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**Latest Vintage from
Champagne: New Rafale jets
now carrying new ASMP-A
missiles and new TNA nuclear
warheads!**

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The report: "Missile nucléaire dans le ciel de Champagne-Lorraine" (Nuclear missiles in the skies of Champagne-Lorraine) begins:

« "Now operational!" Behind this short announcement lies a decision of huge gravity. As from Thursday 1 July, in the heart of Champagne-Lorraine region, the Rafale jets of the Saint-Dizier air-force base have carte blanche to carry nuclear warheads... Discreetly, hardly anyone will know. »

This report merits some commentary. Please look below.

Although the matter is classified as "defense secret," it seems clear that there are ASMP-A missiles already on board the aircraft-carrier Charles de Gaulle, which is currently heading for the Indian Ocean (and could be diverted to come within Rafale range of Iran and the Persian Gulf...)"

The airborne nuclear warheads (TNAs in French) that are carried on the new improved medium-range air-to-ground missiles (in French ASMP-As) are now loaded underneath the Rafale aircraft. Each TNA has a declared destructive power of 300 kilotonnes, i.e. the equivalent of 300 000 tonnes of the traditional explosive TNT. This amounts to over 20 times the power of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and caused some 250 000 deaths then or in the aftermath (De Gaulle gave the figure as 300 000). In comparison, therefore, each ASMP-A missile could by itself cause 5 million deaths (not counting wounded) and annihilate the population of a city like Paris and its agglomeration.

These airborne missiles can engage in strikes against cities, just like the seaborne missiles which the Oceanic Strategic Force carries on the SNLE subs (Nuclear Missile-Launching Submarines), namely the M45, which is currently in service, and the M51 (due to enter service in 2011 on the fourth new-generation SNLE, "Le Terrible"). It is interesting to observe that the specific first mission of the airborne missiles would be, unlike the seaborne ones, to deliver the "final warning" that is intended to strike the armed forces of an enemy nation so as to warn it that the next strikes would be made on cities. The power of the warheads on the ASMP-As is manifestly ill-adapted to such a mission, because if they were used, whatever the target, they would cause immense "collateral damage" (i.e. kill human civilians in hundreds of thousands or even millions).

Finding no simple solution to this problem of disproportion between the so-called "nuclear deterrence" strategy and its technical means of application, the minds behind this strategy have ended up with the idea (requested by Mme Alliot-Marie, former Minister of Defense) of exploding the nuclear warhead at a high altitude so as to limit its immediate effects principally to the electromagnetic wave that would paralyse or destroy the electronic and electrical communications systems of the nation, or at least those of part of its territory (according to the altitude chosen). They failed to think that by doing so they would render communications with the enemy government impossible. So how then would we know that that government had heard our "final warning" and whether it agreed to renounce its intended evil-doing? Besides, if its internal communications were rendered impossible by the general chaos, how would the enemy government transmit the order to its troops to cease their advance?

Now there's a great "holiday assignment" for the strategists of deterrence to sweat over this summer!

On related matters, the media release from the "Fédération Grand-Est STOP déchets nucléaires" (a group opposing

nuclear waste in eastern France) neatly puts the finger on one of nuclear strategy's many aberrations: deterrence depends not only on the promise that we will commit monumental massacres, it also exposes our population (in the name of defending our vital interests) to becoming the victims of similar massacres committed by the presumed "enemy", who might make "pre-emptive" or retaliatory strikes. Naturally our leaders, in casting people in that double role of accomplices and potential victims of crimes against humanity, have never consulted the population at all, be it the inhabitants of Saint-Dizier, or Grand-Est, or the other regions where there are numerous nuclear targets ... or of France as a whole, since in any case all of our cities, like the enemy's, are possible targets.

How can we put an end to this dangerous game of "ha ha, I've got you by the beard", a sort of danse macabre performed on top of a powder-keg? The only rational solution is to eliminate ALL nuclear weapons - including those of France, of course.

The five nuclear-weapons states in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) seem to have at last understood this when they promised on 24 September 2009 to move towards "a world without nuclear weapons", in accordance with the NPT's Article VI, which obliges them to negotiate the abolition of all their nuclear arsenals. They have all understood it except one: France promises with her lips because she can't do otherwise without appearing as a war-lover, but she holds firmly to her "deterrent force."

On 10 June 2010, on the bridge of the aircraft-carrier "Charles de Gaulle", Nicolas Sarkozy said : « Deterrence remains for France an absolute imperative. Nuclear deterrence is for us the Nation's life insurance policy. »

He was merely repeating what he wrote to us during the presidential election campaign, on 26 March and 18 April 2007. It's as if nothing had changed in the world since his election and that of Barack Obama. It's as if - here's the nub - nothing must ever change in the French doctrine which serves to justify France's "vertical proliferation"... and which in fact justifies any horizontal or vertical proliferation of any country keen to obtain or retain that mortal "life insurance policy".

To find out what the French people really want, there is only one way: to consult them by referendum. Here's the question to put:

"Do you want France to propose to all nations that she renounce her nuclear strike force and dismantle its components, in the context of nuclear, biological and chemical disarmament that is total, comprehensive and verified, and of a genuine system of international security?"

We are calling on our compatriots to demand just such a referendum by sending to the President of the Republic the letter here below, in the knowledge that, if Sarkozy refuses to heed it, this demand will count for his successor and for the majority to be elected in 2012... and that it could even be a factor in the election.

France's leaders must stop treating her people like sheep being led to the abattoir, promising that we will be on the butcher's side, while shearing the wool off our backs.

In short, they must stop taking us for cretins (as the humorists Stéphane Guillon or Didier Porte might say if they were still officiating on Radio France Inter)

The above critique does not apply only to France's current president. It applies to the whole of France's political class. It applies also to all those, some of them anti-nuclear, who don't believe the French people can (once well informed) reach a good understanding of the nuclear problem and form an opinion in the right way, i.e. in the way of

good sense. In any case, even if the result of such a referendum were to disappoint our expectations, it would have the merit of allowing the people to express a view on a fundamental ethical and political problem, on which controversy is currently confiscated by one man and subject to a pact of silence. It would offer them for the first time the chance of becoming informed, and then of contesting French policy - and it is hard to imagine that French policy could be worse than it is at present.

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