

Conflict Management Bulletin #3



Recap! By Prof. Daniel Serwer

As the fall semester races to an end, I hasten to report on the latest developments in the Conflict Management program.

As many of you will know, we held a gala lunch on November 4, Vali Nasr presiding, to celebrate Bill Zartman's many virtues, acknowledge Chet Crocker's generous contribution, and try to meet our goal of tripling it by raising **\$20,000 this year and next**, which will enable us to continue to fund two study trips.



One, to **Nanjing and Beijing** in January to study the US/China dimension of the South China Sea conflicts, is well on in the planning stages. The second one, we hope will go to **Ukraine** during spring break. This is the first year we'll be studying conflicts in which major powers like the U.S. and Russia are protagonists. The reports will be published as books in April and May. **We are within \$4,400 of our fund-raising goal this year.** I am hoping more of you may be moved to contribute before the end of the year. If so, the easiest way is on the SAIS website. Be sure to note in the "comments" section that the contribution is for the Zartman Fund.

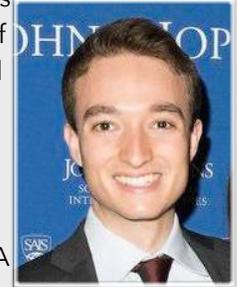
Other notable news: **Sinisa Vukovic**, has been appointed an assistant professor with a three-year term. We share him with the Global Policy Program. Sinisa and I are planning a **spring practicum** on "dealing with extremists," in which we'll consider the full range of policy instruments. Students will prepare papers for non-SAIS "clients" (so far at the Middle East Institute, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and the Antiquities Coalition) who have posed stimulating research questions.

The **Global Security and Conflict Management Club** has held several events this fall and is planning a major conference for late winter on emerging security and resource problems and remedies in the Arctic.

I am **grateful** to each of you for the work you do to try to make things come out right in an all too violent world.

GSCM Leadership

Aaron Zucker is the president of the SAIS Global Security and Conflict Management Club, and a second year MA candidate



concentrating in Conflict Management, Middle East Studies and International Economics. Aaron spent the summer of 2016 interning at the U.S. State Department's Near East Affairs Bureau. Before SAIS, Aaron worked for three years as a writer for the Israel advocacy group J Street. Aaron is a Jacob Blaustein fellowship recipient at SAIS and received his BA in International Relations from Tufts University.

Karina Panyan

is the vice-president of the GSCM Club and a second-year student concentrating in Conflict Management



and Quantitative Methods. She has a background in counter-terrorism studies and political risk. Karina is very passionate about conflicts in the former Soviet Union and plans to use her SAIS education towards a long-lasting peace in those regions.

The I. William Zartman Field Trip Fundraiser

The Conflict Management program hosted a fundraising **lunch** November 4 in honor of Bill Zartman, whose inspiration and leadership lie behind the program's annual study trips. This will be the 12th consecutive year SAIS students will go on trips around the globe to observe conflict situations first hand and consult with adversaries on both sides. Until now, the trips have been supported mainly by the program and occasional assistance from the Starr Foundation for trips going to Asia. The goal of the **I. William Zartman Field Trip Fund** is to alleviate some of these expenses and expand these opportunities to a broader range of SAIS students.



Dean **Vali Nasr** opened the event with high praise for Professor Zartman's many contributions to conflict management, negotiation theory and practice as well as SAIS. Along with Georgetown professor and SAIS alumnus **Chester Crocker**, who has made a substantial commitment to the Zartman Fund, the Dean stressed the educational importance of the field trips along with the unique opportunity they provide for hands on experience. Professor Crocker applauded Bill Zartman's many contributions to the field of conflict management as well as his dedication to his students.

The Field Trip Fund was in the center of attention, drawing commendation by speakers, guests and students alike. It will enable most students who want to join a study trip to do so. This year the trips will take place in China and Ukraine. The Conflict Management program is extremely grateful to the large number of donors who made generous contributions to the fund (See list [→](#)).

Please honor Bill Zartman by continuing to contribute to the I. William Zartman Field Trip Fund. Your gift will directly help a student. To make a tax-deductible gift online, please follow this link: <https://secure.jhu.edu/form/sais> and add in the comment section that the gift is intended for the Zartman Fund.

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Interview with Prof. Sinisa Vukovic

1) *What motivated you to go into academia? Do you intend to remain in academia or would you consider a career as a practitioner in which you could actively contribute towards the resolution of any conflict?*

During my graduate studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands, I started realizing that academic scrutiny offers an invaluable foundation for any type of critical and creative thinking, which is also applicable to more policy-oriented circumstances. While I was conducting part of my doctoral research at SAIS, I was challenged with a unique task to transpose accumulated academic insights into policy recommendations. This ‘pracademic’ approach has helped me to develop a nuanced understanding of global affairs, and has opened the doors for countless engagements geared towards the policy community. Thus far, I have been involved in both training and advising practitioners in the best practices of conflict analysis and management. In the years to come my plan is to stay in academia, while actively contributing to the policy community whenever possible.



2) *What do you enjoy best about teaching?*

Teaching is one of my passions, and an essential reason why I enjoy academic life. It is a never-ending challenge. As a teacher you are responsible not only to yourself, but to the students and to the school you represent. This keeps me motivated to always be prepared with cutting edge knowledge and fresh insights from the policy world. It never gets dull, as I am also learning how to use academic and empirical studies to better interpret the unfolding dynamics in international affairs. More importantly, I try to motivate my students to do the same. My main goal is to provide them with the tools, coming from academic scholarship, that they can use to analyze volatile situations around the world, and if possible offer grounded and well-thought policy recommendations. As one can imagine, structured as such, teaching never gets dull. On the contrary!

3) *What made you decide to teach in the US and at SAIS in particular?*

It is a well known fact that SAIS has a global reputation of being one of the leading institutions in the area of international affairs. In particular, the Conflict Management Program is one

GSCM Club Activities

The South China Sea Arbitration

On November 1, GSCM worked with the International Law Society and the China Club to examine the future of the international dispute in the South China Sea. Over 100 students joined us to hear experts from SAIS including the Conflict Management Program’s director, Dr. Daniel Serwer.

Near East Diplomacy Under Obama

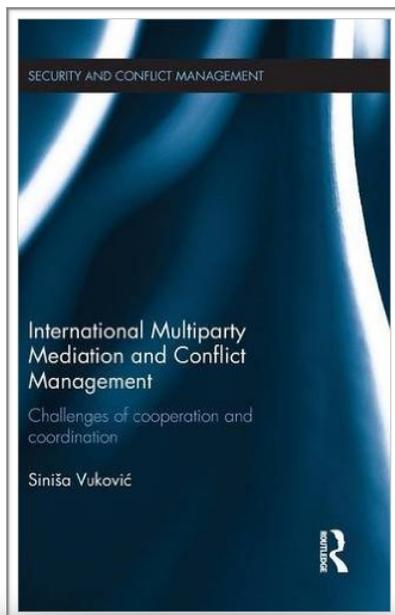
On November 10, GSCM teamed with the Middle East and North Africa Club to host Dr. Peter Howard, senior regional political officer at the State Department’s Bureau for Near East Affairs. Dr. Howard shared a unique regional perspective on U.S. challenges and accomplishments in the Middle East under President Obama, and -- as a former professor in international affairs -- a sense of how conflict management principles can be applied in the day-to-day dealings of U.S. diplomacy.

Visit to the Turkish Embassy

On November 15, GSCM again teamed with MENA Club to bring SAISers to the Turkish Embassy for an intimate meeting with Turkish diplomats. Topics discussed included Turkish democracy, the fight against ISIS, and the prospects for EU membership.

of its kind, not only in DC but globally. The program - established by world renowned scholar and pioneer of the field Bill Zartman, later led by equally illustrious scholar Terry Hopmann, and now headed by widely acclaimed paracademic and leading expert in conflict management Daniel Serwer - offers a unique outlook onto the complexities of managing conflicts around the globe. I was fortunate enough to work with Zartman and Hopmann prior to my arrival at SAIS, first as a post-doctoral fellow and now as Assistant Professor. Their support was crucial for my research and academic development, and I tried to reciprocate with my performance through teaching and research I conduct at SAIS.

4) You recently published a book "International Multiparty Mediation and Conflict Management" (2015) by Routledge..... What are you currently focusing your research on?



The book on multiparty mediation was part of my post-doctoral research that I started at SAIS in 2013, and was funded by the Netherlands Scientific Organisation. At the moment I am working on several projects. The most robust one is a co-authored book with Terry Hopmann on international negotiation, which is going to be a revised edition of his 1995 classic piece "The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflicts." In parallel, I am starting work on a new book on International Mediation, which has been picked up by Routledge, and will focus on redefining the key paradigms of neutrality, power and success. I am also working on several focused projects, intended to be published as articles or book chapters in edited volumes. Some are focusing on the notion of power in conflict management, others are looking into spoiler problems in peacemaking, or the issue of bias in mediation activities. On top of that I am also working on several policy oriented pieces intended for wider audiences, and published in outlets such as Washington Quarterly, Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Policy, which will focus on the current conflict management activities in Syria and Ukraine, preventive diplomacy in the Balkans, post-conflict peace-building in Colombia, and challenges of engaging with violent extremists around the globe.

5) How has your cultural/geographic background influenced you to study Conflict Management?

The fact that I come from Montenegro, which came out of the ashes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia is certainly something that influenced me and prompted my interest in conflict management. Throughout my formative years I was surrounded by conflict. However, this is not the only reason why I chose this field. I was attracted by the fact that it provides the best way to understand global affairs. It provides the best answers for why states and non-state actors behave the way they do. More importantly, it is the only field that can help you understand what is happening around the world: why are some conflicts intractable, what makes a conflict more amenable to peacemaking, etc. This ability to provide nuanced interpretations of reality is what distinguishes this field.

Alumni Profile

Interview with SAIS Alumna Claire Casey

1) *What was your professional trajectory after graduation?*

Right after graduating from SAIS, I joined a small start-up policy consulting firm to cover Latin America while I waited for my resume to make it through the UN. But by the time the UN called, I was completely sold on what I was already doing. The start-up, Garten Rothkopf, grew, and for 11 years, I led its research and policy analysis business. Then this past August, the firm was acquired by The FP Group, publisher of Foreign Policy Magazine, and I'm now heading up the newly formed FP Analytics. Every so often, though, I still get to flex my CM muscles a bit - most recently, developing scenario exercises for FP's PeaceGame on issues ranging from a resolution of the conflict in Syria to countering the global rise of violent extremism.



2) *How did the CM Program help you in your professional development?*

Despite not working actively in the field, I've always seen the program as a tremendous professional asset. I can't think of another field of study that offers such a robust set of skills for understanding the forces that shape the world around us, and for meeting our greatest challenges. I graduated with a pretty good understanding of the civil wars in West Africa, but more importantly, a much more rigorous and dispassionate approach to analysis and problem solving - and one that can be applied to anything shaped by people, so... pretty much everything.

3) *What are the 3 things you took with you from SAIS and are still valid today?*

1. That knowing the details, down to how to appropriately pronounce names, is critical for credibility and effectiveness when you're working around the world - that one was straight from Dr. Zartman.
2. That idealism and sentimentality can be downright dangerous and the surest path to producing positive outcomes is assessing the world as it is, rather than as we would like it to be.
3. That there really is such a thing as an integrative solution, but it requires a lot of hard work and creative thinking.

4) *What is your favorite memory of the CM Program while you were at SAIS?*

In my final semester at SAIS, our CM toolkit team put together an event on bridging the gap between theory and practice - bringing together academics and practitioners in the field of conflict management to discuss how the two can, should and sometimes do not inform each other. It ended up being a fascinating discussion and something of the capstone of my SAIS experience - and a bridge in itself to thinking about how one might apply an education in conflict management to contributing meaningfully in a professional context.