

**Report by France
on the implementation of Article VI and Paragraph 4 (C)
of the 1995 decision
on " principles and objectives
for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament "**

Geneva, 30 April 2003

(Translated from the French)

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to address here issues relating to disarmament, examining them in the international security context.

In their policy statements, many delegations, including that of France, have underlined that the main challenge now facing the NPT is that of compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

This is a reality to which all the States Party are sensitive, I believe, because clearly one of the principal benefits of the Treaty in terms of security consists in the assurance that the number of States possessing nuclear arsenals will continue to be limited by the NPT.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that since the end of the Cold War, the instances of nuclear proliferation have increased in number, whereas the arsenals of the nuclear powers have decreased in size overall thanks to the efforts of the principal countries involved, Russia and the United States, in addition to the efforts of my country and other nuclear powers.

Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction does not compromise the undertakings given by France under NPT Article VI. My country abides by its undertakings and will continue to do so. But France will also continue to emphasise that nuclear disarmament presupposes a context of undiminished international stability and security for all. In other words, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles is a factor which may hold back disarmament.

How can we avoid questioning the significance of nuclear disarmament if it goes hand in hand with parallel dissemination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the breach by some of their commitments to non-proliferation? What gains can be expected in terms of security from such disarmament? In addition, how can we avoid reflecting on the fact that those who drafted this Treaty linked, in its Article VI, progress on nuclear disarmament with progress on general and complete disarmament, and therefore, notably, conventional, biological and chemical disarmament?

The situation we are currently witnessing in regard to North Korea is grave and without precedent. It is obvious that my country, and others, will draw conclusions from it.

Mr. Chairman,

France has devoted great effort to the implementation of the programme of action determined at the time of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, on which Chapter VI of the Final Document of 2000 was built. You will recall that this programme can be summed up in three points: the conclusion of the CTBT, the negotiation of a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons, and the determination to move systematically and progressively towards a reduction in nuclear weapons and to work for general and complete disarmament.

Firstly, the conclusion of the CTBT. France signed and ratified this Treaty in 1998. It continues to act to promote its entry into force as soon as possible. France is making an active contribution, both financial and technical, to the work of the CTBTO. It has, you will recall, dismantled its nuclear testing site in the Pacific.

Secondly, negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament. France continues to favour the immediate opening of these negotiations at the CD on the basis of the Shannon Report and the mandate contained therein.

France did not wait for those negotiations to announce, as long ago as 1996, the final and complete cessation of production of fissile materials for weapons use by closing down the relevant facilities for the production of fissile materials at Pierrelatte and Marcoule. Their dismantling is being undertaken. This is a complex, lengthy and costly task that will unfold over several years, and one which my country is only one among the nuclear powers to have undertaken.

Thirdly, the determination to move systematically and progressively forwards in order to reduce nuclear weapons globally. France has abided by this undertaking by reducing its nuclear arsenal, by eliminating all its surface-to-surface nuclear weapons, by reducing the number of ballistic missile nuclear submarines, and by cutting by half the total number of its nuclear delivery vehicles.

These unilateral reductions have been made possible by the principle of strict sufficiency, which determines the format of the French nuclear arsenal, and by the post-Cold-War context.

In this connection, I wish to congratulate the United States and Russia on their efforts to continue to reduce the nuclear arsenals they have inherited from that era. The reduction to 2,200 warheads, or even less, by 2012, in their operationally deployed strategic nuclear arsenals will constitute a major step forward. The Moscow Treaty has prepared the ground for progress in future years. These countries have also entered into significant commitments in the non-strategic domain.

And lastly, working for general and complete disarmament. I shall simply recall that France is active in all the domains of disarmament. France is party to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is also party to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines and several other agreements in the area of conventional arms. It actively supported the Hague Code of Conduct Against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles. It is making constant efforts to ensure the implementation, universalisation and strengthening of these instruments. And finally, France is fully committed to the combat against small arms and light weapons, whose lethal nature in current conflicts is apparent to all.

In this respect, I remind you that some of these agreements were born in the present forum, the Disarmament Conference. Others are the fruit of outside initiatives. France, Mr. Chairman, very much wishes to see a resumption of the activity of this forum with an ambitious programme: the negotiation of the Cut-off Treaty, as I have said, but also the addressing of today's issues in the sphere of international security, notably terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, in addition to compliance with non-proliferation undertakings.

In the nuclear domain, as in other areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, France is taking part in concrete action. It is a participant in bilateral and multilateral programmes for the destruction of

fissile materials designated as excess to Russian defence requirements. It has undertaken to make a contribution of USD 750 million over ten years to the G8 Global Partnership. It is providing its support for the objectives of dismantlement of decommissioned nuclear submarines, destruction of chemical weapons and the recruitment of former weapons industry researchers in Russia. As the current holder of the G8 Chair, it is endeavouring to ensure that this partnership progresses further in the lead-up to the Summit to be held in Evian in June.

Mr. Chairman,

In the present context, one of the major ways forward toward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation consists in a regionally-based approach. This is a realistic approach consisting in the search for political solutions to regional tensions, and latent or open conflicts, in order to make progress on disarmament and non-proliferation. It is clear that the reduction of nuclear risk in South Asia must involve ensuring greater peace, security and stability in the region. In the Middle East, the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction is inseparable from the establishment of long-lasting peace. This is probably the key to the universalisation of the NPT and progress toward general and complete disarmament.

Wherever the regional context permits, nuclear-weapon-free zones constitute an effective instrument. I may recall in this respect that France is party to the additional protocols under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba. It supports existing zones and very much wishes to see the entry into force of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. It is continuing dialogue with the countries of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia regarding a protocol to this treaty. It looks forward to South East nations' response to its comments and suggestions. It supports the project for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and is taking part in consultations with the countries of this region. It is awaiting responses to its suggestions and comments from the Central Asian. It hopes that consultations will help the countries in the region to conclude an agreement that will promote nuclear non-proliferation, subject to the principles adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1999.

Through the protocols it has signed, France has given negative security assurances in conventional form to over one hundred countries. It has also given security assurances to all States Party to the NPT, through a unilateral declaration made on 6 April 1995, of which the United Nations Security Council took note in its Resolution 984 of 11 April 1995.

Some parties raised questions at the 2002 Preparatory Committee session as to a possible shift in the policy of nuclear-weapon States on security assurances. I wish to state here that France has made absolutely no change to its policy in this area. France continues to abide by the undertaking it has given in the form in which it has given it. I recall in this connection that that undertaking is governed by the inherent right of self-defence recognised in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, I wish to recall that States in breach of their commitments on non-proliferation cannot invoke the benefit of those safeguards.

Mr. Chairman,

States that abide by the international regime of non-proliferation share the responsibility of ensuring the disarmament of States who choose to acquire weapons of mass destruction in breach of their commitments. It is therefore important that the international community should retain effective instruments for disarmament, and implement them in compliance with legal requirements. IAEA inspections are one such instrument. Robust ad hoc inspections decided under the authority of the United Nations Security Council are another, which will have to be applied whenever necessary.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

