
PLOUGHSHARES FUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 21, 2021

Media Inquiries: Delfin Vigil | Director of Communications & Marketing | dvigil@ploughshares.org; (415) 259-1247.

Ploughshares Fund marks 40-year anniversary of working to rid world of nuclear weapons

‘Momentum’ to become the largest US foundation dedicated exclusively to the elimination of nuclear weapons all started in a San Francisco living room in 1981.

- **WHO:** Ploughshares Fund, founded, 1981 in San Francisco, the largest US philanthropic foundation dedicated exclusively to eliminating the threats of nuclear weapons.
- **WHAT:** Momentum: Chain Reaction 2021: Featuring: Ben Rhodes, Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), Former President of Mexico and member of the Elders, Ernesto Zedillo. Pre-show entertainment by the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus.
- **WHEN:** 5 p.m. PT Monday, June 7.
- **WHERE:** Live Via Zoom.
- **COST:** [Registration is free via this link.](#)

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – In 1981, during the height of the Cold War, a San Francisco philanthropist named Sally Lilienthal began a quest to change the world. She invited public service leader Lew Butler and Nobel Prize-winning physicist Owen Chamberlain for a meeting in her San Francisco living room.

Chamberlain, one of the world’s quietest people, spoke up: “There are lot of problems in the world. There’s one that’s so much bigger than all the others: nuclear weapons. If we can’t get rid of them, it will destroy civilization.”

“There was silence. Then there was a consensus,” recalls Butler. “We had a foundation.”

Within its first year, Ploughshares Fund had 62 donors award \$150,000 in grants aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons. Forty years later, the momentum continues with Ploughshares Fund now serving as the largest US foundation dedicated exclusively to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

To commemorate the nonprofit’s 40-year anniversary, Ploughshares Fund is hosting a virtual event on Monday, June 7: “Momentum: Chain Reaction,” with guest speakers, Ben Rhodes, Rep. Ro Khanna, Former President of Mexico and current member of the Elders, Ernesto Zedillo. Registration to the virtual event is free.

“As the new Ploughshares Fund president, it is an absolute honor for me to engage in these leading-edge conversations about finding new solutions for the nuclear problem,” said Dr. Emma Belcher, who became the third president of Ploughshares Fund, following the 2020 planned retirement of Joe

PLOUGHSHARES FUND

Cirincione. “As anti-nuclear advocate Albert Einstein himself so famously said, ‘We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.’”

For complete event details, visit: ploughshares.org/chainreaction2021

For media inquiries, including interview opportunities: Director of Communications & Marketing Delfin Vigil: dvigil@ploughshares.org; (415) 259-1247.

About Ploughshares Fund: *Ploughshares Fund is a global security foundation based in San Francisco, with an office in Washington, DC. Founded in 1981, Ploughshares Fund supports initiatives to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. It is the largest US philanthropic organization focused exclusively on nuclear security. Visit ploughshares.org*

About Dr. Emma Belcher: *Prior to arriving at Ploughshares Fund, Belcher spent nearly a decade at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, where she led the foundation’s Nuclear Challenges grantmaking program. There, she developed and built the foundation’s Nuclear Challenge Big Bet team—from ideation to planning to management of a nearly \$20 million budget.*

Belcher served as a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. She also served as an advisor in Australia’s Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on national security and international affairs and as a public affairs officer at the Australian embassy in Washington, DC.

In the Spring of 2019, [Belcher delivered a TED Talk](#) on the importance of confronting, humanizing and ultimately solving the existential threat of nuclear weapons. Between 2014 and June 2020, Belcher served on the advisory committee of N Square—a multi-funder initiative to promote innovation in the nuclear realm. She was a 2014-2016 Emerging Leader at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

###