

Opportunity Title: Understanding Change: Approaches to International Conflict Prevention

Opportunity Reference Code: ICPD-2021-26



Organization Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)

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How to Apply

Create and release your Profile on Zintellect – Postdoctoral applicants must create an account and complete a profile in the on-line application system. **Please note: your resume/CV may not exceed 2 pages.**

Complete your application – Enter the rest of the information required for the IC Postdoc Program Research Opportunity. The application itself contains detailed instructions for each one of these components: availability, citizenship, transcripts, dissertation abstract, publication and presentation plan, and information about your Research Advisor co-applicant.

Additional information about the IC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program is available on the program website located at:
<https://orise.orau.gov/icpostdoc/index.html>.

If you have questions, send an email to ICPostdoc@orau.org. Please include the reference code for this opportunity in your email.

Application Deadline 2/26/2021 6:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description **Research Topic Description, including Problem Statement:**

How can we realize sustainable global peace? The cost of violent conflict, internationally, is staggering not only in human lives and national treasure, but also in the observed degradation, and sometimes whole-sale destruction, of the political, economic and social structures and institutions requisite for ensuring a society's peace and prosperity. Efforts focused on prevention have demonstrated that needless suffering and donor country "deep-pockets" are not predetermined costs when it comes to the topic of conflict and violence—the literature tells us that there is a choice. To date, however, the international community has failed to find traction along this proactive approach to peace.

The goal of this research topic is to evaluate conflict prevention change holistically within the peacebuilding enterprise—micro-to-macro and macro-to-micro—to inform an interagency approach to intervention. The literature offers a mapping of the landscape perspectives within the local peacebuilding system ranging from bottom-up to top-down and even middle-out to name a few. Each perspective advocates for prioritizing a conflict prevention locus within a given country's societal infrastructure (grassroots, midlevel leaders/community structures, or elites). Critics argue targeted, grassroots approaches are insufficient, however, as discrete programs often do not realize boarder societal change, nor were they designed to realize that change, at the national level. National-level initiatives are challenged with having to satisfy a diverse constituency, some of which might actually be considering regime change. Alternatively, a more comprehensive approach to realizing change is conceptualized as infrastructures for peace, which advocates for integration of the system and the necessity of supporting peacebuilding efforts over time and across political, economic, and societal infrastructures. Coordinating a comprehensive approach brings with it the tension of each country's national interests—can this tension be overcome? How can we realize sustainable global peace?

The first phase of the project will examine the landscape of conflict prevention by answering the following questions:

- What does the complex environment of peacebuilding look like?
- What challenges and opportunities do third-nation conflict prevention approaches face during planning and implementation?
- How do conflict prevention efforts manifest within a national system?
- How have infrastructures for peace succeeded or failed and why (country case studies)?

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The second phase of the project is to determine how outcomes might be monitored, evaluated, and articulated by answering the following questions:

- What approaches can third-nation donors take to design prevention strategies for successful implementation?
- How can third-nation conflict prevention support be monitored for impact and feedback?
- How is the effectiveness of conflict prevention program outcomes articulated (qualitatively and quantitatively)?

Example Approaches:

Approaches to this project could use a variety of techniques, but are in no way limited to:

- Traditional case study or Qualitative Comparative Analysis of conflict outcomes.
- Apply systems thinking for analyzing the complex environment of peacebuilding.
- Develop a methodology for assessing conflict prevention activities using cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis.
- Explore empirical approaches that feed decisionmaker, analyst, and practitioner dashboard interfaces for feedback and monitoring.

Relevance to the Intelligence Community:

The National Defense Strategy (p3) identifies that "the Homeland is no longer a sanctuary." Fragile and failing states offer malicious actors territorial sanctuary from which they exploit weak governance, undermine democratic institutions, and enable terrorism and other illicit activities. The National Security Strategy (NSS) recognizes that helping fragile and developing countries become successful societies creates "profitable markets for American businesses, allies to help achieve favorable regional balances of power, and coalition partners to share burdens and address a variety of problems around the world." (NSS 2017, 38) Within a framework of development assistance, the United States will assist fragile states to prevent threats to the Homeland (p 39). The Global Fragility Act (GFA) was passed by Congress as part of the 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act and signed into law by the President on December 20, 2019. The GFA will create the first-ever comprehensive U.S. Government strategy to tackle and prevent spiraling global conflict.

Key Words: Conflict, Prevention, Monitoring and Evaluation, Fragility, World Peace, Economics, Conflict Resolution

Qualifications











Postdoc Eligibility

- U.S. citizens only
- Ph.D. in a relevant field must be completed before beginning the appointment and within five years of the application deadline
- Proposal must be associated with an accredited U.S. university, college, or U.S. government laboratory
- Eligible candidates may only receive one award from the IC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program

Research Advisor Eligibility

- Must be an employee of an accredited U.S. university, college or U.S. government laboratory
- Are not required to be U.S. citizens

Eligibility Requirements

- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree.
- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Communications and Graphics Design** (2 )
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** (17 )
 - **Earth and Geosciences** (21 )
 - **Engineering** (27 )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** (14 )
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (45 )
 - **Mathematics and Statistics** (10 )
 - **Other Non-S&E** (2 )
 - **Other Physical Sciences** (12 )
 - **Other S&E-Related** (1 )

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- **Physics** (16 )
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences** (27 )