



Interaction Institute
for Social Change

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Overview of the Peace and Security Initiative

In January 2003, a group of over 50 activists, scholars, and funders met in Washington, DC to launch a collaborative effort to consider how to enhance their collective capacity to achieve public policy victories in the peace and security field. This diverse group was convened by the Ploughshares Fund in the face of the sobering national security environment following September 11 and the significant reduction in foundation support for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament work. The Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC) served as the designer and facilitator of this collaborative planning process, known as the Peace and Security Initiative (PSI). PSI ultimately involved over 250 people in the development of a vision, strategies, and tactics to reframe peace and security issues and regain lost political relevance and effectiveness. More than 450 people have since been involved in the implementation of that plan.

Over an eight-month period, IISC brought its collaborative methodology to working with a core group of nine individuals, called the Design Team, to construct and conduct an inclusive and efficient planning process for PSI. The Design Team also synthesized and analyzed the content generated from discussions of the larger community of PSI participants, known as the Planning Group, as well as other discussions, and drafted material for subsequent meetings. The Planning Group met four times in Washington, DC and, with the guidance of IISC, worked diligently to define its shared vision and goals, further its understanding of the challenges and opportunities before the community, and develop a strategic plan for the next three to five years to bring its vision closer to reality.

The result of the planning process was a report, entitled *Strengthening the Peace and Security Community*, which captures the Planning Group's broad understanding along with the shared goals and strategic recommendations that emerged from its discussions (see other side of this page). Before being published, this report was vetted at open community meetings in New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. The finalized document serves as a guide for the strategic planning and programs of individuals, organizations, and funders in the peace and security community, as well as a tool for outreach and fundraising.

Since the report was published, working groups have been established to implement the various strategies and recommendations of the community. Now in its second year of implementation, PSI has a full-time coordinating director, continues to convene its network of stakeholders on a semiannual basis, maintains a website, and makes a variety of resources (media and communications guides, issue briefs, etc.) available to members. While IISC is currently working with PSI to evaluate outcomes to date, anecdotal evidence suggests that it has helped to strengthen the diverse network of and relationships between stakeholders, created a stronger role and voice for grassroots groups, and increased cooperation and collaboration between funders and NGOs.

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From Strengthening the Peace and Security Community: A Collaborative Planning Document (Published by the Ploughshares Fund, October 2003)

PSI Vision of the Future

We envision a world in which international cooperation, international law and economic opportunity provide the greatest security for people in the United States and around the world, and the greatest opportunity for all people to live in free, healthy, and just societies.

We envision a world in which nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are not considered legitimate instruments of political or military power, and a universally accepted regime of rules, norms, and monitoring capabilities enforces legal prohibitions against their acquisition, possession, and use.

We envision the United States fully respecting the authority of, as well as actively participating in the creation and empowerment of, this enhanced international system for preventing and resolving conflict and achieving disarmament. To this end, we envision an engaged and informed citizenry with equal opportunity to participate in the political system and with accountable and responsive elected officials.

PSI Key Strategic Areas of Focus

- 1. Develop and refine the ideas, solutions, and policies that further disarmament, cooperative security and the rule of international law.*
- 2. Develop the message and means to effectively promote these ideas and policies.*
- 3. Engage and mobilize diverse sectors of the public.*
- 4. Influence U.S. government officials and policy.*
- 5. Build effective and diverse organizational capacity and strengthen the collaborative community infrastructure.*
- 6. Support a new generation of leaders, activists and experts.*
- 7. Increase and sustain funding for the Peace and Security Community.*