



FRANCE



**Third Session
Of the Preparatory Committee
For the 2005 Review Conference
Of the Parties to the Treaty
On the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Cluster I

**Statement by H.E.Mr François Rivasseau
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To the Conference on Disarmament**

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(Traduit du Français – seule la version française fait foi)

Mr. Chairman,

I want to begin by associating myself with the Irish Presidency's Declaration in the name of the European Union.

I intend to discuss here the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and to explain how France is respecting its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

As you know, France acceded to the NPT on August 2, 1992, even though it had been in compliance with its main provisions well before that date.

Since its accession, in response to an international situation characterized by the end of the cold war and undeniable progress towards complete and general disarmament, my country has made a series of major decisions aimed at implementing Article VI of the Treaty. We are bound to acknowledge, alas, that even as we were making these decisions, several States were embarking on or pursuing clandestine projects in the nuclear field, some of which have recently come to light.

The following is a list of the most significant decisions taken by France regarding the implementation of Article VI :

September 1991: announcement of the early withdrawal, ahead of schedule, of Pluton surface-to-surface missiles and AN-52 bombs;

November 1992: cessation of production of plutonium for nuclear weapons;

January 1996: France's last and final nuclear test;

February 1996:

- announcement of reduction in the number of ballistic missile nuclear submarines (SSBNs) from five to four; of the end of the Mirage IV's nuclear mission; of the abandonment of the surface-to-surface component of the nuclear forces through the standing down and destruction of the Hadès and S3D surface-to-surface missiles;

- announcement of the closing down of the Pierrelatte and Marcoule facilities for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, and of the Pacific testing centre;

June 1996: cessation of production of highly enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons;

September 1996: ratification of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga and to the Treaty of Pelindaba;

September 1997: announcement that no part of the French nuclear deterrent forces was any longer targeted;

April 1998: together with the United Kingdom, ratification of the CTBT, signed in 1996.

Since 1990, France has halved the number of nuclear delivery vehicles in its force, and the number of nuclear weapons systems is down from 6 to 2. The share of nuclear forces in total French defence spending has dropped from 17% in 1990 to below 9.5% in 2004. These figures speak for themselves.

The logic of strict sufficiency has consistently dictated the format of its deterrent force, a key pillar of France's security.

That is not to say that it has interrupted its disarmament effort. For instance, dismantling of the Pierrelatte and Marcoule facilities for producing fissile materials for nuclear weapons continues to this day. This is a long, complex and costly process, stretching over many years. My country is alone among the nuclear powers to have undertaken this.

Mr. Chairman,

France is implementing Article VI of the NPT, as described above, drawing inspiration notably from the guidelines laid down in the programme of action decided at the time of the NPT's indefinite extension in 1995. That programme's three points were: conclusion of the CTBT; negotiation of the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT); and the determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce globally nuclear weapons and to work for general and complete disarmament.

As I said earlier, France acceded to the CTBT, and drew all of that Treaty's consequences even before its entry into force. France today no longer has any nuclear testing facilities. It notes, however, that the CTBT has still not entered into force, and that hence the States parties to the NPT have not yet fulfilled the spirit of point one in the 1995 Programme of Action. As a member of the European Union, France supports the Common Position of the Council on the universalization and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery, one of whose aims is the entry into force of the CTBT at the earliest opportunity. Pending that

time, it is contributing actively, financially and technically, to the work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.

France came out in favour of the launch of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament. My country notes, however, that the resumption of these negotiations in Geneva is stalled. As I said earlier, France has dismantled its Pierrelatte and Marcoule facilities. Today it no longer has facilities for the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

Mr. Chairman,

France supports the ongoing efforts to bring about a global reduction in nuclear arsenals. Most prominent among these are the efforts of the United States and Russia, notably through the implementation of the Moscow Treaty. The number of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of these two countries is out of all proportion to the other nuclear-weapon States. Where operationally-deployed strategic offensive nuclear weapons are concerned, their reduction to 2,200 or even fewer warheads between now and 2012 will represent an unprecedented step in its scope. In the non-strategic domain, too, these countries have also made significant commitments.

Moreover, France is participating in concrete actions beyond its frontiers. In particular, it plans to contribute technically and financially to the Russian plutonium disposition programme, within the framework of the agreement now being negotiated within the Multilateral Plutonium Disposition Group (MPDG). This agreement, at a cost of nearly 2 billion dollars, will serve to convert some 34 tons of Russian plutonium into civil fuel, while another 34 tons will be disposed of in the United States under the American-Russian agreement of 2000. This project is within the framework of the Global Partnership of the G8, to which France has pledged to contribute 750 million Euros.

France ratified in April 2003 an Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreements with the IAEA.

Finally, pursuant to Article VI of the NPT, France is working for general and complete disarmament. I will confine myself to reminding you that France is active in all areas of disarmament. It is a party to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is also a party to the Ottawa Convention on

the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, and to several agreements in the conventional sphere. France adhered to the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. It is making constant efforts to secure the implementation, universalization, and strengthening of these instruments. In addition, it is resolutely committed to the fight against small arms and light weapons, whose murderous capabilities in contemporary conflicts, in Africa especially, are well known.

Mr. Chairman,

One important path to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation lies in the regional approach. This is a realistic approach, one that consists in seeking a political solution to regional tensions, and to latent or open conflicts, with a view to making progress in the field of security and hence in disarmament and non-proliferation. For example the way to reduce risks in South Asia clearly involves bringing peace, security and stability to the region. The composite dialogue now in progress between India and Pakistan is contributing to this and should be encouraged. In the Middle East, the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is inseparable from the establishment of a lasting peace. That is assuredly a key to universalization of the disarmament and non-proliferation agreements, and to progress towards general and complete disarmament.

Where regional conditions permit, nuclear-weapon-free zones are an effective instrument. I would remind you, in this respect, that France is a party to the protocols of the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba Treaties. It supports the existing zones and urges the entry into force of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

I am happy to announce here that the French Parliament has authorized on April 4th, 2004 the ratification of the agreement between France and the IAEA guaranteeing the denuclearization of French territories lying within the Tlatelolco Treaty's region of application.

France stands ready to go still further on that score. Together with the other nuclear-weapon States, France awaits the proposals of the countries in the South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, aimed at reviving negotiations on a protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok.

Finally, France supports the plan for a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, and is taking part in consultations with the countries in that region. It hopes these consultations will help the countries of Central Asia to sign an agreement promoting nuclear non-proliferation, in keeping with the principles adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1999. It will enter into negotiations on a protocol to the future treaty, with the other nuclear-weapon States, when the time comes.

Through the protocols it has signed, France has given negative security assurances to more than one hundred countries in a conventional form. It has also given negative security assurances to all of the States parties to the NPT, through a unilateral declaration on April 6, 1995, as noted by the Security Council in its Resolution 984 of April 11, 1995. I would remind you, in this regard, that this commitment is consistent with the natural right of legitimate self-defence as recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. I would further remind you that States that violate their non-proliferation commitments cannot claim protection under these assurances.

France further wishes to underline the role of positive security assurances which, in the same ways as negative security assurances, provide a guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons to those non-nuclear-weapon States that respect their obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

Since its accession to the NPT in the early 1990s, France has fulfilled its commitments in good faith, through a series of gestures whose scale is well known to all of the States parties to the Treaty. Our efforts have been made in response to the strategic situation; to the risks affecting our country, Europe and our allies; to the progress in general and complete disarmament and in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Yet we know now that, over the same period, certain States have engaged in clandestine nuclear programmes; States that declared to this very gathering, in 1995 and 2000, that they were respecting and would respect their non-proliferation commitments; States that have undermined the Treaty's equilibrium, the politico-strategic situation, and the confidence of all—nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike—in the Treaty. Some of them, with the assistance of the IAEA, have taken corrective measures, which we welcome.

Mr. Chairman,

We have all placed our confidence in collective security and respect for non-proliferation commitments by the other States-parties. The revelations of recent months about nuclear proliferation crises, and about the networks supplying them, have given the measure of the extent of the threat to the security of each one of us, without exception.

Each of us understands, I believe, the prime challenges facing the Treaty today if it is to remain a credible instrument in preserving world peace and security. While efforts to implement the various aspects of Article VI continue, it is imperative to restore confidence in the NPT's equilibria.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.