

ACDIS History

ACDIS was formed in 1978 after over a decade of faculty and university involvement in arms control and security studies. Professor Charles Osgood was among the first to develop a systematic strategy toward arms limitation negotiations—Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT)—that still has currency today. In the early 1970s, Professor Stephen P. Cohen and his colleagues in Asian Studies, supported by funds from the Center for International Comparative Studies, organized a study group on the “International Relations of Asia,” which devoted considerable attention to regional security. Other campus units sponsored public lectures, forums, and seminars on a wide array of peace and security issues. The Military Education Council, charged by the University Senate to oversee the ROTC program, simulated discussions of SALT, NATO, and Chinese defense policy. The Friday Forum committee organized public lectures on nuclear energy. The Miller Committee invited distinguished speakers to address important defense issues. Professor Sidney Drell of Stanford University lectured on controlling nuclear arms. Professor Zhores Medvedev, a Russian dissident, assessed the implications of the Ural mountain nuclear disaster of 1957–58.

An invitation from the Ford Foundation in 1977 to participate in a competition among selected American and European institutions of higher learning for grants to support arms control centers crystallized faculty efforts to establish ACDIS at the University of Illinois. ACDIS was placed under the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs for program development. The Director of the School of Social Sciences assumed responsibility for administrative and financial oversight of the Office. From its inception in 1978 until recently, ACDIS was guided by three co-directors (Professors Stephen P. Cohen and Edward A. Kolodziej of Political Science and Professor Arthur Chilton of Nuclear Engineering). In May 1983, ACDIS was placed under the Director of International Programs and Studies (IPS), an all-campus unit, and Professor Edward A. Kolodziej was appointed Director.