

# From the Editor

What is it about a twenty-fifth anniversary that seems to demand that we pay attention to the occasion? The obvious response, of course, is the issue of longevity—that someone or something has endured the various travails of a quarter century and, by all appearances, is continuing onward. But surely there is something else, something more essential at issue than merely endurance. There is, I think, the issue of *recognition* that is of importance here—the recognition that something has been sufficiently valued and appreciated as to warrant perpetuation. That, I suspect, is what we are celebrating when we take this moment to reflect on our achievements and recommit ourselves to our stated mission.

Twenty-five years ago the Carnegie Council published the first issue of *Ethics & International Affairs* with the aim of addressing head-on the intersection of these two disciplines. In announcing the launch of the journal, then editor-in-chief and Council president Robert Myers explained that this new publication would show “the concrete application of ethics to various key international problems from a variety of perspectives.” He outlined an ambitious editorial vision: The journal would feature the best minds in the field, foster a multiplicity of views, engender vigorous debate, and all the while remain true to the Council’s nonpartisan, non-ideological tradition. A distinguishing characteristic of the journal would be its emphasis on practice, and on scrutinizing the implicit ethical content behind specific international policies. “This ‘well-concealed’ dimension,” wrote Myers, “will regularly be revealed in *Ethics & International Affairs*.”

It seems fair to say that the goal of the editors was somewhat radical at the time. We were, after all, still caught in the dichotomies of the cold war; and the academic and policy communities were largely dominated by realpolitik and the language of power and interests, leaving little space for the study of norms, values, and ideas. At the same time, since the 1950s the doctrine of human rights was becoming an established global norm, while the influential writings of Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, and others were raising interest in issues of morality and statesmanship. The arrival of *Ethics & International Affairs* at this

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particular time was a consequence of this trend, and marked the formulation of a new field of normative inquiry. Then, as now, the Carnegie Council held that ethical inquiry is not an idle philosophical pursuit—it is quite literally a practical enterprise. Ethics helps us to understand what we truly value and how to connect this with the practice of our daily lives, our individual choices, and the policies of the institutions of which we are a part. The goal is to find clarity and to choose wisely—to choose in ways that promote human well-being and human flourishing.

Reflecting today on the choice of topics in the inaugural issue, we see the endurance of ethical questions and at the same time are confronted with the incredible scope of the changes that have taken place in the world in this short period—notably the end of the cold war, rapid globalization, and the rising influence of non-state actors. These developments have themselves underscored the importance of ethical reflection, having forced us to look anew at various long-held truths, to interrogate the moral claims that surround us, to mediate between our ideal versions of the world and the realities of real life, and to make hard choices among the imperfect alternatives for action that we have at our disposal.

Some of the questions raised by the contributors to the inaugural issue are as vivid today as when they were first published: Is democratic theory for export? How do we respond to revolutionary changes in Iran? What are the ethical obligations of superpowers? Is the concept of humanitarianism being overstretched? Other contributions—on the Soviet Union and the Helsinki Accords, and on the implications of the papal visit to Poland in 1983 for the Solidarity movement—though firmly set in the historical context of the cold war, anticipate the geopolitical changes that were at the time just around the corner. Peter Bauer's piece on the "ethics and etiquette of third world debt," on the other hand, is a reminder that our long-held beliefs and assumptions are often challenged by the evolution of history. Indeed, would readers of *EIA* in 1987 have expected that just a quarter century later first world debt would be the issue of the day?

Concluding his introduction, Myers expressed a hope that *EIA* would evolve into "a most significant publication." Today, I believe that we have much to be proud of. In the last twenty-five years *EIA* has featured some of the most innovative thinkers, publishing groundbreaking articles on humanitarian intervention, poverty reduction, human rights, global public health, and so much more. Our contributors come from a variety of disciplines and employ a range of methodologies, ensuring that the conversations on our pages remain dynamic and

thought-provoking. In this issue, for example, we offer articles on the failure to address climate change, the philosophy of “middle-ground ethics,” a proposed remedy for the “resource curse,” and a new multilateral arrangement to prevent humanitarian disasters—all by some of the most respected and provocative thinkers of our time.

This, the first issue in our anniversary volume, also marks the beginning of our new publishing partnership with Cambridge University Press—a relationship that we enthusiastically welcome and look forward to enjoying for a long time to come. As our colleagues at CUP have noted, today *EIA* is that rare breed of a quarterly, peer-reviewed academic journal whose audience is not restricted to narrow scholarly circles, seeking to reach a larger audience of thoughtful and informed citizens. And while we are proud of the achievements and continuing relevance of our past, the journal—like the world it explores—has evolved in numerous ways that the first editorial team could never have expected. Technological innovation, for example, has helped us broaden our reach enormously, such that more than 2,500 institutions worldwide now access our pages electronically. The focus of our themes has also shifted in response to new developments, acknowledging such realities as the rise of terrorism, the emergence of important nonstate actors, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the new concept of the responsibility to protect, and the many complex and interrelated issues surrounding climate change.

Perhaps the biggest testament to the journal’s contribution, however, is the fact that the question “*What does ethics have to do with international affairs?*” no longer sounds quixotic. The principles of pluralism, rights, and fairness are increasingly acknowledged as the standards against which international policies and actors are judged, not only in specialized academic writing but also in public discussion. The worldwide proliferation of academic programs, centers, and publications with an explicit focus on ethics is partially a result of a broad trend in which *EIA* was a pioneer.

We live in a transient world—one in which journals, and even great institutions, come and go. In recent months we have seen banks, investment houses, newspapers, and other pillars of our commercial and social life disappear. For all the unpredictable changes of the past century, the Carnegie Council, founded in 1914, has remained resilient and strong. Against a background of world wars, financial crises, man-made and natural catastrophes, and such remarkable developments as the Internet, the Council has always found ways to reinvent itself and remain not simply relevant but vital. Our focus on ethical issues, as exemplified by

our journal, continues to be of enormous value in today's competitive markets of ideas, education, and policy. *Ethics & International Affairs* has played an exceptional role in advancing the work of the Council over the past quarter century. We are confident that it will continue to do so for a long while to come.

—JOEL ROSENTHAL