

James Chace 1931–2004

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of James Chace, former editor of *World Policy Journal* (1993–2000), who died suddenly in Paris on October 8, at the age of 72. James was a talented professional editor (he had previously been managing editor of *Foreign Affairs* and coeditor of the *New York Times Book Review*) who, when he took over the helm of the journal (an apt phrase for the passionate sailor that he was), had recently also become the Henry Luce Professor in Freedom of Inquiry and Expression at Bard College. A prolific writer on political and historical subjects, he was best known for his biography of Dean Acheson, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (1999).

It was America's role in the post–Cold War world that engaged James as editor. As he wrote in the “Coda” to the Tenth Anniversary issue of *World Policy Journal* (his first as editor), we were at the beginning of a new era, in which the United States was “trying to assume global leadership from a weakened economic and political position in a world wracked by ethnic, nationalist, and religious conflicts that defy quick and easy solutions.” What the journal would do under his leadership was not to try to set the foreign policy agenda, but to “uncover [the] longer-term trends and dynamics and to ask the deeper questions that run beyond preoccupations with current policy.” He intended to “open up the journal to more varied approaches to international affairs” by publishing, in addition to policy essays, articles dealing with cultural and historical trends, and reportage from regions “vital to an understanding of the deeper forces that shape our lives.” What was needed was “creative thinking” to deal with a newly fragmented world.

Over the next seven years, James assiduously sought out creative thinkers among academics, policymakers, journalists, cultural critics, and novelists, publishing some 300 articles intended not simply to inform but to challenge readers to reexamine their preconceived notions. The common denominator was clear English prose—for a former Latin scholar, James was stubbornly opposed to the Latinate, preferring the more muscular Anglo-Saxon.

In his last “Coda,” written in the spring of 2000, James saw a world still “struggling to reconcile the push toward integration with the simultaneous tendency toward fragmentation.” The American age, he wrote, “is fast becoming an age of anxiety.” More than a year before 9/11, James warned his readers that the United States would not be able to “barriade itself within the castle keep. Other powers will arise to besiege the castle, and they will find their footsoldiers among the angry and dispossessed.” America's foreign policy tradition, he wrote, “requires a moral component even when it is grounded in a realistic assessment of its interests and the capabilities of its allies and enemies.... The American people need to understand the implications of American power and the fundamental commitment this country must make to internationalism. This, above all, is the central task of the next president. If he does not do this, much of the world will suffer grievously.”

At a time when creative thinking and “daring and buoyant determination” are needed more than ever, a powerful voice has been stilled. It will be missed.

—*The Editors*