

## **Move the 37 billion € over 6 years of the nuclear weapons modernization money to promote the peaceful development needs of the French population**

Patrice Salzenstein <sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mouvement de la Paix, Comité du Doubs, Besançon, France <http://mvtpaix25.free.fr/>

<sup>2</sup> Mouvement de la Paix, 9 Rue Dulcie September, F93400 Saint-Ouen, France <http://www.mvtpaix.org>

### **Abstract**

This paper explains what strategy French pacifists are developing to move money from the modernization of French nuclear weapons on France's civilian budgets to promote peace and development.

### **Introduction**

We first recall the amounts of the French military programming act over the next six years. Then we discuss the strategy of the pacifists and the levers they can use.

### **French military programming law for 2019-2025 and modernization of French nuclear weapons**

Let's remind about the French military programming law for 2019-2025, which devotes € 295 billion to an increase in the military budget from € 34 billion to € 44 billion per year, bringing it to 2% of France's GDP (which is € 2200 billion), the largest increase in military spending. It represents an increase from 8.5% to more than 11.3% of the state budget (€386 Billion/year). In this programming law, € 37 billion are especially devoted for modernization of French nuclear weapons. "The cost of nuclear deterrence will double to 6 billion euros per year by 2030" [1]. This paper tells about the strategy of French pacifists to move this nuclear weapons money to civil use for the country.

### **Battle of public opinion and strategy of French pacifists**

It is interesting to ask the question of what the French population thinks about French nuclear weapons. More generally, among the points about which it is useful to question, are the French still attached to the force of nuclear dissuasion? The national daily "*La Croix*" and the French Peace Movement commissioned a survey of 1001 people, thanks to the IFOP polling institute. The results of this survey were published on July 5, 2018, pages 1 to 3 of the daily "*La Croix*" [2]. Main lesson from this poll is that a majority of respondents (67%) wants France to ratify the treaty to ban nuclear weapons. It must be emphasized that French public opinion is generally not very interested in questions concerning nuclear weapons. This result shows that there is an important base among the French, who wants France to abandon its military nuclear strike force. Pacifists are therefore likely to be heard and understood when they express their desire to go against this type of weaponry. For a long time pacifists have sought to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons. This resulted in a series of agreements and treaties mainly between the United States and the USSR and then Russia. In 2017, the new strategy of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) led to the UN vote on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons known as NWBT [3]. ICAN has been awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Beatrice Fihn, director of ICAN, explains how transnational Civil Society Realized the NWBT in an Interview [4]. Rather than trying to convince the authorities of countries that have the nuclear weapon to reduce their stocks, the pacifists have changed their strategy: they are now trying to convince the countries that do not have the nuclear weapon to impose the prohibition of this type of weapon of mass destruction. French government says that it will not be constrained by the ratification of an international treaty for the abolition of nuclear weapons. But there is a precedent that should make French authorities think. This is the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water that France had not signed. This treaty is known as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT). It was signed in 1963. Faced with the fear of international trials, France has however stopped its nuclear tests in the atmosphere. In concrete terms, the pacifists' strategy of change on a global scale aims to force countries like France, which possesses nuclear weapons, to go towards the signing of the NWBT. It is not by modernizing its nuclear weapons that France can hope to persuade states to renounce nuclear weapons. Abandoning this modernization would be a coherent symbolic and diplomatic gesture.

## Peace campaign against nuclear weapons and militarisation of space

French peace movement is involved in campaigns against all such weapons and it protests, for instance, at Eurosatory, the international Defence and Security industry trade fair, held every two years in the Paris-Nord Villepinte Exhibition Centre. French peace movement asks its own government to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to significantly reduce military spending. Pacifists are also completely opposed to their new government leading wars and to its military presence in approximately 12 foreign countries [5]. French peace movement condemns and considers the US missile defence system not as a defence system but an instrument of aggression, linked with the possibility for the US to attack countries that they potentially consider to be enemies, such as Russia, China or Iran without fear of retaliation. This shield puts France in danger of replicas of countries de facto designated as enemies. Peace campaign is to be helpful for contributing in building a world of peace and security and avoid French programmes of militarization of space [6-8]. There are strong arguments against the absurdity of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons, and the shocking increase in military budgets while, at the same time, our government attacks social welfare, social security, pensions, and education. The action for peace in France is a question of developing peaceful strategies and of strongly opposing some of the policies of the French government by demonstrating, protesting, and informing. French public opinion can evolve in favor of a questioning of military nuclear and the militarization of space. France, like the other countries possessing the nuclear weapon, will be then able to go towards an abandonment of these weapons of massive destruction.

**Conclusion.** The NWBT is already of great value in denouncing nuclear weapons. The goal is to eradicate nuclear weapons. We aim to establish a real debate in France on the need to move nuclear weapons money for civil and peaceful use, thinking that the world can be better saved by promoting peace and disarmament. Multiplying initiatives to denounce the French military programming law for 2019-2025 is a means and is also a question of winning the battle of opinion to oppose the modernization of nuclear weapons, and through this, to advance the cause of France and Europe as a zone of peace, making France an example for other countries. It is especially urgent in the context of the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by the USA on 1 February 2019. To go further, what an honour if France joins the list of countries that have possessed nuclear weapons and that have renounced them, such as South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

## References

- [1] Dissuasion nucléaire: de lourdes questions en suspens, *Le Monde*, 26 September 2016 <https://urlz.fr/9sf4>
- [2] Les Français contre le nucléaire militaire, *La Croix*, 5 July 2018 <https://www.la-croix.com/France/Securite/Francais-contre-nucleaire-militaire-2018-07-04-1200952564>
- [3] T. Ruff, "Negotiating the UN treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the role of ICAN," *Global Change, Peace & Security* **30**(2), 233-241 (2018). DOI: [10.1080/14781158.2018.1465908](https://doi.org/10.1080/14781158.2018.1465908)
- [4] Motoko Mekata, "How Transnational Civil Society Realized the Ban Treaty: An Interview with Beatrice Fihn," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* **1**(1), 79-92 (2018). DOI: [10.1080/25751654.2018.1441583](https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2018.1441583)
- [5] Opérations dans le monde, effectifs, chars, avions... Quelle est la situation de l'armée française ? [https://www.francetvinfo.fr/france/14-juillet/infographies-operations-dans-le-monde-effectifs-chars-avions-quelle-est-la-situation-de-l-armee-francaise\\_2281865.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/france/14-juillet/infographies-operations-dans-le-monde-effectifs-chars-avions-quelle-est-la-situation-de-l-armee-francaise_2281865.html)
- [6] P. Salzenstein, "Weaponization of space: a French perspective," Future wars: the impact of new technologies, CND Conference, Birkbeck University of London, 10 November (2018). <http://inesglobal.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FW-SALZENSTEIN-weaponization-of-space.pdf> [hal-02093282]
- [7] P. Salzenstein, "Weaponisation of Space," *The Spokesman*, **141**, 50-54 (2019). [[Google scholar](#)]
- [8] P. Salzenstein. Милитаризация космоса: взгляд Франции. Редкие земли, Р. А. Черноба, 2019, <http://rareearth.ru/ru/pub/20190227/04194.html> [hal-02070797]