

# Toward Ideas and Influence

## 2022 Strategic Framework of *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*

### I. Background

As the field of international relations has shifted from a focus on the humanities to a predominance of the social sciences, its scope and applicability has broadened. One effect of this shift is that the community surrounding international relations discourse has expanded to non-scholars, namely practitioners, policymakers, journalists, and activists. Accordingly, the mission of the Fletcher School has also expanded to the wider goal of training not only academics, but also practitioners for leading roles in global affairs.

Given these developments, the relevance of a traditional-form, academic journal at what is otherwise a policy and practice research school is unclear. Moreover, the quality and effectiveness of non-peer reviewed, student-run journals such as *The Forum* is called into question. Nevertheless, the importance of the latter cannot be diminished. Student fora continue to be the nuclei of reform and innovation movements in politics, economics, and diplomacy around the globe. The question is: how might *The Forum* structure itself to contribute pragmatically to the crucial debates of the current day? Hence this Strategic Framework as a way forward for *The Fletcher Forum* emerges.

### II. Motivation

Today, *The Fletcher Forum* maintains the same motivation as that held since its inception:

*“Founded in 1975 and published biannually, The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs is the student-managed foreign policy journal at The Fletcher School. The publication provides a broad, interdisciplinary platform for analysis of legal, political, economic, environmental, and diplomatic issues in international affairs. Each year, The Forum publishes winter and summer editions.*

*“The editorial board of The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs believes that the publication’s audience values and expects the inclusion of conflicting viewpoints, and does not expect readers to concur with all of the views expressed by Forum authors. This inherent diversity supports the very definition of a “forum,” i.e., a public meeting place for open discussion.”*

### III. Vision<sup>1</sup>

In the early 2000s, the editorial team launched a complimentary website to feature short-form analysis on the same timely array of topics critical to the print edition. The website also features a

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn heavily from the mission statement of *Foreign Affairs*, available here for reference: [About Us](#) page and [Submissions](#) page.

student blog, known as *The Rostrum*. Recently, *The Forum* added a podcast to facilitate conversation with experts in the international relations field.

In 2022, *The Forum* acknowledges an urgent need for a pragmatic approach to international affairs discourse. This approach recognizes a desire for an information hub to which policy makers can turn for a clear understanding of the latest ideas and innovations of academic pursuit. As such, *The Forum* reintroduces itself as a foreign policy journal which platforms thought-provoking analysis by world-leading scholars, practitioners, and experts, aimed at a broad audience of policy-makers, and the general public. Each print edition will present a series of 20 to 25 analytical essays on a particular issue or set of issues of crucial importance to the current day and our shared global future. While these essays will maintain the academic rigor of past *Forum* editions, they will be presented in semi-formal, concise, digestible form, providing decision-makers of multiple levels of States and society access to the modern debates of international affairs. In line with this new format, these essays will prioritize clear, straightforward language. Indeed, more formal, technical analysis will be left to other, traditional peer-reviewed publications. The print edition will also continue to publish its *perspectives* and book review sections, the former which allows a diverse array of global actors to offer reflections, opinions, and recommendations about contemporary issues, usually based on emerging evidence and personal experience; the latter offers informed critiques of recently released books that deal with international affairs.

Notably, these particular kinds of articles are not new to *The Forum*, and in fact have been some of the most successful and influential pieces it has published. Therefore, the publication endeavors now to capitalize on this success and concretize the analytical essay as its feature length.

The web edition of *The Forum* presents short form, journalistic and opinion articles that concern current events and the latest issues of international affairs outside of the print edition. The podcast series complements the themes of the print and web editions with organic interviews of scholars, practitioners, and experts, from within and outside The Fletcher School's community. Both web and podcast editions continue to highlight the cutting edge research and advocacy work of The Fletcher School, whose mission to which *The Forum* remains dedicated.

As ever, the views and opinions expressed in the journal are solely those of individual authors and should not be regarded as reflecting any official opinion or position of *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, or its faculty, staff, or administration.

#### **IV. The Advisory Committee (formerly, Board of Directors)**

In previous years, *The Forum* has been overseen by a Board of Directors, consisting of a faculty lead and Fletcher School alumni. Moving forward, *The Forum* will recognize that its overseeing authority are the Deans of The Fletcher School, and instead will restructure its Board to an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will consist of interested faculty (three persons), alumni (two persons), and practitioners (one person) who will support each year's Executive Team to execute the above vision of the publication with advice and guidance. To facilitate the latter, the Executive

Team shall present the achievements and plans for the publication in a meeting with the Advisory Committee twice each year, at the beginning of each academic semester. As the Executive Team operates by consensus, should the Executive Team of *The Forum* face a deadlocked disagreement on any particular issue, the Advisory Committee will be called to make a final decision. Each member of the Advisory Committee agrees to serve three years. After each three-year period, the new Advisory Committee will be appointed and/or re-elected by the Executive Team, in consultation with existing and potential Committee members.

## **V. Publication Structure**

### ***Print***

1. *Feature Length*: In-depth analytical essays for the print edition offer concise, rigorous research and critical analysis of topics in international affairs relevant to each edition's theme(s). Feature articles range in length from 3,000 to 4,500 words.
2. *Perspectives*: Articles (or interviews) providing reflections, opinions, and recommendations about contemporary issues, usually based on emerging evidence and personal experience. Perspectives articles range in length from 1,200 to 3,000 words.
3. *Book Reviews*: Reviews offer informed critiques of recently released books that deal with international affairs and are no more than 1,800 words in length.

### ***Web***

1. *Feature Length*: Journalistic (unbiased reporting) or opinion (point-of-view analysis) articles ranging in length from 500 to 1200 words.
2. *Interviews*: Conversations with scholars, practitioners, and experts, from within and outside The Fletcher School's community, presented in written form. Interview transcripts range in length from 1,200 to 3,000 words.
3. *Letters to the Editor*: Letters respond to a specific article published by *The Forum* and are no more than 550 words in length.
4. *Student Blog (The Rostrum)*: Any of the above from Fletcher students and graduate students of other universities.

### ***Podcast***

1. *Interviews* with scholars, practitioners, and experts, from within and outside The Fletcher School's community, usually of 30 to 45 minutes in length.

All submissions processes remain the same as outlined in *The Forum's* online guidance, available [here](#).