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Dear Readers

The Winter 2008 issue of IAJ focuses on the environment. This topic is very important to the global community because it is an issue that affects every single person on earth, regardless of age, gender, nationality or economic status. Our Fall 2007 issue focused on human rights, discussing many instances of human rights violations. Cases of human rights abuses often receive the most attention in the media because it is easy to put a face to the victims and perpetrators of such violations. It is harder to understand abuses against the environment because the total effects of our actions on the environment are debated, and the necessary steps to stop the abuse force us to question the actions we take in our daily lives. You cannot put a face to the environment and it cannot speak for itself. This is why we are proud to provide a selection of articles focused on global environmental issues in our spotlight section. Eliot Peper presents the growing concerns over the role globalization plays in environmental degradation in his article, "Bang or Bust," and suggests that the WTO is the only institution that has the ability to implement any sort of global controls. Victoria Stephanova examines the role that Brazil's growing cattle industry plays on deforestation in the rainforest and the ecological affects of the deforestation in her article, "Losing the Rainforest." In his paper, "Looking at Research on Bt Cotton in India," Isa Mirza examines several studies on Bt cotton in India with a special focus on farmers in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, and concludes that further studies need to be conducted and that India should switch to organic cotton.

Our forum section is considerably smaller than in the past, consisting of only one article. However, we believe you will find this article to be captivating and engrossing. The article entitled "Private Security Contractors and International Law," written by Rick Zarrella, discusses a very controversial issue in current politics. The issue of the Blackwater Scandals in recent years, including the War in Iraq, has brought public scrutiny and investigation into the organization and has raised many questions about the future role of private security companies in military missions.

We are honored to have three interviews with very prominent members of the Sacramento and Davis communities. Our three interviews focus on our spotlight, environment; however, each focuses on different aspects of the environment. Dr. Mark Lubelle discusses the consequences of climate change while Professor of Ecology, Mark Schwartz, discusses how Davis is doing its part to help with environmental conservation. The final interview is with the Executive Director of the Sacramento Vally Conservancy, Aimee Rutledge. She discusses the importance of the Conservancy and what they do there to help the environment. We believe that you will find these interviews very interesting and relevant to current environmental issues.

The International Affairs Journal is now in its 4th year and the progress and growth we have gone through is thanks to our amazing and dedicated staff and the continued support of our readers. We would like to personally thank each member of our staff, from senior editors to every member of each department, for their dedication and hard work. It is because of your effort that this journal is successfully put together each quarter. We would also like to thank our readers for their constant support; it is because of you that we continue to enjoy producing this journal. And last but certainly not least, we would like to thank our dedicated group of advisers and graduate student referees, whose guidance and assistance has helped us immensely. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Minh Xuan Cao
Editor-in-Chief



Nicholas M. Schroeder
Editor-in-Chief