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France's topside

# Phasing out nuclear technology? What an April Fool's joke!

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**What will the Easter bells bring us this year when they return from Rome on April 1st? Will we find in our gardens the heaven-sent first-fruits of a world freed from the nuclear threat?**

**Alas no, we won't escape that any time soon. We can't count on France's topside to follow that path. Let's rely rather on France's underside: her ordinary people.**

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Just three weeks ago, on March 11, thousands of Parisians met in the Place de la République to commemorate the 7th anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe.

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On the same day, just after the drama was commemorated in Japan, the man who was the Prime Minister dealing with that disaster in 2011, Mr Naoto Kan, flew to Paris to bring his support to French antinuclear activists.

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On March 12 he landed in our capital and that same evening, to a full auditorium, presented his testimony to the viewers of the film *The Lid of the Sun*, a film of fiction inspired by frightening reality.

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The message of Mr Naoto Kan, a former champion of nuclear energy, is clear and simple: renounce all your power-plants, renounce nuclear power and nuclear weapons, they are far too dangerous!

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On March 13, Naoto Kan spoke at France's National Assembly, at a press conference attended by about ten MPs (of the France Insoumise party) and by Barbara Pompili, who chairs the Inquiry into the safety and security of nuclear installations. ACDN was present and asked him a question about the links between nuclear power-generation and nuclear weapons. But regrettably there was no emissary or official representative of the French government.

On 14 March, Naoto Kan was in Strasbourg and again spoke, this time in the European Parliament, at a press conference attended notably by Michèle Rivasi, the ecologist MEP who had co-founded the CRIIRAD laboratory in

the wake of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

On 15 March Mr Kan was at Flamanville, and gave his testimony again there, in a packed hall of 400 people.

Lastly, on 16 March, the former PM of Japan flew back to Tokyo with some sense of comfort: there are many citizens determined to put an end to the nuclear threat, even in the land of AREVA. AREVA is the corporation which boasted of providing Japan with the MOX fuel that melted in Fukushima-Daiichi and disseminated its plutonium in the Pacific's atmosphere and ocean; but AREVA today is riddled with debt and troubles, and hides its financial dealings under the gentle name of « Orano » .

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During the whole week of March 11-18, the "citizens' votation" organised on the initiative of La France Insoumise mobilised more than 300 000 people across France, of whom 93 % declared themselves "favourable to a phase-out of nuclear technology".

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*In Saintes, where the Flame for Nuclear Disarmament has been lit in 2001, they reject the monstrosities of the Atom.*

Nevertheless, good sense has not yet reached the topside sphere of the leaders that make the decisions for us.

The oldest power-plant in France, Fessenheim, is still not closed despite repeated promises. Its closure is delayed till the opening of the EPR at Flamanville, a 3-billion-sized mirage that has already cost 11 billion euros and still doesn't work - and which promises (if one day it unfortunately starts) some 60 years of nuclear prolongations.

As a cherry on top of the Easter cake, the National Assembly has just adopted on first reading the Military Programmation Bill for 2019-2023. This promises us 197.8 billions of expenditure over 5 years, lifting the Defense budget from 35.9 billion in 2019 to 44 billion in 2023. This includes investments constantly rising, though not precisely costed, in the modernisation programmes for the two components of nuclear weaponry (the airborne and the seaborne), and the continuation of the Franco-British TEUTATES programme, planned to continue for 50 years.

France's participation in nuclear disarmament is not on the agenda. Nor is the closure of nuclear power-plants. What a radiant future.

Rise up, you irradiated ones!

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*In Paris as in the provinces, men and women citizens sign the [Appeal to Abolish Atomic Arms](#)*

PS:

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*Photos jmm/ACDN. DR.*