Appeal

A FRENCH REFERENDUM FOR FRANCE PARTICIPATING IN THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Humankind is today threatened in its dignity and its very existence, and ought to be allowed to enjoy a fundamental right: **the right to survival,** along with its corollary: **the right of peoples to determine their own survival.**

This right implies the abolition of nuclear weapons. They are weapons of mass destruction, massacre weapons, arms for crimes against humanity. They are totally useless for throttling terrorism, yet they borrow the same contempt for human life and multiply it many times. They threaten to annihilate millions of people, entire populations, and humankind itself since a nuclear war would make the Earth uninhabitable.

This power to annihilate is concentrated in the hands of less than a dozen heads of state, who can choose to exercise it at any moment, without trial or appeal, and carry out the sentence themselves within a quarter-hour of their decision. Yet never have the citizens of the nuclear states been consulted (or those of the non-nuclear states) even though they have to finance them and thereby jeopardise their own survival – and the survival of other peoples.

France has possessed these weapons for 50 years. She has spent over 300 billion euros on them and continues to develop them. France's 300 bombs could kill about one billion people.

This situation flouts basic Human Rights, since, as Alain Peyrefitte said to President de Gaulle on 4 May 1962, a single atomic bomb would cause "hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children, old people burned up in a split second, hundreds of thousands more dying in the following years after atrocious suffering. Isn't that what is called a crime against humanity?"

It flouts International Law, which obliges those nuclear-armed states that have signed the NPT, including France, "to pursue in good faith and to bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control," (Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, 8 July 1996.)

It flouts the French Constitution, which gives top priority to Human Rights and imposes a duty of respecting them, and also respecting treaties.

It defies good sense, since it is illogical

- to defend the values of the French Republic (including fraternity) while threatening to commit crimes against humanity;
- to link France's "vital interests" with the use of fatally suicidal weapons against any country that also possesses them;
- to claim to guarantee any nation's security with these weapons while forbidding others from obtaining them;
- thus to encourage proliferation while claiming to be combatting it;
- and to impose budgetary restraints while wasting billions on instruments of death which are unusable against other nuclear powers, incapable of deterring terrorists, and would be fearsome in terrorists' hands if they obtain some. **It is undemocratic,** since the French people have never been consulted about it, yet we know from a recent poll that around 75% of French citizens would answer YES to this question :

"Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the other states concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?"

Similarly, three quarters of citizens want to be consulted by referendum on this question and are ready to support a bill originating in parliament to organise the referendum.

Thus the French people can open the path to a world without nuclear weapons. We call on all French parliamentarians to give them the opportunity to do so, and we call on all French voters to support this initiative at the appropriate time by electronic means.

Deliverance from the atomic « sword of Damocles » hanging over us will bring reinforcement both to our security and to our freedom, in full respect of Human Rights and of the French Republic's motto : liberty, equality, fraternity.

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