

**FLETCHER FORUM OF  
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Thirty years ago, a group of dedicated students produced the first issue of *The Fletcher Forum*. For someone born after 1976, it has been interesting to look back and reflect on how international affairs and this journal have developed over the years. Technological advances have changed the editing process beyond recognition. The end of the Cold War, the rising influence of nonstate actors, and aspects of the so-called era of globalization have fundamentally altered the world in which we live. Yet, ultimately, the character of international affairs and the mission of *The Forum* remain in many ways unchanged.

In its first year, *The Forum* covered an array of issues—some distant to today's student of international affairs, others similar to current headlines. Its analysis of the 1975 seizure of a U.S. merchant ship by Cambodian forces highlighted the botched rescue attempt that was to be the United States' last engagement in Southeast Asia after the Vietnam war. What went unmentioned on was the genocidal character of the Khmer Rouge regime, already beginning to manifest itself at the time. Since then, we have become more conscious of human rights violations that challenge the international community to respond—as in Darfur. Reflections on justifications for a state to use armed force, part of an early *The Forum* article on the raid by Israeli special forces on a hijacked plane in Entebbe, sound as relevant today as they did then. In the post-September 11 world, however, terrorism has become a more general worry, perhaps necessitating collective action.

Détente was at its height when *The Forum* was inaugurated, and readers may have been hoping for an end to the nuclear arms race. Few, however, would have predicted the transformation that followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Despite these changes, the availability of nuclear technology and materials remains a global concern, and the effectiveness of nonproliferation measures is hotly debated. 1976 also witnessed events that echo well into our times: Indonesia's annexation of East Timor later resulted in one of the first state-building exercises of the twenty-first century. The entry into force of a convention condemning apartheid marked the beginning of the end of the South African regime followed by the establishment of truth commissions that served as model for post-conflict justice all over the world. China was struck by the devastating Tangshan earthquake, which cost some 250,000 lives. The ensuing discontent in face of an inadequate disaster response surely strikes a chord with those grappling with the aftermath of the Asian Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and the Kashmir earthquake.

History, without a doubt, repeats itself—often in different guises, sometimes in unashamedly open resemblance. The process of learning and analysis, by editors and readers alike, goes on. From the beginning, our journal sought to serve as a true forum, a public meeting place for discussion of often divergent ideas. We hope you enjoy this anniversary publication and the tradition it seeks to perpetuate.

**CORNELIA SCHNEIDER**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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# Things You Have Missed . . .

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