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Nuclear disarmament? The brakes are still on, and at present France is the nation most to blame.

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Transcription translated from the French

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(Durée : 5'35")

[-] **Philippe Bertrand** : Jean-Marie Matagne, bonjour.

[-] **Jean-Marie Matagne** : Bonjour Philippe.

[-] **P.B** : Jean-Marie, you are president of ACDN (Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire) and you wrote a letter which touched us. Sent a few weeks ago, the letter says "I've been president since 1996 and this association has been eating up my life."

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes that's true. It occupies a huge amount of my time, it was almost my second profession while I was still teaching, and now it's my only job, one might say. Indeed it's eating up my life.

[-] **P.B** : When we say nuclear disarmament, we mean nuclear weapons and not nuclear power generation, yet you campaign against both.

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes, because they're linked and they're both dangerous. Nuclear weapons proved that at Hiroshima and Nagasaki ; currently there are more than 20 000 nuclear warheads, and each of them, on average, is ten times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. So you can imagine what destructive power is hanging over our heads, permanently. That's the military side of nuclearism. As for civilian nuclearism, we know what it produced with Chernobyl and recently Fukushima, we are aware that this energy doesn't come without dangers. It is certainly a very serious matter.

[-] **P.B** : Jean-Marie, the fact that you are not being listened to at present, and were not given an audience with François Hollande... on the day he became President you began your hunger-strike of 42 days, later you found the doors closed at the Presidential Palace, although you were not alone, but were supported by a good number of people... doesn't that fact result from what might be called the "amalgam" between nuclear-weapons interests and nuclear-power interests, though there is quite a difference between the two ?

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes, without any doubt. One of the generals who originated France's strategy of so-called "nuclear deterrence" admitted that he supported the two aspects of nuclearism, the weapons and the power-plants, in order to protect the military one.

[-] **P.B** : But the prime necessity, the first element of the battle, to use a term that fits the struggle you have led since 1996, is is against the weapons, to prolong what began as a treaty for non-proliferation and push for the abolition of all nuclear arms everywhere, is it not?

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes. Actually, the Non-Proliferation Treaty was based on a commitment by the non-nuclear powers not to obtain these weapons, plus the simultaneous and reciprocal commitment of the nuclear states to eliminate their arsenals. Article VI of the NPT clearly states this requirement. Yet, after several decades, not one of the nuclear powers has ever asked the others to meet around a negotiation table and negotiate the elimination of their arsenals under strict and effective international control.

[-] **P.B** : So what is holding the brakes on, what is blocking the process for abolishing nuclear weapons?

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes, the brakes are still on, and in terms of nation-states, at present, France is the nation that is dragging her feet. France keeps saying that she wishes for nuclear disarmament, yet she has never once said that she was ready to negotiate, ready to put her nuclear strike-force on the table if the others agree to eliminate their nuclear forces. And that's what people are waiting for France to do: to participate in this multilateral process that normally should have been concluded long ago.

[-] **P.B** : 81% of French citizens wish for nuclear disarmament, according to a poll by IFOP...

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes, French nuclear disarmament along with everyone else's, not unilateral disarmament but all the nuclear weapons on the planet. And that is perfectly achievable. We know that during the 1990s there were nearly 70 000 nuclear warheads in the world, and now there are "only" (is that the right word?) around 20 000. Yet there remain enough to destroy all humanity 7-10 times over.

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[-] **P.B** : One last thing that I don't understand, Jean-Marie, is the dichotomy between thought and action, on the one hand thought ... or opinion, but we can call it thought, as with the poll that I just quoted ... and on the other hand action. We have 81% of French people in favour of nuclear disarmament, yet a shortage of adherents to your campaign... as if the step of passing from thought to action and actually joining you was too big a step.

[-] **J-M.M** : Yes. This is because the French people feel powerless about this question. They tell themselves it's a matter for specialists, that they're not competent to talk about it themselves, or else they think... yes, they know, but... that there is a huge barrier between them and the decision-makers that they never get past it. Yet there are a few political leaders whose thinking has evolved and who no longer share the established opinion. I think that the solution is to consult the French people on the matter, because our nuclear arsenal has already cost us over 300 billion euros, and on top of that you can count the upkeep of what exists, the military exercises, etc. You can say therefore that every year between four and five billion are spent on it.

[-] **P.B** : For further information there is a website "www.acdn.net", ACDN, (Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire). Thank-you Jean-Marie Matagne, and have courage.

[-] **J-M.M** : Thanks, Philippe. Have courage yourself in your work for a better world.

[-] **P.B** : Thanks, bye. Au revoir.

[-] **J-M.M** : Au revoir.
