

THE FLETCHER FORUM *of* WORLD AFFAIRS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The world has changed immensely since my class arrived at Fletcher in August 2015. Populism is resurgent around the globe, exhibited by the election of President Trump, the Brexit vote, and Duterte's actions in the Philippines, among others. Much of the West looks inward while other powers have risen and extended their international reach, both economically and militarily. Challenges seem endless: the United States has taken limited military action against the Syrian government; tensions continue to rise on the Korean Peninsula; millions of people remain food insecure in Yemen, Syria, Somalia, and many other parts of the world; and some 65 million people are displaced worldwide—a modern-day record high. With the barrage of seemingly devastating news, it is hard to remain positive about what lies ahead.

It is important to remember, though, that where there are challenges, there are also opportunities. Here at Fletcher, I have studied international development, which is often criticized because it's still a relatively young field, some of its failures have been more widely publicized than its successes, and it is really hard to do well. But development has also changed the world for the better. It has led to the more than 99 percent decrease in polio cases each year—in 1988, polio affected more than 350,000; in 2016, that number has dropped to 42 and polio is only present in three countries. Development helped Botswana become the fastest growing economy of the past 50 years, demonstrated by a steep decline in poverty rates from 50 percent to 19 percent and a per capita income increase from \$18 in 1966 to more than \$16,000 today. And we can thank development programs for numerous efforts that provide food for the world's starving populations; in February 2017 alone, World Food Programme was able to reach nearly 10 million food-insecure people in Yemen and Syria. And this just represents one field.

Successes in international fields have been possible because well-meaning, determined people have led the charge in making a positive

difference in our increasingly complex world. They did not accept defeat because the work was hard. They learned from mistakes, changed institutions, invested in new innovations, and found the opportunities hidden within these global challenges. The work was hard but it was work worth doing.

We have curated this issue to offer insight into some of the leadership changes the world has experienced and the challenges that lie ahead. Across the world, new leaders have come to the fore—some of them with unconventional approaches that have unsettled the international order, with consequences that remain unclear. Non-state organizations and individuals continue to fill governance gaps while trying to stay on top of our rapidly-changing world.

This issue offers perspectives on the rise of the “angry leader,” how President Trump’s election is affecting global trade and immigration, the ethics of autonomous weapons, the challenges of internet governance, and the dangers of global supply chains in the fashion industry, to name a few. Our authors offer analysis and, in many cases, policy prescriptions. We encourage you to read to seek out the opportunities in the presented challenges. As Fletcher’s Dean, Adm. James Stavridis, USN (Ret.) says in his closing interview, “In the end, we are all leaders.” Whether in government, business, non-governmental organizations, or at the family dinner table, we encourage you to lead the work worth doing.

Thank you to *The Forum* staff for your work; we have found such success this year because of you. To Ashley, Stephen, and Sydney, thank you for being such strong leaders on this team—I am proud to have shared this experience with you. A special thank you to Dean Stavridis for both bookending this issue and serving as Fletcher’s fearless leader since 2013. To Dean Sheehan and Katie Mulroy, thank you for being sources of guidance, kindness, and support; you both are indispensable to the Fletcher community. And finally to you, the reader; *The Forum* thanks you for your readership and support. We hope you enjoy this issue and learn from it as much as we have.

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