to meet a collection of brilliant scholars, who have provided their time and energy through their work to help craft what I consider to be one of the finest international studies journals in Korea. My sincere appreciation and thanks goes out to each of these individuals and I wish them all the best in the future. Those being said, please enjoy their work as you read this issue of the *Yonsei Journal of International Studies*. Happy reading and happy trails!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Watson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Eric Watson  
Editor in Chief