Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue of *British Politics*. This represents something of a thematic departure from the overall content of issue one, which principally examined a range of theoretical approaches that are involved in the study of British politics. In this issue, the focus is directed instead towards a range of both empirical and theoretical analyses. Insofar as the former are concerned, we have placed a specific emphasis upon the events of the 2005 general election, and, in particular, upon the role of the British media in shaping both its direction as well as its eventual outcome. Following the re-election of a New Labour government for a third consecutive term in office, David Sanders begins by assessing the prospects for a Conservative victory in the next general election; Pippa Norris considers the impact of the media on the course of the election itself; while David Deacon, Dominic Wring, and Peter Golding, from the Communication Research Centre at Loughborough University, examine the nature of media coverage during the election campaign.

Staying with the theme of the media and politics, these analyses of the general election are accompanied by an examination of the political role of the media more generally. Mick Temple asks whether the recent 'dumbing down' of political issues is as negative as is often supposed, or whether the creation of a more open public sphere can help to encourage the political participation and debate that are essential to a well-functioning polity. Finally, in our Forward Thinking section, Judith Atkins discusses the topical theme of New Labour's foreign policy, with a critical examination of the ethical and moral underpinnings that inform Tony Blair's doctrine of humanitarian interventionism.

By way of a concluding editorial announcement we would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who attended our successful launch, which was held at the Conference of the Political Studies Association at the University of Reading in April. Many thanks in particular must go to Professor Michael Moran, for agreeing to give a brief talk in support of the journal at relatively late notice, and to all those at Palgrave who helped with the promotional arrangements.

Steven Kettell and Peter Kerr