

PURSUIING THE
GLOBAL
COMMON GOOD

Principle and Practice in U.S. Foreign Policy

Edited by
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Center for American Progress



PREFACE

In the fall of 2006, the Center for American Progress held a conference at Georgetown University entitled, “Securing the Common Good.” President Bill Clinton gave the keynote address, and an eminent panel of policymakers, advocates, academics, and faith leaders explored the concept of the common good as a moral precept and a progressive theory of governing. Their discussions spurred the Center to continue our work on this issue and examine the international aspects and implications of the common good for U.S. foreign policy.

The result is now in your hands. *Pursuing the Global Common Good* is a collection of essays that describes the challenges of going beyond perceived notions of national self-interest and security in order to pursue policies that will benefit our common humanity. The essays make the case that despite differences of religion, ethnicity, culture, and geography, people around the world share basic values and interests. A U.S. foreign policy that reflects these universal values is the surest way to secure our most fundamental national interests.

By exploring strategies for achieving this goal, *Pursuing the Global Common Good* is an essential guide for those seeking to connect our nation’s highest ethical traditions with pressing foreign policy realities. Whether arguing against torture or for our responsibility to protect vulnerable citizens against atrocities, these essays dispel the faulty notion that our national self-interest conflicts with our ethical obligations. To the contrary, they make a strong and persuasive case that we can do better by doing good because our nation’s self-interest and its moral responsibilities are intertwined.

Sally Steenland
Senior Policy Advisor
Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative

Peter Rundlet
Vice President for National
Security and International Policy

“Many often deride the influence of values and religious beliefs in the making of U.S. foreign policy as irrelevant or not in the ‘national interest.’ This couldn’t be further from the truth. *Pursuing the Global Common Good* tells us why.”

Madeleine K. Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State
and author of *The Mighty and the Almighty*

“American foreign policy has been at its best when it linked our national interest to an engagement with the global common good. Our religious traditions are at their best when they challenge us to find realistic ways of engaging the world that are true to our moral commitments and our values. At a moment when we badly need creative thinking, *Pursuing the Global Common Good* is exciting because it suggests steps that are, at once, right, practical and visionary. By suggesting that there can be such a thing as a ‘common good’ in world affairs, this book will help open the debate we need.”

E. J. Dionne Jr., syndicated columnist, Senior Fellow
in the Governance Studies Program at the Brookings
Institution and author of the forthcoming book, *Souled
Out: Renewing Faith and Politics After the Religious Right*

“Our deepest beliefs and religious traditions tell us to respect all humanity and seek justice and peace on earth. Why, then, would we separate our highest principles from the activities of our representative government? By demonstrating how moral vision can have a concrete impact on policy, *Pursuing the Global Common Good* makes a convincing case for a U.S. foreign policy that lives up to our highest ideals.”

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action
Center for Reform Judaism

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