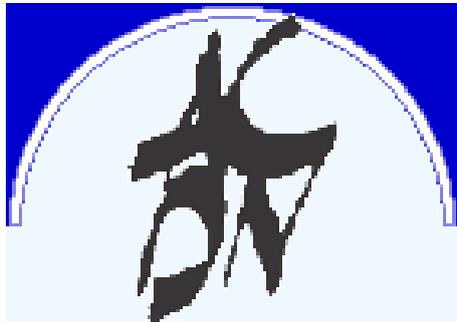


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Does François Bayrou really want nuclear disarmament ?

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Alone of all the « big candidates » to the French Presidency, François Bayrou has said he is ready to « discuss a long-term nuclear disarmament plan » for creating « a world in which these weapons would be banned » : « Right now it is not reassuring that five or six great nations have nuclear weapons... If we accept nuclear proliferation, then one day some fool will use them ».

It is strange that the French media, who are happy to chatter at length about Iran or North Korea, treat France's nuclear programmes as fully understood and agreed, including her « vertical proliferation » programmes (the 4th SNLE sub, the M51 missiles, ASMP-A, TNO...), which will cost at a low estimate 18 billion euros between 2007 and 2012. It is strange that they breathe not a word about the long-standing failure of the nuclear states that signed the NPT - including France - to honour Article VI, which obliges them to negotiate, undertake and complete the abolition of their nuclear arsenals.

It is strange that the smallest declaration from the lips of Nicolas Sarkozy or Ségolène Royal, who both support the strike force, is made into a big noise, while what François Bayrou says on the subject, with a different viewpoint, is not echoed at all.

Given this dark conspiracy of silence, one could fear that the « Peace Pact » presented on March 12 in Paris (at the Maison de Radio-France) by the Coordination for Disarmament and Peace, might undergo the same fate, despite the fervent letter of support it received from the Mayor of Hiroshima. But the reasons for endorsing this Pact - expounded by Roger Roth (Alliance Humaniste), Eric Bastin (Parti Humaniste), Jean-Marie Matagne (ACDN France) and the singer Francis Lalanne - are much too strong to not move our compatriots, including some candidates for the presidential and parliamentary elections.

Georges Krassovsky, an indefatigable peace activist aged 92, born in a military family, declared that he is certain that his grandfather, a Russian general, would have signed this Pact in the current world context. Jean-Marie Matagne, who was a presidential candidate in 2002, read his open letter to the 2007 candidates and spoke of the replies received to ACDN's « citizens' questionnaire ». These show that several presidential candidates (Marie-George Buffet, Jean-Marc Gatorator, Alain Ducq, Robert Braud, Christian Garino...), numerous parliamentary candidates, and some current MPs (such as Noël Mamère) have declared themselves in favour of France taking a rapid and resolute initiative for general nuclear disarmament, and support the organising of a referendum on this precise question.

We are now all the more keen to hear François Bayrou's reply to the letters which the ACDN president sent him on 19 February and 12 March. Does candidate Bayrou really want France to instigate the process of abolishing nuclear weapons? For many citizens, such a wish would represent an immense hope, and would clinch their vote.

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