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Letter to President Hollande, the Prime Minister and the ministers of the new government

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- ▶ Monsieur le Président,
- ▶ Monsieur le Premier ministre,
- ▶ Mesdames, Messieurs les ministres,

You govern France. You have been elected, or appointed and mandated to be leaders of change in the direction of liberty, equality and fraternity. Permit me therefore to draw your attention to a change that is sorely needed but which, nevertheless, was not at all debated during the presidential election campaign.

For over fifty years France has possessed nuclear weapons. Today there are 300 bombs, each of which is 7 to 22 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, which caused over 200 000 deaths. This means that France's Head of State could, alone, without sharing the decision, cause up to a billion deaths, not to mention the wounded.

This is an intolerable situation which flouts human life and Human Rights, International Law, the French Constitution, good sense, the people and democracy.

It flouts human life and Human Rights, because a single atomic bomb would cause "hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children, old people burned up in a split second, hundreds of thousands more dying in the following years after atrocious suffering. Isn't that what is called a crime against humanity?" (as Alain Peyrefitte said to de Gaulle on 4 May 1962).

It flouts International Law, which obliges the nuclear-armed states that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty to "pursue in good faith and to bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control," as the International Court of Justice at the Hague confirmed in its Advisory Opinion dated 8 July 1996.

It flouts the French Constitution, which gives top priority to Human Rights and imposes a duty of respecting them, and also respecting treaties.

It defies good sense, because it is absurd to defend the values of the French Republic while also threatening to commit crimes against humanity, it is absurd to link France's "vital interests" with the use of fatally suicidal weapons against any country that also possesses them, it is absurd to claim to guarantee our nation's security with these weapons while forbidding others to obtain them, it is absurd to encourage proliferation thus while claiming to be combatting it, and it is absurd to want to save money while wasting billions on unusable instruments of death.

It scoffs at the people and democracy, because the French people have never been consulted about the creation, maintenance and permanent modernisation of this strike force, which has already cost 300 billion euros. And yet we know now from convergent opinion-polls that at least 80% of French citizens wish for nuclear weapons to be abolished, including those of France.

For the above reasons I politely request you to consult the French people, by means of a referendum that would pose the following question, the very one required by the international agenda of 2012: "Do you agree that France should participate with the other states concerned in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, under mutual international monitoring that is strict and effective?"

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I humbly put this matter before you, Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Premier ministre, Mesdames et Messieurs les ministres.

Yours sincerely,

Jean-Marie Matagne, Ph. D., President of ACDN (Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire)

On hunger strike for this cause since 15 May 2012.

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