https://www.acdn.net/spip/spip.php?article1198

Op-ed in "Le Monde"

Nuclear Policy: "A referendum to abolish nuclear and radioactive weapons"

Publication date: Sunday 16 February 2020

Copyright © www.acdn.net - All rights reserved

At the time when France's president Emmanuel Macron explained his vision of deterrence, on February 7, five parliamentarians and the president of the citizens' group ACDN (Action des citoyens pour le désarmement nucléaire) wrote an op-ed for « Le Monde » calling for direct consultation with the French people. Also, a draft bill about this has been signed by 42 parliamentarieis of all political stripes.

Source: Le Monde (14/2/2020). Article reserved for subscribers. Reading time 3 min.

Free acces



« Aujourd'hui, 14 000 bombes atomiques pourraient anéantir plusieurs fois l'humanité. Avec ses quelque 300 bombes, la France pourrait faire à elle seule un milliard de morts. » Roy Scott/Ikon Images / Photononstop

« Today there are 14000 atom bombs and they have the power to annihilate humankind several times over. France with her 300 could by herself cause a billion deaths. »

The signatories of this op-ed are: Sophie Auconie, MP (UDI, Agir et Indépendants) for Indre-et-Loire ; **Jean-Michel Clément**, MP (Libertés & Territoires) for the Vienne ; **Joël Labbé**, senator (Rassemblement Démocratique & Social Européen) for Morbihan ; **Jean-Paul Lecoq**, MP (Gauche Démocrate & Républicaine) for Seine-Maritime ; **Jean-Marie Matagne**, president of Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN) ; **Christine Pirès Beaune**, MP (Socialistes & apparentés) for Puy-de-Dôme .

The Op-ed

Just sixty years ago, with the nuclear test named « Gerboise bleue », France attained the status of a nuclear power. Today there are 14000 atom bombs and they have the power to annihilate humankind several times over. France with her about 300 could by herself cause a billion deaths. But this lethal capacity is not enough for her: she plans to spend 37 billion euros between now and 2025 - 14.5 million per day - to modernise her weapons. The President of the Republic confirmed this in his speech at the War School.

In this regard, nothing changes. Yet the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists tells us we are only 100 seconds away from Doomsday, and so changes in policy are now urgent.

France's nuclear policy rests on a belief, constantly reaffirmed, in nuclear deterrence. But this is a tissue of contradictions. We cannot defend the values of the French Republic, notably Fraternity and Human Rights, by threatening to massacre peoples. We cannot, in defense of our *« vital interests »* use atomic weapons against a nation which also has some and would not fail to retaliate - that would be suicidal .

.

Deterrence or abolition ?

We cannot claim to guarantee our security by these weapons while forbidding others from having them. We cannot ban biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction yet authorise them for us if they are nuclear, and even *authorise ourselves to use them first !* We cannot thus legitimise their proliferation, while claiming to forbid it. We cannot call them « solely deterrent, and so not to be used » while deterrence assumes an obvious willingness to use them.

We cannot sacrify budget expenditure for ecological, social, educational and health purposes etc, for the sake of devices that do not protect us against terrorists or other nuclear states, but which prepare us all for the apocalypse. And it's no use fighting against climate dangers if the planet is about to be destroyed and made inhabitable by nuclear technology.

The nuclear threat is absurd and criminal. A UN Resolution of 24 November 1961 said that *« any state that uses nuclear and thermonuclear weapons must be considered as violating the UN Charter, acting in contempt of the laws of humanity and committing a crime against Humanity and civilisation ».* According to the International Court of Justice *« there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to concluding negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control ».* (Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996)

This obligation is written into Article VI of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) but has remained a dead letter since 1970. This is what led 122 non-nuclear states to vote in July 2017 a Treaty Banning nuclear weapons. But the nuclear states, with France in the forefront, boycotted this treaty, rejected it and continue to arm.

For a shared-initiative referendum

Though never consulted, the French people finance this policy. Yet according of a poll in May 2018 by IFOP-ACDN, 85% of French voters say YES to the question: *« Do you approve France participating in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons and engaging along with all the States concerned in negotiations aimed at establishing, ratifying and implementing a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear and radioactive weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective? »*

At the invitation of ACDN, 42 MPs and senators belonging to a dozen political groups have signed a Draft Bill asking France to take part in abolishing nuclear and radioactive weapons, and aiming at organising a shared-initiative referendum on that specific question. Along with them, we ask citizens and parliamentarians to give resolute support to this initiative.

So France must suspend her race for nuclear arms, and must negotiate with all the states concerned, whether or not nuclear-armed, whether or not parties to the NPT, an abolition treaty including both the universal and definitive banning of these weapons and their total elimination, negotiatied, progressive, methodical and duly controlled. In doing so she would merely be honouring her signature to the NPT treaty she joined in 1992, and her own values, and

Copyright © www.acdn.net

international law.

The French preople can and must open a path to a world freed from all forms of extermination, a world of cooperation, peace and hope. This is possible, necessary, urgent. Let us act together now.

For more information : ACDN, 31 Rue du Cormier, 17100 Saintes, FRANCE. contact@acdn.net www.acdn.net

Copyright © www.acdn.net