
Winning the War of Ideas

A CONVERSATION WITH FARAH PANDITH,
*Former Special Representative to Muslim Communities,
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FLETCHER FORUM: *In this edition of The Forum, we're focusing on reflections on the one-hundred years since the end of World War I. Based on your experience working on political violence and extremism, how do you view these issues as having evolved over the past one hundred years, and what do you think are the major factors that have impacted the evolution of political and violent extremism?*

FARAH PANDITH: Looking back over the evolution of any issue over a hundred years is important...and it's a good marker. I think collecting data on where you've been and where you need to go can only help future foreign policy strategists.

I think about this question in a couple of different ways. One is about the generation that was dealing with the war, leading up to the war,

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and what happened during the war. Who were they, how did they experience the planet, what was happening in their communities? And I think about what is happening today, in terms of the push and pull of ideas, that is making both violence and nonviolence possible.

The second and really important piece for me as I think about the milestone of World War I is certainly who were the decision makers on the planet for World War I, who were the people running countries—and at that time obviously we're talking about nation-states, in a very particular moment, in a post-colonial time and there are multi-layered pieces to that—but who were the people—who were decision makers and how does that contrast with who the decision makers are today?

We don't just have power coming from nation-states. We have power coming from other forces as well...and I think that's very important for us to understand. Layered on top of that is the timing that the system of impact for a human day is very different than it was a hundred years ago—when you heard information, what you did with that information, how you evaluated that information, as a country but also as a human, an individual going about your day. That's obvious, I understand, but it also makes a difference in terms of us thinking about how to solve problems. A hundred years ago men were making decisions, men were implementing the strategies, men were thinking that the only activists and the only way in which you can get to a solution were nation-states doing things in a particular way. Today, a hundred years later, we have a multi-faceted system of ways of solving problems.

FORUM: *Considering your experience working on extremism and working with communities across the United States and the world, specifically Muslim communities, how have those local networks impacted political extremism around the world? How have you sought to work through those networks in terms of engaging with people?*

PANDITH: Networks is a term that can be used in different ways. Formal and informal networks...and they don't always happen or exist in the ways that we think they are going to happen. Also, network as you mean it here is a modern term. We're using it in a very precise way when we are talking about fighting extremism...and certainly in the social media era we think of it in a particular way. But there are different types of networks. Local networks are utilized at a grassroots level to fight extremism. But there are also networks of more formal structures that can happen. We see partnerships across platforms or networks to work on common goals.

I would answer your question around what's happening with extremism in terms of the networks and actors that are making a difference. At the local level, there are both informal and formal processes that allow networks and individuals to work. When we think out of the box, we see that some networks are working to fight extremism because there are like-minded people that have formed a network to work on a common goal. There are also individuals who work outside of a network...and in this case we must think about how we can magnify the ideas of the people within a community that know that they can make a difference.

How do we do that? We need to link people together to form new networks or to take great ideas that individuals are developing and do more. The way to scale good ideas is through larger networks. It's not through investment in just one particular element. So, what I have seen over the course of the last almost twenty years working on this issue has been an evolution in thinking in terms of "how do we deal with the growing threat of extremism?" Because, in fact, the threat hasn't decreased—it has increased. The multiple kinds of ideologies that are connected around the "us versus them" narrative are growing in societies in ways that we did not even and could not have imagined even right at 9/11. So how do we utilize what we've learned and understood in terms of how people have been radicalized and what can prevent them from being radicalized, and what is it that we can do within that network, what we can do with millennials and Generation Z in particular, to make sure that they're resistant to these ideologies from bad guys.

Those bad guys come in different forms. The kind that I worked on are groups like al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and other terrorist organizations that use the name of Islam for their nefarious ends. I know for sure that if only government was trying to tackle this problem we would not be able to get the solution. What I do know is listening to what young Muslims are saying about who they are and how they experience life is the only way we can begin to build the kind of resistance we need. So, for me, as I look at nearly a billion Muslims under the age of thirty globally, I understand how important it is not to silo them, not to try to interpret who they are based on old data, but to listen to what these young digital natives have to say over various generations globally. This will allow us to be very creative in the way in which we are able to build inoculation systems on the ground that can decrease the appeal of these ideologies and can force a different era of existence for these young people.

FORUM: *You served as the first ever Special Representative to Muslims Communities under President Barack Obama. What did you learn during that experience and how did it impact your perspective on efforts to counter violent extremism?*

PANDITH: It was an honor of a lifetime to be able to serve as President Obama's first Special Representative to Muslim Communities. Our nation had never had that position. The position was created for me by Hillary Clinton based on work that I had done in the Bush Administration when I was piloting programs across Europe. The U.S. government was the convener, the facilitator, and the intellectual partner with the ideas that we heard on the ground. We were investing in young people who had ideas on how to push back against the ideology of al-Qaeda and groups like it. We were really fortunate that we were able to partner with grassroots organizations that were authentic and organic and build things not from the top down, not from what U.S. government demanded we needed, but rather to try to find ways to connect likeminded thinkers across Europe.

When Hillary Clinton heard about what we had done and the kinds of things we seeded, she wanted us to do it around the world. So the job was a global position, it was an opportunity to really be a talent scout, to be able to go into countries and talk to young people and say, that's an amazing social entrepreneur, and that's a really incredible poet, and that's a really incredible activist, and what brought them together is that they all wanted the ideology of the extremist groups to be punctured. The way to do that may be different but they all had the same goal. So the job was about how to facilitate that change, how to develop an opportunity for them to learn how to take their idea and do something different.

We built all kinds of global networks of really amazing young thinkers, one of which was called Generation Change, which was a generation of young people under the age of thirty that were handpicked—and we had, by the time I finished as Special Representative, thirty chapters around the world of more than five hundred young Muslims handpicked working together to fight extremist ideologies in their local communities and knitted together across the world as a common team. They used Facebook to connect their ideas with each other. So really, we weren't in there telling them, you in Tanzania need to do this and you in Malaysia need to do that. It was really more like, what are your ideas and do you know anyone else in the network that can help you? Learning how powerful youth were and the importance of peer to peer connections was critical. Learning that local voices exist and that they just needed a platform was also critical.

The building of programs—whether a new network or some other kind of initiative—was all about youth and their own agency.

The other piece as Special Representative that I think was really important for us was that we allowed the conversation around soft power to happen. It gave legitimacy to the idea that, while it was essential and critical to think about hard-power elements, the kinetic element of how to stop a terrorist organization like al-Qaeda, we simultaneously needed to work on the soft power piece. Here we are at The Fletcher School, and one of the components of this incredible education is around diplomacy and understanding the tools of soft power. Diplomacy is not just sitting around a table talking to your counterpart. So, for me, as Special Representative, I really was utilizing things that I learned here at Fletcher. Understanding all of your carrots and all of your sticks and how to use them in a way that makes sense. But to also understand how important it is to experiment with different kinds of soft power that oftentimes people may not think will have any impact.

I recall for example that a new tool was technology. Social media was new and the bureaucrats that were making decisions are not millennials and Generation Z. They're learning about the latest technology, they're understanding through their kids oftentimes how ideas are connected. Now we all would say everybody knows Google and everybody knows Facebook. But it wasn't so easy for government to get permission to use Twitter or to believe it could be useful at all to our work... and this is stuff that you're kind of cutting your teeth on. But the challenge was also to say, it is ok to take a risk. What Hillary Clinton was able to do was to say that some of these things are going to fail but we have to try to do some of these things. Being allowed to take risks and to think differently was a gift.

I was very lucky to be able to have a chance to have a person that I worked for directly think out of the box and give me a long runway. I had an incredible team of people that worked with me and the embassies were great. It was a profoundly important experiment for the U.S. government in terms of how soft power could work. For me personally, it was the job of a lifetime and I really am grateful for it.

You also asked about CVE (countering violent extremism) and lessons...and I do want to say a word about that. One of the things that's really important to convey is that countering violent extremism is the non-kinetic element of what we are doing to fight extremist groups. It is about destroying the appeal of the ideology. It is not about policing, it is not about surveillance, it is not about doing things through a police force or law enforcement. It has to do with scaling and building resilience at a commu-

nity level so that ideas of the bad guys are destroyed and the “us versus them” narrative is punctured. That is what countering violent extremism is. The war of ideas is another way in which we talked about it so that you have that “kinetic” element of “war” but it’s ideas which are soft power.

I think the term CVE has been very misconstrued and, having been on the inside when this started in the Bush Administration, and having been around the table of people who were talking about it at its genesis, I can tell you that the creature that it is today is not the creature it began as.

CVE was corrupted as a discipline to be something it was not and is not. As a result, I think what has happened is that it has turned off a lot of people to the idea that they want to work on this because they think that it’s a really super secret surveillance program that is going on out there! CVE wasn’t intended to do anything like that. Investment in countering violent extremism is investment in soft power, it’s investment in a multitude of different tools around CVE, it’s not one particular avenue or method. And it’s around investing in young people. Lessons learned here are about the success of CVE being possible when you stay focused on the ideological dimensions and the effort to stop youth from finding the ideology appealing.

When I was working on these issues [CVE], I worked for both Democrats and Republicans, I’ve worked as a political appointee for Bush and I worked as a political appointee for Obama. Working on stopping a young person from joining a group like the Islamic State is not a Republican or Democrat thing. It is a universal responsibility for humanity to protect youth. I look at it as a youth protection component. I think one of the lessons that we all have to learn as people who are studying foreign policy and as people who are living in the world is that we can get a good idea from a party or a person who may not align with us. We have to open our ears and our eyes and our hearts. If the Obama Administration closed the door on me and said, “Oh, she worked for Bush and there’s no way we can do it,” we would not have had that position and we would not have had this chance. The second lesson is that some of the most unlikely people are people who gave me incredible ideas...and that was a very important lesson.

FORUM: *You spoke about how Facebook has served as an avenue for entrepreneurs for people connect. Of course, we know that Facebook has also been used in other ways. How do you see Facebook and other social media in terms of the juxtaposition between being a platform for opportunities to engage and to draw people in and one that can serve a nefarious role? How do we navigate that?*

PANDITH: The knowledge that we have today is not the knowledge we had in 2007. Government was so naïve and people living their daily lives were

so naïve. Data that people collect is more important than gold because we can manipulate it in ways that we couldn't even imagine. It is easy for me to tell you that then we were so innocent and that we also were naïve about the nature of the beast. These are companies. These are not social good platforms. Their mission statement is not to spread love in the world. They make money, they have shareholders, and they are for-profit companies and should be looked at as such. I think that some of the problems that we faced along the early side of this is that we keep expecting them to work like governments or work with a public good in mind.

There's a new momentum in the last few years of course around companies and public good and social impact. This is something that is very millennial and very Generation Z. I'm grateful for it because I think it is going to put pressure on not just social media companies but on every kind of company. We're in a different mindset and that's one piece of it, but I think we have to be very stern around these issues, around responsibility. I take a very strong position on spreading hate because the corruption of hate in the environment, in the air, in what you touch and what you see, is so nefarious and so particularly deep that we can't always expect and understand how it is going to be activated. Around these issues of extremism, it's beyond the algorithm of moving bad hate up. It's beyond the platforms of bad people now finding networks on which they can find like-minded people. They can build armies that can do such harm and we are not capable of defending ourselves because we don't have the armies to fight them in the space where they are. In a kinetic war, we've spent hundreds of years understanding and studying the art of war and what happens with what you do and how you build a strategy and how many x's and y's and z's you need and how to build a battlefield. We haven't had 200 years to be thinking about the virtual side of the war. We don't have the cyber armies, we don't have the skillset in terms of people. We are so far behind in competing that, right now, it's the terrorists' game to win, because they know that they can move faster and they're more nimble. The irony here is that there are more of us, meaning non-terrorists, than there are of them.

Having said all of that, now we understand that we can go to a social media company and say we know this is going to work in the social media domain, can you help us do it? I think that if a company is really thinking about who they are and what they want the planet to be and their users, they have to do more than say our responsibility ends here and it's the rest of the world over there. We've passed that point. I believe very strongly that companies, like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, and the lists goes on and on and on, that are platforms for youth, need to be vigilant and

they may have to go further than they have ever gone before for whatever it is that they stand for. Building cohesive societies should be one of them.

FORUM: *In your forthcoming book, How We Win, you coin the term, “open power,” which you say is distinct from soft power and hard power. You define open power as the ability to solve critical human challenges through peer to peer exploration, collaboration, and ownership. Can you expand upon that?*

PANDITH: In writing the book, I was really searching for a way to explain a comprehensive idea around soft power problem-solving that would be easy to understand. Open power is a derivative of soft power. It’s an opportunity

..... for us as government to look at human challenges and to say, how do we open up the aperture in understanding, in seeing what we see from multiple sides and not just one direction? Also, how do we organize ourselves in such a way that we are bringing different people to the table that can in fact solve [these challenges]? Rethinking the way we actually *solve* a problem means, in my view, certainly around extremism, that you must have actors around the table that are very different. Experts that offer a much wider set of insights about what they are seeing and how to solve the problem from their viewpoint.

You’re opening your mind, you’re not close-minded, you’re opening the aperture [on what is possible], and you’re opening the system. The system can change as we speak because things are moving fast. For example, you will have an anthropologist, an artist, a historian, and you will have a technology person [around the table]. You’ll have a behavioral scientist and a mental health expert. These aren’t professions that are normally around a table in a government setting to actually work on something in-sync, at the same time, peer to peer. We silo those experts if we even bring them in. We bring them in and we think we can adapt and fix the problem. I think that government has long passed the time when we have to think more creatively about how to solve problems that I believe are solvable. We’re not looking at a problem that is not fixable. We’re talking about stopping the spread of hate ideology. All of those touch points, all of those aspects of the human experience have to be accessed. Open power is my way of getting people to think differently, asking government to re-mobilize their

willingness to experiment, and to open up the conversation in a new way. And this requires us to be brave and have the courage to seek new ideas and redesign how we problem-solve.

FORUM: *In How We Win, you examine how entrepreneurs, policymakers, business leaders, and social media can work together to counter extremism. What is your vision for how such cross-cutting collaboration and cooperation can help counter these ideologies?*

PANDITH: It becomes a really important problem when we point the finger at somebody else and say: that's the sector that has to fix it! I have been working with young people since 9/11 around the issue of the ideology of extremist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. I know that for Muslim youth who are growing up in the world since 9/11—Millennials and Generation Z now—that at the crux of everything is a crisis of identity. Whether you're a Muslim in a Muslim majority country or a Muslim who is growing up as a minority, this central question around “who am I?” is the start of a process.

What I want to do is to disrupt the process in such a way that we can allow those young people to have agency and to think about themselves in a new way. That means that government can't be the answer and that means that civil society can't be the answer. It means that in everything that young Muslims experience in this life, they need to be getting signals (offline and online) that allow them to reject the ideology of extremist groups. They can do this by strengthening their own identity. Post 9/11, these types of extremists prey on youth by telling them that to be a “true Muslim” and that they need to buy into a certain narrative and lifestyle. They break the world into “us versus them.” They are focused on youth and use tools to persuade youth to want to buy what they are selling.

What I talk about it in the book, *How We Win*, is what we all need to do to win the war of ideas and protect youth. I lay out the strategy to do that by talking about the system underlying extremism and what government, business, and civil society must do to make it possible for us to win.

What government needs to do is important. It requires a very deep and broad change in terms of how we organize ourselves, the money that needs to go into soft power, the effort of scale that we need to put in, the kinds of partnerships we need to develop.

I talk about the private sector, importantly, because the private sector—and this is not just the social media companies—is critical to both scale and expertise. Companies have a role to play and increasingly they care

about doing social good and building more comprehensive, more civically-minded communities. We've seen that in the last couple of years around companies as divergent as Patagonia and Whole Foods paying attention to what their brand stands for. This is different than a mission statement. It is about how companies now understand their role in connectedness to local communities and their customers. Customers are asking new questions about who companies are and what they stand for. People—consumers—are building a new consciousness, and shareholders are taking notice. These kinds of companies can invest in their communities and teach and and commit themselves to rejecting hate.

Companies are partnering with schools, community centers, and civic organizations to help invest where government has not. Individuals are also making efforts to help strengthen their communities. Layer upon

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..... layer upon layer, everyone is sharing the responsibility to make communities more resilient and fight ideologies of "us versus them." This whole-of-community approach requires the private sector alongside other organizations.

..... The key is a combined effect within a community daily...so that when you get to a place when you're asking about your identity, you're seeing inclusivity and normalcy around difference of thought and expression. And, on the issue of extremism for Muslims and non-Muslims, the more we can do to set up a different kind of environment in which these young people grow up, one that does not allow the ideology of extremism to grow.... That's what I know can make a difference.

The government piece is important and the private sector piece is important. But so too is civil society—the NGOs working day and night since 9/11 to build at the grassroots level infrastructure that allows for small local authentic programs and initiatives to exist that debunk extremist narratives. Through many different methods, organic programs and peer to peer platforms we see the potential for change. Yet these are NGOs. They are not raising a billion dollars tomorrow to make this happen. But with the right kind of partnerships, we should be able to help NGOs that have proven themselves to get support from the private sector and philanthropists.

Secondly, while governments are partnering with and relying on NGOs to do this work...governments are asking them to do the dirty work they cannot do because they have no legitimacy to do this work. And

yet, the NGOs that are doing this really challenging work are being paid so little. NGOs are on the front lines and are the super stars here. Why aren't we giving them what they need?

You have people who are waking up every day, usually young people under the age of thirty primarily who are invested in fighting extremism, going to work and dealing with truly horrible content every single day. What they watch online is unbelievably challenging emotionally. They read terrible things that most people could not stomach and endure...think about what we are asking these people to do to help us protect communities. They're getting paid peanuts, they have no security, there are no mental health provisions for them. Yet they are foot soldiers. My whole point is, don't tell me as a community, a world community, that we can solve extremism if you're putting it on the back of these small NGOs. And don't tell me that you can only do it with government—because they *don't* have any legitimacy to talk to a young Muslim.

Tell me we can work *together* as humanity: government, private sector, civil society, and in partnership to make sure that we can eradicate the appeal of the ideology in large measure at one of the world's most complicated moments in time around the rise hate. Let's take that off the agenda and let's work on the other stuff that the world is dealing with that is actually super hard. Hate should not be something we have to deal with. *How We Win* is a book that is about this challenge and what we can do together. It is a positive message and the right prescription for this moment in time.

FORUM: *You've mentioned scaling a couple of times. What is needed to scale up soft power and open power efforts and what are some of the constraints that you see?*

PANDITH: One of the things that is remarkable is that even though we can talk about the really big changes that have been made in the last six or seven years in terms of international organizations and bilateral commitments... between the United States and a whole bunch of countries around fighting extremism...and large efforts around the world to fight extremism—we are still no where near where we need to be in stopping recruitment. It has been nearly twenty years since 9/11 and we are still looking at tiny efforts that are ad hoc and sporadic.

In order to win, we need to address the issue of scale. When you actually see what is happening on the ground, you're not seeing a large comprehensive coordinated effort to fight the ideology and protect youth. It's a small program here and there.

I want to see what happens if you go all in. I want to try to just saturate the marketplace with as many touch points as possible for a finite period of years. Let's do it for five years and see what happens to the young people that are affected. We do not know what success will look like because we have never tried this approach. We have never gone all in with all our soft power assets continually and in a coordinated way.

How is it that we stopped changing behavior surrounding smoking cigarettes? Today smoking levels have decreased. How is it that we changed behavior around sexual practices when AIDS appeared so that years later safe sex, AIDS awareness, and condom use has dramatically changed on the planet? How is it that we produced major change for humanity around various issues from health to recycling? We didn't stop talking about it because it was too difficult or we did not know how to go about saturating the marketplace to help shift behavior. And we didn't look at any area within a community as a place that we weren't actually going to teach and make people aware. We are doing that with extremism. We are turning away from doing all we can to strengthen communities. We think of this issue as something someone else has to deal with to protect us from a bad thing from happening, when in fact, communities themselves have a role to play in making sure hateful ideologies do not take root.

Extremism is on the rise. It's coming from many different places and appears in many different forms and access points. One kind of extremism is building off another kind of extremism, so now you're seeing an explosion of hate in many, many ways and we don't know the impact of that yet. We don't know what that is going to mean for terrorist organizations and society at large.

FORUM: *Considering the transformations in the global order that have taken place over the past hundred years, the toolbox that is available to diplomats has changed drastically. What do you think are the major new tools that diplomats have at their disposal?*

PANDITH: One of the things that we have understood is that the old system that we knew in the world, the world order, the system of diplomacy and how we did things, has been turned on its head for a lot of different reasons. It's not just about President Trump. It's about a lot of different things and different forces that are happening in the world.

On the positive side, what that means for diplomats is that they're able to be more creative about the kinds of partnerships that they're able to bring to the table. I think that ten or fifteen years ago if you had said, we're

building a partnership with X organization to try to do whatever, most people would say, you're government, why would you ever do that?

Today governments are looking at new kinds of organizations that can help and we're also looking at new kinds of people that share our common goals. Who can help get to where we need to be on an issue and what new partnership and alliances can we create that can get us there? At the U.S. Department of State, this kind of change is happening in various ways, including being aware of the changing nature of the people joining the ranks of foreign and civil service. There is a new reality and awareness about the demographic and backgrounds.... I'm not just talking about how people have been educated, but what they understand as success. We are drawing in a new generation of diplomats today. They think differently and it is not just that they are digital natives and see the globe differently—it is that they evaluate options and opportunities in new ways. A new tool, then, is the human element.

Careers have shifted and people change. The kind of person that goes into diplomacy today is very different than a hundred years ago. I think with that comes a whole new set of ideas and a whole new set of personalities. What I want to stress is the new element of the uncommon voices, the different types of perspectives as well as the idea of timelines for change and deliverables. With a different generation used to doing things at a different pace, as well as diplomats responding to and expecting results with different timeframes, we should see this as a new kind of tool.

In the past, the patience people had with understanding the arc of diplomacy was very different from today. With the cycle that we're in—and how you're supposed to feed information out to the public (in terms of what you have done for success) is completely different. You can either use that to your advantage, or it can become a complete mess. We're looking at a new type of diplomacy today. I used to talk a lot about *entrepreneurial* diplomacy because I think we have experimented in new ways, and we've really tried to do things that kind of break the system. It's not the same old, same old.

FORUM: *One hundred years ago, the arena of foreign policy was very male oriented. How do you think the role of women and gender in general has evolved over the past century? How do you see this moving forward?*

PANDITH: I think one of the most exciting opportunities that we have going forward in terms of problem-solving is getting different types of people around a table. That includes gender. We cannot solve some of the human problems we have today by doing things the same old way we have

in the past. Women at the table in an equal proportion will allow us to offer new ideas to problems that we've been stuck with.

It is no surprise when we see new ideas come forward to seed new kinds of teams. Similarly, the position of the U.S. government needs to

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..... be one that reflects obviously who we are as Americans. When I say women, I also obviously mean more than just that. Race, gender, ethnicity, and all of these kinds of differences matter.

You cannot just have a bunch of men making decisions in the old way. Yet today, I am embarrassed to tell you that if you look at a lot of the photo-

..... graphs that are coming out of summits or meetings from our country, it is a majority of pictures of tables of guys in suits discussing world problems. You can compare those pictures to photographs from the 1930s and think, what are we talking about over here? Why do the two photographs look the same?

I want to see more women in positions in policy. One of the initiatives that Hillary Clinton started in 2011 was the Women in Public Service Project. Its mission is to put more women in public service positions around the globe. And that means women around the policy table, not just the political table but the policy table too. I want to see women around the policy table. It isn't just because they are women that they need to be there. It is because men and women are equal and the imbalance that exists now means that men are making decisions that affect us all. Women's perspectives and insights count and will make a difference to the way policy is made.

Unless you have leadership that values diversity and differences of opinion in every possible way, and have citizens who understand that the making of policy decisions also has to reflect these values, you're not going to see change. The outcomes will be the same. We must do better than the past. We have data that tells us how vital it is that diverse opinions are part of the process and add value to results. They offer better solutions. Women at the policy table alongside men will mean a new reality for us all in terms of focus areas, solutions, opportunities, partnerships and commitments.

FORUM: *In closing, is there any advice or lessons from your experience you would give to Fletcher students who are dedicated to and passionate about international affairs who are hoping to do similar work, whether in the private sector, NGOs, government? Are there any lessons from your experience?*

PANDITH: Fletcher was one of the most pivotal experiences for me for so many reasons, and not just what happened in the classroom and the extraordinary experience I had with some professors who are still here, such as Dick Shultz, Leila Fawaz, and Andy Hess, who really made me think differently and made me see the world differently. You should absorb as much as you possibly can from your professors inside and outside of the classroom because they have a lifetime of experience and understanding of how the research and the themes and everything that is going on in the world connect. I think that is something you should never miss. There is also something really powerful about what is happening in the world today that you are experiencing as Fletcher students today that we didn't. But the responsibility piece is something I want to touch upon. It is no longer just the responsibility of a government to solve problems. I would argue to Fletcher students that you are here because you care about something bigger than yourself, otherwise you would've gone to another school. I would say to you, it doesn't matter if you join a for-profit company, join the Peace Corps, or go do whatever you want to do. You must find time and value in your life to do the best that you can with the education you have been given to make this planet better. That is who you are. You're not students who are just kind of here. You're here because there is purpose and finding that purpose can come in many different ways. Over time, and as you evolve and as you become different kinds of women—I am looking at three women at the table right now and am very happy about that—keep seeking how you can make a difference. Today it will maybe be different than ten years from now, but there is always time for you to look around to see what you can do to add value. Some of you will be super-gazillionaires and you will give back to Fletcher in great ways. You will give your money and do things. I don't just mean that. I mean really seeing and seeking. For example, the like-minded thinkers that all care about a particular issue should continue to talk to each other, continue to think, and continue to absorb and work together because there will be problems that you can solve. *f*

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