1 Introduction

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The genesis of this book lies in a conference held by the London School of Economics department of international relations in November 1998. The conference, for staff and students, takes place every year at Cumberland Lodge, near Windsor. The theme in 1998 was 'Ethics and Foreign Policy', and several contributors to this book presented the first versions of their chapters at the conference.

The theme was chosen to prompt reflection about the apparent proliferation of issues on foreign policy agendas that raise questions about how governments should act in international relations. The promotion of human rights, punishment of crimes against humanity, the prohibition of arms sales to unstable regions or to states which abuse human rights, and the use of force, particularly for the purpose of humanitarian intervention, are all issues which have recently been the subject of discussion among politicians and government officials. This is most evident in the 1997 proclamation by the new British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, that Britain would formulate and implement foreign policy 'with an ethical dimension'. He meant that the promotion of human rights would be a central concern of British foreign policy and that arms sales would be reviewed to ensure that British arms were not used by foreign governments to repress human rights. The European Union has also tried to incorporate human rights considerations into its relations with third countries, and has agreed on a Code of Conduct on Conventional Arms Sales. In President Clinton's State of the Union message in 1994 (*The New York Times*, 26 January 1994), he claimed that promoting democracy was an important goal of American foreign policy. Dozens of states approved a statute for an International Criminal Court in July 1997, which would prosecute individuals for war crimes and crimes against

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humanity. Governments have frequently had to decide whether they should intervene militarily to protect the citizens of other states (for example, in Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor or Iraq).

The starting point of the conference and of this book was that of the foreign policy analyst, not the normative theorist. But the general debate on an ethical foreign policy must perforce bring in normative theoretical considerations, primarily because the meaning of 'ethical' needs to be pinned down. International relations scholars have paid attention to normative theory in the past (Beitz, 1979; Brown, 1993; Hoffman, 1994; Frost, 1996). Policy-makers, steeped in realism, tended to scoff at normative theory, however, and at those who suggested that it should inform government policy.[1] National interest, they insisted, should be the basis of foreign policy; discussing ethics was inappropriate.[2] As a result, the normative theoretical debate was often quite separate from deliberations by government officials about policy. Now that governments and international organisations explicitly claim an ethical basis to their foreign policy, policy-makers can and should use the insights that normative theory can provide. As for theorists, they have new empirical material on which to test their concepts. Several leading theorists do so in this volume.

Conflicts can and do occur between perceived national interests and a government's ethical intentions. A simple example is the loss of jobs in the defence industry at home that may follow the cancellation of foreign arms sales because of concern about the use to which the arms will be put.[3] To realists, this proves that proclaiming an ethical foreign policy merely gives a hostage to fortune. To normative theorists, on the other hand, it indicates that decision-makers need a reliable method of choosing between contradictory claims. Policy-makers often deny that there is a problem. They tend to reiterate that their policy is ethical (as if repetition will make it so), and find some way of justifying their pursuit of national interest by insisting, for example, that they are simply fulfilling

[1] In the 1980s, for example, Alan Clark, a British government minister, made an entry in his diary complaining that, in briefing him for a visit to Chile, 'a creepy official' told him 'all crap about Human Rights. Not one word about the UK interest' (cited in *The Economist*, 12 April 1997).

[2] They did not mean that foreign policy should be consciously unethical, simply that it was amoral. Many of the chapters in this book, however, draw attention to the implicit and explicit role of ethics in foreign policy-making throughout the twentieth century.

[3] In the first two months of 2000 alone, the British government was criticised for approving arms exports to Pakistan (ruled by a military government), Indonesia (which had not yet punished human rights abusers in East Timor) and Zimbabwe (involved in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo and accused of human rights abuses). In all three cases, the EU context was critical; the EU had decided to lift the arms exports ban on Indonesia. And critics of the government's policies with respect to Pakistan and Zimbabwe claimed that it was violating the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (see Chapter 11).

commitments made prior to their adoption of an ethical dimension to their policy.

At one level, this example illustrates the long-standing debate between realism and idealism. Idealism is traditionally blamed for the rapidity with which the hopes for international peace collapsed after the First World War (Carr [1946] 1964). Realism was dominant in international relations theory and among practical policy-makers during the Cold War (Morgenthau, 1985). But idealism has deep roots, it seems, in human nature. Each time it appears to be defeated, it creeps back into theory and it also influences the way in which policy-makers wish to behave. Declarations of an ethical foreign policy are one manifestation of the revival it has enjoyed since the end of the Cold War. But does the arms sales example prove, as realists would argue, that it is as doomed now as it has always been?

At another level, the arms sales example epitomises a knotty problem with which policy-makers often have to grapple: how to choose between conflicting interests. Of course, balancing interests is always difficult, even when the issues have nothing to do with ethics. All governments have a number of foreign policy aims, and they frequently contradict one another. Ensuring that short-term needs do not undermine important and long-standing elements of the national interest, for example, is never easy. When ethical considerations enter the equation, however, the choice becomes more difficult. Should the duty to provide jobs at home override the responsibility to protect foreigners abroad? In essence, the problem centres on whether ethics cease at the water's edge, or whether the ethical standards applicable abroad are different from those that prevail at home.

A third problem that is highlighted by many aspects of an ethical foreign policy concerns the very basis of the international political system. Should the principles of sovereignty, inviolability and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries – the foundations upon which the international state system is built – take precedence over ethical concerns? In relation to arms sales, is it any business of governments that export arms how the weapons are used within the borders of another state? If the answer is affirmative, does that mean that sovereignty and non-interference have been replaced by new international rules of engagement, and if so, what are they? In fact, few policy-makers would reply that it *is*, invariably and always, their business. But if the response is that it is only sometimes their business, further questions arise: under what conditions is it their business, for example, and who decides what the conditions should be?

The question of 'who decides the conditions' leads to another of the problems that has dogged discussions about human rights and ethical

foreign policy: are ethics universal, or do they differ from culture to culture? Cultural relativists claim that ethics are culturally bound, and that what we call universal human rights are simply Western norms that have been imposed on other countries and cultures. In normative theory there has long been a debate between cosmopolitans who believe that human rights derive from natural rights and an ability to reason and, therefore, are universal; and communitarians, who argue that individuals have rights by virtue of their community (Brown, 1992a). The debate is sometimes transposed into the question: are Asian or Islamic values different from Western norms, and if they are, should those who hold them be able to set their own standards of human rights?

The idea of a foreign policy with an ethical dimension, therefore, raises many complex problems of both a conceptual and a practical nature. The aim of this book is to examine some of the issues from a theoretical and empirical perspective. Three groups of key questions are investigated:

(1) What is an ethical foreign policy? How should conflicts between national interest and ethics be settled?
(2) What are the ethical issues facing foreign policy-makers? What instruments do they use to deal with them? How effectively do they use them?
(3) To what extent do particular international actors incorporate ethical concerns into foreign policy and what problems do they face in so doing?

In Part I, contributors explore what an ethical foreign policy means. Several different theoretical perspectives are offered which provide different approaches to this controversial question. Part II takes a thematic approach, looking at the key instruments used by foreign policy-makers and other international actors in their ethical foreign policy: the export of democracy; the promotion of human rights and its effect on the relationship between NGOs and governments; the attempt to create an institution which can hold governments and individuals accountable for international crimes; and grassroots efforts to put pressure on governments to improve their ethical practice. Part III consists of case studies which examine more closely developments in the foreign policies of three international actors, the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU), to assess their progress in, and the difficulties raised by, incorporating ethical considerations into foreign policy.

Inevitably there have been omissions: one book cannot do justice to all the issues surrounding the theory and practice of ethical foreign policy. On the theory side, for example, there is no chapter on the realist critique of ethical foreign policy. Partly this is because the realist view is fairly

well known, but it is primarily because the editors wanted to address the key question, 'what is ethical foreign policy'? The realist answer, 'there is no such thing', would have closed the debate prematurely. Instead, the editors asked three normative international theorists to engage with this question. Readers may also lament the absence of important and related issues such as arms sales, international economic processes or environmental concerns. Some chapters do touch on the clash between economic interests (for example, selling arms abroad) or foreign economic policy (for example, promoting market economic reforms), and ethical concerns such as the promotion of human rights and democracy (see, for example, the contributions by Picken, Light, Smith, and Dunne and Wheeler). But space constraints prevented the inclusion of chapters dedicated to these issues, and to considering the clash between policies to foster the right to development and those to promote political rights, or whether ethics should extend to the physical world as well.

Lack of space, too, means that the policies of only three international actors are considered in this volume. The focus on the UK is explained by the fact that the proclamations of the new Labour government on ethical foreign policy rekindled a theoretical debate about ethics. On the other hand, the long history of the United States' ideologically driven foreign policy and the Clinton administration's humanitarian pretensions justify our choice of the US for one of our case studies. The EU offers an example of a collective actor incorporating ethical concerns into its foreign policy, with a wide impact on international relations due to its very nature as a collectivity of fifteen states (and many more, in the decade to come). Of course, the foreign policies of other international actors – such as Australia, South Africa and the Scandinavian countries – could have been explored here.[4] Since we could not cover everything, we tried to bring together theoretical reflections and empirical investigations of some issues and policies in the hope that our volume will encourage others to fill the lacunae left here.

What is ethical foreign policy?

Different theoretical perspectives provide different accounts of what constitutes an ethical foreign policy. The three contributors to Part I start from different positions, but they all agree that it is unreflective of actual practice to posit a dichotomy between an ethical foreign policy, on the one hand, and a non-ethical foreign policy, on the other. The issues are rather how governments act ethically, according to which criteria, and how they

[4] Some works have already done so: on the Australian case, see Keal, 1992; on South Africa, see Frost, 1996 and van Aardt, 1996.

balance competing ethical claims. All the authors, by and large, agree that governments have to be practical pragmatists. They cannot formulate foreign policy from a predetermined ethical standpoint, for down that road lies the tendency towards a superiority complex. All three authors emphasise that governments must be open to a variety of viewpoints, and engage in serious, open-minded dialogue with other actors, both governmental and non-governmental. Foreign policy-making must be open to scrutiny and must be reviewed constantly to ensure that governments live up to their own standards.

In the opening chapter, Chris Brown rejects the traditional (and widespread) idea that there is an antithesis between ethics and the foreign policy interests of a state, noting that this stems from a misreading of realist authors, none of whom discount the role of morality in international affairs. Brown argues that what is now proclaimed as ethical foreign policy is not new. States have always had to take into account the requirements of membership of the international society. As to the choices that policy-makers may have to make, in his view their primary duty is to pursue the interests of their own citizens, 'but in the context of a set of wider duties towards other states, and, through other states, the rest of humanity'. Their wider duties include: abstention from forcible intervention in the affairs of others, obedience to international law (and particularly the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*), cooperation with others wherever possible, and, arguably, humanitarian intervention to stop gross violations of human dignity. These norms mandate that governments take an enlightened, rather than a narrow, view of their self-interests. Brown admits that there can be a clash between the duties a government must assume towards its own citizens and those it owes to the wider world, but these can only be resolved by political argument directly on the issues.

One of the more controversial issues on foreign policy agendas in the 1990s has been humanitarian intervention. Do states have the right or even the duty to intervene to stop massive violations of human rights in other states? Mervyn Frost provides a moral justification for humanitarian intervention. He traces the development of two non-intervention norms in international relations. The first – the more familiar – demands that states do not intervene in the internal affairs of other states. The second, however, reflects the historical development of limitations on state power within the state: the state must allow freedom and space to civil society. Frost argues that observation of the non-intervention norm applicable to states in the international realm is dependent on states showing due respect for the non-intervention norm relating to civil society. When states do not respect it, the international non-intervention norm cannot hold. Humanitarian intervention should be directed at maintaining civil

society, at ensuring non-intervention by the state in civil society. He concludes by offering a series of guidelines and principles on how to decide and conduct such humanitarian intervention. Interestingly, in light of the controversy surrounding the Kosovo crisis, Frost does not specify that UN authorisation is necessary for humanitarian intervention. Members of global society may make use of a state, many states, international organisations, or any other social power to prevent rights abuses from taking place – as long as the actor chosen is constrained by the norms of civil society.

Brown and Frost provide essentially pragmatic answers to the question 'what is ethical foreign policy?', and they do so from the perspective of the dilemmas facing policy-makers today. Molly Cochran illustrates that these dilemmas are by no means new. In Chapter 4 she argues that pragmatism offered guidance as to what constitutes an ethical foreign policy in the early part of the twentieth century, just as it does today. She examines the writings of three pragmatists who wrote about US foreign policy in the first half of the 1900s when ethical issues were prominent on the US foreign policy agenda: John Dewey, Walter Lippmann and Jane Addams. Cochran rejects the conventional view that foreign policy must be either entirely ethical or unethical. Pragmatism, she suggests, provides a middle path, in which progress towards 'growth' is the valued end; the determinate content of ethical prescriptions is left no more precise than this. This allows space for the search for creative solutions to specific problems within international relations. For pragmatists, ethics must be conceived democratically, through a deliberative, consensual and inclusive process. Foreign policy-makers must also be open to transnational activity – to the voices of NGOs and social movements, a theme that several other contributions raise as well.

The instruments used to pursue an ethical foreign policy

The contributors to Part II discuss some of the instruments states and international actors attempt to use to implement the ethical aspects of foreign policy and explore the difficulties that arise in the implementation. The first contribution looks at a particular aspect of state policy, Picken and Economides are concerned with international instruments, while Fierke examines grassroots attempts to influence state policy.

Margot Light's chapter examines the challenges facing governments who are trying to 'export' democracy. She argues that exporting democracy logically and chronologically predates most other aspects of ethical foreign policy. Governments have three motives, she believes, for exporting democracy: first, they think that like-minded governments are

easier to deal with, and second, they believe that economic development will be more successful where good democratic governance prevails. The economic motive is not entirely disinterested – democracies provide better markets and investment opportunities for the advanced industrialised states than non-democracies. The third reason why governments export democracy is that they believe that democracy within states will be accompanied by peace between them.

Light claims that the definition of democracy is not as simple as the frequent use of the word seems to imply. Nor is it always easily and successfully exported. She distinguishes between democratic procedures (constitutional and electoral arrangements, voting procedures, laws and institutions), and democratic processes (norms, expectations, agreements between citizens and authorities on the mutual limits and obligations each must observe). Procedures can be imported, while processes derive from society itself. She argues that in many transition countries, the economic reforms that were exported at the same time that democracy was being established often served to undermine the processes on which democratic consolidation depends.

Promoting human rights is one instrument of ethical foreign policy. But should governments encourage respect for human rights abroad, and with what means? Or is it illegitimate interference in the domestic affairs of other states or the imposition of Western values on non-Western states? What role should human rights advocates play in policy-making? Margo Picken traces the history of human rights in post-1945 international relations, and highlights significant inconsistencies in aspects of Western policies on human rights in the 1990s. She charges that 'much of the decade came to be marked by "grandiloquent incantation" with the risk of human rights falling victim to sloganism'. Picken stresses, as do Cochran and Fierke, that governments must be monitored by vigilant citizens and independent institutions, and that NGOs have a role to play in monitoring governments that claim to act for human rights, as well as those that abuse them. But she also points to the dilemmas that NGOs increasingly face: inclusion in policy-making, as well as the increased channelling of government funding through NGOs, can compromise the independence that NGOs must have if they are to monitor governments adequately. She warns against the monopolisation of human rights by governments (Brown makes a similar point). Picken concludes by suggesting that Western NGOs should turn their attention to 'the anomalies that mark Western domestic and foreign policies today in respect of human rights'. For example, Western governments should ensure that their domestic policies and practices comply with their

international commitments, and strengthen the authority and power of international institutions to enforce those commitments. The need to get one's own house in order crops up in Part III as well, particularly with respect to the reluctance of governments to curb arms exports.

For several authors, such as Cochran, the signing of a statute that will establish an International Criminal Court (ICC) is a significant step, as individuals will be held to account for committing international crimes. Spyros Economides traces the history of the ICC (which can be considered to date back to the Nuremberg trials following the Second World War) and analyses the negotiations that led to the signing of the ICC statute. While he agrees that the establishment of individual responsibility is a significant step forward, Economides also illustrates that traditional state concerns dominated the negotiations. Many governments were unwilling to divest themselves of their traditional rights, and the ICC statute inevitably reflects a compromise among states. The issue of jurisdiction in particular makes manifest the extent to which states insisted on retaining control over the remit of the ICC. Yet individuals are now liable to be prosecuted for violating international criminal law, marking a step away from the traditional state-centrism of international relations.

The last chapter in this section takes a 'bottom-up' perspective, from below the level of the state. K. M. Fierke asserts that a foreign policy that is ethical requires 'that individuals and groups be ready to hold up a critical mirror to government action'. The power of a government to act is fundamentally dependent on being able to provide ethical justifications for its policies. The exposure of a discrepancy between the justification and a government's actual practice can prompt a government to align its practice with its words. As Brown, Picken, and Dunne and Wheeler all note, the Labour government is indeed, and rightly, under such pressure.

Fierke, like Cochran, argues that for a foreign policy to be ethical, the government proclaiming it must be willing to engage directly in dialogue with those most affected by it. She criticises the tendency of the UK and US governments in particular to dismiss the possibility of dialogue by arguing that actors such as Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosević only understand the language of force. Although she recognises that the use of force may be justified in some cases, Fierke argues that treating foreign leaders as if they were incapable of rational argument only ends up reproducing conflict. A dialogical form of analysis, in which a wider range of voices (including social movements) are allowed to speak, could open up a new space for thinking about how we can construct the future. The problems faced by governments in opting for dialogue or the use of force are elaborated in Part III.

How are international actors incorporating ethical concerns into foreign policy?

The three chapters in Part III on the foreign policies of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union illustrate that international actors that proclaim to be acting ethically can frequently be criticised for not living up to their own rhetoric. All three actors can be charged with inconsistency and selectivity in their approach to the ethical issues on their foreign policy agendas. The three contributors to Part III seek to explain the inconsistency. With respect to the preferences of many of the authors in Part I for a dialogical approach to foreign policy, it is interesting to note that both the UK and EU claim to use dialogue to promote human rights, but this is often judged to be a cover-up or excuse for not taking stronger action against human rights abusers.

Christopher Coker evaluates US foreign policy, particularly with regard to the use of force. He argues that although US foreign policy is no longer guided by a grand purpose, as it was until the Vietnam War, the US government has distinct ethical pretensions, namely 'humanitarianism'. President Clinton has proclaimed that the United States will only fight humanitarian wars in the future; in other words, it will only fight for the oppressed in other countries, not for its own self-interest. But Coker argues that American foreign policy is a great deal less ethical in a post-ideological age than it was during the Cold War. It is reactive and risk-aversive, and uses force essentially for its own safety (against 'terrorism', for example), rather than for the general good. The US government tries to manage crises, but it does so selectively, because it lacks a grand design to guide policy-making. Moreover, the means used by the United States have been disproportionately military, and the way in which it has used its military means (for example, in the air campaigns against Serbia and Iraq) has also been suspect ethically. Coker charges that although the United States uses the language of humanitarianism, it lacks the will to enforce it. And until it finds the will, 'its ethical pretensions will be open to challenge'.

Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler analyse the foreign policy of the current Labour government in Britain in terms of whether it acts as a 'good international citizen': does it seek to strengthen international support for universal human rights standards, obey the rules of international society, and act multilaterally and with UN authorisation where possible? Dunne and Wheeler focus on three cases: policy towards China; policy towards Indonesia; and involvement in the Kosovo war. In the first two, they criticise the government. But they argue that the government's policy on Kosovo was based on humanitarian motives, gave diplomatic