Department of Defense Awards Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures a $1.05 Million Research Grant

DENVER—May 27, 2014—The University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies announced today that the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures has been awarded a $1.05 million research grant as part of the Department of Defense’s Minerva Initiative. The awarded project, “Taking Development (Im)Balance Seriously: Using New Approaches to Measure and Model State Fragility,” will develop a new, more comprehensive index for measuring and monitoring state fragility in the future.

Though widely used and cited, existing state fragility indices, designed specifically to signal instances of abrupt socio-political change such as the Arab Spring or the ongoing uprisings in Ukraine, have missed the mark, limiting the strategic options available to our country’s national security and defense leaders. In this project, a team at the Josef Korbel School intends to improve upon existing quantitative methods by developing and testing new measures of economic, political, or broader social (im)balance and fragility related to abrupt socio-political change and forecasting these metrics to 2035.

Pardee Center Associate Director Jonathan D. Moyer and Director Barry B. Hughes are the principal investigators on this project. Other co-investigators from the Josef Korbel School include faculty members Erica Chenoweth, Cullen Hendrix, Oliver Kaplan, and Timothy Sisk. This will be the second Minerva grant awarded to both Chenoweth and Hendrix.

“This Minerva grant provides us with an exciting opportunity to extend how we measure and analyze structural factors that contribute to abrupt socio-political change, especially in middle-income countries,” said Hughes.

The grant will be awarded over a three-year period, with a possible two-year extension.

The $1.05 million grant marks a milestone for the Josef Korbel School. Presently, there is more than $4.1 million in external funding for active projects at the School. Over the past five years external funding for research projects has tripled—an increase that reflects the School’s growing strength in quantitative social science research. “Through their innovative research, faculty at the Josef Korbel School are answering some of today’s most pressing questions,” said Christopher Hill, dean of the Josef Korbel School. “We emphasize quantitative skills in both our
research and curricula. This award from the Department of Defense and the sharp increase in research grants affirms our continued improvement in this area.”

According to the DoD, the Minerva Initiative was launched by former Defense Secretary Robert Gates in 2008 “to improve DoD’s basic understanding of the social, cultural, behavioral, and political forces that shape regions of the world of strategic importance to the US.”

The Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures uses the IFs integrated forecasting system to provide long-term analysis of development, security, and sustainability issues to various governments, private companies, and other non-governmental organizations worldwide. The center has published its own volume series, Patterns of Potential Human Progress, and has contributed to publications including the National Intelligence Council’s Global Trends reports and the United Nation’s Human Development Report.

For more information, please visit the center’s website: pardee.du.edu

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