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Demand a referendum on the abolition of nuclear weapons, so that France can exit from military and civilian nuclearism

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The mysterious flights revealed recently of drones over power-plants provide a no-cost advertisement of the permanent risks that nuclear reactors pose to the population. And we must not forget the risks that military weapons - atomic bombs - pose permanently to all humanity.

It is high time that the dangers of these two nuclear technologies were properly debated in public.

ACDN wishes to contribute to the discussion by publishing the orientation motion that it has moved in the lead-up to the AGM of the "Sortir du nucléaire" network (Nuclear Phase-out), which will be held in Dijon soon (31 Jan - 1 Feb 2015).

This text offers an analysis of the potentially catastrophic situation in which France is placed and maintained by leaders blind to the dangers of nuclear technology and deaf to the warnings rising from all quarters. But it offers also a way by which it would be politically possible to exit from this situation.

We draw these proposals to the attention of all, and we call on the groups belonging to the network "Sortir du nucléaire" to rapidly state their support for this motion and to vote for it at the AGM.

We hope that a "federating congress" of antinuclear movements (opposed to civil and military nuclearism) can be held in France during 2015.

ORIENTATION MOTION by ACDN :

Inspired by the Charter of the « Sortir du Nucléaire » network:

"In this critical period, when we face growing risks of accidents and military confrontations, and need new orientations for our energy and strategy policies, we - citizens, scientists, elected reps, NGOs, business-people - call for an immediate decision to urgently phase out nuclear power-plants and nuclear weapons",

the Annual General Meeting of 2015 considers the following facts:

[-] There is a historical, technical and political link which organically connects military and civilian nuclearism.

[-] A historical link: nuclear energy was first used to make the atom bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its civilian uses are by-products of military research. They were used by the first five nuclear powers (USA, USSR, UK, France and China) to distract attention from its military uses (via "Atoms for Peace"), and by the next four (Israel, India, Pakistan, Nth Korea) as a screen and platform for acquiring the Bomb, especially after the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force.

[-] A technical link: nuclear technologies are dual-purpose, so that any state obtaining them can be tempted or suspected (as Iran is) of wanting to get the atom bomb.

[-] A deliberate political link: General Ailleret, one of the « godfathers » of France's bomb, said in 1968 : « I have

always made sure that civil and military nuclearism went hand in hand. If the former disappeared, it would be the death of the latter. » Thus the two technologies go together "like shirt and butt", the civilian technology serves to cover up the military underparts. As long as we have the nuclear butt, we will need the civilian shirt-tails. But the abandonment of nuclear weapons will deprive nuclear power-generation of the state motivation and support that it has always had, even more in France than in other countries.

[-] Nuclearism of both kinds has already polluted the planet and caused innumerable casualties, mostly anonymous and unrecognised. (1)

[-] Both forms of nuclear technology are intrinsically dangerous and impose on all humankind a permanent risk of self-destruction, either insidious and incremental, or brutal and definitive.

[-] The only way to escape from these incommensurable dangers is to move as fast as possible towards a France, a Europe, and a world without nuclear weapons or nuclear power.

[-] Far from taking these facts on board, France's President, like his predecessors and his entourage, wants to maintain France's nuclear weapons and her nuclear power-plants (2)

[-] He has even declared that modernizing France's arsenal is indispensable, thus making France the chief obstacle to the elimination of nuclear weapons, and ipso facto justifying the proliferation of these weapons by states that don't yet have them.

[-] Despite the financial crisis, President Hollande has decided to « ring-fence the credits for the nuclear strike-force in its two components, submarine and airborne ». The budgets for 2013, 2014, 2015 and the Military Programme Act for 2014-2019 confirm this orientation.

[-] France pushes its hypocrisy to the point of denouncing massacres perpetrated by chemical weapons and by a non-nuclear state, but authorizing them when they are done by a nuclear state with a permanent seat on the Security Council. (2)

[-] The French people have never been consulted on this absurd, hypocritical and criminal policy which makes them financiers, accomplices and potential victims of crimes against humanity and nuclear catastrophes.

[-] When there is an international crisis, the French people's fate is placed in the hands of one individual, the head of state, who goes about constantly with an "atomic suitcase", can condemn to death millions of human beings, and can himself have them executed just by typing some code on a computer.

[-] Nor have the French people been consulted on the choice of society implied by the decision to use nuclear energy.

[-] With civilian nuclear technology, the situation has deteriorated as the plants get old: the promised closure of the two 900-megawatt reactors at Fessenheim is still not confirmed and will be compensated by the opening of the EPR at Flamanville (1650 MW), which will commit France to over 60 years of nuclear power. France's 56 other reactors will continue in 2017 even though more than half will have exceeded their originally planned 30-year lifetime. The decision to prolong that to 40 seems to be already made, and the PM spoke of possibly extending to 50 years "so as to pay for energy transition" while EDF has mentioned the figure of 60 years. Every passing day adds to the unmanageable radioactive waste already accumulated and increases the possibility of a French Chernobyl or Fukushima or worse.

[-] The so-called « energy transition law » that passed its first reading in the Assemblée Nationale on 14 October 2014 « sets a ceiling » at 63 GW for electronuclear power, i.e. authorizes eternally the maintaining of the electronuclear assets at their current level, with the option of always modernizing them, just as we are keeping and modernizing nuclear weapons until doomsday. This betrayal of promises by President Hollande contributes to the disqualification of political personell and the alienation of the people from the electoral masquerade.

[-] Thus the only way to escape from the nuclear dictatorship which a ruling caste is imposing on our nation and the rest of the world is to appeal to the sovereign people, by means of a referendum.

[-] According to convergent polls (WorldPublicOpinion 2008 ; IFOP 2012), more than 80% of French people are

favourable to the abolition of nuclear weapons, including French ones.

[-] This very strong proportion in favour, despite the veil of silence surrounding the subject, means that a victory for YES would be very likely, despite the financial and media power of the nuclear lobby, in any referendum concerning France's participation in the abolition of nuclear weapons.

[-] To the above we can add the topical arguments of the cost of civil and military nuclear technology, and growing international pressure. Thus, the 1st Conference on the "humanitarian" impact (i.e. inhuman impact) of nuclear weapons brought together 127 states, along with NGOs in Oslo in March 2013, the 2nd attracted 146 in Nayarit (Mexico) in February 2014, and the 3rd is meeting in Vienna in December 2014.

[-] It is true that the results of a referendum are never pre-determined, but a victory for NO would merely extend for two years the military policy that France has pursued without consultation for over 50 years (a repeat referendum cannot be held until at least two years).

[-] Conversely, a victory for YES would open decisive political perspectives for phasing out nuclear weapons, and also for phasing out nuclear power, since the prior campaign to get a referendum on nuclear weapons abolition, and then the campaign for the YES vote, will have opened a national debate - public, political, and in the media - about the intrinsic danger of both military technologies and the urgent need to exit from them. (3)

[-] Activist and political forces are already mobilized for holding such a referendum, and ask only to be encouraged and supported. (4)

[-] This political orientation, far from competing with all the other actions of the Network, in particular those aiming to close all civil reactors as soon as possible, would on the contrary reinforce them by offering:

[-] a springboard and a media audience for anti-nuclear ideas;

[-] the hope for a political solution to a situation that has been blocked for decades while the nuclear army-energy lobby has dominated the minds of the ruling caste and the decisions of presidents and governments;

[-] the realization by public opinion that nuclear policies, civilian and military, are not "off-limits for hunting" , that their continuation is not inevitable, that the people can overturn them by taking charge of the subject and exercising their sovereignty;

[-] the start of the end for complicity between the two branches of the nuclear lobby (civilian and military), and especially between the two missions of the Commissariat for Atomic Energy (CEA). Nowadays the CEA doesn't hesitate to get involved in research and development for renewable energies so as to give itself an "ecological" façade and thereby to protect from criticism the nuclear reactors (through the concept of "energy mix") and the nuclear weapons, over which it intend to keep its hold.

In consequence, the AGM adopts the following resolution:

The « Sortir du nucléaire » Network wants a France, a Europe and a world without nuclear weapons or nuclear power-plants.

Concerning both weapons and power-plants, it will continue or undertake by all possible means all actions that may win over public opinion to anti-nuclear ideas.

Concerning the closure of power-plants, it will submit the idea of a referendum to the whole French anti-nuclear movement (civilian and military) at a Congress. If the idea is endorsed, the Congress will have to define precisely the terms of the question or questions the movement wants put to the French people, along with the timing of the said referendum and the means of preparing for it in such a way as to ensure a majority for phasing out the nuclear plants.

Concerning the abolition of nuclear weapons, the Network demands :

[-] that all the nuclear states, official or not, stop temporizing and flouting international war by keeping, developing and modernising their nuclear and radioactive weapons;

[-] that they solemnly state they renounce the use of these weapons, declare them banned, and commit actively to abolishing them;

[-] that they meet without delay to organize their complete abolition following a precise and binding timeline with mutual and international verification procedures that are strict and effective;

[-] that they work together with equal energy to prevent any nuclear proliferation by any state or non-state actor;

[-] that the French government engage its diplomatic arm actively and without delay to implement this process;

[-] and asks the French people to support it in this action by answering YES to the following referendum question: «

Do you approve of France taking part with the other nations concerned in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, with an international and mutual monitoring system that is strict and effective ? »

Synthetic sentence to be put to the vote at the AGM:

Are you in agreement, YES or NO:

[-] that France, instead of retaining them, should urge all the states concerned to eliminate as quickly as possible all their nuclear weapons, with an international and mutual monitoring system that is strict and effective,

[-] that the « Sortir du nucléaire » Network should endorse and give its political and logistic support to the call made since 1996 by ACDN and in the campaign launched in 2012 by the RAHAN collective (pour un Référendum et l'Abolition Historique des Armes Nucléaires) to demand a referendum on this precise question « Do you approve of France taking part with the other nations concerned in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, with an international and mutual monitoring system that is strict and effective ? »

[-] that the Network should propose that the entire French antinuclear movement demand a referendum as soon as possible on phasing out nuclear power-generation and urgently closing the reactors that have reached or exceeded their age-limit of 30 years?

(1) Radioactive fallout from over 2000 atomic tests (500 of them in the atmosphere), genetic mutations caused by what are called "depleted uranium weapons", permanent contamination from the effluent of nuclear reactors, leakage of uranium and plutonium all along the chains, irradiation and contamination caused by major accidents such as Cheliabinsk, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima...

(2) The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, on 4 October 2013 - taking up the President's "ambitious and simple proposition" made to the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2013, according to which "when the Security Council had to speak on a situation of mass crime, the permanent members would agree to not use their veto powers" - clarified the point by saying that "realistically, this code of conduct would exclude cases where the vital interests of a permanent member were in jeopardy." Cf.

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/ONU/Evenements-et-actualites-lies-aux/actualites-21429/article/suspendre-le-droit-de-veto-en-cas>.

That amounts to saying that although nuclear arms are instruments for mass crime, France justifies their possession with reference to defending her "vital interests" and could use them with impunity because she, in such a case, would not fail to invoke "vital interests" and to veto any sanction by the international community. Crimes against humanity are thus forbidden except to the five nuclear powers with permanent seats on the SC... and (key point!) France is one of these. Also the homeland of Human Rights, of course, as everybody knows...

(3) The RAHAN campaign (La campagne pour un Référendum et l'Abolition Historique des Armes Nucléaires) was launched in 2012 by the RAHAN collective and by ACDN. ACDN's proposition to the AGMs in 2008 in Dijon and 2012 in Reims led to the inclusion of abolishing nuclear and radioactive weapons among the explicit aims of the Network's Charter. RAHAN and ACDN aim to make France honour her international obligations and commit without delay to a concerted process for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Cf. Participation de la France à l'abolition des armes nucléaires : Pourquoi un référendum et pourquoi CE référendum ?

(4) During the presidential campaign, Eva Joly (Europe Ecologie - Les Verts), Jean-Luc Mélenchon (Front de Gauche) and Philippe Poutou (Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste) supported the demand for a referendum on this precise question, approving article 1.2.F of the [Charter for a Livable World](#). On 24 June 2012 the EELV's federal council of adopted this objective unanimously (with one abstention). The campaign, supported by hunger strikes including one lasting 42 days has continued with rolling fasts across France, approaches to parliamentarians, and various initiatives including an Open Letter to the President of the Republic which received support from numerous prestigious people in France and abroad. The intention is to work in liaison with the international networks " Abolition 2000", "Mayors for Peace" and ICAN, and to create in France the conditions for a massive and irresistible historic movement. Cf.

<http://mondevivable.over-blog.com>