

EDITORIAL

2026 may be recorded in human history as a *déjà vu* of 1937, when Japanese militarism began to unravel following the invasion of China. Despite its early victories at the outset of the war, the Japanese military became trapped in a vast quagmire, and its imperial project ultimately entered a path of decline. Similarly, the Iran War is drawing the US into a deadlock; it has not maintained control of the battlefield since its inception. President Trump urged allies in Europe and Asia to participate in naval operations in the Strait of Hormuz, but his request, perceived as coercive, elicited only a cold response. The US now faces the potential breakdown of the transatlantic alliance under the NATO system and is poised to witness the disruption of key alliance structures in Asia as well. For the US, which has maintained and expanded its political and economic influence through military alliances, the dissolution of these strategic cooperation would amount to the collapse of its hegemony. This suggests that the time is approaching to redesign the foundations of global order.

The current issue interprets such a critical turning point of world order from a viewpoint of international law. The <Issue Focus> section addresses “New Horizons in Marine Governance.” This section contains: Strengthening the Ocean Carbon Sink under the UNCLOS (Wei Shen et al.) and Legal Divergence and Cooperative Governance of Underwater Cultural Heritage (Hui Zhong & Eric Lee). The <Article> section accommodates: Legal, Institutional, and Regulatory Dimensions of China-ASEAN Commercial Arbitration. In the <Notes & Comments> section, Nehaluddin Ahmad et al. discuss the Contemporary Missile Warfare and the Use of Force: A Legal Evaluation of the Iran-Israel Escalation; Soojin Nam & Jamie Yoonsoo Kim deliver the National Courts as Enforcers of International Treaties: Analysis of “Homeward Trend” in Korea’s CISG Adjudication; and Xinrong Tan analyzes Chinese International Law Scholarship: A Bibliometric Analysis (2005–2025). The thematic issue of <Regional Focus & Controversies> section is “Digital Sovereignty and the Rule of Law in East Asia.” Phillip Y. Freiberg et al. look into the Human Rights-Based AI Governance in Thailand: A Functional-Equivalence Approach Beyond the EU AI Act, while Nguyen Minh Tuan & Do Thi Bao Yen investigate the Legal Reasoning in the Artificial Intelligence Era: Possibilities. These articles demonstrate the significant potential of artificial intelligence to inform legal reasoning and its application

to jurisprudence in both theory and practice. In <East Asian Observer> section, Surakhbayar Galsan discusses the Constitutional Resource Sovereignty and Critical Minerals Governance under International Law: The Case of Mongolia; Yiwei Liu & Xingjun Liu present The Philippine Marcos Jr. Administration's South China Sea Policy from a Neoclassical Realist Perspective; and Hazmi Rulsi et al. review *Surviving Great Powers: Kedah and the Practice of Sovereignty under International Law*. In <Digest> section, Stuart S. Malawer reports Trump's Supreme Court Tariff Case and Trade Policy. Finally, we interview with Professor Andrew J. Harding for <International Lawyer> section.

The Journal extends sincere gratitude to our esteemed editorial members, diligent reviewers, knowledgeable experts, and collaborative colleagues 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