

## The Lessons from South Ossetia: Respect Matters

By Susan Allen Nan, Ph.D., ICAR Professor, snan@gmu.edu

**W**e in the conflict resolution field knew what needed to change to prevent a war over South Ossetia or Abkhazia, yet the course towards war continued. Preventing future unnecessary wars requires us to share our insights so broadly that we bring about a fundamental shift in the way the world thinks about



Above: South Ossetian refugees in a camp in North Ossetia. Photo: Wikimedia.

international relations. The war in South Ossetia shows we need to shift popular thinking away from the doomed project of a *Pax Americana* to what I call a *Pax Respectus*, that is, international relationships based on a fundamental respect for all people's needs and dignity.

A mutual lack of respect between Georgians and the Abkhaz and South Ossetians contributed to the emergence and continuation of the frozen conflicts, and sparked the

recent fighting, while a mutual lack of respect between the U.S. and Russia fueled the Russian will for a show of force.

The slogan "Georgia for the Georgians" circulated during the period when Georgia sought independence from the Soviet Union. Abkhaz and South Ossetians found the Georgian authorities curtailing their autonomy, and sought independence. Fighting broke out, leading to deaths in each group as well as massive population shifts. For fifteen years, the Abkhaz have enjoyed de facto control of Abkhazia, and the South Ossetians of South Ossetia, while Georgia had, until

*Continued on Page 7*

Commentary

### Inside This Issue...

- 2 Network: Why Media Matters
- 3 Initiatives: ICAR-OAS Summer Workshop
- 4 Events: Graduate Orientation Welcomes 121 New Students
- 5 Press: New Books, Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor
- 6 Spotlight: Franklin Dukes and Hosein Tarabeih, New Members of ICAR
- 7 Graduate Certificate Celebration at Point of View

# Why Media Matters at ICAR

By Sara Cobb, Ph.D., ICAR Director, scobb@gmu.edu

As the Russian tanks rolled into the city of Poti, Georgia, pundits emerged in the media, providing perspectives on the history of the conflict in the region, its relation to oil, and its context vis-a-vis global politics, providing predictions on the success of the mediated agreement. While certainly interesting, most of this analysis reinforces and intensifies existing polarizations in the region and in the world. There is little in the way of analysis or recommendations that address the long-term transformation of this conflict. We need "conflict resolution" perspectives in the media, where these views tell a new story, one that contributes to de-escalation, as well as new strategies for political leaders.

At the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), faculty and students are actively presenting a "conflict resolution" perspective on current conflicts around the world. For example, Professors Dennis Sandole and Susan Allen Nan have recently been doing media interviews on the



Above: ICAR Professor Dennis Sandole interviewed on the topic of the Russia-Georgia conflict for CTV News. Image courtesy of CTV News.

conflict in Georgia. Professor Solon Simmons has been providing regular analysis of the presidential campaign, in light of his research on the culture conflict within the U.S. ICAR student Sam Risk and Professor Mark Gopin have done media interviews that highlight the role of identity and religion in the Middle East. Faculty and students published a blitz of letters to the editor, over the past year, in the *International Herald Tribune*, *Washington Post*, *Economist*, *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, as well as op-eds in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Christian Science Montitor*, and *The Hill*. And YouTube hosts several pages of media interviews by ICAR faculty and students.

ICAR's media presence is, in large part, due



Above: ICAR Professor Solon Simmons interviewed on the topic of American politics and US presidential campaigns for Al Jazeera television. Image courtesy of Al Jazeera TV.

to the media expertise and enthusiasm of Michael Shank, Communications Director at ICAR. With his background in journalism, working in the policy community on the Hill in Washington D.C., Michael brings not only expertise in communications, but in the politics of policymaking. And on top of all this, Michael is a doctoral candidate at ICAR, so he is able to help hone the "conflict resolution" perspective on world events.

While research, which feeds our curriculum, is our core practice, we must ensure that we generate relevant research pertinent to resolution of conflicts today, and those of tomorrow. We want to impact, through our research, the course of events, reducing violence, ending genocide, and promoting sustainable peace. The world today cannot afford

*Continued on Page 8*



Above: ICAR doctoral student Maneshka Eliatamby de Silva interviewed on the topic of Sri Lanka for BBC World News. Image courtesy of BBC World News.

# ICAR-OAS Summer Workshops

## Conflict Processes in Latin America and the Caribbean

By Mery Rodriguez, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate, mrodrigb@gmu.edu

Inequality, resource distribution, political disarray, class, poverty, protracted social conflict, structural violence—this is not a list of subjects for a lecture. It is the reality of the conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean. The specifics of the resolution of those conflicts have become the projects that 14 Latin American and Caribbean academics and practitioners brought to the Institute in June 2008.

For the sixth time, the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS), held its summer workshop with scholars and professionals from all over Latin America and the Caribbean. The strategic partnership between ICAR and the OAS has given the Institute a constant presence and made an impact in the region. Since 2000, ICAR students, alumni, and associates have worked with professors Christopher Mitchell and Wallace Warfield in organizing two-week events during the summer, in which 12 to 15 participants come to the Institute to share and learn about conflict resolution in their home countries. The participants are brought by



Above: Facilitator Alicia Pfund working on an exercise. Photo: Harbey Pena.

the OAS who, for the sixth time, awarded ICAR with the project through its Professional Development Scholarship program. ICAR's team works on a volunteer basis with the certainty of an amazing learning experience that can only come from a room full of people who care about their field and have first-hand knowledge of their region. Participants have now formed a network with over 400 members, keeping alive the spirit of the workshops and maintaining a website that enables the sharing of information about events, job offers, and the state of conflict



Above: Participants at Point of View. Photo: Harbey Pena.



Above: Workshop participants in conversation with OAS representative in Washington D.C. Photo: Harbey Pena.

analysis and resolution in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We have explored different subjects each year such as deeply divided societies, media coverage of violent conflict, the environment, and the need to link theory and practice. With this wide variety of interests, the workshop has become a window of opportunity for the participants to have new insights about conflict analysis and resolution. ICAR students have been offered a chance to present their work and create connections that have proved enriching and have further advanced the field of conflict resolution in this important region of the world.

The ICAR-OAS summer workshop has demonstrated that by working together as a community with shared knowledge and goals, we can make a difference while learning and giving students the opportunity to grow in their own practice as facilitators and conflict experts. ■



Above: Participants pose on GMU's Fairfax campus. Photo: Harbey Pena.

initiatives

# ICAR Graduate Orientation Welcomes 121 New Students

By Erica Soren, ICAR Events Coordinator and M.S. Student, esoren@gmu.edu

## EVENTS

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) welcomed over one-hundred new faces to its community last week during its annual new student orientation. The occasion spanned three days beginning with the Certificate Student Orientation and ending in a two-day session designed for M.S. and Ph.D. students.

This year's incoming students featured a diverse group of individuals with varied interests and backgrounds. One of these students is James Filipi, incoming M.S. student from Omaha, Nebraska. James commented on his journey here to ICAR, "I had taken an amazing class in



Above: New ICAR graduate students introducing themselves at orientation. There are 15 new Ph.D. students, 68 new M.S. students, and 38 new graduate certificate students. Photo: Paul Snodgrass.

Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution, and happened to run into the professor at a human rights lecture. I told him what I wanted to study and asked him where he would recommend. He said George Mason University."

Faculty and alumni welcomed our newest additions to the ICAR community. This year, faculty got a sense of our incoming students during informal introductions, which highlighted where each student was from and their interests here at ICAR. Afterwards, students had the opportunity to get to know our faculty in what turned out to be one of the most enjoyable moments of the event. "Meeting with and hearing from the professors was great. I thought it was fantastic to find that the faculty had senses of humor," said James Filipi.

As orientation came to a close, the students were asked to participate in a facilitation exercise with current students

and alumni. The purpose of this social exercise was to reflect on their path leading to ICAR and what they hope to gain from their time here. James Filipi shared his thoughts, "While at ICAR, I hope to get involved and make use of as many resources and activities as I can. It excites me that there is so much going on in the ICAR community."

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—JAMES FILIPI

me that there is so much going on in the ICAR community, from working groups, to lectures and other presentations. I hope that I continue to meet fantastic people, make contacts and network, and enjoy as much as I can of the ICAR community." ■



Above: ICAR Director Sara Cobb welcomes the new graduate students. Photo: Paul Snodgrass.

### Upcoming ICAR Community Events

For more info on events, email [esoren@gmu.edu](mailto:esoren@gmu.edu).

#### September 13: ICAR Welcome Dinner

7:00 pm, Hazel Hall, Arlington Campus

RSVP: [esoren@gmu.edu](mailto:esoren@gmu.edu), 703.993.9402

#### September 16: Book Discussion and Signing with ICAR Advisory Board Member Ambassador John McDonald

6:00-7:00 pm, Truland Building, Room 555

#### October 18: CRDC-Sponsored AmenPeace Concert and Film Screening

7:00-10:00 pm, Original Building, Room 329

#### October 28: Discussion with ICAR's Visiting Scholar Noelle McAfee

4:30-6:00 pm, Truland Building, Room 555

Entire events listing available at <http://icar.gmu.edu/events.htm>

## New Book

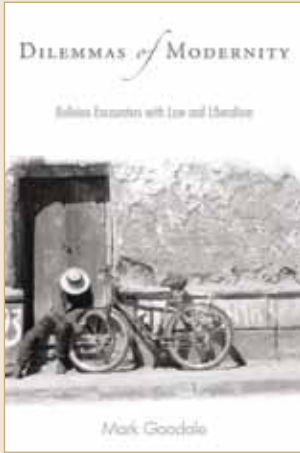
### Dilemmas of Modernity

Stanford University Press

Mark Goodale, ICAR Professor

#### Book Description

**D**ilemmas of Modernity provides an innovative approach to the study of contemporary Bolivia, moving teleoscopically between social, political, legal, and discursive analyses, and drawing from a range of disciplinary traditions. Based on a decade of research, it offers an account of local encounters with law and liberalism. Mark Goodale presents, through a series of finely grained readings, a window into the lives of people in rural areas of Latin America who are playing a crucial role in the emergence of postcolonial states. The book contends that the contemporary Bolivian experience is best understood by examining historical patterns of intention as they emerge from everyday practices.



## New Book

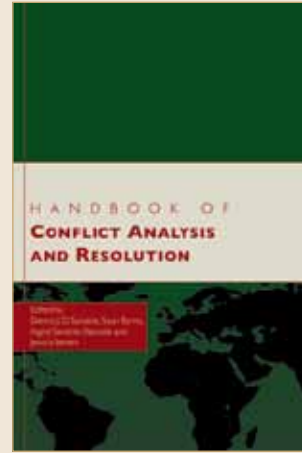
### Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Routledge

Edited by ICAR Professor Dennis J.D. Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Sandole-Staroste and Jessica Senehi

#### Book Description

**T**his volume provides a comprehensive overview of the core concepts, theories, approaches, processes, and intervention designs in the field. The central theme is the value of multidisciplinary approaches to the analysis and resolution of conflicts. This consists of moving from the study of analytical approaches to understanding the deep-rooted causes of conflict, to third-party intervention approaches to preventing or ending violence, and to resolving and transforming conflict. *The Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution* is a benchmark publication with major importance both for current research and for the future of the field.



## New Book

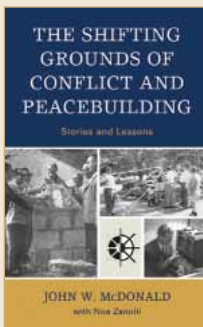
### The Shifting Grounds of Conflict and Peacebuilding

Lexington

Ambassador John W. McDonald, ICAR Advisory Board Member

#### Book Description

**T**he *Shifting Grounds of Conflict and Peacemaking* contains the professional life lessons of Ambassador John W. McDonald and offers his insight into international issues, providing frank and informed discussion on the environment, women's rights, the global water crisis, sustainable resources, international development, and, above all, peace.



## Recent ICAR Articles, Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor

### The Lessons of the Russian-Georgian Conflict

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Professor  
*New York Times*, 08/22/08

### Future for Ossetia

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Professor  
*The Guardian*, 08/20/08

### Can We Envision and Build a Peaceful Caucasus?

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Professor  
*Financial Times*, 08/19/08

### The War in Georgia

By Susan Allen Nan, ICAR Professor  
*Washington Post*, 08/19/08

### Global Peace Index Ranking Doesn't Flatter the U.S.

By Michael Shank, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate, and U.S. Representative Gregory Meeks (D-NY)  
*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 08/10/08

### Ethiopia: Domestic and Regional Challenges

By Terrence Lyons, ICAR Professor  
*CSIS Africa Policy Forum*, 08/07/08

### Brownback's Hypocrisy

By Paul Snodgrass, ICAR M.S. Alumnus  
*The Hill*, 08/05/08

### Female Suicide Bombers

By Julie Shedd, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate  
*International Herald Tribune*, 07/31/08

### Game Emblematic of Party Politics

By Michael Shank, ICAR Ph.D. Candidate  
*Roll Call*, 07/23/08

### Mukasey's Disturbing View on Holding Gitmo Detainees

By Ross Gearllach, ICAR M.S. Student  
*The Hill*, 07/23/08

# Franklin Dukes

By Zoe Rose, ICAR Graduate Admissions Assistant and M.S. Student, zrose@gmu.edu

**D**r. Franklin Dukes, a Ph.D. graduate from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), is an experienced facilitator, trainer, and mediator in the environmental conflict field. In 1990, Frank became the Director of the University of Virginia's Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN), which is committed to building a sustainable future for communities in Virginia and beyond and provides mediation and consensus building services concerning the natural and built environments. Along with a research component, IEN has substantial training in conflict resolution; two years ago a manual on collaboration was developed and supported by environmental advocates and conflict



practitioners. Building collaborative processes to address environmental concerns is at the core of Frank's efforts to bring a voice to both environmentalists and affected communities.

Stemming from his training at ICAR as a doctoral student, Frank brings experience in facilitating problem-solving workshops and community dialogues to develop consensus on issues such as water quality or food security. These conflict resolution methods allow for both Virginia's leaders and local populations to explore environmental issues, learn from each other, and help move communities beyond conflict to collaborative problem solving.

Frank believes strongly that conflict is not inherently bad, but can reveal injustice, force change and secure the mechanism to address environmental issues—a philosophy which likely guides the focus of his current work at the local and state policy levels. He has worked in numerous communities on a wide range of issues including water supply in contaminated sites and handling conflict between different users in the national forests.

Starting this semester, Frank will teach a class on Environmental Principles, with the intent to gain traction at ICAR in this field. If all goes as planned, Frank hopes to develop an environmental certificate program, enriching both the field and ICAR. ■

# Hosein Tarabeih

By Zoe Rose, ICAR Graduate Admissions Assistant and M.S. Student, zrose@gmu.edu

**A**s an environmental engineer, Hosein Tarabeih is adamant about enriching the conflict resolution field. As an Arab-Israeli, Hosein researches a new method to manage environmental disputes at the local level. On sabbatical, serving as a visiting scholar at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), the focus of Hosein's work is to manage environmental conflicts in Israel, a task that Hosein notes is very complicated due to the strenuous ties between Arabs and Israelis. Hosein believes a culture of co-existence can be formed through a hybrid model, composed of Western elements along with traditional Arab/Israeli methods.



Specifically, Hosein would like to incorporate alternative dispute resolution methods with the ongoing work of the Sulha Peace Project, inspired by an indigenous process of mediation, or *sulha*. Environmental *sulha*, therefore, would prepare people for peace at the grassroots level by integrating workshops and sacred interfaith rituals from Arab and Jewish traditions.

ICAR's impact on domestic and international conflicts struck a chord with Hosein as he plans a multi-cultural center focusing on environmental conflict in Israel. Hosein hopes to emphasize to local community members and decision-makers how the environment can affect the social context. The involvement of ICAR, with a rich background in conflict resolution, would provide a stepping stone for addressing environmental issues between Arabs and Israelis.

When asked how he heard about ICAR, Hosein replied that his organization in Israel hosted several students when they visited. His goal, while at ICAR, is to be involved in the community and take courses to help connect practice and technique with theory. Hosein has his eye on Frank Duke's course on environmental conflict and is invigorated that ICAR has ventured down this path. ■

“Environmental *sulha* would prepare people for peace at the grassroots level by integrating workshops and sacred interfaith rituals from Arab and Jewish traditions.”

—HOSEINTARABEIH

## The Lessons from South Ossetia: Respect Matters

Continued from page 1

Russia's August 2008 recognition of the republics, maintained a de jure authority over the territories in the eyes of the international community. During this period, the Abkhaz and South Ossetians announced no desire to live with the Georgians, and gave no nod of respect to the Georgian memories of a history of a multi-ethnic Georgian empire. On both sides, wounds festered without recognition of the underlying needs involved.



Susan Allen Nan, above, is an ICAR Professor.

Since the end—or brief reprieve from—the Cold War, the U.S. has, with a misguided triumphalism, refused Russia respect for its need for security and the identity of a valued member of the international community. Expanding NATO to Russia's borders and plans for a "defensive" missile shield in Poland threaten the former enemy. And the August 2008 condemnation of Russia as an international pariah and announcement of no further NATO-Russia Council meetings serves only to alienate Russia further. Meanwhile, with the arrogance of a self-appointed world policeman, the U.S. acted without U.N. Security Council approval to bomb Serbia, invade Iraq, and recognize Kosovar independence, showing no respect for international consensus.

Numerous conflict resolution initiatives sought to change these dynamics. Individuals on all sides of these conflicts came together to respectfully develop mutual understanding and respect for the needs of all involved. Some of the participants shared their new understandings with their home communities. But despite attitudinal change documented in each society, leadership in all of these areas continued to seek a

security built on military might rather than neighborly goodwill.

Can you imagine if in your neighborhood you sought a security based on having more guns than your neighbors? You would not feel very secure walking on your own block. Instead, in our individual lives, most of us develop a friendly exchange with our neighbors. We know someone will notice if our mail starts spilling out of the mailbox or

if our windows are busted in, and someone will offer help when our grocery bag splits open and apples start rolling every which way. There's a basic shared respect for each other's security and human needs. No one tries to rule the neighborhood.

We need to develop norms of international relations that more closely mirror healthy neighborhoods and the

*Continued on Page 8*

## Graduate Certificate Celebration at POV

By Erin Ogilvie, Graduate Admissions and Student Services Director, [eogilvie@gmu.edu](mailto:eogilvie@gmu.edu)

This year's graduating certificate class at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) gathered at Point of View on August 3 for an afternoon of reflection and celebration of their achievements. The graduate certificate program director, Mara Schoeny, addressed the graduates along with their friends and family members. Students completed their certificate track with a field-based project. Projects this year included: assisting the county-wide Arlington County Diversity Dialogue Initiative, an El Salvador War College Seminar Facilitation: Foundations for Effective Crisis and Consequence Management, and the design and delivery of a Risk Communication and Conflict Resolution training program. The graduate certificate program is a year-long program at ICAR designed for working professionals in the field of conflict analysis and resolution and also for those who are looking for a career change. The four specializations in the program include: Conflict Analysis and Resolution Advanced Skills; Conflict Analysis and Resolution for Prevention, Reconstruction, and Stabilization Contexts; Conflict Analysis and Resolution for Collaborative Leadership and Community Planning; and World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution. For more information on the certificate program, please contact [icarcert@gmu.edu](mailto:icarcert@gmu.edu) or call 703-993-1300. ■



Above: Graduate Certificate Students at Point of View. Photo courtesy of Ali Erol.

## The Lessons from South Ossetia

Continued from page 7

basic respect afforded all residents. These norms need to reach not only throughout the peacebuilding community, but into leadership. The conflict resolution community needs to expand into the political leadership too. We need conflict resolution-oriented presidents, prime ministers, parliamentarians, congresspersons, and ambassadors. Who from amongst the ICAR alumni will run for office or take a senior government position?

In the Caucasus, leaders must be willing to take into account the needs of not only the recognized states, but also the Abkhaz, Ossetians, and other ethnic minorities with human rights and political grievances. Leaders need to make space for previously marginalized voices and hear their messages. Rather than consider what the western media have dubbed the "Russian-Georgian war", we need to look at all the complexity of the "War Over South Ossetia", recognizing that the South Ossetians matter too. If all peoples can participate in crafting settlements that meet their needs, as well as others' needs, then there will be no motivation to return to war. But if any party is not allowed to be part of the solution, that party will remain part of the problem.

As one of the founders of our field, Kenneth Boulding said, what exists is possible. There are many non-warring and peaceful societies in history and in today's world too. *A Pax Respectus* is possible, especially in the Caucasus where honor remains common to all the cultures of the region. ■

## Why Media Matters at ICAR

Continued from page 2

to have the light of conflict resolution under a bushel and ICAR is working to ensure that it shines brightly in the media, as well as in more traditional academic domains.

For a detailed listing of our interviews and articles, go to [http://icar.gmu.edu/ICAR\\_Newspage](http://icar.gmu.edu/ICAR_Newspage). ■



Above: ICAR Professor Marc Gopin interviewed on the topic of the Middle East Peace Process for CTV News. Image courtesy of CTV News.



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