Editorial

International Politics Reviews (2013) 1, 63–64. doi:10.1057/ipr.2013.20

It is a real pleasure to introduce you to the second issue of *International Politics Reviews* (IPR). The editorial team has really enjoyed working on this project and we hope you find the contributions to this issue stimulating, engaging and useful. The goal of IPR is to help move academic research into a policy environment, while still providing a resource for scholars and students to stay abreast of the latest developments in international relations scholarship.

We open this issue with a study of the Hermit Kingdom by John Hemmings from the London School of Economics. John takes us through some of the more recent studies on the domestic and international politics of North Korea, exploring the challenges that the international community face in attempts to engage this reclusive nation. Following the passing of power from Kim Jong II to Kim Jong Un the world waits with anticipation to see if the younger Kim can consolidate his leadership position and what sort of policy changes he may undertake. John does an excellent job of offering us unique insights on the contemporary literature based on his own academic research and policy experience in the region. This article served as the basis of John's recent submission to a UK Foreign Office Working Group on North Korea.

Political change is also afoot in Afghanistan as the international community moves toward the end of the United Nations-mandated NATO ISAF mission and a presidential election in 2014. The passing of full responsibility for security in Afghanistan from NATO to Kabul marks a turning point for NATO, and policymakers now want to know what the future holds for the world's most tried, tested and admittedly weathered, military alliance. Fresh from working at the Pentagon and in the private defense sector Kathleen McInnis, now in the War Studies Department at King's College London, offers us an intriguing view of the literature on coalition formation and the challenges of war fighting in coalition. Although many American policymakers dismissed the idea of 'war by alliance' in the early

2000s, time has shown in the Balkans and in Afghanistan that war by alliance is more robust than war by coalition of the willing – not that alliances are easy to manage. Kathleen provides an incisive and interesting review of the latest scholarship, offering some take aways that NATO might want to incorporate as the alliance ponders its future in the upcoming summit to be held in the United Kingdom in 2014.

NATO landed in Afghanistan in 2003 as a result of the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington DC on 11 September 2001. Although NATO's involvement came through the back door – certain European allies did not want to go to war with the United States in Iraq – the Alliance has been instrumental in fighting what in the administration of George W. Bush was known as the 'war on terror' (the war that continues, but dare not speak its name in the Obama Administration). The war on terror presented policymakers with significant challenges, not in the least how does one fight the enemy within? From Michigan to the streets of London, the idea of the terrorists among us has been a problematic one. Probing this challenge, in a fun and intelligent review, Christopher Coker of the LSE offers us philosophical reflections on the contemporary obsession with zombies. From Dan Drezner's *International Relations and Zombies* to the *Walking Dead* and *World War Z*, the zombie seems to have a foothold in every facet of contemporary culture. However, what do zombies tell us about the world we live in? Is the zombie a metaphor for the wars we fight and the challenges the world faces? With sardonic wit and succinct prose, Coker reflects on zombies and war in a piece of writing that should make us all think more critically about the lens that popular culture offers us to explore contemporary challenges.

Finally, the last section of the journal focuses on two review panels examining military learning and on the energy challenge facing the world. Returning once more to

Afghanistan, Tony King, David Galbreath and Frank Hoffman provide a series of critiques on the strengths and weaknesses of a brand new edited volume on military learning in Afghanistan. A well-timed contribution to the scholarship on military learning, *Military Learning in Afghanistan*, offers a balanced contribution for policy-makers to consider when thinking about how they should adept for future deployments and the twenty-first century security environment.

Just as pressing an issue is how the world will power itself well into the twenty-first century. With climate change legislation stalled in many countries and non-existent in most, while demand for energy increases, what can states do to overcome the energy challenge? Michael Levi,

the David M. Rubenstein senior fellow for energy at the Council on Foreign Relations, examines America's changing energy landscape and the implications for US domestic and foreign policy. Given America's global posture, people around the world will be attempting to discern what the new energy landscape in America means for them and this international review panels offers an array of insight into what the future may hold.

The team hopes you enjoy this edition of the journal. We welcome feedback and submissions. You can contact us at m.j.williams@rhul.ac.uk for more information.

MJ Williams
Editor