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Paris is a nuclear target

Question to the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë: What should France do?

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to M. Bertrand Delanoë

Hôtel de Ville de Paris

Open letter

Monsieur le Maire,

The international "Keep Space for Peace" week, held on 4-12 October on the initiative of the *Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space*, urges us to ask you a question which is of public interest because of your current position, and because of future roles you may be called on to play.

As you know, the US Government, which withdrew unilaterally from the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty, has decided to station parts of its "anti-missile shield" in the Czech Republic, and to build a base for its so-called "interception missiles" in Poland. Russia has protested in vain against this initiative, which alters the balance of nuclear forces between Russia and the USA. Russia deems itself to be threatened, in future, by a possible US "first strike", and has taken or announced a series of measures intended to counter this threat. One of these is the "re-targeting" of West European cities for "deterrence" purposes and for retaliation. Thus France, allied to the USA and increasingly involved in NATO since the election of President Sarkozy, sees or will see her capital city become again a nuclear target, as during the Cold War.

Your citizens, doubtless busy with their daily work, perhaps do not think or choose not to think about this threat of collective annihilation directly linked to the so-called "nuclear deterrence" system. As the person most responsible for their security, Monsieur le Maire, you must surely be concerned about it, and all the more so because in 2002 Paris, with you as mayor, joined "*Mayors for Peace*". This organisation, chaired by Mr Akiba the Mayor of Hiroshima, now groups over 2400 cities across the world, including about 100 in France. The "Mayors for Peace" campaign entitled "*Cities are not Targets*" is part of their "2020 Vision" which hopes to make the decade 2010-2020 the "*UN decisive decade for nuclear disarmament*" (in conformity with Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which France has signed).

Weapons in general represent an enormous waste, they are a factor in monetary inflation, budget deficits, economic crisis, impoverishment of the majority, insecurity, war, destruction, murders and misery. It is not by chance that the great nation whose military expenditure exceeds all the others put together is revealing its feet of clay. But when every day could be our last, if one of the world's 27,000 nuclear warheads were to go off by accident or design, it is essential that strong voices be raised to demand the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, biological, chemical or new-technology - in the name of existing conventions, charters and treaties... and also, especially, for the survival of humanity.

Such voices have been raised in the USA, where George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, in the Wall Street Journal in January 2007 and again in January 2008, called for the USA to lead a movement for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Voices have been raised in Britain too: Gordon Brown declared in January 2008 that the UK was ready to act "*to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons.*" Such a call had already come from Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland - where all Britain's nuclear weapons are based. But so far not one of France's "responsible leaders" has echoed them. Will you be the one to raise your voice?

In your opinion, should France oppose the "Star Wars" space programme, the targeting of cities by missiles

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on hair-trigger alert, and at last commit herself to a process for abolishing nuclear weapons?

From Saintes, City member of "Mayors for Peace" and "Abolition 2000" - 7 October 2008

Jean-Marie Matagne,

President of ACDN France, based in Saintes, a city belonging to the "Mayors for Peace" and to the international "Abolition 2000" network