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No to Terrorism, No to State Terror. Let's Change our Software!

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The French people are in mourning. There is immense emotion, shock, and suffering. To call oneself a Parisian you don't have to live there, to be born there as I was, to have studied there, to have children or close friends who could have been in the Bataclan or the Petit Cambodge on Friday night. All of us, from wherever, can identify with the massacre victims and share the grief of the families - though not feel the same immeasurable amount of pain.

The tragedy that has struck the people of Paris needs to be a time for affirming our solidarity in the combat against the fanatics who have enlisted in Daesh (the so-called Islamic State) or Al Qaeda. As in January after the slaughter at *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher supermarket. But it also needs to be a time to reflect in depth on some undeniable points of fact, and to examine our consciences with a view to changing not our values but our security software, as I proposed on January 8, [the day after the Charlie Hebdo massacre](#). Otherwise the killings will continue and could take unimaginable dimensions.

Points of fact, points to note.

First Point : We the French are at war. We didn't decide this, it was decided for us. A strange violation of democracy. This war is not being waged just in Mali or Central Africa or Syria, and it doesn't involve only soldiers equipped to defend themselves. It has come onto our territory, it concerns us all. Each citizen, each inhabitant of France has been made to share the common lot of people in Baghdad or Beirut.

Second Point : Our « vital interests » have been attacked - unless you say that 129 or 132 civilians killed (the number varies according to the source) and 350 wounded in the heart of Paris are not part of our vital interests, in which case who is? Note that our 300 nuclear warheads - our atomic bombs - were absolutely useless to prevent this attack.

Those bombs could cause a billion deaths. But all they do is threaten hypothetical enemies, enemies they couldn't even deter from attacking if they really wanted to, since they too have their own nuclear weapons which would deter us from using ours first. During the Cold War President Giscard secretly admitted this and was resigned to the possibility of a Soviet occupation. The « nuclear strike force » is a newer, more sophisticated and more burdensome version of the Maginot Line that didn't stop the Germans.

These bombs that are so useless against other nuclear states also failed to prevent our real enemies - a handful of determined individuals - from causing the recent carnage. Is that surprising, really? You don't use a pneumatic drill to squash a fly. Elsewhere, Obama's bombs would be unable to prevent a new 9/11, or Putin's bombs to prevent new attacks in Moscow. Netanyahu's bombs are no more able to stop attacks in Israel than do the massacres which his armies commit in Gaza or the bombings they commit with depleted uranium projectiles which sow cancers and genetic deformities among them. In short, Nuclear State terror does not prevent any « conventionally » armed conflict, any « ordinary » or « exceptional » massacre, or any terrorism. Indeed no warlike horror at all. Between 1945 and now there were more people killed in war than during the Second World War. And that goes on.

Third Point : The billions of euros diverted to the nuclear weapons programme would help more in the war on terrorism if they provided better equipment to the police and army, while also reducing the total army budget, and helped to satisfy the most extreme social and humanitarian needs.

Those 300 bombs and those scrapped already cost us more than 300 billion euros and continue to cost us at least five billion per year, for zero benefit - even a negative result. But President Hollande won't even consider touching them! At the congress meeting in Versailles to address the needs arising from Daesh he prefers to increase the budget deficit rather than questioning the bomb. Even sacrosanct European budgetary orthodoxy is less sacred than

the mighty Bomb.

Fourth Point : These bombs totally invalidate the « humanist » discourse that is supposed to justify our combat against jihadist barbarism. The French airmen now bombing Daesh from their Rafales and Mirages - on principle hitting only military targets but in reality that is uncertain - are for the moment out of reach of the jihadists. And so the jihadists claim to be avenging their « brothers » by murdering random people in France. But how can we deplore their barbarism when we say that we are ready to commit massacres a thousand or hundred thousand times greater ? For what is an H-bomb like those at our president's disposal, from 7 to 22 times most powerful than the Hiroshima A-bomb, if not a way of murdering civilians, in their thousands, in their millions ? Will they have more luck than the Parisians murdered by Daesh?

Let's call a spade a spade : nuclear weapons are weapons for crimes against humanity. That is what Alain Peyrefitte said to General de Gaulle after the Council of Ministers met on 4 May 1962. It is also what the UN General Assembly said in its Resolution 1653 XVI of 24 November 1961 : « any State that uses nuclear and thermonuclear weapons must be considered to be violating the UN Charter, acting in contempt for the laws of humanity and committing a crime against humanity and civilisation ». President Mitterrand too admitted during the « Golf War » that they are « barbaric weapons ».

Despite all that, François Hollande has never stopped declaring since his election, notably at Istres on 19 February 2015, that our so-called « deterrence force » must be retained and even modernized. But if the defense of human rights and democracy and republican values can serve to justify crimes against humanity, then how can the champions of a cause that flouts these values be convinced to not commit crimes on a lesser scale? It is shocking that a supposedly reasonable Head of State should continue to push this double discourse, and that the crowd of journalists who gather his every word should continue to reproduce them without squirming. We are still waiting for an editorialist to grasp this point.

It is true that our MPs and Senators gathered in Versailles for the Congress, as they sing a warlike Marseillaise, do not seem to notice that you can't get angry against those « ferocious soldiers coming into our arms to butcher our sons and wives » and at the same time, in the same verse, call on the shedding of « impure blood » in quantities that « overflow our furrows ». Oh mystique of war, what we do when you grab us.... !

Fifth Point : Not only does State Terror totally fail to deter terrorists, it actually invites them to lift the level of their crimes up towards the level that the nuclear powers claim for themselves.

And they can do so, either by getting an atom bomb on the black market (still difficult to do) or by getting the materials for building one, or (much more easily) by attacking the radioactive targets that our nation offers permanently : the 58 electronuclear reactors in our 19 plants, recently overflown by unidentified drones, or the plutonium transports which move through France every week carrying hundreds of kilos from north to south and west to east, through four different itineraries which all endanger dozens of towns, including Paris. When you know that inhaled plutonium dust, even a millionth of a gramme, can cause a cancer within six months, a fatal lung cancer, then you shudder at the idea that one of these might be targeted by a bazzoka shot or might burst in flame when hitting a tanker lorry, or just any lorry, as happened in the recent accident at Puisseguin.

Our political strategists and leaders seem to have never realised that in times of war (and we are at war, they keep telling us) a nuclear power-plant, or a plutonium or radioactive waste transport, are like radiological bombs placed at the enemy's disposal.

Sixth Point : As President Hollande said on the evening of 13 November « there is indeed reason to fear ». But we

need to begin by fearing chiefly himself and the other eight leaders of nuclear powers.

As tyrannies go, the absolute monarchy by divine right which existed in France before the 1789 revolution was a friendly joke compared with the nuclear dictatorship which France now entrusts to the President of the Republic, by delegating to him the exorbitant power to massacre millions of people on the other side of the world and thereby to attract lightning-bolts down onto the French people. On this matter there is no fundamental difference between the dictator ruining North Korea and the other heads of 9 nuclear-armed states, including the western « democracies ».

How can one explain this aberration and its persistence after the Cold War ended? In all likelihood by the fact that the nuclear arms race was not motivated solely by mutual fear and concern for national security, but also and principally by the will to power, to dominate others through the permanent threat of collective annihilation. Nuclear weapons were and remain more than ever an attribute of « power ». They perpetuate at the same time an atmosphere of rivalry and defiance between states, which is certainly favorable to the competition which private and state capitalism enjoys, but which goes against the cooperation which humanity so needs if we are to meet the huge challenges we face. One of those is climate deterioration. Another is poverty and threat of food shortage. Another is ethnic or religious fanaticism. Another is terrorism.

The choice is domination or cooperation, dictatorship or democracy, violence or non-violence, oppression or *liberty*, exploitation or *equality*, terror or *fraternity*.

Seventh Point : Despite the brutal brainwashing inflicted on the French people over many decades in favour of nuclear weapons and nuclear power, they are not dupes of the specious arguments pushed by the partisans of the atom. With military nuclearism at least, they want another policy.

This was shown by a poll conducted by IFOP on the initiative of ACDN (Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire) on 9-11 October 2015 on a representative sample of 1000 people aged over 18: 74% want France to « negotiate and ratify with all the other states concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective ». And also 74% want to be consulted by referendum on this question. They are even ready to personally support a bill in the parliament that would organize such a referendum. In brief, [three out of four French citizens want to abolish nuclear weapons](#).

So, it is possible that the French people approve - but democracy means we ought to find out for sure - the war that France is waging against Daesh and the jihadists generally. But we know that they widely disapprove of France's nuclear military policy. And the facts show that they are right : although nuclear weapons are a fetish of imagined power, they maintain a *de facto* impotence in the face of terrorism of all kinds, and at the same time they increase the likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe that could go as far of annihilating humanity.

Conclusion.

They are urgent measures to be taken - police and army measures - to combat and if possible defeat Daesh, to neutralise its henchmen, to deprive it of its possible supporters in the French population. We can have *a priori* confidence in the current government to take these measures, provided they do not set up lasting procedures, institutions and practices that are contrary to democracy and likely to degenerate into an authoritarian regime or worse. If they did, then Daesh might be defeated militarily but would have really won.

Parallel with these urgent measures, the government ought to take others, if it wants to provide real security for the lives of the people :

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1°) Immediately suspend all the transports of plutonium and radioactive waste that move across France : they expose the population to huge dangers of radioactive contamination, both accidental and provoked. That can be done without fanfare, and without any immediate effect on the functioning of the plants.

2°) Decide that France should give up its nuclear power-plants and prepare a nuclear phase-out plan, closing down the reactors as soon as possible starting with the oldest and most dangerous (for example those over 30), including obviously Fessenheim, and decide to halt the EPR construction at Flamanville.

The COP21 Conference could be the time to announce this historic decision to the other governments. [You don't cure the plague with cholera](#). Or the climate deterioration with nuclear technology, or the proliferation of nuclear weapons by exporting reactors. Only a world without nuclear weapons or power-plants will have a chance of becoming livable again, provided other conditions are met, notably a decrease in domination by a small minority of men greedy for political or financial power.

3°) Stop feeding the fire by selling our weapons *made in France* to all comers. For exporting arms is not the way to reinforce peace or ensure one's own security. Remember that it was an *Exocet* missile made in France with British capital that sank a British ship in the Falkland-Malvinas War! Remember that it was French *Mirage* jets piloted by French-trained Iraqis that massacred 5000 Kurdish civilians at Halabja with chemical weapons! France needs to choose between human rights and weapons-merchants.

4°) Propose to all the nuclear states, or firstly to those that signed the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), that negotiations must begin to write and ratify a treaty to ban and completely eliminate their nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective.

This ground-breaking initiative would have the support of the French people. In the medium term it could lead to a change in the international climate which in turn would favour the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, such as Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and Israel, and also incite the states concerned to cooperate more closely in combatting terrorism.

To escape the impasse into which the jihadists want to corner us, we must show firmness, imagination, and above all *loyalty to our values*. We must go beyond the spontaneous reactions of fear, hate, and warlike mobilization, certainly. We must get perspective. Examine our one political conscience. Realize that France does not respect her own values. And build calmly, methodically (with a seasoning of poetry too) a world where the mad, ferocious ideas of the jihadists are seen as wacky, inoffensive and ridiculous, to the point when they provoke the inextinguishable laughter of the gods.

Including Allah the Merciful.

I know as I write this that it will displease the finicky jihadists. It's my way of resisting them.

Saintes, 16 November 2015

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