
Fletcher at 80

JAMES STAVRIDIS

In Indian folklore, an 80th birthday is not simply a cause for reflection and celebration—it is a life-affirming achievement: after all, a thousand moons have come and gone. The 80th celebration is deeply symbolic, for it marks the moment where the elder had completed his or her duties and officially passed on the responsibility of family security and stability to the next generation.

Together, we all bear responsibility for using this moment to define the future of The Fletcher School—faculty, students, alumni, and administrators. It is a marvelous time to be part of this vibrant community.

As I return to a place where I earned a Ph.D. in the early 1980s, this special edition of *The Forum* offers an opportunity to share some thoughts on my return to Fletcher, about what I have seen thus far, where I think we are, and what the future may hold.

My own frame of reference was developed as a career Navy officer, including a great deal of time spent at sea and ashore on international missions. In my service in both peace and war in the Balkans, the Caribbean, the Arabian Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Pacific, I realized that economic, political and military structures are fragile and should never be taken for granted. I saw firsthand that a broadly shared ideology for freedom and basic human rights is a powerful weapon, which demands changes in economic, political, and foreign policy positions. Throughout my naval service, I often relied upon the lessons learned as a MALD and Ph.D. student at the Fletcher School.

The Fletcher School has evolved and grown significantly since my time as a student here. The many successes and advances the institution has made are due to the unwavering dedication of the faculty, students, alumni, and administrators. Leading that team for the past twelve years was Dean

Admiral James Stavridis, *USN (Ret)* is the 12th Dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy having assumed his duties in July 2013. He is a former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, and holds both a MALD and a Ph.D. from The Fletcher School.

Stephen Bosworth—the type of leader who was not afraid to take chances, think “around the corner” and embrace change when it made sense to do so. Under his guidance, The Fletcher School developed and implemented new academic programs and courses, including a unique degree program in international business, which recognizes that the private sector is integral to the resolution of global issues. Dean Bosworth had a vision for the future that was well and truly realized; it now falls upon us all to build on his legacy in the years ahead.

I will begin my time as Dean by listening carefully to the entire Fletcher community. My initial sense is that in this 80th year, we should think about some of the following:

- Create more opportunities for students and faculty from around the world to enjoy the Fletcher experience. We will aggressively recruit the best and the brightest from around the globe, and work hard to provide financial aid. We want our students to “know the world” and indeed ultimately to “change the world.”
- Increase our integration with Tufts University, especially through partnerships with other graduate schools within the University.
- Explore new and creative ways to engage in public-private partnerships, working both with governments and the commercial private sector.
- Continue to innovate and expand our distance learning program degrees, which are clearly on the cutting edge of such programs today. We should explore further ideas using the benefits of new technologies.
- Ensure that The Fletcher School remains a premier research institution in international relations, and that the fruits of our research are used in helping the world move forward on key issues.
- Consider international partnerships with other leading graduate schools and universities in other nations to enhance civil society, exchange ideas and build bridges for the future.
- Explore emerging issues in international relations, including cyber, strategic communications, the Arctic, biosciences, environmental challenges, and the like.

As I walk the campus and observe our future leaders engaged in discussion and debate with our faculty, I know we are passing on important lessons. At Fletcher, we subscribe to the philosophy that collective thinking and working together is always smarter than any one individual thinking alone—and I think we prove it every day.

It has been said that a “leader is a dealer in hope.” Indeed, I am very hopeful about the international environment—for all our challenges—and about this historic Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. I believe that with a collegial and empowered team of students, faculty, alumni, and administrators, The Fletcher School will remain a global leader in international relations. I am proud to be part of the team!**f**

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