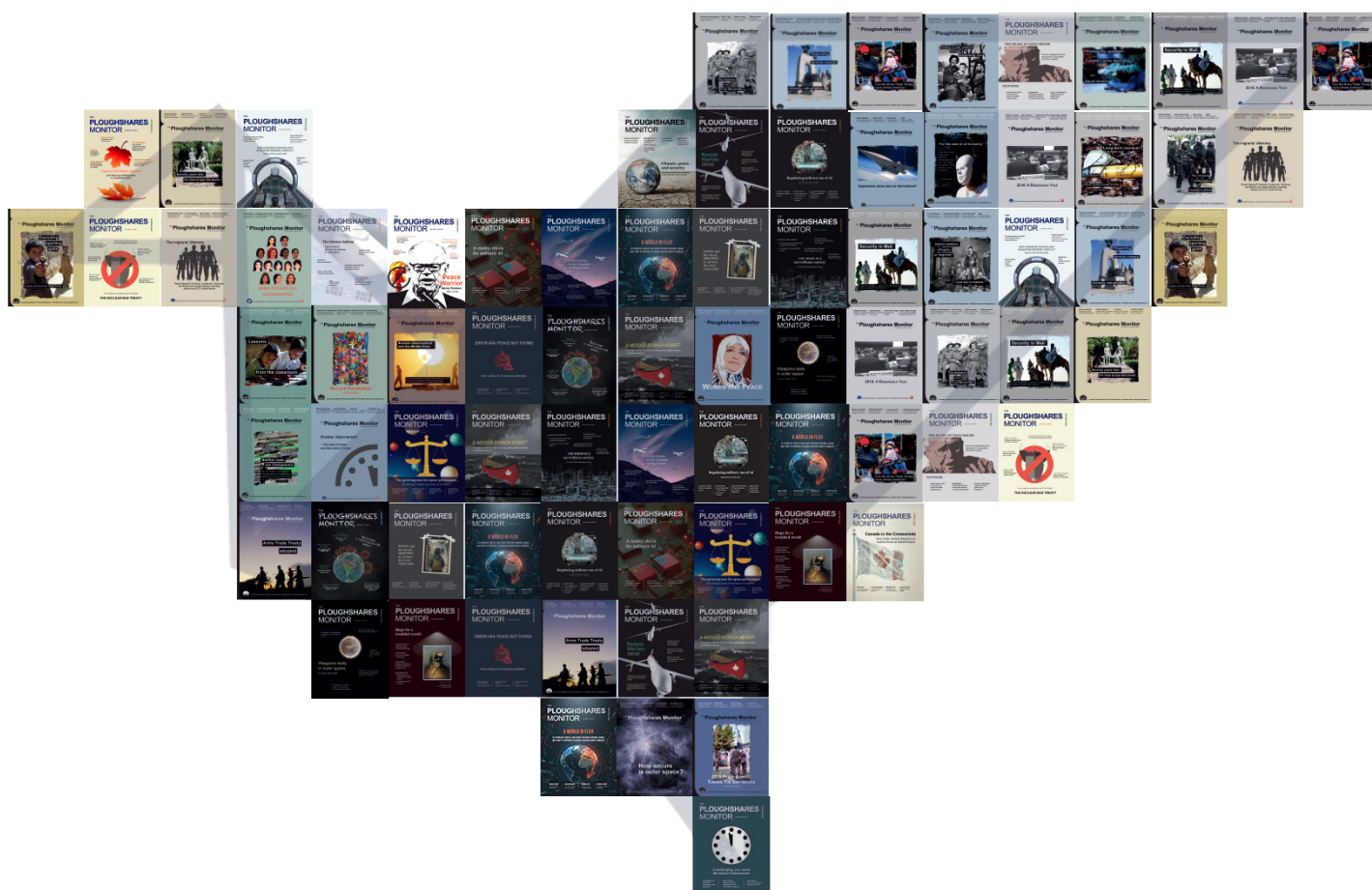


THE PLOUGHSHARES MONITOR

VOLUME 47 | ISSUE 3

AUTUMN 2026



50 Years of Project Ploughshares

A Special Commemorative Edition



*"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*

AUTUMN 2026

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PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES STAFF

Paul Heidebrecht DIRECTOR

Kelsey Gallagher
Lynne Griffiths-Fulton
Branka Marijan
Fred Martin

Matthew Pupic
Lisa Umholtz
Jessica West

STUDENT INTERNS

Kaya Cikir
Cole Westerveld

Julian King
Emelia Connolly



The Ploughshares Monitor is the quarterly journal of Project Ploughshares, the peace research institute of The Canadian Council of Churches. Ploughshares works with churches, nongovernmental organizations, and governments, in Canada and abroad, to advance policies and actions that prevent war and armed violence and build peace. Project Ploughshares is affiliated with the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo.

Office address:
Project Ploughshares
140 Westmount Road North
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6 Canada
519-888-6541, 1-888-907-3223
plough@ploughshares.ca; www.ploughshares.ca

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A Special Issue of *The Ploughshares Monitor*

Written by Paul Heidebrecht



Ernie and Nancy Regehr speak to attendees at the launch of the “50 Years of Turning Swords Into Ploughshares” exhibit at the Grebel Gallery in Waterloo, June 23, 2026.

This special issue of *The Ploughshares Monitor* is dedicated to marking the 50th anniversary of Project Ploughshares. In place of the usual mix of timely articles written by our research team, in these pages you will find windows into the history and impact of our efforts through the years.

Some of what follows has been inspired by the commemorative exhibit entitled “50 Years of Turning Swords Into Ploughshares” that has been on display since June in the Grebel Gallery, located right next to our offices in the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College. This is a fitting location, given that it was from a desk at the college that Ernie Regehr and Murray Thomson officially launched Project Ploughshares on July 1, 1976.

Working with past and present staff as well as curator Philip Klassen-Rempel on this exhibit was a great prompt for me to become more familiar with the resources and campaigns that Project Ploughshares has produced and contributed to over the decades. It was also a humbling exercise, given the abundance of material we had to work with, and I wish we would have had more time to explore our files and to talk to more people. I also wish we had many more than 24 pages in this issue of *The Monitor*!

We have aimed to provide a representative, not

comprehensive, window into the identity, activity, and spirit of a remarkable initiative. There is a timeline showing key milestones along the bottom of each page. Former staff member Grant Birks has provided a reflection on the history of local Ploughshares chapters. You will find an image of the print we commissioned from artist Nick Schuurman to depict our foundational biblical text from Isaiah 2:4, which also offers a reminder of our ongoing connections with sponsoring churches and church agencies, and our institutional home with the Canadian Council of Churches. And there is even a spread on *The Monitor* itself (this is the 194th edition!).

The heartbeat of this issue is provided by testimonials from partners and supporters that speak to the past impact and ongoing relevance of Project Ploughshares. Here too, we have only been able to be selective, but we are deeply grateful for the many individuals and organizations who made contributions.

We are also deeply grateful for the many people who have been part of our journey over the past fifty years who are not named here, including past staff members, interns, governance body representatives, program partners, government officials, and faithful readers of *The Monitor*. If this issue prompts your own memories or reflections on the history and impact of Project Ploughshares, please share them with us!



----- 1976

Project Ploughshares, initially a six-month project, is founded by Ernie Regehr and Murray Thomson.

The Local Groups Era

Written by Grant Birks

Imagine that it is 1976 and you are with Ernie Regehr and Murray Thomson, who are planning the launch of a new organization that researches and educates about the harm caused by armed conflict and the arms trade in general. You want to educate and influence not only the government, but all Canadians and Canada is a hard country to reach across – thousands of kilometers wide. And remember, there will be no Internet for at least another two decades.

I wasn't there at the time, but it has been fun to scan the early Ploughshares Board minutes that document the many meetings with potential allies and, importantly, funders: the churches, of course, but also government agencies, educational institutions, and like-minded civil society organizations such as Oxfam and InterPares.

A 1977 report from Murray outlines the development of a Canadian Content List to provide the “nucleus of a cross-country network.” And, in 1978, he reported on community-regional dialogues with training sessions. It all worked, as some five years later, in early 1982, the first National Consultation meeting with the emerging local group network was held.

Ploughshares Calgary reported its establishment at this meeting as one of nine local groups present. A second meeting later that year had 17 local groups present stretching from St. Johns, NL to Victoria, BC. Held annually, by the 1986 National Consultation, the number of local groups had grown to the mid-40's.

The role of Ploughshares local groups was to move Ploughshares' research findings and advo-



Kathleen Wallace-Deering (left) in conversation with Judith Meinert, representative from Ploughshares Saint John, NB. Year unknown.

cacy into their respective regions. Examples of local group activities included organizing public meetings with invited guest speakers covering Project Ploughshares themes, providing speakers from the local group to community schools and churches, taking part in Ploughshares advocacy campaigns such as the disarmament postcard campaign, and petitioning for a ban on antipersonnel land mines. Some key annual dates for public action included the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6 and the UN Disarmament Week which occurs at the end of October.

Using the term “era” implies that there is an endpoint in time. Ploughshares Calgary alone remains active today, but more as a companion peace organization than as an affiliate. They note on their website that the CRA has mandated separation, but also that we share fundamental values and continue a productive relationship.

As part of Ploughshares' 50th anniversary exhibit at Grebel Gallery this year, I was proud to curate a feature that recognized the 63 local Ploughshares groups across Canada.

The local group era may be over, but the groups had an impact. We are grateful to the hundreds of dedicated grassroots folks who took Ploughshares' work into their communities to sow peace-building.

Grant Birks is a former staff member at Project Ploughshares.

----- 1977

Ploughshares joins the Canadian Council of Churches; first issue of *The Ploughshares Monitor* is published.

-- 1979

Produced report on Canada/U.S. defence relations for UN Group of Governmental Experts.



In total, 63 local chapters emerged in towns and cities across Canada in the 1970s and 80s. These citizen groups took the research and analysis produced by Project Ploughshares and turned it into action: developing resources for churches, schools, and community groups; writing letters and organizing meetings with local politicians; and marching, chanting, and singing for peace.

Ploughshares continues to be Canada's prominent peace advocacy home from its early foundations five decades ago. Their focus on conflict prevention, violence reduction, arms control and accurate monitoring, through sharp, considered analysis has reliably served us all — from positions on land mines, cluster munitions, nuclear weapons to modern threats. Its continuance ensures necessary tools are in place for advancing the common security framework we need for a better world.

- **Robin Collins**

Secretary, Pugwash Canada

I joined Project Ploughshares fresh out of graduate school as part of the Young International Internship Program run through Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT - at that time). I had never heard of Ploughshares before and, as a Montrealer, had never been west of Toronto. I applied to the program hoping for the best and was not disappointed. I was warmly welcomed, including being able to stay with the Birks family when I first arrived. The small team, led by Ernie (the legend) and Nancy, took me aboard and showed me the ropes. In total, I was able to spend two years there, cutting my teeth in researching and analyzing matters of international peace and security — matters which remain as important today as conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Europe highlight. Ploughshares provided me with the foundation I needed to launch my international career, first in Ottawa with an international-facing crown corporation and then later with the Asian Development Bank.

- **Peter Whelan**

Former Program Associate and Researcher for Project Ploughshares
Principal Risk Management Specialist, Asia Development Bank

1983

Published the first comprehensive analysis of Canada's stance on nuclear weapons.

1985

Briefed Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations on SDI (Star Wars).

Conventional Arms

Written by Kelsey Gallagher



Project Ploughshares' work on conventional arms dates to its origins. Ernie Regehr's early research was shaped by what he witnessed in the developing world: the stark contrast between pressing development needs and resources devoted to weapons, and the role of the international arms trade in reinforcing insecurity and impeding social and economic development. These concerns helped inspire Ploughshares' founding and established a commitment to scrutinizing the arms trade that has endured for five decades.

In that time, Ploughshares has built a record of tracking Canadian arms transfers, documenting their consequences, and asking difficult questions about where Canadian-made weapons go and

how they are used. This work has been accompanied by sustained engagement with governments and civil society, participation in international campaigns, and contributions to establishing and strengthening the Arms Trade Treaty, globally and in Canada.

Weapons, technologies, and patterns of warfare have changed considerably, but the need for independent scrutiny has not. Advocating for transparency, restraint, and accountability has not always been easy or popular. Yet providing credible information about the movement and consequences of arms exports remains an important public service, one Ploughshares has been fortunate to undertake alongside dedicated civil society partners in Canada and around the world.

Arms control initiatives, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), play a significant role in regulating the behavior of states and non-state actors. Project Ploughshares is notable for its relentless calls for the implementation of the ATT and other global arms control instruments, as well as its highlighting of incidents where states have breached international law related to disarmament and arms control. Its research outputs have helped shape arms control policies in Canada and beyond.

- Singo Mwachofi

Deputy Director
Security Research & Information Centre, Kenya



Past Executive Director, Cesar Jaramillo, campaigning with Control Arms to halt to supply of weapons to Saudi Arabia, Geneva, Switzerland, 2017.

----- 1986

Created first database of Canadian military production and exports.

----- 1987

Published first *Armed Conflicts Report*; wrote to Prime Minister re: white paper on defence policy.

States should consider the humanitarian impact of arms transfers because irresponsible transfers directly contribute to human suffering, undermine development, and exacerbate conflict. Poorly regulated arms flows fuel violence that destroys civilian infrastructure, including water and sanitation systems, disrupts livelihoods, and deepens poverty and inequality. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, the proliferation of weapons increases risks of gender-based violence and disproportionately harms marginalized groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities. The Arms Trade Treaty obliges States to assess the potential for exported arms to be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Failure to apply these standards enables cycles of violence and impunity. By prioritizing humanitarian considerations in arms transfer decisions, States can help prevent harm, protect civilians, and support long-term peace, stability, and sustainable development outcomes. Oxfam is pleased to partner with Project Ploughshares in this vital work.

- **Martin Butcher**

Senior Policy Advisor for Arms, Conflict and International Humanitarian Law
Oxfam International

"The militarized approaches being taken by the United States and Russia today, and the commitment of too many countries to expand weapons production, are pulling us away from arms control and arms trade restraint. Leadership is desperately needed from those who believe in multilateral and cooperative approaches.

Project Ploughshares, both in its work pushing Canada, and in more broadly supporting humanitarian disarmament-based solutions, is playing a critical role in envisioning a better and more peaceful path ahead."

- **Jeff Abramson**

Senior Non Resident Fellow
Center for International Policy



Ernie Regehr (left) and Bethuel Kiplagat at a consultation on small arms hosted by the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1998.

1989

Launched campaign that sends 2 million postcards to Canadian MPs opposing the modernization of nuclear weapons; published framework for Canadian Arctic Security.

The unfettered production, transfer and use of arms have created untold civilian suffering across the twentieth century and beyond. Arms control, particularly the development of binding international law, is the one global, preventive response to these continuing atrocities. It has created a legal framework which influences the conduct of states — particularly in relation to the anti-personnel mine and cluster munitions Conventions. The Arms Trade Treaty has set legal benchmarks, which, while not always adhered to by states parties, have become established norms and given civil society a foothold in the fight for accountability. But these achievements are now being challenged. Existing arms control regimes need reinforcing; they must also remain relevant in a world in which autonomy and Artificial Intelligence are transforming the battlefield. Project Ploughshares continues to play a vital role in the struggle for a world in which agreed rules are adhered to, arms control regimes are renewed and strengthened, and civilians are protected from harm.

- **Patrick Wilcken**
Researcher/Advisor
Amnesty International Secretariat

Since the ATT was adopted, the comfort zone for states has been to talk about processes, about institutional arrangements, about national systems, about budgets. Not only is that their 'happy place' – the more they talk about these things, then the less chance they will have to dwell on more awkward subjects.

Which is where civil society comes in. Civil society is involved in all sorts of ways to support the Treaty. This can take the form of awareness-raising, education, technical support nationally and regionally, promoting adoption by more countries. The list goes on.

But it is by being the conscience of the ATT, by remembering that the ATT is about reducing human suffering, preventing atrocities and violations of international law, that civil society really comes into its own. In some jurisdictions this has extended to taking government to court on the grounds that it has approved arms exports in breach of ATT obligations. More typically this happens in the political arena, so when states would rather discuss what is 'comfortable', civil society is working to bring the conversation around to actual arms transfers, to highlight what poor implementation actually means out in the real world, and to challenge states to explain themselves and to do better in future. It is in this area that civil society is perhaps most crucial to furthering the goals of the ATT.

- **Roy Isbister**
Chief of Arms Unit, Saferworld

----- **1991**

Represented Canada on Group of Gov. Experts that develops UN Register of Conventional Arms.

-- **1993**

Established and coordinated Int'l Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa.



Left: Senior Researcher Kelsey Gallagher testifying on arms exports and Canada's sanctions regime before Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, June 2023. Right: Ken Epps, past-Senior Program Officer, speaking at a side event at the fourth Arms Trade Treaty Preparatory Committee in New York City, February 2012. Photo credit: Fred Lubang.

In an age of proliferating information sources and myriad opportunities for disinformation, government openness regarding arms transfers is more important than ever. For over a century, advocates of transparency on arms transfers and procurement have argued that it can help to overcome misperceptions and reduce tensions between states, as well as showing that transfers are conducted in accordance with political commitments and international law. Regular reporting on authorised arms transfers to national legislatures and publics, as well as to the international community via regional and international instruments, allows for parliamentary oversight and public accountability. Further, scrutiny of international transfers by organizations like Project Ploughshares not only contributes to a responsible international arms trade, but also to peace, security, and stability, and reducing human suffering.

- **Paul Holtom**

Conventional Weapons Programme Head
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Switzerland

1994

Co-founded Mines Action Canada; participated in parliamentary review of Canada's defence and foreign policy.

1996

Conducted roundtables that lead to a formal review and strengthening of Canada's nuclear policy.

Nuclear Disarmament

Written by Jessica West



For 50 years, Project Ploughshares has worked toward a world without nuclear weapons. The goal has been remarkably consistent; the political terrain has not. Nuclear dangers have shifted from Cold War arms racing, the optimism of the post-Cold War peace dividend, and back to renewed great power competition, modernization efforts, emerging technologies, and increasingly explicit talk about nuclear use.

At different moments, the work has meant challenging cruise missile testing in Canada, scrutinizing nuclear doctrines and disarmament commitments, supporting international legal efforts, participating in global diplomacy, and helping to build the humanitarian case that ultimately

contributed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

That history matters now because nuclear weapons are again becoming easier to talk about as ordinary instruments of security rather than extraordinary threats to humanity. Ploughshares has spent decades pushing in the opposite direction: keeping their human consequences visible, questioning the assumptions that sustain nuclear deterrence, and looking for practical ways to reduce risks while pressing toward abolition.

The people reflected here — activists, diplomats, researchers and colleagues across generations — have been part of that effort, and their reflections capture both how much has changed and how much of the work remains unfinished.



ICAN Press conference, Toronto, October 27, 2017. L-R: Setsuko Thurlow, ICAN campaigner and Hiroshima survivor; Ray Acheson, member of ICAN's International Steering Group; and Cesar Jaramillo, ICAN campaigner and former Executive Director of Project Ploughshares
Photo credit: Paula Cardenas.

Project Ploughshares has had a special role in the pursuit of nuclear abolition. The work of Ernie Regehr set a model for other peace activists in the country: identifying flaws in existing policies and offering practical suggestions for alternatives — and doing so in a very civil manner.

- **Bev Tollefson Delong**

Co-Founder, Ploughshares Calgary;

Former Chairperson

Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Project Ploughshares has been a leading contributor on nuclear disarmament and space security and has earned the confidence of both government and civil society.

- **Dr. Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M.**

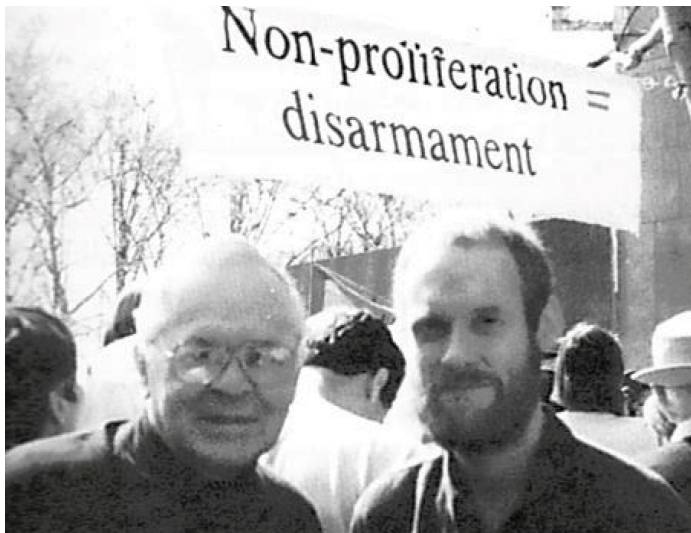
Founder and President, The Simons Foundation Canada

----- 1997

Participated in process leading up to signing of Ottawa landmines treaty; endorsed Code of Conduct on arms transfers.

-- 1998

Co-founded International Action Network on Small Arms.



Douglas Roche (left) and Colin Archer, then Secretary-General of the International Peace Bureau, attend an NGO rally for nuclear disarmament in 1995.

"The essential problem of nuclear weapons is an ethical one. That is why the work of Project Ploughshares, which constantly raises the consciences of Canadians to the effects of these evil instruments of warfare, is so important. The dedication of Project Ploughshares to informing Canadians and calling on the Government of Canada for action that can build a sustainable peace gives us hope for the elimination of nuclear weapons through comprehensive negotiations. The practical work of getting Canada to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons needs the full weight of Project Ploughshares behind it.

In today's world, when the foundations of international law are being severely challenged, the work of Project Ploughshares is needed more than ever. Thank you for being the conscience of Canada on nuclear disarmament."

- Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.

Former Senator and Former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament

My experience working with Project Ploughshares sparked my desire to always see the human angle in matters of peace and security, especially in nuclear disarmament. At its core, nuclear disarmament is about preserving humanity and life on Earth, but it is easy to lose sight of that when discussing niche policy issues.

- Kirsten Mosey

Policy Officer Nuclear Weapons,
Non-Proliferation and Disarmament
Global Affairs Canada

Project Ploughshares has served as the unofficial 'think tank' of the peace movement in Canada. Its top-notch analysis of international security issues, presented in accessible prose and enriched with policy-relevant recommendations, has been unrivalled in Canada for half a century.

- Paul Meyer

Former Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament;
Adjunct Professor of International Studies
Simon Fraser University

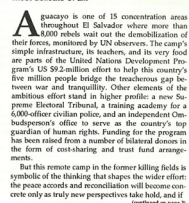
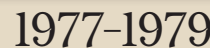
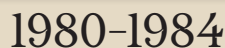
1999

Initiated Sudan Track II diplomacy and dialogue project.

2000

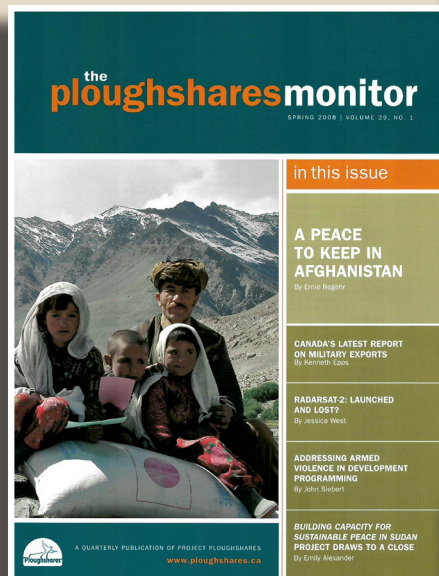
Advised Canadian delegation at UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

While *The Monitor* may alter its appearance, its purpose remains as important as ever, as the need for peacebuilding efforts continues to be ever present.

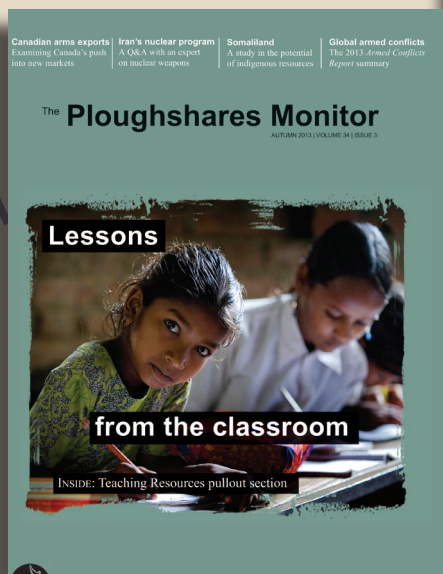




1999-2002



2006-2010



2005

Consulted with officials in Africa on the Responsibility to Protect.

2006

Developed core principles for an international Arms Trade Treaty as a member of Control Arms.



2003-2006



Space Security

Written by Jessica West



Space security once seemed like a niche concern — technical, distant, and easy to separate from the problems of peace and security on Earth. Project Ploughshares was among the organizations that saw early that it was not.

Through the Space Security Index, launched in 2004, Ploughshares helped build a shared, evidence-based picture of how the space environment was changing, bringing together experts from across countries, sectors and political perspectives at a time when common ground was often hard to find.

The Index has ended, but the problem it helped

define has only become more pressing. Space systems now underpin communications, navigation, military operations, critical infrastructure, arms control and nuclear weapons. Commercial and military activities are increasingly entangled, drawing civilians more directly into harm's way. And conflict on Earth can quickly extend into orbit — and back again.

Over the years, Ploughshares has worked with researchers, practitioners and advocates who helped shape this field alongside us. Their reflections speak to a period when space security moved from the margins of the peace and security agenda toward its centre.

Ploughshares has been one of very few organizations that have recognized the need to advocate for the governance needed to keep outer space sustainable and peaceful for the benefit of all.

- **Cynda Collins Arsenault**
President and Founder
Secure World Foundation



UN Open Ended Working Group Reducing Space Threats, Geneva, Switzerland, 2022. Photo credit: United Nations

Ploughshares clarifies a jargon-riddled debate that is often obtuse to outsiders and helps ensure that hard-won progress in multilateral space security discussions can be built upon.

- **Victoria Samson**
Chief Director, Space Security and Stability
Secure World Foundation

----- **2008**

Launched armed violence reduction project in the Caribbean.

----- **2009**

Called on government to focus on diplomacy and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Civil society organizations — of which Project Ploughshares is the most prominent in Canada — have a place, and even a responsibility, to inform and educate government and its elected officials on the particulars and specifics of these issues.

- **Dr. Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M.**
 Founder and President
 The Simons Foundation Canada

"The Space Security Index offered a rare opportunity for westerners and non-westerners, military and peace activists, academics and officials to listen to each others' points of view. The resulting texts represented a consensus of what all could agree was a fair assessment — a baseline description that all players could use."

- **Dr. Jonathan McDowell**
 Astronomer
 Center for Astrophysics
 Harvard & Smithsonian



Space Security Index working group meeting, McGill University, Montreal, 2013.

The Space Security Index's policy-neutral and evidence-based annual reports, prepared by leading experts from around the world, have been of significant and practical value to space professionals, decision makers and wider audiences. They have contributed to international peace and security, disarmament and the sustainable use of space for the benefit of all countries.

- **Ram S. Jakhu, LL.M., D.C.L.**
 Director Emeritus, Institute of Air and Space Law
 McGill University

2010

Briefed Parliamentary Committees on the Joint Strike Fighter program and the role of Canadian forces in Afghanistan.

2011

Presented key findings of Space Security Index report to UN Cmte on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Emerging Technology & AI

Written by Branka Marijan



Fifty years ago, autonomous weapons and the military use of artificial intelligence were not concerns for the peace and security community. The technologies that now shape debates about human control, accountability, and the changing character of warfare belonged largely to the realm of science fiction. Yet the questions at the heart of these debates—how technological change affects human security, how new weapons should be governed, and how we preserve meaningful human judgment over the use of force—are deeply connected to the work Project Ploughshares has pursued throughout its history.

As artificial intelligence began moving from civilian applications into military systems, Project

Ploughshares recognized early that these developments required sustained attention. Over the past decade, we have contributed research and analysis on autonomous weapons and military AI, participated in emerging international discussions, and worked with governments, civil society, researchers, industry, and other stakeholders to understand both the risks and the possibilities of rapidly evolving technologies.

The specific technologies confronting us will continue to change in ways that would have been difficult to imagine when Ploughshares was founded 50 years ago. What remains constant is the need for independent peace research that not only responds to today's challenges, but anticipates and reacts to those on the horizon.



Right: Branka Marijan speaking at the Harms and Risks of AI in the Military December 2, 2024 Mila-Quebec AI Institute, Montreal
Photo credit: Workshop organizers

Left: Branka Marijan attends the Third REAIM Summit in A Coruña, Spain, February 4–5, 2026.
Photo credit: Manoj Harjani



Project Ploughshares has played an indispensable role in raising questions about whether efforts by Canada and other countries to make themselves more secure ultimately make the world less secure. They are a vital partner in the effort to inform citizens of the consequences of defence policies.

- Dr. Stephen M. Saideman

Professor, Carleton University

Director, Canadian Defence and Security Network

----- 2012

Delivered statement on nuclear disarmament to states parties to the NPT at the PrepCom in Vienna.

-- 2013

Delivered statement on policy challenges of emerging technologies to the UNGA First Committee. -----

Project Ploughshares brings a unique combination of experience and expertise to the work needed to limit the use of autonomous weapons systems. Working at the intersection of technology, peace and security, is not easy but the Ploughshares team does it well.

- **Erin Hunt**

Executive Director
Mines Action Canada

"Project Ploughshares' work on military AI and autonomous weapons plays a critical role in equipping global institutional investors with the research and analysis they need to better understand the risks---to rights holders and shareholders---posed by these emerging technologies. As a result, investors can use their financial capital to more effectively support, shape, or constrain the companies responsible for these products."

- **Sam Jones**

President
Heartland Initiative



Ploughshares hosts its inaugural workshop on autonomous weapons at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, April 4–5, 2016. Photo credit: Emilia Zibaei

2015

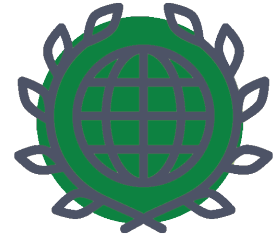
Participates in first Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Mexico.

2017

Attended negotiations and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Climate Peace & Security

Written by Jessica West



Climate change can seem like a departure from the traditional terrain of disarmament and arms control. But its consequences — for food and water, displacement, livelihoods, infrastructure, governance and conflict — go directly to a longstanding Ploughshares concern: human security. It also increasingly intersects with harder security questions, from military preparedness and Arctic access to critical infrastructure, emergency response and the resilience of communities facing overlapping pressures.

That makes climate and security difficult to

contain within any one policy silo. Environmental change can intensify existing tensions, create new vulnerabilities, and blur the boundaries between civilian and military responsibilities.

For Ploughshares, the challenge has been to bring a peace and security lens to these questions without losing sight of where insecurity is actually experienced: by people and communities.

Our work with colleagues across research, policy and civil society has helped push that conversation beyond whether climate change is a security issue toward the harder question of what a just and effective response should look like.

"In addition to nuclear weapons, **climate breakdown is the pressing security threat of our time.**"

- **Kenneth Epps**

Former Project Ploughshares Program Officer and former advisor to the Executive Director



Kenneth Epps (left) and Robin Collins take part in the workshop, "Between Protection and Security: Climate, Peace, and Security in the Arctic and Beyond" hosted by Project Ploughshares, Ottawa, June 19-20, 2024. Photo credit: Mehnaz Morshed Ottawa ON

----- **2018**

Presented on legislation to implement Canada's commitment to the ATT.

-- **2019**

Co-signed letter to PM re: review of export of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia; conducted policy labs on future defence & security challenges facing Canada.



Dr. Jessica West at the Montreal Climate Security Summit 2025.

Threats to peace and security from the expansion of military activities in outer space, as well as from climate change, are two important areas that are not receiving the attention they deserve. I applaud Project Ploughshares for highlighting these emerging challenges.

- **David Kendall**

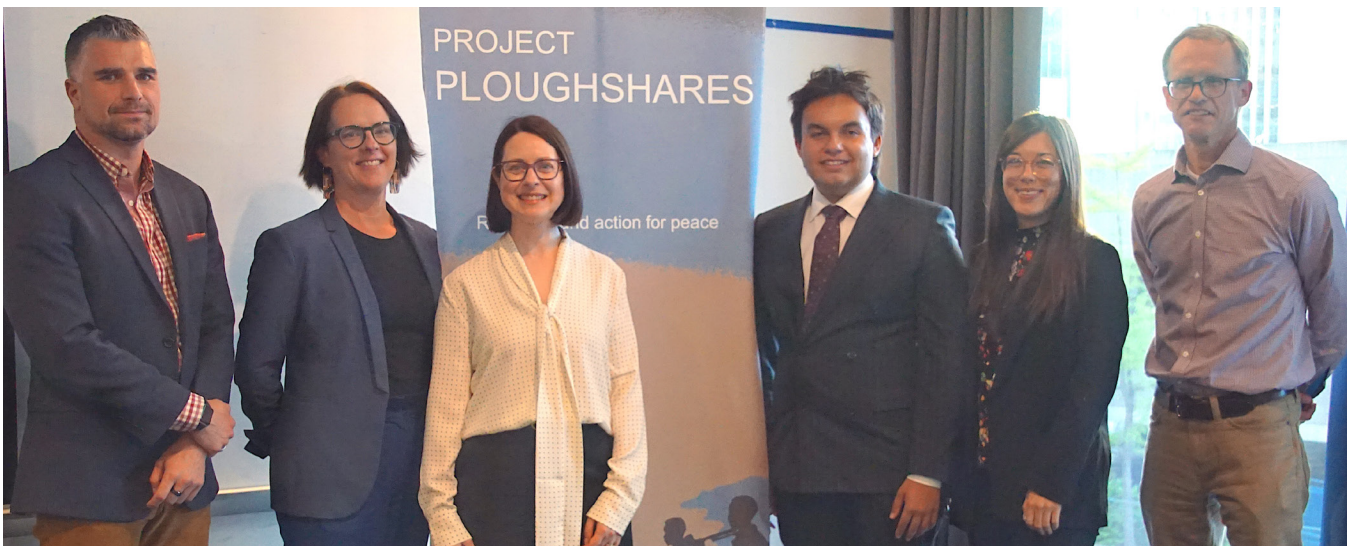
Former Chair

United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Equally important is Ploughshares' commitment to understanding security from a whole-of-society perspective and through the eyes of those with lived experience. Ploughshares convenes conversation, conducts research, and advances thinking in ways that are relevant to anyone concerned about resilience, good governance, and building a livable future for all,

- **Dr. Jennifer Silver**

Professor, University of Guelph



Dr. Andrew Heffernan, Dr. Jennifer Silver, Dr. Jessica West, Mr. Hadishrayen Diego Gros-Louis, Dr. Mia Bennett, and Paul Heidebrecht at the Ploughshares 50th Anniversary Reception Dialogue "When Security Comes Home" in conjunction with our workshop "Security, Environment, and Public Awareness: Engaging Canadians in the Grey Zone", Ottawa, May 2026.

2022

Supported the Dublin Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas through International Network on Explosive Weapons; participated as part of Canada's delegation to the 10th NPT Review Conference.

From Donors, Interns, and Supporters

Countless people have made Ploughshares what it is over the decades, from donors to interns, staff and volunteers to partners and contributors. Here are a few thoughts and memories from the many people and faces behind Project Ploughshares.

The decades-long partnership between the Africa Peace Forum (APFO), led by the late Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, and Project Ploughshares stands as a powerful testament to the impact of sustained, principled collaboration. Together, Ploughshares and APFO helped advance regional action on small arms, contributing to the Nairobi Declaration and the establishment of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (REC-SA), while also supporting efforts to ban anti-personnel landmines and strengthen peace initiatives in Sudan. The collaboration extended to conflict prevention, civilian protection, and African-led approaches to human security through engagement with regional institutions and civil society.

As Ambassador Kiplagat urged, "Let us heed the call and invest just as much in peace diplomacy as we do in arms." This shared legacy demonstrates that lasting peace is built through trust, patient dialogue, and enduring partnerships that transform ideas into institutions and hope into lasting progress. As Project Ploughshares celebrates 50 years, this partnership remains an enduring inspiration.

- **Nirina Kiplagat**

Former Intern at Project Ploughshares

I am a monthly donor because I value the important work done by Project Ploughshares. Backed by extensive research, Ploughshares provides an important voice for global peace and justice. A voice, which in the current times, is very, very important.

- **Peggy Stevens**

Newmarket, ON

I give to Project Ploughshares because it produces high-quality research to show areas that threaten peace and provides frameworks to provide solutions to those threats. At Christmas the angels announced "Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all" - Ploughshares provides the mechanisms for the Angel's message.

- **Duncan Etches**

Vancouver, BC

----- 2023

Participated as the sole Canadian civil society org in the inaugural Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) Summit in the Hague; launched a Climate, Peace, and Security initiative focused on the peace and security implications of climate disruption.

Turning Swords Into Ploughshares

Artist Statement from Nick Schuurman

The prophet Isaiah anticipated a world in which weapons are broken down and fashioned into farming implements. The manufactures of armed conflict are converted to tools used to plant and harvest.

Put otherwise, the resources that were used for war are reallocated to support the infrastructure of human flourishing.

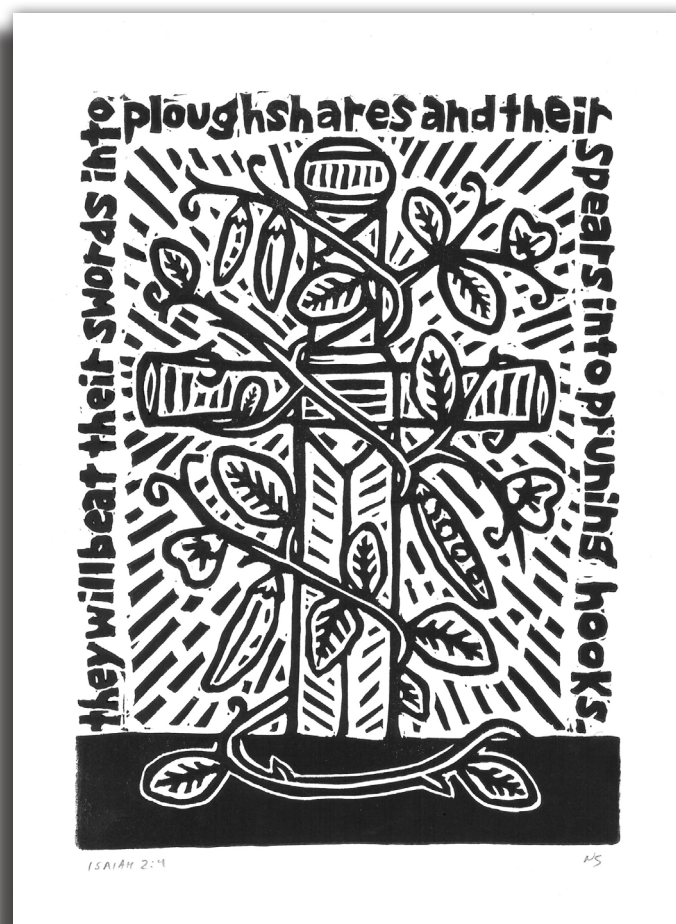
In this world, the sword is set down in the garden bed and used as a trellis for climbing peas.

Nick Schuurman is a Mennonite pastor and print-maker. He currently works with Mennonite Central Committee BC, where he serves as team lead for the Fraser Valley and Central and Northern BC Rent Banks - programs that support people at risk of eviction.

In his free time, he carves block prints which he offers in support of groups that work for peace.

This print was commissioned for the 50th anniversary of Project Ploughshares.

To learn more about his work or place an order, visit www.therainthesnowtheseed.ca.



I give because peace is the most important issue of our time. I grew up sheltering under my school desk in case of nuclear war. It was scary for me then and scarier now. But protests don't propose solutions. Project Ploughshares works to suggest them.

- Jane H Gordon
Halifax, NS

2024

Participated in the 10th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Geneva; brought civil society expertise to the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

Looking Ahead

Written by Paul Heidebrecht

There is so much more I wish we could have included in this special issue of *The Monitor*. For example, the commemorative 50th anniversary exhibit in the Grebel Gallery spotlighted the role that Project Ploughshares played in drafting church leaders' statements on nuclear weapons in the early 1980s that led to meetings with the Prime Minister, and in instigating a postcard campaign for nuclear disarmament that resulted in 2 million postcards being mailed to Members of Parliament. These are two of many instances where Ploughshares drew on the values

and concerns of churches and individual citizens to influence government policies.

Also missing from this issue are significant program activities from past decades focused on specific regions such as East Africa and the Caribbean, and research and action in more recent years focused on specific themes such as the root causes of forced migration, and the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in urban warfare. And major undertakings such as a decade-long international internship program merit an in-depth feature, or a full chapter in the



The wall of *Monitors*, featuring covers from every edition of *The Ploughshares Monitor*, part of the “50 Years of Turning Swords Into Ploughshares” exhibit at the Grebel Gallery in Waterloo, June 23, 2026.

2025

Participated in the final session of the work of the Global Commission on Military AI in the Hague, Netherlands.



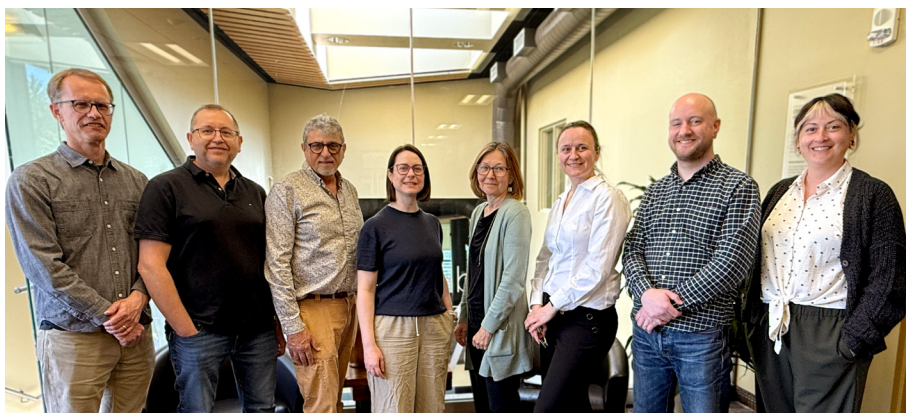
Executive Directors, past and present at the exhibit launch of the “50 Years of Turning Swords Into Ploughshares” exhibit at the Grebel Gallery in Waterloo, June 23, 2026. L-R: Cesar Jaramillo, Ernie Regehr, Paul Heidebrecht, and John Siebert.

yet-to-be-written comprehensive history of Project Ploughshares!

As we look ahead to the next fifty years, it is clear that the mission of Project Ploughshares has never been more urgent. The world is racing to beat its ploughshares into swords, and we need to lift up alternative strategies informed by ancient wisdom traditions and the lessons of recent history. As policy makers in Canada and beyond increasingly pursue peace and security by re-arming their militaries, informed and trusted voices advocating for disarmament need to be at the table.

A great deal is also murky when we look ahead and try to imagine what the world will look like in another half century, and when we try to imagine how positive changes might be brought about by citizen movements, faith communities, civil society networks, and initiatives like Project Ploughshares. How will our moral imagination navigate the rapidly shifting social, political, and environmental context we find ourselves in?

Just as looking back and realizing how much there is to celebrate in the history of Project Ploughshares is humbling for those of us carrying on with this work in 2026, so too is the ambiguity and challenge that lies in front of us. But celebrating the past reminds me that the future was also daunting and unclear in 1976. Countries like Canada prioritized profiting from conflict over investing in development, and the Cold War was heating up. The pursuit of peace through disarmament traversed uncertain terrain. It would have been hard to imagine the scope and scale of the treaties that were enacted over the subsequent decades, much less the processes that enabled them to be negotiated. Even more, it would have been hard to imagine the rise of digital communication technologies that enabled Project Ploughshares to connect with grassroots supporters and global partners working for disarmament in new ways, while also ushering in an era of disinformation and distrust that undermined political processes.



Project Ploughshares staff, May 2026. L-R: Paul Heidebrecht, Matthew Pupic, Fred Martin, Jessica West, Lynne Griffiths-Fulton, Branka Marijan, Kelsey Gallagher, and Lisa Umholtz.

I hope this history can be our inspiration. No doubt there will be issues that continue to recur and will require us to persist. And no doubt Project Ploughshares will need to continue to be nimble and creative in finding new ways to contribute to a better future for all.

2026

Project Ploughshares enters a new partnership between the Canadian Council of Churches and Conrad Grebel University during its 50th anniversary year.

A sincere thank you to our 50th Anniversary Fundraising Gala Sponsors



Tim & Jacqui Schmucker

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Every contribution helps us build a safer world —
one policy, one partnership, one generation at a time.



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