
Reflections on *The Fletcher Forum's* 40th Anniversary

What started in the mid-1970s as a “fairly marginal, ad hoc”¹ effort has become a valued and reliable source of thought on current issues in international affairs. One need only peruse *The Forum's* archives to get a sense of the timeliness of each edition's content to the issues of the day. And yet perhaps paradoxically, a review of the archives reveals that the issues of yesterday remain the issues of today. To cite just one small example of many: Michael Donovan's *Iran's Bomb: A Crisis Deferred?* (Summer 2005).

Not surprisingly, *The Forum* and its editors have often, dare I say, been ahead of the School on key topics in international affairs. For example, check out the Summer 1993 issue, published nearly a quarter century ago, featuring eight articles on gender in international relations.

Having had the good fortune to know the editors of *The Fletcher Forum* for three quarters of the journal's life, it is remarkable that this entirely student-run enterprise has reliably, year in and year out, met the goal of its founding student editors: that is, the production of two high quality, insightful publications every year.

“Despite some popular skepticism...and rather uncertain circumstances surrounding the conception and gestation of the project,”² *The Fletcher Forum* has endured, prospered, and, most importantly, contributed to The Fletcher School's mission of increasing understanding of international problems and concerns.

– GERARD SHEEHAN, *Executive Associate Dean at The Fletcher School*

NOTES

- 1 The Fletcher Forum: First Annual Director's Report, May 21, 1977
- 2 Fall 1976 memo from Fletcher student Shashi Tharoor, chairman of the student editorial board to Fletcher faculty.

Leading *The Fletcher Forum* was an absolute highlight of my time at Fletcher. I loved my team of editors, I loved chasing after our authors, and I loved the editing process—as strange as that sounds, since a lot of it entailed painful hours of formatting and re-writing. I am proud of the work we did and the journal we published, and I am grateful to our team and to everyone who supported us. Thank you all, and happy anniversary!

– **MARIYA RASNER**, *former Editor-in-Chief 2002-2003 (Vol. 27), and Senior Program Manager at Counterpart International*

The Fletcher Forum occupies an important space at the Fletcher School as its flagship publication. In order to stay relevant, it has been important for *The Forum* to adapt to evolving media. While I was with *The Forum*, we were able to expand our web presence to provide both timely content and allow Fletcher students to submit their own contributions, while still continuing to publish a print version featuring articles from established experts with “big picture” analyses. This adaptation worked well during the year I was involved, but it may evolve further in the future. Readers can expect *The Forum* to continually adapt its approach in order to maintain and expand its reach, while continuing to highlight The Fletcher School’s academics, research, and ability to reflect on the world’s biggest questions.

– **PAUL NADEAU**, *former Editor-in-Chief 2011-2012 (Vol. 36) and Adjunct Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies*

The inside cover of *The Forum* is the most important page of any issue. The names on the masthead bring meaning and life to the content on the pages between the front and back covers and to our website. The personalities, ambitions, and dedication of our staff shape *The Forum's* content just as much as the author of each piece.

But, more importantly (to me at least), the names on the inside cover represented partners, confidants, masterminds. Together, we conspired to tell the world as we saw it. We fought over headlines. We tracked down every missing Oxford comma. And we remain friends today.

– **CHRISTOPHER MAROSHEGYI**, *former Editor-in-Chief 2014-2015 (Vol. 39) and Analyst at Albright Stonebridge Group*

The Fletcher Forum was the highlight of my experience as a student at the Fletcher School, in large part because the journal attracted some of the most passionate and talented students at the school, many of whom remain close friends of mine to this day. I was fortunate during my time as Editor-in-Chief to be able to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Fletcher School by collecting articles from Fletcher alumni, and am delighted to see *The Forum* celebrating a milestone and birthday of its own, as it enters its fifth decade of providing cutting-edge commentary on a variety of contemporary topics in international affairs.

My time on the journal taught me to be a better writer, editor, and leader. As a recent graduate, I am proud of the way the journal has continued to blend online and print content, including interviews with high-level policymakers and academics, along with the more traditional long-form pieces. This has allowed *The Forum* to remain at the forefront of scholarship and commentary on international affairs. *The Forum* has long been, and will continue in the future to be the crown jewel of the Fletcher School in the years and decades ahead. The current Editorial Board should be proud of the high caliber of the work that they continue to do.

– **ALEXANDER ELY**, *former Editor-in-Chief, 2012-2013 (Vol. 37) and Editor-in-Chief of the Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*

I am grateful to the editors of *The Fletcher Forum* for inviting me to write a few words of reflection on my association with the journal over the past twenty years. My involvement with *The Forum* has combined three roles—administrator, advisory board member, and author.

In each of these roles, it has been a privilege to work with the editors and observe their many talents. As an administrator, I have been impressed by their ability to deftly negotiate budgets and policies with people more senior than they, and to navigate complex relationships with distinguished authors. A few years ago, the *Forum* staff also launched an excellent, cutting-edge web edition.

As an adviser, I have seen them debate vigorously amongst themselves to find relevant and intellectually strong themes, as well as a unified voice for each article and issue. I have watched editors face disagreements over serious issues of intellectual freedom and find processes to work through them. Finally, as an author I have benefitted from their careful and thoughtful editing. In short, it would be difficult to find better preparation for career leadership than working at *The Forum*.

As one example, two years ago Cornelia Schneider, the Forum's Editor-in-Chief from 2005-2006, won the first Fletcher Young Women's Leadership Award for her work on judicial reform for the UN in eastern Congo, and for promoting the education of girls in Afghanistan.

A few years ago, *The Forum* came out with a special issue on women in international affairs. In my introductory piece for the issue, I wrote of the need for women scholars in the field of international affairs to publish as often as their male counterparts, as well as the need to increase the role of women as practitioners in international affairs.

In this regard, *The Forum* has truly been ahead of its time. Fifty percent of the editors-in-chief over the past decade have been women, including both this year's and next year's leadership, and the *Forum* staff consistently reflects an equitable distribution of men and women.

In this anniversary issue, I salute all the editors of *The Forum* and congratulate them on their extraordinary work, which has prepared its staff for future positions of leadership; served as a model for a diverse and inclusive workforce; and, by serving as a forum for discussion and debate on today's most pressing international challenges, immensely enriched The Fletcher School.

– **DEBORAH NUTTER**, *Senior Associate Dean and Professor of Practice at The Fletcher School*