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The International Political Science Association is proud to have contributed to the making of the *New Handbook of Political Science*. Participation in the IPSA XVI World Congress in Berlin in 1994 had an opportunity to hear initial presentations on many of the chapters in a series of sessions, organized by the Editors, on 'The State of the Discipline'.

This is an appropriate time at which to take a look at political science. The discipline faces new challenges in understanding and assessing recent dramatic, sometimes tragic, world events and sweeping political changes. The *New Handbook* covers familiar, staple topics in political science, such as political institutions, political behavior, public policy and political theory, but the political context, in North as well as South, East as well as West, is no longer so familiar. New questions are being asked about such fundamentals as the nation state and sovereignty, as well as the growing interest in the politics of religion, ethnicity and nationalism.

Intellectual developments, particularly in the last twenty years have brought a wide range of new theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches into political science. Some scholars, for example, are using highly technical and sophisticated mathematical models, others have moved under the philosophical umbrella called post-modernism, many are proponents of the 'new institutionalism', and feminism is a major presence.

Political science is also changing in other ways. As part of the current wave of democratization, the discipline is being established or strengthened in many countries and now exists more widely than ever before. The numbers of women and younger scholars from around the world participating in the IPSA World Congress, and the fact that the Congress was addressed by the Association's first woman President, reflect the democratization that has been taking place within political science itself.

The *New Handbook* provides an unusually comprehensive and cutting-edge discussion of all the major areas of the discipline. In this era of specialization, practitioners and their students will turn to contributions beyond