

Virtual Diasporas

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v i r t u a l d i a s p o r a s **and global problem solving project**

- [Virtual Diasporas](#)
- [Background](#)
- [Workshop](#)
- [Report](#)
- [Authors](#)
- [Papers](#)

Global diaspora communities are an increasingly important actor in international conflict and cooperation. Today information communication technologies bind transnational diaspora communities with their homeland, facilitate new and efficient economic networks in both the host and home countries, and increase identity and belonging to a greater transnational community. Yet other observers contend that virtual diaspora networks are an emerging source of global conflict as they facilitate transnational terrorist and criminal activity, finance wars in "home states," and most importantly, cultivate divisive and fragmenting nationalism throughout the online diaspora community.

How are we to balance a growing need for national security and increased intelligence gathering with the need to respect the privacy, civil liberties, and freedom of non-state transnational networks? How will this first ever "war against networks" impact transnational diaspora communities? How can states work with these global diaspora networks to further their aims?

The Nautilus Institute is beginning the process of understanding these challenges with the Virtual Diasporas and Global Problem Solving Project. The project, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, examined the growing impact of global diasporas, and their use of information technologies, on

international conflict and cooperation. Specifically, this effort explored a number of issues ranging from global diaspora communities as an increasing source of conflict to the positive contributions that emerging cosmopolitan diaspora organizations are making to global problem-solving.

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