

# Foreword

## ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CARNEGIE COUNCIL FOR ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

When the Carnegie Council Board of Trustees and staff met in 2011 to discuss how to commemorate the Council's 100th anniversary—then three years off—a strong consensus emerged. We should use the occasion to reflect on the historic mission of the Council, honor it, and re-invigorate it. We should look *forward* as much as back, with the most important goal being the establishment of a clear direction for the Council's work into the future.

The spirit of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary is embodied in the idea of “re-founding” the organization. *Ethics & International Affairs*, as the Council's signature publication, plays an indispensable role in illuminating the ideas that make the Council's work distinct. Prompted by the challenge to begin anew, the editors commissioned the seven Centennial symposia and roundtables that comprise the contents of this online collection.<sup>1</sup>

This collection serves two functions. First, it is a benchmark—a snap shot of the urgent issues currently facing the international community. Each essay taps into deep currents in the Council's work over the past generation while at the same time informing our Centennial theme, “Ethics for a Connected World.” This approach, we trust, provides a valuable guidepost for our readers. Second, this collection is an exercise in thinking about the future. As we commemorate our first one hundred years, it is natural to think about the next hundred. It is no coincidence that essay titles include the words “future,” “reimagining,” and “change.” Prediction is not our business; but we can and do ask how political and technological changes will affect ethical thinking and action.

Finally, a discerning reader will detect two distinguishing features in the editorial design of these symposia and roundtables, and in all of the articles and essays

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<sup>1</sup>Please see the contents page of this supplemental issue (EIA 28.S1) and click on an article title to view any of the symposia and roundtables in this special collection.

that appear in *Ethics & International Affairs*. Each cultivates a humanistic perspective, and each injects a dose of realism.

Humanistic approaches to international relations are all too rare—especially those that, like ours, seek also to integrate rigorous social science and empirical studies. We begin with the simple idea that human emotions and moral arguments are both time-bound and timeless. As much as things change, they remain the same. For example, war may have evolved from ancient hand-to-hand combat to the use of remotely piloted drones, and yet the taking of life in war remains essentially identical in human terms. And questions of just war remain remarkably unchanged. Similarly, human relationships to the natural world may vary tremendously—from subsistence to post-industrial societies—and yet we all face a common challenge of how to maintain a healthy and sustainable environment.

As for realism, it begins with humility. Ethical thought and action is deeply connected to power; it is therefore always compromised in the sense that interests will collide and values will conflict. There are no perfect solutions, and we know that all utopian ideas in human history have ended in dystopia. We cannot escape human imperfection. And we should not try. However, our work reminds our readers that political plans and institutional arrangements can work for the betterment of society when they recognize the realities of power and work with human nature, not against it.

In the words of the Carnegie Council motto: Ethics Matter. In these pages we map out, explore, and interrogate the rights, duties, and responsibilities that shape our worldview and determine what we do. These principles and their implementation are matters of human decision, and therefore in large measure are in continual development. This inquiry is a first step to imagining a better future. It is a process that must be accomplished in conversation, together, with as many perspectives participating as possible.

And so we invite you to join us as part of the *Ethics & International Affairs* community—in print and online ([www.eiajournal.org](http://www.eiajournal.org)). In doing so, you will be connected to a tradition that stretches back one hundred years, and forward to another hundred and beyond.

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