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The Military Programme Legislation - Warning for French MPs and Senators:

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On Tuesday 3 December the Military Programme Legislation for 2014-2019, which passed its first reading in the Senate and was debated in the National Assembly on 26-27 November, will be presented for MPs to vote on. Not only does it determine France's military and international policies until the end of this decade, it will have grave consequences well beyond 2020 for the destiny, even the survival, of humanity, and for the future of all of us, beginning with the parliamentarians who will have voted it.

Does France intend to help build a peaceful planet, or to aid in the self-destruction of humankind? That is the question. The Military Programme bill opts for the latter: to prepare crimes against humanity. This makes it a criminal and unconstitutional piece of legislation.

This bill does not simply "ring-fence" the defense budget. From 2014 to 2019 military expenditure will "progress by 3.6%" for a total of "190 billion euros at current value, or even more", according to the Minister of Defense J-Y Le Drian (26.11.2013). Expenditure for military equipment, which was 16 billion euros in 2013 will reach on average 17.2 billion over this period (rising from 16.5 in 2014 to 18.2 in 2019). Included in this expenditure are the sums assigned for maintaining nuclear weapons and developing new ones - these are kept and increased.

The rapporteur of the special commission, Jean Launay MP, explained on 23 October that it was appropriate to add from 2014 onwards the opening budget of 1.5 billion euros for the 'Defense Industries technological Excellence' programme, most of which will benefit the CEA (Atomic Energy Commission) and thus contribute to maintaining the deterrence part of our defense capability. "We will continue our forces' simulation and modernisation programme, following the principle of strict sufficiency," he said on 26 November.

This so-called 'strict sufficiency' consists in the ability, with 300 atom bombs, to cause nearly a billion deaths. Each of these bombs is 7 to 22 times more powerful than the Hiroshima one and can cause several million deaths, naturally without discriminating between civilians and military personnel. These are weapons of crimes against humanity. The UN General Assembly has formally condemned them: "Any state using nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons is considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization" (Resolution 1653, XVI of 24 November 1961)

Like all France's so-called 'nuclear deterrence' policy, this plan for 2013-2019 flouts many important principles :

[-] Human life and human rights, for a single atom-bomb explosion means "hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children, old people incinerated in a split-second, plus hundreds of thousands dying in the following years in atrocious suffering" : it is a "crime against humanity" (as Alain Peyrefitte said to Charles de Gaulle on 4 May 1962) ;

[-] International Law, which obliges the nuclear states that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty "to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, " as was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996;

[-] France's Constitution, which places above everything else respect for human rights, and imposes it as a duty, along with respect for treaties ;

[-] Good sense, since it is absurd to defend France's republican values, which include fraternity, by threatening to commit crimes against humanity; it is absurd to link France's "vital interests" with the use of suicidal weapons against another nation that may also possess them; it is absurd to claim to guarantee our nation's security with these arms

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while forbidding others to obtain them; it is absurd to want to economize while still wasting billions of euros on unusable devices of death;;

[-] Democracy, since the French people have never been consulted on the creation, upkeep and permanent modernisation of this strike-force which has already cost over 300 billion euros. And yet we know today from convergent polls that at least 80% of French citizens wish for the abolition of nuclear weapons, including France's.

For the above reasons

1°) we invite MPs not in any circumstance to vote for the Military Programme Legislation for 2014-2019, which in its current form prepares for crimes against humanity and flouts international law, exposing France to legal action for these reasons, and exposing themselves for complicity ;

2°) we invite MPs and senators, if the bill is held back for a second reading, to lodge and vote for amendments that will create a real change in defense policy ;

3°) we invite MPs and senators to lodge a bill concerning the organising of a referendum on the following question : « Are you in favour of France participating with the other states concerned in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, under a system of mutual and international monitoring that is strict and effective ? »

A rejection by the Parliament of the legislation in its current form will offer France, and the French people - and thereby other people and states - a historic opportunity to abolish nuclear weapons. We will all emerge better off, in a world that is freer, more just, more fraternal, more peaceable and more secure : a livable world. But its adoption would carry us further from this goal, perhaps irremediably. Such a decision would be criminal and (we repeat) actionable before national and international Courts of Justice.

The world needs to know once and for all whether France is the homeland of Human Rights... or the country of Godillot the yes-man and Tartuffe the hypocrite.

For more information :

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