Letter from the Director
Thea Harvey

The very first issue of the ECAAR News Network (predecessor to the Quarterly) records, “Economists against the Arms Race ‘went public’ at an 8 o’clock breakfast on Friday, December 30 [1988], the final day of the AEA annual meetings. Eighty people gathered and overfilled the room... [T]here was animated discussion of economics, disarmament, peace."

The meeting was presided over by Lawrence Klein, co-chair of ECAAR. He introduced the morning’s panel: ECAAR Trustee Robert Solow, Treasurer and Founder Robert Schwartz, Robert Eisner, Joseph Pechman, Dietrich Fischer and Lloyd Dumas. He went on to note “our professional obligation for rigorous analysis and substantive exploration of the issues.”

I am pleased and honored to bring you this issue of the EPS Quarterly celebrating our twentieth anniversary. I thought it would be fitting to re-run a few articles from ECAAR/EPS’s past – to give our readers a small taste of our activities over the last 20 years. This gave me the opportunity to re-read all of our newsletters. There were so many authors and articles that I wanted to share with you; we have done a lot of work in these years. Of course, I had to narrow down my choices for reasons of space.

The pieces I have chosen are, I hope, a representative sample. In “ECAAR Promotes Land Trust for Vieques” from the May 2002 newsletter, our founder, Robert Schwartz, describes his personal involvement in efforts to oust the US Navy from the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Thanks in large part to several reports generated by ECAAR, the movement was eventually successful and the Navy left its base there in 2003.

The 2008 US presidential election is over and the next phase of policy and action is yet to be decided. I was struck by an article in the April 2000 newsletter by Trustee Lawrence Klein and Vice-Chair Michael Intriligator comparing George W. Bush and Al Gore’s positions on defense spending. The article concludes, “The differences between [the candidates] on defense issues affect the US economy and the security of the entire world. These are clearly much more significant issues than most of those now debated by the candidates and covered by the media,” as hauntingly apt a statement in 2008 as it was in 2000.

Grants from the Ford Foundation were integral in several major projects. Among them was the Global Register of Experts on the Economics of Military Affairs. GREEMA is a registry, or directory, consisting of 460 entries from over 50 countries of experts in the field of economic aspects of military affairs. A short article by Dietrich Fischer, reproduced from the Summer 1994 issue, gives an example of the utility of the directory.

In 2002, ECAAR initiated a project on the economic costs, benefits, and unintended consequences of the use of barter arrangements, or “offsets,” in international arms transfers. Using the relationships of our international affiliates, and funds from the Eisner Project Development Fund, we co-hosted a conference in Cape Town, South Africa. Here we reprint a report of the conference by ECAAR member Geoff Harris.
There is also a random sampling of other short articles. I was often struck by how pertinent the thoughts and advice contained in these articles are still.

I am pleased also to have recruited all three of my predecessors in the position of staff director to write new articles for this issue. Each brought her own character and particular areas of special interest to the organization; each of the pieces they wrote for this edition focuses on the current state of affairs in her field.

The selection process has been a learning experience for me. Although I have worked for ECAAR/EPS since the summer of 2002, I was unaware of many of the projects and activities from earlier times. In going back through the newsletters, I was able to see the progression of the organization and really understand the richness of our history. From its beginning, EPS has provided conference sessions, reports, studies and publications which have clarified and illuminated the intersection of economic and security policy. Here’s to another twenty years of providing rigorous analysis, substantive exploration and practical, constructive counsel to social scientists, citizens, journalists and policy-makers worldwide.