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# Nuclear Folly, Military Folly, and now War

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The war that Vladimir Putin has now declared against Ukraine and (de facto) against Europe, will surprise only those people who have veiled their faces and blocked their ears for decades.

Back in January 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev, Putin's predecessor at the head of the Russian Empire (then called the USSR), launched this appeal : "*A total end to nuclear weapons by the year 2000!*" Accompanied by patient and resolute diplomatic actions and by the withdrawal of the Russian army from Afghanistan, that declaration of peace was soon bearing fruit. President Reagan soon ceased to consider the Soviet Union as "the Evil Empire", and less than two years later, with Gorbachev, he signed the Treaty of Washington (8 December 1987) which eliminated Intermediate Nuclear Forces from Europe (SS20s and Pershings). It was the first great treaty for reducing nuclear arms.

That denuclearisation changed the atmosphere of the time. We were entering an era of peace. Two years later the Berlin Wall fell without a blow being struck, the Cold War and the freezing of Europe into two blocs came to an end. Such are the virtuous effects of nuclear disarmament. They should have been continued, right up to the zero option sought by Gorbachev. Unfortunately the West failed to respond to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact by dissolving NATO, and the USA multiplied decisions contrary to planetary peace. Today we are paying the price for that militaristic obstinacy. A man called "a killer" by Joe Biden is at the head of a nuclear superpower, and the world is moving towards Doomsday. According to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, we have never been so close, not even during the Korean War. For the last two years the Doomsday Clock has stood at 100 seconds, and the countdown has now begun. In truth, we are dealing with not one killer but nine, and all need to be disarmed, without exceptions.

Perhaps it is time now for the "sponsors" of France's current presidential campaign to give a voice to those who propose a radical solution to the ills of the planet Earth.

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