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## Fletcher hosts the Women's Leadership Award Ceremony

by **Stephanie Rifkin**  
Contributing Writer

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy hosted the sixth annual Fletcher Women's Leadership Award (FWLA) ceremony last night. At the ceremony, Fletcher alumnae Karoun Demirjian (F'06) and Siobhan MacDermott (F'13) were honored for making a meaningful impact in the world through their careers.

Demirjian, who graduated from the Fletcher School with her Master of Arts in law and diplomacy in 2006, was honored first for her contributions as a reporter for the Washington Post. Alice Finn, chair of the FWLA Committee, highlighted aspects of Demirjian's career, such as her correspondence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza for the Associated Press and her work covering the conflict in Ukraine. Currently, Demirjian is focusing on the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

Demirjian began her speech declaring that she doesn't see herself as model alumna to receive a career award.

"Basically, I spent my first few years after Fletcher just trying to hang on and assuming massive amounts of debt," she said, noting that she had difficulty holding down a journalism job for years after graduating.

Demirjian credits the education she received at Fletcher for helping her find her way to eventually being a foreign correspondent, and then to covering events in Washington, D.C.

"Nobody comes to the Fletcher School because they want a preordained path, but it does give you the tools to be able to carve out your own. I learned how to question the status quo here and really, really dig. You can draw a

straight line from that to investigative journalism. Even more importantly, this was the most diverse student body I've ever been a part of and probably the most diverse group of people that I've ever existed in, and that forces you to listen. If you're a reporter and not listening, you're not getting the story," she said.

She also highlighted the importance of honoring a reporter in an academic space like this and continuing to support journalism as much as possible.

"I think it's really great that Fletcher is honoring a reporter this year. Attitudes are clearly changing in this political time and in this internet age, I think people are starting to come around to the idea that having well sourced information quickly turned around is important," she said.

Demirjian closed her talk by calling on the crowd to support journalism by subscribing to their local media outlets.

The second honoree, MacDermott, graduated in 2013 with a global Master of Arts in law and diplomacy. She currently works as vice chairperson of global and corporate investment banking at Bank of America. Like Demirjian, MacDermott credited her Fletcher education for the skills it gave her to effectively do her job.

"As I walked into the room at Fletcher, I looked around and realized that I was one of two people that came from the corporate world in the program. When we sat in our groups, and we tried to apply these corporate world policies, especially from Wall Street on how to get stuff done, it didn't really work. I learned so much from my classmates. We had people from NGOs, we had people from governments from all over



AUSTIN CLEMENTI / THE TUFTS DAILY

Karoun Demirjian (F '06), a Congressional reporter for the Washington Post, discusses her experience as a reporter, accepting the Fletcher Women's Leadership Award in Cabot 207 on Nov. 14.

the world, and really being able to sit and listen to them and understand their concerns about how things are being done made me rethink everything," MacDermott said.

When she started to work at Bank of America in a position concerned with cyber public policy, the Fletcher School alumni network helped her succeed.

"I have people all over the world I could call and say, 'Hey, what's going on? Can you tell me what's happening in your country? How are people thinking about this? What's going on over here? How do we piece all these pieces together?' which was something I wouldn't have been able to do any-

where nearly as successfully beforehand," MacDermott said.

MacDermott also specifically addressed the issues that she's faced as a woman in a male-dominated industry.

"I don't think [there] was probably a more male-dominated profession out there [than financial services]. But it is changing. You're starting to see more women at the top and more women in leadership positions and more gender parity in boardrooms, but it's still difficult," she said.

The event closed with a question and answer session with the Dean of the Fletcher School Rachel Kyte.

## Heginbotham speaks about war games at inaugural Applied IR Speaker Series

by **Matthew McGovern**  
Assistant News Editor

*Disclaimer: Kevin Doherty is an assistant features editor at the Tufts Daily. He was not involved in the writing or editing of this article.*

Research scientist and specialist in Asian security issues Eric Heginbotham spoke last night at the Cheryl Chase Center in the first installment of the international relations (IR) department's Applied IR Speaker Series. He currently works at the MIT Center for International Studies.

The Applied IR Speaker Series aims at encouraging creative thinking in international relations (IR) students, especially as it pertains to career paths, according to an introduction by senior Kevin Doherty, president of the IR Student Advisory Board.

Heginbotham's talk was focused around wargaming and war simulation, which have developed into integral tools in modern warfare.

Despite risks and pitfalls associated with these war games and simulations, Heginbotham said that he was a believer in their effectiveness. His expertise in the field comes from his work at both the

RAND Corporation and the Council on Foreign Relations, two think tanks which focus on policy.

"In the lead-up to World War I, war games were used by all the major powers to develop war plans. Perhaps the best documented use of war games to date was done by the U.S. Naval War College during the interwar years," Heginbotham said.

These games covered a wide variety of factors such as attrition, supplies and the tactical importance of various bases. Heginbotham emphasized their application in the Pacific theater in the lead-up to World War II.

He also recounted the wargames and simulations that Japan conducted in preparation for World War II which showed that Japan would lose the war. Heginbotham noted that sound analyses and simulations are quite frequently ignored by policy makers.

He went on to describe the effectiveness of war games and simulations during the Gulf War as well as during the Cold War.

"All U.S. Service branches run what they call 'futurist games,' though I have only participated in the Air Force ones," Heginbotham said.

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# New speaker series shows IR majors career paths

## APPLIED IR

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Towards the end of the discussion of wargaming and simulation, Heginbotham concentrated on their application during the nuclear arms race in the second half of the 20th century.

More specifically, he made the point that analyses have become increasingly complicated because nuclear warfare is no longer an issue solely between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The last portion of Heginbotham's talk was dedicated to what he called the "think tank world" and the different types of functions, funding structures and goals that various think tanks have. He also elucidated

how students of international relations can enter the field.

Heginbotham detailed the variety of ideological affiliations of think tanks, funding sources and destinations for their research. He emphasized that the nature of think tanks' work largely hinges upon their sources of funding.

Heginbotham closed with two pieces of advice: that students should study a breadth of subjects, and that they should not limit their scope of their job search solely to think tanks. Despite his extensive background in think tanks, Heginbotham also encouraged students to consider looking to academic institutions for work in public policy.

Celia Bottger, who is studying IR and a member of the IR Student Advisory Board, explained some of the objectives of the Applied IR Speaker Series to the Daily in an interview.

"Bringing in Heginbotham is part of an effort to bring in people that work in the field to campus and allow students of international relations to hear from them about relevant careers," Bottger, a senior, said.

Lionel Oh, a member of the IR Student Advisory Board, echoed these sentiments.

"The most important aspect of this series is having speakers talk about their experience applying international relations education on an everyday level," Oh, a senior, said.

# Thant Myint-U discusses contemporary history of Burma



NATASHA MAYOR / THE TUFTS DAILY

Burmese writer and historian Thant Myint-U discusses his new book, "The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism, and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century," in Mugar 200 on Nov. 14.

by **Natasha Mayor**  
News Editor

Burmese writer and historian Dr. Thant Myint-U discussed his new book, "The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism, and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century" (2019), with an audience of about 30 people in Mugar 200 last night.

The talk was hosted by the Fletcher School's Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies (CSAIOS). Director of CSAIOS Ayesha Jalal introduced Thant Myint-U and noted that he is a former United Nations (UN) peacekeeper who is following in the footsteps of his grandfather U Thant, the third Secretary-General of the UN.

Thant Myint-U said that when he first set out to write his book in 2016, democracy was making good progress in Burma, and he had intended for this book to primarily be a political history. However, the crises in Rakhine and for the Rohingya people began a year later and he realized that writing a history of contemporary Burma would not be so straightforward.

"If I was going to try to write a history of the past 15, 20 years and try to make sense of contemporary Burma ... I would have to delve much more into

these issues around identity and nationalism and citizenship and belonging and race and ethnicity," Thant Myint-U said.

Accordingly, Thant Myint-U structured his talk around five main topics that he identified as crucial in understanding the current situation in Burma: democracy, race and identity, armed and violent conflict, political economy and climate change.

Thant Myint-U walked the audience through a brief history of Burma. He discussed the colonial period in British India, the racial tensions between indigenous and alien people in Burma when it became independent in 1948, the beginning of military rule in 1958 and the eventual rebirth of democracy in the past decade, which included the establishment of a new constitutional framework in 2008.

He talked about the racial tensions that permeate the Burmese psyche which led to the expulsion of large numbers of people of Indian descent in 1964. Thant Myint-U noted that the telecom revolution that began in Burma in 2013 has allowed ideas about race to take on a new dynamic.

"Today on Facebook in Burma, you will see identity-based mobilization on an unprecedented scale," he said.

Thant Myint-U explained that although the two countries are now rebuilding

their relationship, Burma's close ties with China were negatively affected in the early 2010s.

"The Chinese by 2011 were shocked by the speed with which the rapprochement between the West and Burma took place and the abandon with which the Burmese seemed to be embracing Washington and other Western countries."

He also spoke about the political economy in Burma, whose "seed money" can be traced to the large illicit heroin industry. Thant Myint-U explained that there are huge sums of money being moved around the country and most of that vast economy is going unaccounted for in official statistics.

"This economy that's developed in Burma over the past 25 years has produced a society that is far more unequal in terms of wealth than anything we've seen at least since colonial times," he said. "It has devastated the environment."

Thant Myint-U concluded his talk by posing a question. "What is Burma?" he asked. Given the lack of common identity and the extremely weak state institutions, he wondered how it is possible that the country is still being held together, can support multimillion dollar industries and has not devolved further into violence.