

EDITORIAL

A limited and temporary truce was reached in the US-China trade war following the Gyeongju APEC 2025 Summit. In the bilateral dialogue, President Trump agreed to reduce average tariffs on Chinese goods from 57% to 47% and withdraw the immediate 100% additional tariff threat, while President Xi Jinping accepted a one-year deferral of expanded rare earth export controls. Further détente saw China resuming purchases of the US agricultural products and both sides agreeing to cooperate on Fentanyl precursor control, accompanied by a US tariff reduction on the substance. This fragile accord, however, merely buys time, leaving core technological and geopolitical disputes unresolved. Both nations are racing toward self-sufficiency in critical sectors before the other gains a decisive advantage. China's stance, based on the principle of meeting strength with strength, has forced tactical retreats from the US, yet the inherent pain of full decoupling makes a "third great détente" a distinct, if complicated, possibility. This unpredictability signals a pivotal shift: the end of the post-Cold War unipolar global order where the US unilaterally dictated military and economic terms. The time is coming to consider the new rules for the future world without sole American hegemony. In this vein, critical implications for regional actors like South Korea should be re-evaluated, underscoring the necessity for a firm negotiating posture to guard against economic instability and potential financial manipulation. The stakes in this great economic game could not be higher.

The current issue involves critical international legal questions in the time of US-China geoeconomic tensions. The <Issue Focus> section addresses "Sustainable and Impartial Adjudication: New Challenges in International Dispute Settlement." This section contains: Arbitrator Impartiality and Academic Expression: The Ukraine v. Russia Case in PCA (Chao Wang); and The EU-Korea Labor Dispute's Outcome: An Appraisal under the ILO Conventions and the EU's Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter (Thi Trang Ngo). The <Article> section accommodates Defining the Boundaries: WTO National Security Exceptions in the US-China Unilateral Trade Sanctions (Youyou Jiang). In the <Note & Comment> section, Chandaphan Suwijak & P.J. Blount discuss Active Debris Removal: Assessing the Future Governance of an Emerging Technology. The thematic issue of <Regional Focus & Controversies> is "Emerging Norms in the Law of the Sea: Human Security and Maritime Governance." Ran Guo & Yanlin Zhou look into The

CLCS and South China Sea Continental Shelf Disputes: Legal Strategies, Practical Challenges, and China's Response, while Sang-il Lee & Song-yi Yi tackle Human Rights at Sea: A Korean Perspective toward an Integrated Legal Framework for Seafarer Protection. In <East Asian Observer> section, Yuji Hosaka deals with Legal Status of Dokdo Islands in the SCAP Directives and the San Francisco Peace Treaty: A Bibliographical Analysis; and Kavar M. Mousa et al. present The Role of Energy Law in Promoting Energy Independence and National Security.

The Journal extends sincere gratitude to our esteemed editorial members, diligent reviewers, knowledgeable experts, and collaborative colleagues including the cartoonist for their unwavering dedication and cooperation throughout the preparation of this issue. The Journal remains steadfast in its commitment to thoroughly scrutinizing highly critical legal issues both on a regional and global scale. Our preference lies in the exploration of provocative, timely, and creative subjects, while also giving due consideration to national and topical issues. Notably, each volume of the Journal undergoes a rigorous peer-review selection process, ensuring the highest standards of scholarly integrity. We encourage submissions on a rolling basis, welcoming contributions that align with our commitment to advancing legal discourse.

Editor-in-Chief