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During the Cahuzac Affair and the Korean Crisis...

Don't panic: we are in good hands.

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The French world of politics and media is examining and questioning the lucidity - and even the honesty - of President Hollande regarding (« staring closely at ») the turpitudes of one of his ministers.

That's a good way of not talking about a fact that is nonetheless obvious : the President's own undoubted dereliction of duty, made apparent in his TV declarations on 28 March - his contempt for international law, for France's signature and word of honour, for Human Rights and for the French Constitution.

It's also a good way of distracting attention from what is happening in the Far East, in Japan and the Korean Peninsula. More precisely, from the terrible dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear power-generation to which our enlightened and incorruptible elites are exposing us, thanks to their ostrich-like courage.

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In Korea, where fires are smouldered for nearly 60 years, a dynasty of dictators continues to starve the northern half the population in order to finance armies and nuclear weapons. And now the young dictator is threatening to use them against the other half of the country, and even (why not ?) the USA. Admittedly there is a lot of rhetoric in this situation, which mixes Tragedy with Ubuesque black humour. But there are also serious lessons to draw. At least five.

1st lesson: with nuclear weapons and the insane power they pack, we are never safe from the possibility of an insane use. The risks of a technical ... or political "accident" are permanent, and far greater than zero.

2nd lesson: despite the USA's gigantic nuclear strength, they have had no success in obtaining anything from North Korea, North Korea, a small country that is fifteen times less populous, and cannot at present strike at US territory. No more success than they had in preventing 9/11. The threat of nuclear weapons proves futile against a determined adversary once he refuses to let himself be intimidated. That is true for an individual adversary, a group or a state, whether or not capable of striking at the nuclear power in question. Politically, the nuclear threat is worth only the value accorded it by the party threatened - not the party wielding it. Although its physical effects are huge and terrifying, its political effects remain random, varying with the circumstances, and the nature and will of the actors involved. The same can be said of the "threat by the weak to the strong", which in this case is that of Kim Jung-Un against South Korea and the US (insofar as Seoul shelters under the US "nuclear umbrella"). He can at any moment "cross the Rubicon", and so he can cause them grave worries, but he can't intimidate them. Yet although the outcome of this crisis, like earlier nuclear crises, is uncertain and the Doomsday Clock can move forward or back, the risk of toppling into the horrible abyss is something permanent and indubitable. The fact that since Hagasaki we have all escaped it is no evidence that we always will. Chernobyl was not enough to make us avoid Fukushima.

3rd lesson: if Kim Jung Un were to decide unfortunately to nuke the inhabitants of Seoul (his compatriots, incidentally), we can reasonably presume that the USA would not retaliate by launching one of their bombs on Pyongyang, but rather would apply pressure in the UN and Beijing to topple the North Korean dictator, with the option of accompanying the diplomatic offensive with a simultaneous or subsequent military one - unilateral or multilateral - targeting the dictator and his army with conventional weapons, notably air-strikes. Thus, even in the worst scenario, there is no sensible use of nuclear weapons. They are "fundamentally dangerous, extraordinarily expensive, militarily

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ineffective and morally indefensible", as was said in 1996 by General Lee Butler, former head of the US Strategic Air Command.

4th lesson: Nuclear arms do not avert military crises or wars. On the contrary, they provoke them. Their possession by some states incites other states to want them, or else to obtain more than they have already, and this brings a risk of conventional or nuclear war, either between possessors, or between possessors and acquirers. The current Korean crisis merely extends the list of nuclear crises begun in October 1962 with the Cuba Missile Crisis, and later including the Iran Crisis (recurrent and still threatening) and the two "Gulf Wars" against Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

5th lesson: if Kim Jung Un attacked South Korea, with or without atomic bombs, he could cause huge and irreversible destruction by aiming his attacks at all or some of the 23 South Korean nuclear reactors.

This is emphasized by a US scientist and anti-nuclear activist, Steven Starr, in his article "Korean Crisis - Nuclear Power-plants as Targets of War" After a devastating analysis, he concludes that: *"The illusion of the peaceful atom may soon be shattered in a way that can no longer be hidden from public view."*

That illusion was denounced more than 20 years ago by a dissident French author, in his oral defense of a doctoral thesis - five years before he founded ACDN. He declared:

"Don't panic ; we are in good hands. Here's the proof: after Chernobyl (as after Three Mile Island, about which we learnt nine years later that the catastrophe was at the same level as Chernobyl), the engineers and thinkers of EDF (Electricité de France) and the Commission for Atomic Energy were mobilized post-haste to 'draw lessons' and take additional security measures. It was understood that in France 'a Chernobyl could not occur'... (So why the mobilization? Had they not foreseen all the malfunctions that combined at Chernobyl?)

"In the opinion of our clever technocrats, the only real danger of nuclear technology... is the fear it inspires. That is why, in the case of a major accident of the Chernobyl type (or worse) the chief and perhaps the sole concern of the 'Orsec-rad Plan' must be to prevent the propagation of worrying information - irrespective of whether it's true or false. The first urgent task is to 'screw down' the media, as General Imbot would say. That method proved its effectiveness at Chernobyl.

"In order for every possibility to be properly foreseen, even 'the most improbable', let us ask the thinkers of EDF (Electricité de France) and the Commission for Atomic Energy to reflect on the following little scenario, scarcely more absurd than their own:

"A French nuclear submarine (SNLE) weighing 14000 tonnes is lurking near the French coast. Its M4 missiles [or M5 in the 21st century] have just been armed because of a nuclear alert resulting from some international crisis. A ship of the US Navy patrolling on the surface mistakes it for a Soviet sub [or Chinese, anyway an enemy]. That error is quite normal, since a trained crew can mistake an Iranian civil aircraft gaining altitude with a steeply descending American F14. During the next minute the 'pasha' to whom NATO has delegated the power to use tactical nuclear weapons takes the decision he deems necessary for the safety of his boys: he launches at the supposed "Popov" one or more sea-to-sea Asroc missiles (a sort of nuclear submarine super-grenade). The undersea nuclear explosion provokes a tidal surge that picks up our French sub ... and flings it against a coastal nuclear power-plant which is in operation (or being fuelled, if you prefer)."

"The variables of that scenario can be modified: a Russian sub, a French surface vessel. Or the tidal surge is a seismic tsunami resulting from a series of atomic explosions, or not. For good measure we can replace the power-plant 'a twice 1300 megawatt PWR' with a supergenerator of the Superphenix type.

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"In all these cases, calculate the effects the scenario would have, and determine the measures needed to prevent it ... or to make the media shut up about it.

"Don't forget the medicine kit."

(Jean-Marie Matagne, *Le pouvoir et la puissance - Enquête sur l'idéologie et la pratique des rapports de puissance,* from his philosophy thesis, Strasbourg, June 1991, volume 2 : *"De l'équilibre de la terreur et du désarmement", p*age 190)

That quotation is 22 years old. Since then, the M49 missiles on the subs have been replaced as planned by M51s, and a few iodine pills have been added to the medicine kit. So don't worry about Fukushima, or Pyongyang. Sleep peacefully, good people. Your ruling elites are watching over you.

But you can still ask yourselves whether you'll have to wait for 2017 or the next catastrophe before you can demand the changes in policy that are clearly necessary.

For the record, you may find a large retrospective of the subject on ACDN's website HERE (notably at "Communiqués", "News articles" and "Actions")

Look also at 18 November 2007 : Appeal to All Europeans To Prevent War Against Iran by Michel Rocard, Yehuda Atai et Jean-Marie Matagne

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