The Fifth Congress of the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) was held in the beautiful city of Budapest from June 27th to July 1st, 1985. Among the delegates from more than forty countries there were 4 individual physicians from the People's Republic of China. They had come to join in the effort to prevent nuclear war. The Congress had over 800 delegates and in the opening plenary session a number of world leaders including Kadar, Brandt, Kreisky and medical leaders including Dr. H. Mahler of WHO and Mr. James Grant of UNICEF. From China Dr. Wu Jieping, honorary director of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, addressed the opening meeting, bringing greetings from Chinese physicians and reporting on recent efforts by China in working against war. Dr. Wu said that the people of China love peace and oppose nuclear war. He stated that physicians know at first hand the tragedy of wartime horrors and misery for the people and noted the impossibility of providing any kind of meaningful medical help in a nuclear war. "With our one billion people we value peace and work for prevention of nuclear war. We have just held the Beijing Forum to Safeguard World Peace attended by many delegates from abroad and China as well as delegates from the medical profession."

As is well known China has decided to demobilise one million soldiers from its army within two years. China has already reoriented part of its defense industry to produce articles for daily use.

We fully realise that it is not only necessary but also possible to obstruct and prevent war. When we think of problems of preventing war we think in units of one billion people and it is natural for us to think in global numbers. In other words we think in terms of preventing a world war in the whole world.

Today our medical profession realises that China with its modernisation progress needs, as does the rest of the world, a peaceful environment to develop its social, economic and cultural strength enabling it to play a greater role in preventing nuclear war. Some people claim that China is not aware of the dangers of the nuclear holocaust, the tremendous destructive power of modern nuclear weapons and the awesome danger of "Nuclear winter".
China is fully aware of these things. It has seen over a period of years that the arms race among the two world powers has not eliminated the danger of war. Now with the arms race reaching into space the dangers have become even greater. As physicians, Chinese have witnessed the mass destruction of war and have witnessed the tragedy of the Tangshan earthquake where, in a short time of minutes, the numbers of people killed and maimed exceeded the tragic losses suffered by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in Japan.

I have seen the land of China ravaged by wars from North to South and from East to West. Together with my physician colleagues and our people we have known wars intimately and are determined to safeguard peace.

The recent summary of our commitments to peace have been made by Deng Xiaoping who said that the threat of world war still exists because of the two big powers' intense arms race. However the world's people want peace not war, and their strength is growing faster than the forces of war. He also stressed that the Chinese government stands for opposition to hegemonism and for the maintenance of world peace. China will follow an independent foreign policy and stands on the side of peace.

It is possible that no big world war will occur within a long period of time and there is a hope of maintaining world peace so long as the peace-loving forces in the world develop further.
Anyone in their right senses knows that the nuclear armament of the two superpowers is quite enough to destroy the whole world many times over. More money is spent in a minute in adding to these armaments than in a whole year on the starving children of Africa.

We are not at war, yet these war preparations are already killing many people. Because the flood of funds, money, going into these nuclear weapons would be enough, in a year, to eradicate totally all poverty, all starvation; to provide every inhabitant of our planet with a not only decent, but a high standard of living.

In a nuclear war to come, there will be no losers or winners; there will be no one remaining to enjoy the fruits of any hypothetical victory. A war can begin, but it cannot end except in total destruction. There is no screen, no Great Wall, which can prevent its spread over the total globe. Within a few hours, the war will end; by that time, the earth will be on the way of becoming another moon; and this is no exaggeration.

Misleading propaganda equates any protest against this horrifying state of affairs, against the threat of nuclear war, with political implications. Yet more and more people, all over the world, are beginning to understand that this is not true.

The financial crises which beset the affluent nations are due to the disequilibrium in spending; to the profligacy with which funds are voted to pile up more and more nuclear weaponry and even bringing war into space, whereas funds are cut for social welfare projects, for fundamental research, so that actually even the societies of certain affluent nations are being impoverished and driven to a distressed condition. It seems to me, as a physician, that someone bound by the Hippocratic oath to save life, must participate in the strongest protest in a total revolt against nuclear armaments and nuclear war. This is the only sane course. This is the stand, I know, of China, of her people, of her medical personnel, of which I am one.
Our protest as medical doctors, must be of our concern for the human being whom we are dedicated to care for, to heal, to our mission as fighters against all diseases. The greatest disease of all the paranoia of nuclear warmaking, is challenging us. Can we remain silent, No. Let us devote ourselves to our duty, as physicians, to fight it with the same vigor as we fight to eradicate any kind of illness.

In conclusion we as physicians from China learned that the Fifth Congress for the Prevention of Nuclear War has Organised over 140,000 physicians in more than forty countries and has the single aim to prevent nuclear war and educate the people and the governments about the suicidal nature of nuclear war.

After education must come action.

M A H A I D E M. D.  
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