



International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

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Nobel Laureate Physicians Applaud Obama Prize

(October 9, 2009) Washington, DC - As they did 24 years ago, when they awarded a group of physicians the Nobel Peace Prize for their work to stop the nuclear arms race, the Nobel Committee has once again used their power to leverage action on nuclear disarmament. In attaching "special importance to Obama's vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons" the Nobel Committee understands the significance of the transformational change that is necessary.

"We congratulate President Obama as a fellow Nobel Laureate and welcome this recognition that achieving a nuclear weapons free world is critical," said Dr. John Pastore, one of the IPPNW physicians who received the award in 1985, along with its affiliates including PSR, for building public awareness and pressure to end the nuclear arms race. "Nuclear weapons are a national security and human health liability. Reducing their role in U.S. security policy will make us all safer." Dr. Pastore is a former secretary of International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear (IPPNW) and former national president of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR).

IPPNW and PSR are proud of the central role they have played in building national and international support for nuclear disarmament for nearly 50 years. What started with a handful of young physicians in the 1960's and grew to include medical professionals from all over the world has helped inspire the world to draw back from the brink. But the nuclear threat persists.

"We know that by raising our medical and public health voice to shine a spotlight on these dangers, we can make the world safer and healthier. But we also know how hard it is to achieve lasting change and we must now intensify our efforts to eliminate these unusable weapons," said Dr. Peter Wilk, executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility. "We are only at the beginning of the real work needed to make this vision a reality."

President Obama has directed his arms control negotiators to secure by December 5th a START follow-on agreement with Russia to reduce both our arsenals and strengthen verification procedures. He has pledged to secure Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and he has committed his administration to producing "a Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that opens the door to deeper cuts and reduces the role of nuclear weapons".

"We know the work is unfinished and the shared responsibility of elected leaders and an engaged citizenry, including physician activists. It is critical that the President use the momentum from this award to lead the U.S. in concrete action to make real the promise," said Evan Kanter, a Seattle physician and board president of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

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