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Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Never Again!

APPEAL TO THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT

- Homepage - News - News Articles -



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Saintes, le 6 août 2019

Mesdames, Messieurs MPs and Senators.

Today you have a very great responsibility. We ask you to assess it correctly.

Since January 2018, we have been only two minutes away from the Apocalypse, according to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, who see in the deterioration of the earth's climate an extra factor for catastrophe, leading to a nuclear war. And in fact the world's political climate continues to deteriorate - it has not stopped deteriorating.

On August 2, 2019, through the will of one man, the USA withdrew from the first and most important treaty for reducing nuclear arms, the Treaty of Washington signed in December 1987 by Reagan and Gorbachev. That agreement eliminated the medium-range nuclear forces (the missiles with a range of 500 to 5500 km, the SS20 and Pershing 2 missiles) and opened the path to the end of the Cold War. But now the US withdrawal from the INF Treaty, leading to the Russian withdrawal, after other withdrawals and other negative steps, further increases the risks that bring us close to nuclear apocalypse.

In such a circumstance, then, what can France's atom bombs be used for? Nothing, obviously. Read, please, the grounds for the Bill aimed at organising a shared-initiative referendum on France's participation in the abolition of nuclear weapons. You will be able to see that the notion of "nuclear deterrence" is a nonsense. It is in fact

- ▶ illogical to defend republican values (including fraternity) and human rights (including the right to life) by threatening to commit massacres;
- ▶ illogical to link France's "vital interests" with the use of arms that are virtually suicidal against any nation with similar weapons;
- ▶ illogical to claim to guarantee our security with these weapons while forbidding other nations from having them;
- ▶

illogical to thus encourage their proliferation while claiming to combat it;

- ▶ illogical to ban weapons of mass destruction that are biological and chemical while authorising our possession of nuclear ones;
- ▶ illogical to call them "solely deterrent and not to be used", because they deter only if we are ready to really use them (or else the enemy would not believe the threat);
- ▶ illogical to seek budget cuts and yet to waste billions on devices that don't protect us from terrorists, or from other nuclear powers, and which only perpetuate the risks of a catastrophe.

In short, nuclear weapons are useless except to prepare for massacres - which they will eventually cause, deliberately or by accident.

So why does France pursue such policies? There are two explanations: fear and prestige.

Prestige, first of all: to display power, to strut like rooster. This desire to affirm power, especially marked in France, partly because it is reduced, is instilled by the military-industrial lobbies which infect many nations. Their influence will be countered only by the mobilisation of people, including the people of France.

And Fear, real or simulated fear: that is the very basis of deterrence, invoked by its supporters. "I'm scared of your massacre weapons, so I'm scaring you with mine so that you won't use yours." That is the "balance of terror". Yet this "balance", though more or less manageable between two state actors supposedly endowed with rationality, is less and less manageable as the actors multiply and some are very unpredictable. At that stage - which we have reached - the only tenable "balance" is at option zero: no more weapons of this kind anywhere! They must all be eliminated, abolished. But to achieve this goal, we must disarm while constantly maintaining the balance. Therefore we must first negotiate among all the actors concerned a disarmament process that is concerted, methodical and duly verified. We need a multilateral disarmament founded on the formula: *"build confidence and verify"*.

That requirement was stated in 1970 when the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) entered into force. But its Article VI failed to specify the timeline or the penalty for breach, with the result that this article has never been implemented by the nuclear-armed states. The recent Nuclear Ban Treaty sought to impose this requirement. But none of the nuclear states participated in its negotiation and three of them, headed by France, announced on 7 July 2017 (the day it was voted in by 122 non-nuclear states in the UN) that they would never sign it.

We are not asking France to sign it now in its current form, since we know that the Head of State will not sign unless he is forced to, but also and chiefly because the Nuclear Ban Treaty needs improvement.

It affirms the "inalienable right to nuclear energy" which is not pertinent and which encourages the propagation of a proliferating and dangerous technology; it prescribes no negotiation between the nuclear-armed states for eliminating their weapons, proposing only that they disarm unilaterally either before or after joining the treaty: it denounces the catastrophic effects of nuclear arms but fails to state that they are weapons for crimes against humanity, (which would have forbidden them to all states whether signatories or not) ; it lists all the bans concerning these weapons, including the ban of threat of use, declaring these to be irreversible, yet its Article 17 authorises a state to withdrawal from the treaty with a year's notice merely by declaring that intention - and this makes it incoherent and dooms it to collapse, since one withdrawal would lead to others.

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We are not asking France to disarm unilaterally either. That would leave 98% of the world's nuclear arms still in place. We are asking France to do more, to do better. We are asking France to comply with Article VI of the TNP, which she has signed, and to invite all the nuclear-armed states (whether NPT signatories or not) to negotiate the elimination of all their weapons under mutual control. At the same time they could negotiate the elimination of all their radioactive weapons and propose to the states-parties of the Nuclear Ban Treaty to amend it to make it coherent, universal and irreversible. That could altogether be a genuine abolition agreement.

Today there are about 14500 bombs threatening our survival, each on average ten times more powerful than the Hiroshima one. France with her 300 could cause a billion deaths and cause the reprisal deaths of millions of French citizens. Nothing to crow about! The abolition of nuclear weapons is a urgent matter, and is the only solution.

Unless - Mesdames, Messieurs members of France's parliament - unless you want us to suffer the fate of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, you have one simple action to take now, to sign the Bill aimed at organising a shared-initiative referendum on the following question:

"Do you want France to participate in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons and to engage with all states concerned in negotiations aimed at drafting, ratifying and implementing a treaty to ban and totally eliminate nuclear and radioactive weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?"

Your compatriots want you to sign, irrespective of their political colour or yours.

According to an IFOP poll, 85% of all would say YES to this question. It is time to consult the people on a nuclear arms programme which makes them the accomplices and potential victims of crimes against humanity, a programme that has already cost the country 300 billion euros and will cost 37 billion more by 2025, which amounts to 14.5 million euros per day. All that money spent is diverted from action for public health, social well-being and environmental protection, and its only effect is to incite other national to keep and to modernise their nuclear weapons, if they have them, or obtain some, if they do not yet have them.

France, "the home of Human Rights" is a proliferating nation which needs to return to her values, her international commitments and her republican motto: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

It is in your power to permit the French people to open the path to a world without weapons of extermination. Together, let us impose good sense on the small number of leaders who are holding the world in their hands.

Act, react. Sign for Life. For Peace. Now.

I the undersigned
Family name
Given name
Position
Country
Email

Declare that I support the Bill aimed at organising a referendum on France's participation in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons.

APPEAL TO THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT

Place, Date

Signature :

Pls return to:

ACDN 31 Rue du Cormier,

17100 Saintes

France.

contact@acdnet.net
