

# THE PLOUGHSHARES MONITOR

VOLUME 40 | ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2019

## THE "PLUTONIUM OF AI"

The dangers of  
facial-recognition  
technology

## THE STATE OF THE NUCLEAR ABOLITION REGIME

Preparing for  
the NPT PrepCom

## Wargames

Simulating a crisis  
in space

## FORCED MIGRATION

At a glance



## Peace Warrior

Murray Thomson

1922-2019

*“and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift  
up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war  
any more.” Isaiah 2:4*

## SUMMER 2019

### 3 From the Director's desk The protection of civilians

by Cesar Jaramillo

### 5 Simulating a crisis in space What one disarmament activist learned

by Jessica West

### 9 The “plutonium of AI” Facial-recognition technology

by Branka Marijan

### 12 Forced Migration at a glance The latest facts and figures

### 14 State of the nuclear disarmament regime Preparing for the NPT PrepCom

by Cesar Jaramillo

### 19 Statement to the NPT PrepCom Delivered in May in New York

by Cesar Jaramillo

### 22 Peace Warrior We remember Murray Thomson, Ploughshares co-founder

The Ploughshares Monitor  
Volume 40 | Issue 2

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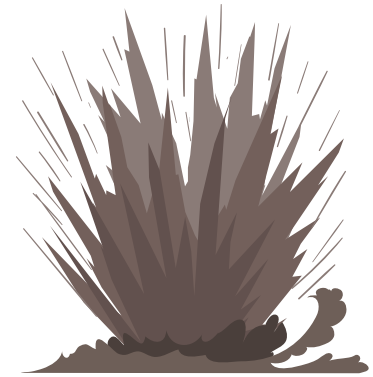
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## From the Director's Desk

# The protection of civilians: New process offers hope

Written by Cesar Jaramillo



**E**xplosive weapons—aircraft bombs, heavy artillery, rockets, grenades, and improvised explosive devices—cause horrific damage. According to a report issued by UK-based group Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), there were 188,325 global deaths from explosive violence between January 2011 and December 2015.

### Explosive weapons in populated areas

Today, armed conflict is more often being waged in urban areas. Urban warfare increases the likelihood of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). Authoritative research has verified widespread use—by both state and non-state actors—in some of the most devastating contemporary conflicts. And a staggering proportion of casualties are civilians.

AOAV reported that civilian deaths and injuries in populated areas represented 91 per cent of all casualties from explosive weapons in 2018. “The majority of those reported harmed by explosive violence worldwide are still civilians and will continue to be so unless dramatic international efforts take place.”

But the reverberating effects of EWIPA go far beyond those immediately killed and injured.

Extensive damage to critical civilian infrastructure and essential services—including those related to health care, sanitation, and electricity—causes long-term harm and suffering, which are often underreported.

EWIPA use also causes psychological trauma, hampers the work of humanitarian relief agencies, and drives forced displacement.

### International response

The good news: EWIPA use is garnering increasing diplomatic attention.

Twenty years ago, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) made protection of civilians a distinct agenda item. During the UNSC debate on the Protection of Civilians this past May, the Government of Austria announced that it will host a multilateral conference on the protection of civilians from explosive weapons in urban contexts.

Austria’s announcement follows a years-long effort by various stakeholders that have been calling for concrete multilateral action to reduce the human suffering caused by EWIPA. At the core of this effort has been a close partnership of progressive states, including Austria, Mexico, Mozambique, Chile, and New Zealand.

Also involved are civil society actors, notably the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW). This global coalition of nongovernmental organizations advocates for the development of an international political instrument that commits states to not using EWIPA and includes provisions for victim assistance.

INEW has laid some of the groundwork for the October meeting in Austria. A regional

meeting in Maputo, Mozambique in 2016 brought together 19 African states. Another in Santiago, Chile in 2017 gathered 23 states from Latin America and the Caribbean. In outcome documents, each group committed to supporting the negotiation of a political declaration (a type of multilateral policy instrument) on EWIPA.

### The road ahead

With luck and hard work, such a political declaration could be adopted as early as 2020. The goal is for a document that strengthens, clarifies, and goes beyond existing international

“Arms control and disarmament processes, which directly tackle the conduct of armed conflict, are sensitive issues in political and military circles.

law—including human-rights law and international humanitarian law—in the use of EWIPA. The expectation is that the spirit and specific commitments of a clear multilateral norm proscribing the use of EWIPA will gradually be reflected in national domestic policies, including military doctrine and rules of engagement.

Until then, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on states to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. This message is not new (see the 2017 “Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict” and the 2018 “Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament”).

Will there be challenges going forward? No doubt. Arms control and disarmament processes, which directly tackle the conduct of armed conflict, are sensitive issues in political

and military circles. There could be strong pushback, especially if the process is perceived to limit options on the battlefield.

### EWIPA a global problem

EWIPA is not a concern only for major military powers whose military is (or could be) involved in armed conflict. Not only the problem of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other states suffering from EWIPA use.

EWIPA is a problem of global concern. It has a prominent place on the multilateral humanitarian disarmament agenda—an agenda that has muscle. A humanitarian

imperative served as the key catalyst for the diplomatic processes that resulted in the Arms Trade Treaty in 2014 and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017.

As these processes demonstrated, states do not need to possess nuclear weapons to have a say on nuclear disarmament, or to export or import a lot of weapons to change the regulatory regime for the global arms trade.

A state at peace today could be at war tomorrow, and subject to the dire consequences of EWIPA. It is in everyone’s interest to develop clear standards and specific commitments to address the pattern of harm caused by EWIPA.

The October Vienna conference may be the path to achieving this worthy and long-overdue objective.

Project Ploughshares was closely involved in supporting and promoting both the ATT and the Nuclear Ban Treaty. In October, Project Ploughshares will be in Vienna supporting efforts to better protect civilians in armed conflict. □

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What one disarmament  
advocate learned

# Simulating a crisis in space

Written by Jessica West



**M**ilitaries use wargames to test concepts, assumptions, and processes; to inform future planning and decision-making. But what does such an exercise look and feel like from a peace perspective?

I had a chance to find out in April when I was in Delhi, India. I participated in a full-day crisis simulation exercise (SIMEX) organized by the Observer Research Foundation. Intended to illustrate the dynamics under which geopolitical conflict might escalate to outer space, the event taught frightening lessons. But after standing in someone else's shoes for a day, I was heartened by the insights that I learned about myself and my work.

## Why simulate a space crisis?

The risk of direct conflict in outer space is increasing as more militaries identify space as a domain of warfare. Not that conflict will likely begin in space. Instead, the fear is that a terrestrial crisis will escalate to include aggression in space. This concern stems from the fact that space is necessary for command,

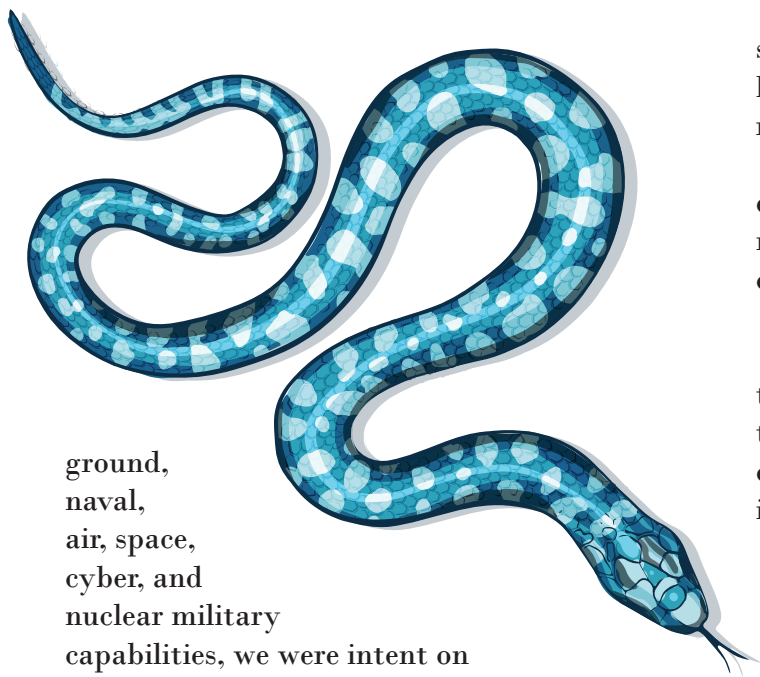
control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR)—in other words, almost every function assumed by military and security forces. And the satellites providing these services are vulnerable.

If such an escalation is to be contained, it is critical to understand how it might develop. This was a core objective of the SIMEX.

## The scenario

Participants were divided into four national groups—Elephant, Dragon, Eagle, and Jackal—and the nonstate group Snake. The groups had competing regional and global interests that were broadly representative of those found in the Indian subcontinent today. This scenario resonated with us, not only because we were in India, but because it reflected the current overlap of national, regional, and global strategic interests and tensions that are increasing the odds for violent confrontation.

I was on team Dragon—a power maximizer and rising global star. Armed with significant



ground, naval, air, space, cyber, and nuclear military capabilities, we were intent on bolstering our regional influence. Among our space capabilities: kinetic interceptors and lasers.

The scenario involved a multipronged regional crisis initiated by an antisatellite test, a terrorist attack, and suspected territorial military incursions. Although not a ‘space’ crisis, space-based capabilities were embedded in military response options.

### What happened?

The outcome is both a good news story and a bad news story.

The good news: in our simulation, the crisis



**In the end, there was no grand strategy, merely action and reaction, while hoping for the best and avoiding the worst.**

did not escalate to space. Space assets were critical to the execution of tactical terrestrial responses, and were subjected to numerous cyberattacks. But space did not become a theatre of combat. Like participants in other

simulations, including a tabletop exercise hosted by Secure World Foundation in 2017, we were reluctant to physically destroy assets in space.

The bad news: The crisis escalated in other dangerous ways, ending with an airstrike on nuclear facilities. While we were saved by the clock, in real life, the clock would keep ticking.

Grappling with multiple crises and trying to balance competing interests made it clear that the state of warfare is in flux. The notion of hybrid warfare rang true as we engaged in a mixture of economic, political, military, and (dis)information manoeuvres. I was also struck by the coexistence and intertwining of different types of conflict that were strategic and tactical, global and local.

In the end, there was no grand strategy, merely action and reaction, while hoping for the best and avoiding the worst.

### Top 5 takeaways

#### 1. Safeguards are collapsing even as new threats emerge

The complexity of conflict is reflected—and exacerbated—by shifting military doctrines, new weapons systems, and the ongoing collapse of arms-control regimes. The old rules no longer apply, but the new rules are far from clear.

No longer could we assume that certain actions were based on known intentions or would follow accepted protocols. Information was at a premium;

disinformation was rife. The potential for misinterpretation and overreaction was high. In an escalating crisis, the cost of such mistakes could be catastrophic. This is, I believe, how the airstrike on nuclear capabilities came about.

## 2. Escalation is a tactic with unpredictable results

Threatening force is an escalatory tactic, used to convince perhaps unwilling parties to give us what we want. But the effects of such a tactic cannot be accurately predicted, particularly with new domains such as space in the mix.

All parties seemed wary of uncontrolled escalation, but were not certain how to contain it. My group found it hard to judge the impact of an action. Hard to ascertain the most important goals of other actors. And hard to evaluate high-value targets or aggressive moves in space (short of all-out destruction). This was clear during the debriefing: our assumptions about one another's goals and intents were often misguided and our own actions misinterpreted.

## 3. No one wants to fire the first shot

In the absence of many formal restraints on conflict, individual behaviour becomes incredibly important. Behaviour signals identity; identity shapes emerging rules of interaction. No one wants to be seen as an escalator. No one wants to fire the proverbial first shot—particularly in space.

This idea of appropriate behaviour offers a critical, if weak, restraint on warfare. Weak because we were frequently masking our behaviour—facilitating military incursions under the cover of infrastructure work or population defence. Weak because we were constantly testing the boundaries—for example, through cyber and directed-energy interference in space. And weak because, once that first shot is fired, there is nothing in place to stop further shooting.

## 4. But no one wants to save the world

Each team was tasked with a list of goals. On

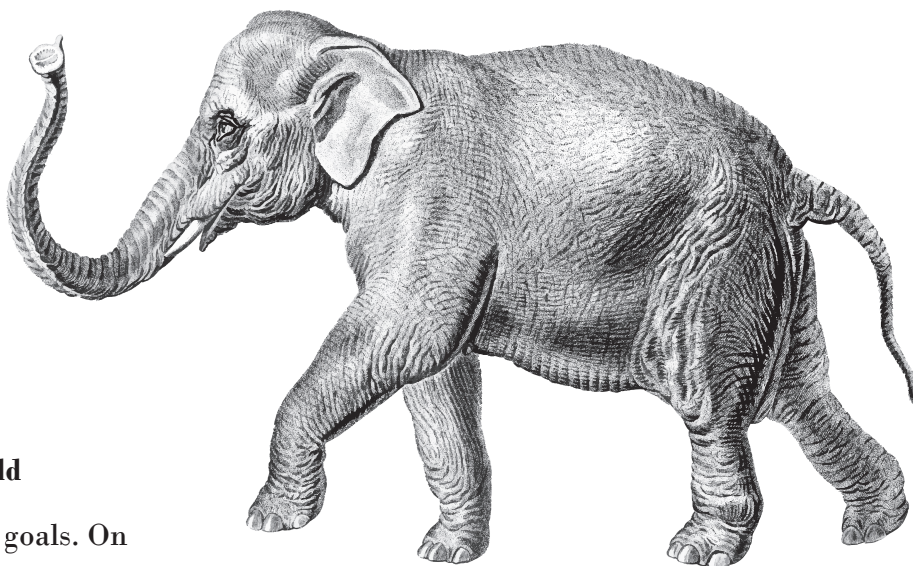
no list was regional stability, let alone saving the planet. Instead, goals were deeply nationalistic. Most revolved around power and influence: increasing one's own and limiting that of others. As team Dragon, we found that working indirectly to foment instability in rivals such as team Elephant was sometimes to our advantage.

I found this the most startling takeaway. For those of us who are focused on collective, long-term goals such as the continued peaceful and sustainable use of outer space, it is unsettling to accept that these goals are not shared by everyone.

## 5. There are opportunities for peace, but . . .

There were opportunities for de-escalation. Many of them were taken, including the exchange of information, fact-finding missions, and temporary *détentes*. The four state groups responded cooperatively to common interests, such as restricting the capabilities of terrorist groups. And when channels of communication were available, they were used. Team Dragon was constantly trying to find ways to communicate more directly with our global competitor Eagle.

But the appeal of short-term gains, stronger signaling of our priorities, and the desire to maintain deterrence through limited



escalation—the movement of troops here, the shifting of naval forces there, temporary interference with a satellite—continued to feed the dynamics of conflict.

### Finding my role

Conflicts, and warfare in particular, are generally viewed as the domain of the state. Nonstate actors are usually viewed negatively. In our scenario, Snake was a network responsible for terrorist attacks on civilians. There were no other nonstate actors. As is often the case, those of us working within civil society to build bridges and contain conflict were overlooked. Yet on reflection, it is clear that our role is essential.

In the SIMEX in April, the cast of characters and tools available affected outcomes. How we could communicate and the nature of our ‘arsenals’ mattered, but so too did who was there and who wasn’t. By this I mean not only each group as one unit, but the makeup of each group. Our team had a range of regional economic and political expertise that informed our decisions. We also had a diplomat, who served to moderate our responses. Social media savviness was enthusiastically unleashed, not always with good intentions. As for me, I tried

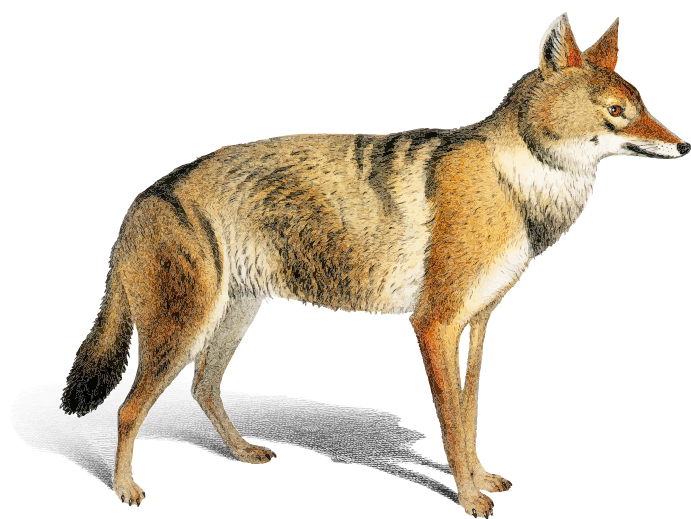


to see things from the other side, to understand how our actions would be interpreted and the likely response.

Despite the absence of civil society from the SIMEX, the dynamic I experienced reinforced my belief that civil society participation is critical in resolving issues of global peace and security. Here I mean civil society advocates who prioritize collective, long-term goals, not those who simply repeat or reinforce the interests of one group.

In an environment of misinformation and mistrust, civil society can give voice to more objective narratives and facts. We are often uniquely positioned to speak across hardening lines of disagreement and conflict. By focusing on rules, we help to stabilize identities and norms. We also shine a light on the often-hidden victims and costs of military confrontation. All of this helps us to contain the cascade of conflict.

I entered the SIMEX to view conflict from a new perspective. I left with a better understanding of my role and the vital work that we do at Project Ploughshares. □

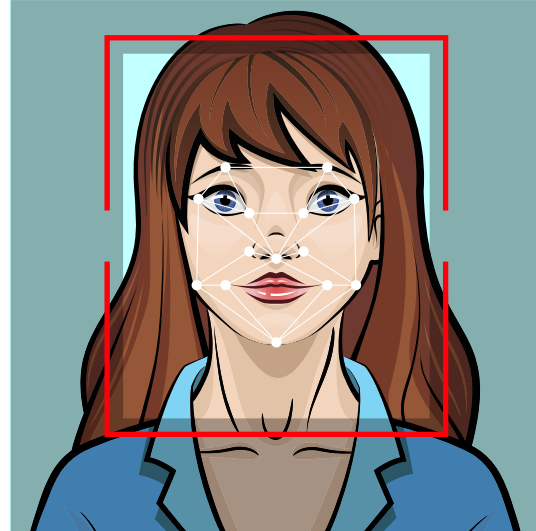


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## Facial-recognition technology

# The “plutonium of AI”



Written by Branka Marijan

In May, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to ban law-enforcement and government agencies from using facial-recognition technology, which identifies individuals by facial features. Civil liberties advocates hope other cities and countries will soon produce their own versions of the “Stop Secret Surveillance” ordinance.

Others see legitimate uses of the software by law enforcement—as in finding a missing child—and want regulation but no ban. In what follows, we’ll consider some key concerns and possible future actions.

### Bad for our health?

In a recent essay, Luke Stark, a postdoctoral researcher at Microsoft Research Montreal, described facial-recognition technology as the “plutonium of artificial intelligence,” and

“anathema to the health of human society,” calling for it to be “heavily restricted.”

Why? Because the technology is flawed. As Joy Buolamwini and others have shown, the technology is fairly accurate when identifying white men. Error rates are much higher when it tries to identify individuals with darker skin or who are not male.

Error rates are connected to a classification of human features that entrenches long-disproven racial theories. Stark writes, “Reducing humans into sets of legible, manipulable signs has been a hallmark of racializing scientific and administrative techniques going back several hundred years.”

But experts don’t think that making these technologies more accurate will solve all problems. Technology does not exist in a vacuum. Products of a biased and discriminating society reflect and even

perpetuate bias and discrimination. In fact, greater accuracy can make matters worse for groups already subjected to surveillance. More accurate tools could lead to even closer law-enforcement scrutiny of already overly policed, often minority, communities.

### State use of surveillance

Authoritarian regimes are using surveillance technologies—which may employ facial-recognition technology—to control minority populations. There are numerous media reports that China is doing exactly this to the Uyghur population, a minority Muslim group in the northwest. The state collects information in many ways: physical searches, surveillance



Efforts to improve accuracy have not addressed the original problem of the biased data that is fed into the facial-recognition algorithms.

software that must be installed on phones, and numerous surveillance cameras that are never turned off. *The New York Times* calls this level of surveillance “automated authoritarianism.”

Many Uyghurs are reportedly sent to reeducation or indoctrination camps for any transgressions discovered through such surveillance. Moreover, the collected video footage and images are fed to Chinese technology companies to improve the accuracy of the facial-recognition software. A vicious virtual circle of repression.

China isn’t alone. Democratic governments are also using and developing facial-recognition tools. Police in the United Kingdom see such technology as crucial in protecting society. According to a BBC Click investigation, police are already running live facial-recognition trials.

Some critics worry that facial-recognition technologies, coupled with the UK’s extensive

network of video cameras, could identify a vast number of individuals, creating a database of Orwellian proportions. An existing database used by the UK police includes not only information on criminals, but on ordinary citizens without even a parking ticket on their records. Innocent individuals can request to have their information removed, but first they must know that they are included in this database and it is not clear how that information is acquired.

### Efficiency rules

London Metropolitan police claim facial-recognition technology will make policing more effective and efficient. This is what modern tech offers and promotes. As Vox reporter

Sigal Samuel explains, global companies that develop lucrative facial-recognition technology are pushing for its widespread adoption.

Efficiency is gained. But individual privacy is lost. This is reason

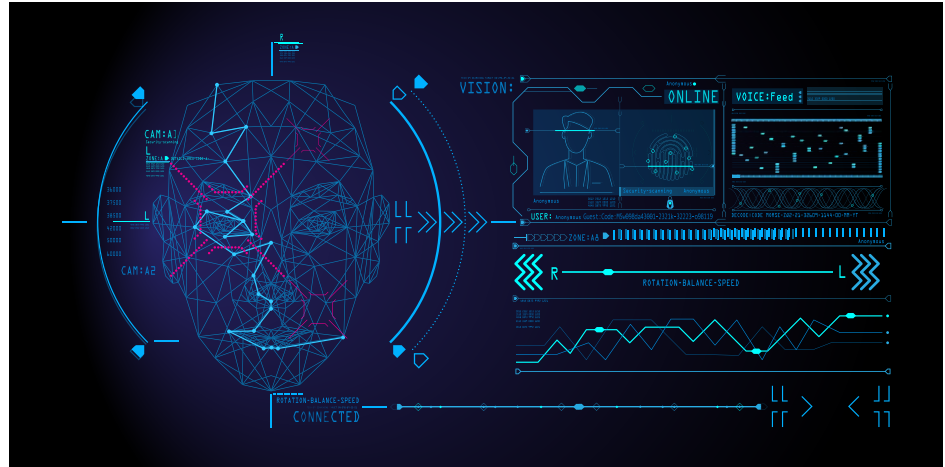
enough for some opponents to call for a ban on such technology.

As Samuel notes, part of the problem is that facial-recognition technology is being marketed to ordinary people as a convenient tool, with a veneer of futuristic sleekness. At a kiosk in an airport in China, facial-recognition tech can scan your face and provide your flight status. In some U.S. airports, JetBlue is using facial-recognition technology to make the boarding pass irrelevant.

Some consumers might not consider the implications should such technology become ubiquitous.

But uncritical acceptance by the general population of some uses of the technology does not mean that there is no need for regulations or even bans. Yes, cellphones have cameras and many people disclose personal information on social media platforms, so there is no universal presumption of privacy. But the right remains.





And the harm of surveillance grows.

Scholarly studies have extensively documented the impacts of surveillance on society and its chilling effects on democracy. And in nondemocratic societies, the ability to navigate everyday life without constant surveillance is crucial for citizens to survive and thrive.

### Ban or regulate?

Some tech companies seem unconcerned about the implications of facial-recognition technology and, with few rules in place, have started to market their technology to law enforcement. For example, Amazon has sold facial-recognition technology to U.S. police forces, even though there is evidence that the product is inaccurate and has other weaknesses, particularly related to bias. Microsoft and others have called for better regulations.

But will regulation be enough? A new report from the Georgetown Law Center on Privacy and Technology, *Garbage In, Garbage Out: Face Recognition on Flawed Data*, reveals that U.S. police forces have altered images, uploaded forensic sketches, and edited computer-generated images to “increase the likelihood that the system returns possible matches.”

According to this report, it is difficult to know how widespread these practices are, but they

will surely increase as more police and security services obtain the technology.

We must remain aware that the technology is imperfect. Efforts to improve accuracy have not addressed the original problem of the biased data that is fed into the facial-recognition algorithms. Nor have vulnerabilities to hacking and other cyberattacks been eliminated or minimized.

Finally, we must consider the possible adoption of facial-recognition technology by the military. Countries that are developing autonomous weapons argue that facial-recognition and similar technologies will distinguish civilians from combatants, lessening collateral damage. But minorities and other innocents under threat fear that they will find it even harder to hide from persecution.

Cities, countries, and the global community must acknowledge the different and possibly harmful ways in which various regimes could use this technology. We must all contemplate how it might change warfare and affect civilians in conflict zones.

After such acknowledgement and contemplation, we might all determine that, in the end, only a ban will protect ordinary civilians from an unprecedented degree of surveillance, which could result in the loss of privacy and freedom and even life itself. □

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# FORCED MIGRATION

*at-a-glance*

68.5  
million

By the middle of 2018, 68.5 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence.



47,800

The number of asylum claims registered in Canada doubled from the previous year to reach 47,800. These included 7,300 from Haiti, 5,500 from Nigeria, 2,200 from Turkey, and 2,100 from the United States (primarily U.S.-born children of third-country nationals).

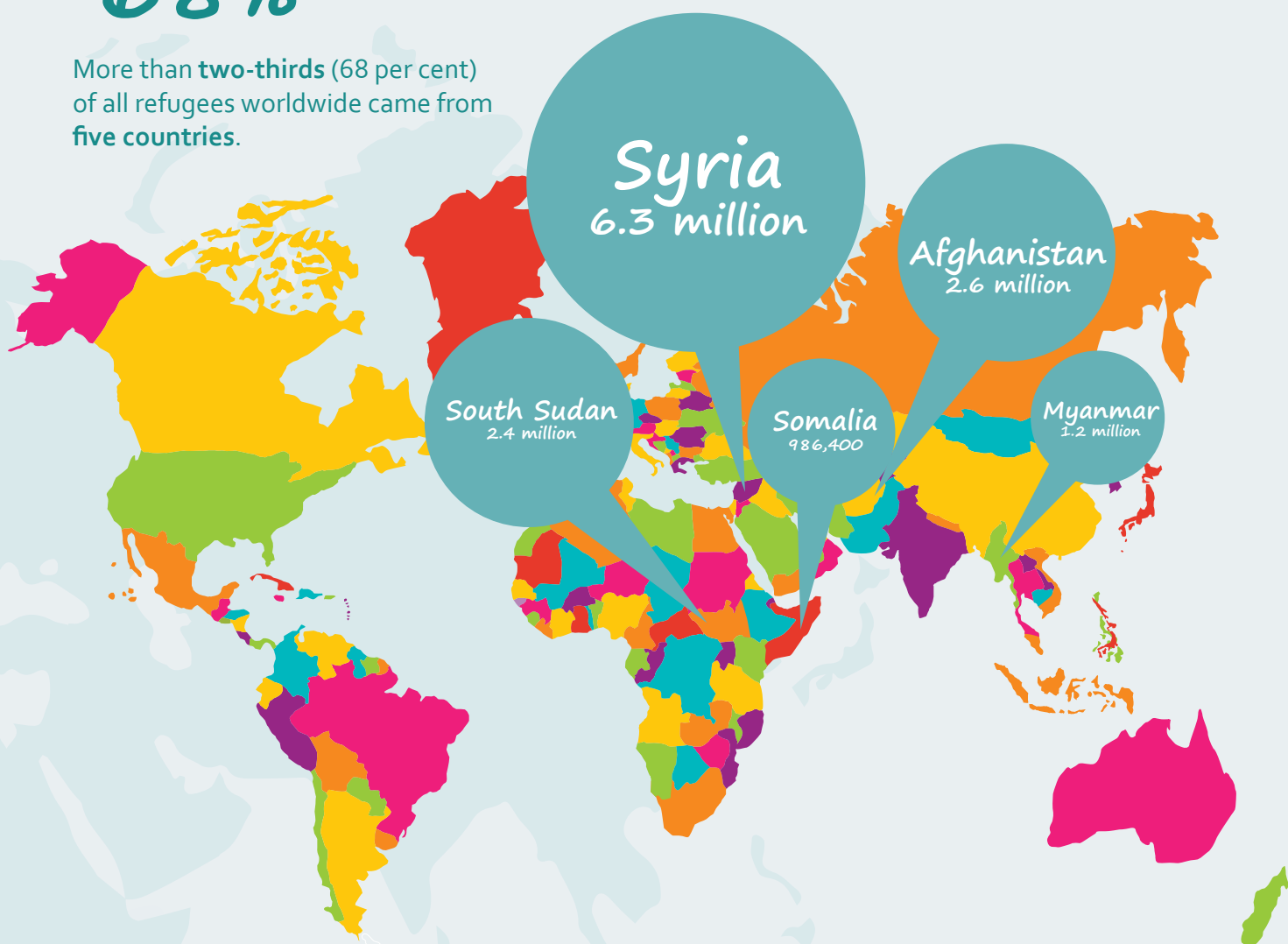


52%

Children younger than 18 years of age constituted more than half of the refugee population in 2017, up from 41 per cent in 2009, but similar to more recent years.

# 68%

More than **two-thirds** (68 per cent) of all refugees worldwide came from **five countries**.



## The top 5 refugee-hosting countries



Design by Tasneem Jamal  
Source: UNHCR

## Preparing for the 2020 NPT Review Conference

# The state of the nuclear disarmament/abolition regime

Written by Cesar Jaramillo

**T**he last of three meetings in preparation for the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), was held April 29-May 10 in New York.

The fault lines in the architecture of the whole nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime seem to be growing deeper, more profound. There was evidence of strong divisions and increasingly divergent views on the best approach to nuclear disarmament.

In recent years, the measure of success for NPT review conferences has been the consensus outcome document to which all States Parties to the Treaty agree. Although it tends to be in lowest-common-denominator language, such a document can still be seen as evidence that states are able to find some common ground with regard to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

However, we left the 2015 Review Conference with no outcome document. Almost at the last minute, the United States, the United Kingdom,

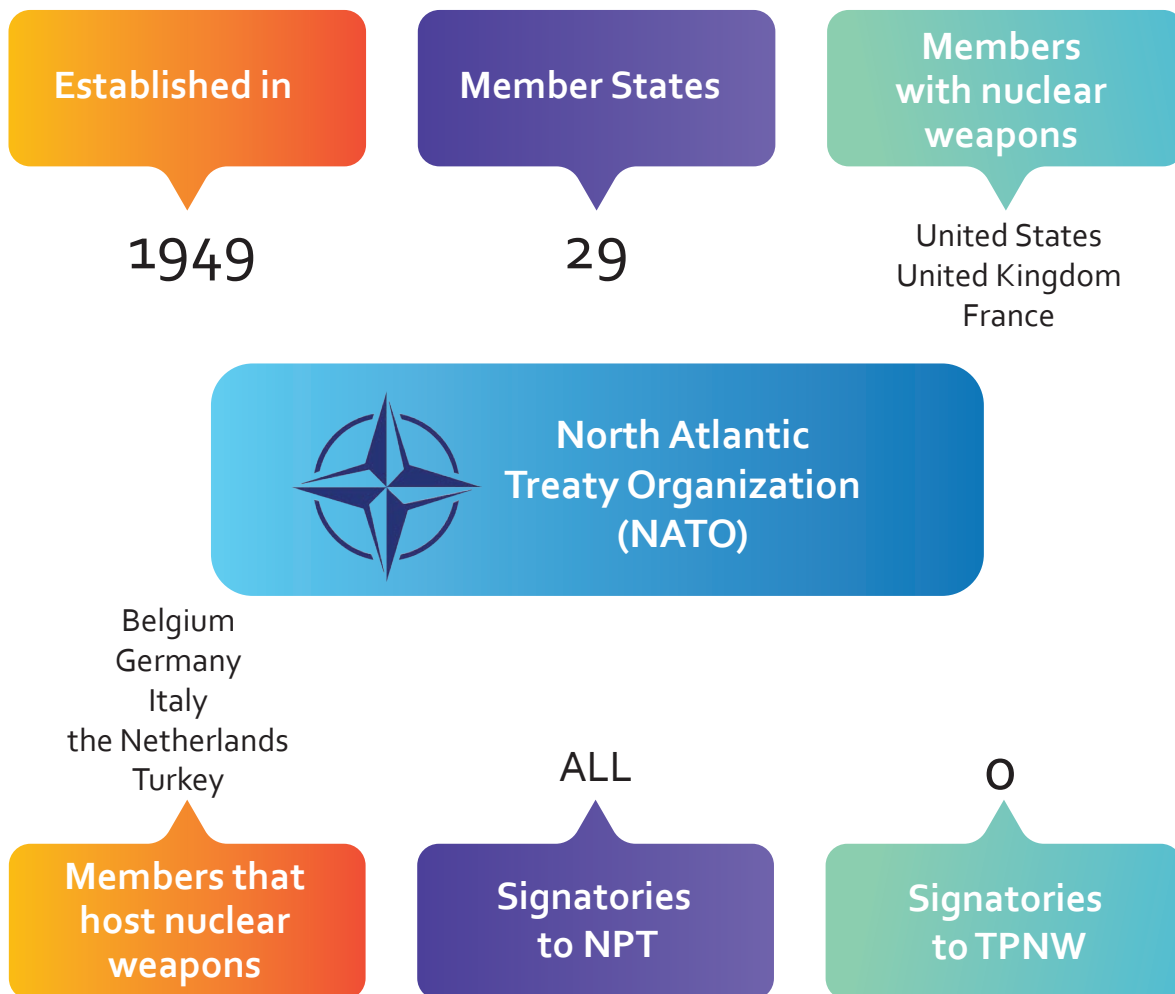
and Canada blocked consensus. It was clear that such a move was the result of concerns that had been expressed by Israel (which is not a party to the NPT), related to the specific references in the outcome document to the need to hold a conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction—which includes nuclear weapons.

Will there be an outcome document in 2020? It is not easy to be optimistic.

### Identifying the players

First, let's correct any misconception that there are only two significant groups at NPT meetings: the few states that have nuclear weapons and remain reluctant to give them up, and the vast majority of states that are all pulling in the same direction toward nuclear abolition.

In reality, there is a third group: nonnuclear-weapons states that one would hope would be



aligned with those pulling for nuclear abolition, but whose policies more closely align with those of nuclear-armed states. These nonnuclear-weapons states are members of nuclear alliances, such as NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—or have individual nuclear-security arrangements with states that possess nuclear weapons.

This group of states is critical in generating

conditions that will lead to disarmament.

But they have been, in their policies and their doctrine and their public statements, unwilling to categorically reject nuclear weapons. They lend cover to states with nuclear weapons, claiming that such weapons are necessary for their protection. They give value to the concepts of extended nuclear deterrence and nuclear umbrellas. One of these states is Canada.

# Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)





## Setting the stage for 2020

Divisions between nuclear-dependent states and their nuclear-armed allies, on the one hand, and states demanding concrete progress toward abolition, on the other, will undoubtedly be easily detected at next year's review conference.

Adding a new level of complexity to all the arguments and counterarguments will be a very significant, still relatively recent development: the historic adoption of the Treaty on the

“The good news is that there are many highly committed individuals, civil society groups, and progressive states that are working nonstop to achieve nuclear abolition and disarmament.

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This very welcome policy instrument was created by an international community that was impatient, fed-up, frustrated by years of inaction on the nuclear-disarmament front—and, in some instances, not only inaction but actions that went in the opposite direction, that actually moved us further away from nuclear abolition.

Now, states that want nuclear abolition, working in close partnership with several civil society organizations from around the globe—including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—have the TPNW to act as a catalyst and a rallying point. This treaty acknowledges both the painstakingly slow pace of progress on nuclear abolition on the part of nuclear-weapons states, but also the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear-weapons use.

States with nuclear weapons still consider the TPNW something they can reject, dismiss, or ignore. They claim that the TPNW is a divisive agreement. So, disagreements around

the TPNW will likely also be front and centre at next year's Review Conference.

## Other complications

Other issues could derail the conference and make a consensus document elusive in the end.

One is the pursuit of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, which the international community has been committed to since 1995. This is an issue of great importance

to some states—in the region, but beyond it as well. To date, the international community has not delivered. A meeting to kickstart the process was to have been held by 2012, but never happened. It is possible that this issue alone

could delay progress at the 2020 conference.

Finally, we see a troubling international strategic environment. Many analysts and observers have commented on a breakdown in international arms control, particularly in relation to the two main nuclear powers, Russia and the United States.

## Sources of optimism

The environment for the 2020 NPT Review Conference is not promising. But there is good news.

The good news is that there are many highly committed individuals, civil society groups, and progressive states that are working nonstop to achieve nuclear abolition and disarmament. They are providing—and will offer in 2020—clear, sophisticated, coordinated, even elegant pushback to many of the flawed, faulty arguments from nuclear-weapons states and their allies. There are solid, compelling cases to be made that counter the misleading rationalizations and justifications that are

given for the perpetuation of nuclear-weapons possession. At key forums, we are seeing this positive pushback—astute, intelligent advocacy to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

This is the way it is. We're in the middle of a high-stakes humanitarian and political struggle for the abolition of nuclear weapons. No easy wins, but potentially catastrophic failure could result.

The meeting next year will be a key test of the health of the NPT regime, which is, in

the assessment of Project Ploughshares, quite fragile. But we will not and cannot and shall not despair. We will continue pushing for concrete progress, both within the NPT and by virtue of complementary instruments, including the valuable Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We will push ahead on every front where nuclear security can be achieved, where the normative regime can be strengthened, and where actual change can come about from these interactions. □

- Adopted by a UN conference on July 7, 2017
- 122 states voted in favour of adoption
- Only 1 NATO state voted: the Netherlands (against)
- No nuclear-weapons state voted
- Currently 70 signatories

### **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

- Opened for signatures on Sept. 20, 2017
- Will enter into force 90 days after 50 states have ratified or acceded to it
- Currently 23 states parties
- 22 states in process of ratifying

May 1, 2019

# Statement to the 3rd Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Delivered by Cesar Jaramillo

Chair,

Nearly fifty years after the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the international community remains woefully distant from a credible process that would make even the most optimistic observer believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons is within sight.

To this day, nuclear weapons possessors extol the value of nuclear weapons in safeguarding their national interests, but expect no one else to embrace the same rationale. They demand immediate, consistent compliance with nonproliferation obligations, but disregard their own responsibility to disarm. They consider the pursuit and possession of nuclear weapons by some states unacceptable, but are content to accept the nuclear-weapons programs of military or economic allies—even outside the NPT framework.

Those with nuclear arsenals have resisted, avoided, or ignored not only their treaty obligations, but the groundswell of support for nuclear abolition from all corners of the planet. They consider themselves at the same time

arbiters and direct beneficiaries of global norms around the acceptability of nuclear weapons. And they are not alone in their recalcitrance.

A subset of nonnuclear-weapons states maintains policies that are disconcertingly aligned with those of nuclear-weapons possessors. States that participate in nuclear alliances, such as NATO, are wantonly complicit in obstructing progress toward nuclear disarmament. These nuclear-dependent states agree with nuclear-weapons states when they claim that they maintain their arsenals not only for their own security, but also for the security of their allies. Indeed, they give nuclear-weapons states cover.

Like their nuclear-armed allies, they insist on a strict step-by-step process for nuclear disarmament. Steps like the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which six out of nine nuclear-armed states have failed to ratify. Or the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, which has been deadlocked for more than 20 years. Like their nuclear-armed allies, they claim that international



Cesar Jaramillo delivers a statement at the 3rd Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference in New York on May 1.



security conditions are not ideal for nuclear disarmament. But the sobering reality is that they may never be. Nuclear disarmament must be pursued under international security conditions that are predictably less than perfect.

Like their nuclear-armed allies, they boycotted the process that resulted in the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, undermining the very rules-based multilateral order they claim to support.

Like their nuclear-armed allies, they called the ban treaty process divisive, when it simply shed light on longstanding divisions between nuclear haves and have-nots—divisions that continue to be exacerbated with the blatant disregard of disarmament obligations, and which the ban treaty specifically intends to remedy.

Like their nuclear-armed allies, they continue to embrace nuclear deterrence as a valid security policy, thereby legitimizing the weapons held by the possessors. Now those possessors are engaged in a multibillion-dollar modernization of their nuclear arsenals, which will inevitably extend the shelf-life of nuclear weapons and push the abolition goalpost even further.

How can this not be seen as contrary to the goal of nuclear abolition? How can the placement of U.S. nuclear weapons on the territories of NATO

members be compatible with the objective, the spirit, and the specific provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Does anyone believe that proliferation concerns will ever be fully allayed while nuclear-weapons states cling to their arsenals?

Chair,

Nuclear-dependent states have been allowed to reside in two camps for much too long. When it suits, they present themselves as responsible international actors that are nonnuclear-weapons states under the NPT. At the same time, they are party to, and explicitly endorse, security arrangements that run contrary to the letter and spirit of the NPT, as well as the broader goal of nuclear abolition.

As things stand, their purported support of nuclear abolition can only hold true in the most ethereal and noncommittal way possible. Because, in practice, they are effectively enabling their nuclear-armed allies. It is thus imperative that they muster the courage, the foresight, and the audacity to work with friends and foes in the formulation of common security arrangements that do not rely on the threat of nuclear annihilation—and to signal that nuclear weapons are unequivocally unacceptable, even for their allies. □

***Drafted by:***

*Project Ploughshares and the SEHLAC Network (Network of Human Security for Latin America and the Caribbean)*

***Endorsed by:***

*Canadian Pugwash Group  
Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons  
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation  
People for Nuclear Disarmament  
Physicians for Global Survival  
Science for Peace  
Voice of Women for Peace  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*

Murray Thomson  
1922-2019

# Peace Warrior



Project Ploughshares  
Co-founder



Murray modelled a life of commitment and high expectations. That covered active engagement in a wide range of causes aimed at human and planetary betterment, and while he was the progenitor of countless organizations and initiatives, those exemplary qualities shone through with particular intensity in his advocacy for a world without nuclear weapons—for a world, as he argued the case, with the wisdom and enough basic sense to turn from the insanity of looking for global security in weapons dedicated to destroying it.

His attention to nuclear disarmament came into sharp focus in his work with Project Ploughshares, which he of course co-founded, in the buildup to the United Nations' First Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. He toured the country spawning civil society disarmament groups from Victoria to Halifax, and in the decades that followed, nuclear disarmament remained a central theme of his tireless work."

~ Ernie Regehr  
Ploughshares Co-founder





While helping to sort some of Murray's recent files, I spied it. A white, slightly used dinner napkin with the words 'Let's Mobilize' written at the top in Murray's handwriting. Something worth saving.

I worked down the hall from Murray for years, and then later we lived in the same neighbourhood. The home phone would ring: 'Debbie? Murray here, I have this idea.... When can you come over?'

Whatever the idea was, it would entail a call to mobilize, to reach out, to include others, and to press forward with the agenda for peace and disarmament.

I cannot make out all the notes on the napkin, but at the bottom it says, 'Call the Steering Committee to plan the mobilization.' The Steering Committee remains on stand-by."

~Debbie Grisdale

**Former member of Ploughshares Governing Committee**



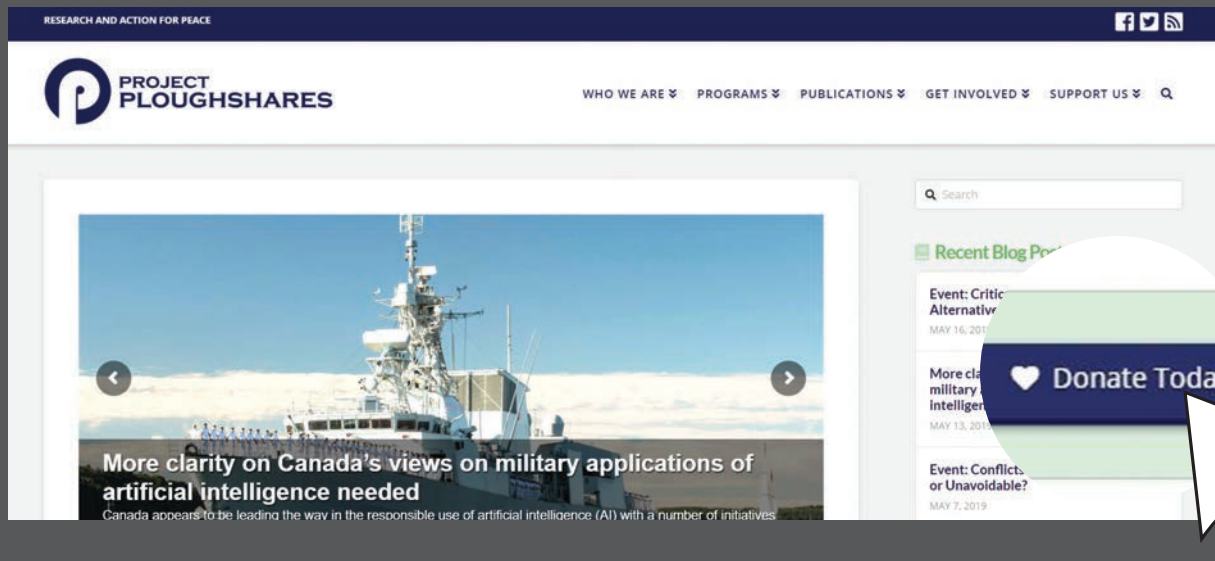
Murray used to crack me up. And I'm pretty sure I cracked him up, too. Every single time we met, it seemed, mutual laughter would precede conversation. If we were at a conference or seminar, he'd say something like "Who let this guy in here?" as we shook hands.

But he would always turn to, well, his life's work: building a safer world. Not in an ethereal, undefined manner, but invariably proposing, challenging, asking, coordinating. Always with a concrete thought or idea. How do we get Canada to join this or that treaty? How do we inform and energize the public on the nuclear weapons threat? How about we write a letter to the government urging concrete actions? That was Murray: smiles and substance, till his last days."

~Cesar Jaramillo

**Ploughshares Executive Director**

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