

Medicine and Nuclear War

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A Nuclear Weapons: The Final Pandemic B Preventing Proliferation and Achieving Abolition@

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I am extremely pleased to be invited to participate in the Opening Plenary Session of this important international conference. My connections with the Royal Society of Medicine go back 40 years to a 1967 sabbatical at the University of London during which my wife and I were regularly invited to luncheons and to programs at the RSM. My contact with the U.S. affiliate of IPPNW B Physicians for Social Responsibility B goes back even further, to the founding of PSR in 1961. Ruth and I were asked by the PSR Executive Committee in 1963 to represent PSR at a meeting in Oxford of the Medical Association for the Prevention of War, the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with MAPW and its successor, Medact. I have been active in IPPNW since its founding in 1980 and have served as its Co-President; I am also a member of the Board of Directors of PSR.

Since the first use of nuclear weapons in 1945, practitioners, organizations and journals in medicine, public health, nursing, social work, and related fields have been active in efforts to prevent proliferation and to achieve abolition of nuclear weapons. Examples include not only organizational work in the United Kingdom by the Medical Association Against War and by Medact and in the United States by Physicians for Social Responsibility, but also in the Netherlands by the Netherlands Association for Medical Polemology (NVMP), in Sweden by the Swedish Physicians Against Nuclear War (SLMK), in Russia by the Russian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (RPPNW); and in other countries. This conference will recognize the outstanding work that has been done by these and other groups and by medical students and other students, and will help plan future efforts.

One element of this work has been the preparation of a monograph on *Medicine and Nuclear War*, which summarizes the history of the work by those in medicine to prevent proliferation and to achieve abolition of nuclear weapons. The monograph grew out of an article that Dr. Lachlan Forrow, who has played an important role in the work of IPPNW and PSR, and I wrote for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1998. The updating and the expansion of the article into a monograph was made possible by the efforts of a medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Jonathan Slutzman, who is attending this conference. The preparation of the monograph was suggested and advised by Dr. Gunnar

Westberg, IPPNW Co-President and by John Loretz, IPPNW Program Director . The preparation and printing were supported by the Swedish IPPNW affiliates (SLMK).

The monograph describes past efforts, by those in medicine to prevent proliferation and to achieve abolition, such as role of medical workers in the achievement of the Limited Nuclear Test Treaty, which banned explosives nuclear tests in the atmosphere undersea and in space, and in the efforts to convince World Health Organization and the United Nations to ask the World Court for an advisory opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons. It also details current efforts, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the work to convince the nations that possess nuclear weapons to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treat (NPT) and to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention. A post-conference edition of the monograph will include material that will be prepared by John Loretz on the proceedings of this conference and on the current work of IPPNP, its affiliates and its affiliated medical students. In short, the monograph may be useful not only for this conference but also for future work.

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