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Nuclear disarmament -an absolutely urgent task

- Homepage - News - News Articles -

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

First I would like to thank the Humanist Party for inviting me to introduce this evening's debate on one of today's most urgent tasks: nuclear disarmament. It is not common for a French political party to raise or discuss this question publicly. It is even, to my knowledge, the first time in many years. To do this as a priority political objective is totally unheard-of.

France's nuclear strike force, secretly prepared by successive governments of the IVth Republic after de Gaulle's creation of the Commissariat for Nuclear Energy in 1945, became a reality under the Vth Republic, in the early 1960s, when de Gaulle returned to power, and because he wanted it. The strike force was questioned at the time, especially by left-wing voices; but it has practically ceased to be questioned for at least two decades - a "consensus" about nuclear deterrence has been said to reign among the political elites and among the French population.

In reality, this consensus can be perpetuated only provided one does not talk about the fundamentals of nuclear deterrence, its cost, its dangers and its incoherencies. But talking about them is precisely what we will do this evening, and I hope that any of you who support nuclear weapons will leave here with your convictions at least shaken.

Secondly, I would like to clarify the meaning of my participation in this debate. I belong to no party, I am not a member of the Humanist Party, even if I share its values and objectives without endorsing all its programme. So I am not here to lend my electoral support, or my endorsement if it were to be a sect, as I heard it said last evening on a State TV chain. Could nuclear disarmament be for this party only a means of manipulating minds, gaining votes and raising funds? Being of a rational mind I wait to be shown proof of such claims. Meanwhile I note that Alain Ducq, the Humanist candidate for the Presidency, was the only one to have brought a case against other candidates (as I did myself in 2002) - those other candidates who had announced that they would not honour article VI of the NPT, in strict contradiction to article V of the French constitution. Who is manipulating whom?

Well, I simply represent ACDN (Action of Citizens for the total Dismantling of Nukes), an association which I founded with some friends 11 years ago, in May 1996, and registered under the law of 1901.

Ten years earlier, in January 1986, I had heard Mikhail Gorbachev, who then controlled one of the two greatest nuclear arsenals, launch a strange appeal: *No more nuclear weapons in the year 2000!* This surprising slogan plunged me into the study of deterrence, nuclear arms and disarmament. That question became the main subject of my philosophy thesis, whose title and topic I had to change radically. Since then - for 21 years - the question has not ceased to haunt my days and nights.

Why? Simply because solving it is essential for the survival of the human race and the possibility of humankind resolving other major problems such as climate degradation, pollution of nature, health and food supplies for our growing population, and of course the persistence of wars and the emergence of terrorism.

To convince you of this, I have only a quarter of an hour now. How in such an instant could I refute over sixty years of ongoing ideological bombardment, which explained and keeps explaining how, without atom bombs and the

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beneficial terror they inspire, this world would have already known a Third World War or will see one tomorrow ? How indeed?

I've turned my question round and found the solution: by reading to you the open letter we sent last April 5 to the candidates for the Presidency of France and the command of PC Jupiter. (If you don't know what PC Jupiter is, you soon will). At least one of the candidates seems to have read it, since he replied on 18 April with a 3-page letter. And he is the very man who has now obtained that presidential Jupiterian command. If you wish to read that [reply from Nicolas Sarkozy](#), you need only visit the ACDN website.

Here then is our letter.

[OPEN LETTER to the candidates for the Presidency of the French Republic and the Command of "PC Jupiter"](#).

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

That letter was not only for yesterday's candidates - or those of tomorrow. It is addressed in fact to all citizens of France, and Europe, and all who consider themselves citizens of the planet. It is for you.

I am sure that after listening to Jan Tamas and Eric Bastin, we will together find even more reasons for concluding that nuclear disarmament is indeed a matter of absolute urgency: with the new doctrines for the use of nuclear weapons (notably so-called miniaturised nukes), with real or imminent nuclear proliferation, with the temptation of pre-emptive wars (against Iran for example), with the risks of nuclear terrorism, with the imbalances caused by the US anti-missile shield and the threatened return to the cold war, with the resultant retargeting of West European cities by Russian missiles, etc.

Those are many reasons, and far from all, for acting to demand that France take a rapid initiative for general nuclear disarmament. On that matter, there is much that I could say. But I must hand over the floor to Jan Tamas. Thank you for listening.