

The Cologne Declaration

IPPNW 6th WORLD CONGRESS

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On 27 May 1986 the International Council of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War adopted the following statement as IPPNW's Medical Prescription:

The nuclear arms race threatens the health and the very existence of every human being on our planet. Because medicine can offer no meaningful response to the horrors of nuclear war, physicians worldwide have acknowledged their professional responsibility to work for the prevention of this final epidemic.

When faced with a life-threatening disease, a physician's responsibility does not end with diagnosis. It demands a prescription for interrupting the disease process itself. On 1 July 1985, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War adopted a Medical Prescription for interrupting the greatest threat to human health. It urged an immediate moratorium on all nuclear explosions as the first, essential step to reverse the nuclear arms race. IPPNW reaffirms this Medical Prescription, and calls upon the governments of the United States and all other nuclear powers to join the USSR in a test moratorium that would remain in effect until the successful negotiation and signing of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

The benefits of this physicians' prescription for the prevention of nuclear war are evident

1. A ban on nuclear explosions is a clear focal point for rallying world public opinion behind a single, important, readily achievable arms control proposal, thus sidestepping the paralyzing complexity of most other proposals.
2. A ban on nuclear explosions is verifiable. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed to on-site inspections. Even without them, however, modern seismic techniques can distinguish earthquakes from underground explosions as small as one kiloton: Trust in this matter is no longer an issue.
3. A ban on nuclear explosions will impede the development of new generations of nuclear warheads, including those designed to power space-based systems, those capable of acting as first-strike weapons, and those that are so small and mobile that future arms control verification might be rendered impossible.
4. Leading scientists, East and West, have stated that test detonations are not necessary to ensure the reliability of nuclear arsenals. In fact, few nuclear test explosions have ever been conducted for this purpose.
5. A ban on nuclear explosions would not decrease the security of any country, but would increase the security of all.
6. A ban on nuclear explosions would strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which seeks to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions for all time and to continue negotiations to this.
7. A ban on nuclear explosions provides a litmus test for distinguishing those political leaders who are committed to ending the nuclear arms race from those who tolerate its continuation.

For all these reasons, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War has adopted a moratorium on all nuclear explosions as its Medical Prescription.