

Address at the

Opening of the **Nobel Laureates Assembly on AI and Nuclear War**,
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Comments by Dr. James Muller,

Co-founder, International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War

Thank you. Nobelists, your Eminence Cardinal Baggio and Your Eminence Cardinal Tomasi, Enzo, Alessio and your great team.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The fusion of AI with nuclear weapons creates an immediate, worldwide danger – a threat that cannot be countered by individual nations consumed with their geopolitical disagreements. A worldwide agreement and collective action is needed.

My hope is that this Vatican Assembly, with its phenomenal participants, can help humanity find the common voice required for survival.

I am speaking as a co-founder of International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, or IPPNW, which was built on agreement between adversaries. In 1980 as our governments talked of winning a nuclear war, we contacted our Russian medical colleagues to create IPPNW. We worked across Cold War barriers against the concept that nuclear war could be won. In 1985 the Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to IPPNW for alerting the world to the medical consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. This helped generate a world-wide popular movement, that, together with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, led to a decrease in the number of nuclear weapons from over 60,000 in 1980 to approximately 12,000 today.

In 2007 as the nuclear dragon again emerged from the forest, IPPNW co-founded the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, or ICAN

which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its support for the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Vatican was the first nation to sign this treaty outlawing nuclear weapons, which now has 100 states parties or signatories.

Since the bombings of Hiroshima, the Catholic Church has provided ethical and moral support for organizations working for prevention of nuclear war. In 1963, soon after the Cuban Missile, Pope John XXIII issued the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, which demanded an end to the arms race and called for nuclear disarmament.

In 1980, when we launched IPPNW, we were attacked for being tools of the communists. The Polish Pope Saint John Paul II, who was known for his anti-communist credentials, sent a letter of support to our first congress. At our press conference I was able to read that letter which silenced the charge that we were aiding the Communists.

In 1983 U.S. Catholic bishops' issued a pastoral letter on nuclear weapons that deemed nuclear deterrence morally acceptable only as a temporary measure as nations moved to nuclear disarmament.

More recently both Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV, have stated that given the lack of progress on disarmament, the policy of nuclear deterrence, which I prefer to call a mutual mass murder, suicide pact, is no longer morally acceptable. Both Popes have condemned the **use** and the **possession** of nuclear weapons.

As was true in the 1980s, cooperation between Russians and Americans, who possess 90% of the world's nuclear weapons, is essential. I am happy to report that both nations have observers present at this Assembly. The honorable Adam Olszowsky will attend from the American Embassy to the Holy See, and Dr. Kirill Zykov, an IPPNW leader and Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Science is in attendance.

With thanks for the Russian language I was taught at Notre Dame, a Catholic university, I can say to Dr. Zykov, Спасибо, доктор Зыков, за то, что вы совершили столь непростое путешествие, чтобы принять участие в этой Ассамблее.

My hope is that this assembly can increase public awareness of the AI and nuclear threat. As in the 1980s, a worldwide public movement against the danger is needed. This Assembly can, with the help of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and other faith traditions, spark a public awareness, particularly among the young, that can lead humanity away from this imminent danger.

AI software will continue to fuse with nuclear weapon systems – it cannot be stopped. The only solution is to eliminate the hardware - to abolish the weapons before, with help from AI, they abolish us.

Humanity, which has demonstrated the intelligence to create both AI and nuclear weapons, must summon the moral courage to prevail against the danger the fusion of AI with nuclear weapons creates.

Thank you.