

## **International Peace Bureau annual conference**

### **Rolling back militarism: A task for the global movement**

#### **Session “Nuclear abolition: it’s time to get serious”**

15<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Speech of Pierre Villard  
Co-chair of Le Mouvement de la Paix – France  
Coordinator of ICAN-France

First of all, I would like to thank IPB and Peace Action for giving me the opportunity to participate in this important conference. I’m enjoying meeting all of you and being able to express the point of view of Le Mouvement de la Paix.

Some words about my organization, which I am co-chair with Arielle Denis, whom many of you know as vice-president of IPB. Le Mouvement de la Paix is the largest peace movement and the major anti-nuclear weapons movement in France. We are a founding member of Abolition 2000. We coordinate of many networks in France such as the “September – Twenty one : International Peace Day” committee, “Anti-NATO” committee, and the French committee of the “International campaign to abolish nuclear weapons”.

We are organized in local groups. At this moment, approximately one hundred and fifty groups exist all around the country. In the past few years we have joined Le Mouvement de la Paix and Appel des Cent pour la Paix, another French group with goals similar to ours. Annick Sicard, chair of Appel des Cent was vice-president of IPB for many years.

Most often, the United States of America has done the worst job in terms of nuclear disarmament. Now times have changed and unfortunately France has taken the lead in this respect. I’m disappointed by that. My country is very nice when it says no to the war in Iraq and takes the leadership of anti-war states. My country is very sad when its president acts like the last supporter of Bush Policy in Europe, in conjunction with Angela Merkel.

Together, they celebrated the French-German friendship on November eleventh. But French-German friendship for what? To make war in Afghanistan? To continue to transform NATO into the armed arm of western capitalist’s globalization in crisis? We would prefer that they ask all countries around the world to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. We would prefer that they announced their support to the Nuclear weapons convention.

Nicolas Sarkozy has not spoken about this because he doesn’t really want to abolish nuclear weapons. France continues to argue deterrence for its own security; but it continues to refuse nuclear weapons to others.

We don't understand why? If we need nuclear weapons for our security, we have to accept nuclear weapons for the security of our neighbors! That is why we consider that deterrence continues to be the best ally of proliferation.

It's true that France made many efforts during the second half of the nineties. At this time, France is making many unilateral decisions. France is the only country to have closed its nuclear testing site. It's true. France eliminated nuclear land forces. It's true. But it was more than ten years ago. Since then, France continues to modernize its nuclear arsenal. This year will see the new French missile M 51 enters in force. This year will see tests of new submarines for nuclear weapons. Don't forget nuclear testing in laboratories, and so on! In national budget of defense, nuclear weapons represent over 20% of credit facilities. The picture is not so nice.

During the last Prepcom, French ambassador said to us that France will refuse to engaged in any multilateral process for nuclear disarmament. It's incredible because nuclear disarmament needs to be multilateral.

If we look carefully, this policy is not new. France has always taken its decisions only outside any collective process. It's time to change that. And we need of your action and your support to change that.

As French citizens we know very well how important our responsibility is. That's why we have organized many actions to put pressure on our government. One month ago in Caen, the French coalition for nuclear disarmament combined Abolition 2000 groups and the ICAN campaign in order to organize the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Nuclear disarmament days. For two days, two hundred people representing twenty four organizations decided to organize for 6 months, a French tour for nuclear disarmament. In each step of this tour, we'll ask people to send a postcard to Nicolas Sarkozy for France in support of the Nuclear Weapons Convention. We'll especially make efforts in youth's direction and workers' direction, because we have to educate to nuclear disarmament and peace culture.

We have decided to be present in New York with a large delegation of one to two hundred people for the next Review conference and have planned alternatives events during this time. This moment will be very important to show to all governments that we are united from all around the world. We hope that many groups have decided or will decide to come in New-York for the International Peace and Disarmament conference and for the Rally in New-York May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

My friends from France will come with many petitions supporting Nuclear Weapons Convention. They will come to meet other activists from the USA and of course from all around the world.

One morning last year, during the Prepcom, French groups organized a non-violent action in front of United Nations. With black clothes and white faces we stood up for one hour without moving and saying anything. In addition to other actions, we propose standing up like that one hour each day for the first week of the conference. All groups that would like to join us, can. It's easy. Just, don't forget your black clothes.

We are facing a new situation. Nuclear weapons could be eliminated, and must be eliminated. It's not a utopian ideal. It's possible. It's necessary.

The planet's course is endangered by nuclear weapons. The future of our little planet is in our hands. We need the solidarity of the others. That's why le Mouvement de la Paix immediately supported the ICAN campaign. ICAN could become an International Campaign to Ban Landmines. We need an international campaign.

A few days ago, two former prime ministers of France, Michel Rocard and Alain Juppe, one from the left and one from the right wrote together in French newspaper asking the French government to take initiative for nuclear disarmament. Last year, le Mouvement de la Paix launched an appeal of 5 mayors from 5 different parties from right and left. These appeals are very important because they change many peoples point of view. And to win the elimination of nuclear weapons we have to convince many different people.

Twenty years ago the Berlin wall fell down. Perhaps many of us have different points of view about what happened thereafter. But what I know, what I'm sure of, is that NATO troops will not be the ones to end this horrible war. Neither NATO, nor nuclear weapons are the solution for building a peaceful world.

To finish, I would like to light the candle of nuclear weapons abolition flame. Hope this flame will light the conscience of government's chiefs to achieve a world without nuclear weapons and to make the next Review conference a major step in this way.

Washington  
2009 November 15<sup>th</sup>