

Position Paper France.

Country: France
Committee: The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Topic: Disarmament

In our present day, the possibility of a nuclear missile is always within reach. One capricious decision by outlying powers can have destructive consequences for Europe within the hour. The nuclear age has forced France to act with awareness to this matter, but it has never jeopardized France's commitment to achieve international peace and security. France is one of the five states that has been known to possess nuclear weapons within the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. France has often stressed the strictly defensive nature of their nuclear policies, in full accordance to the UN charter. "France has always kept its nuclear arsenal at the lowest possible level compatible with the strategic context, in adherence to its principle of strict sufficiency" (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, 2014, chapter 1).

France has been known for its unique and leading position in disarmament. "Rather than making speeches and promises that are not translated into deeds, France acts" (Sarkozy, 2008, p. 7). In 1996, France was the first state that made the irreversible decision to close down all facilities that produced fissile material for nuclear purposes. In 1998, France completed the dismantling of all nuclear testing sites. That same year, France was one of the first states to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Additionally, France has put many efforts in the actual implementation of the CTBT. In September 2009, France and Morocco led the Article XIV Conference in order to promote the CTBT. Presently, France supports the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission by monitoring 24 stations (France TNP, 2010). Unfortunately, the realization of the CTBT has not yet been successful. Lastly, France has shown great efforts regarding transparency and arsenal reductions. In March 2008, former President Sarkozy claimed that "France could and should be more transparent with respect to its nuclear arsenal than anyone ever has been" (Sarkozy, 2008, p. 8). Immediately putting force behind his words, Sarkozy announced the reduction of France's nuclear arsenal to fewer than 300 warheads. Since the end of the Cold War, France has managed to half its nuclear deterrence (France TNP, 2010).

France is actively committed in the development of national and international disarmament. Ultimately, France would like to see general and complete disarmament in the world. Such a goal can solely be achieved when all other states are determined to do their parts. Parallel to Article VI of the NPT, France stresses the importance of involvement by all parties. Disarmament should not be limited to the reduction of nuclear arsenals, but should also comprehend multilateral efforts and increased transparency. France follows three basic principles to move closer to this goal: reciprocity, transparency and trust (France TNP, 2010). France supports resolutions passed in the NPT that are based on these principles, including measures such as: 1) the further ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; 2) the launch of formal negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty; 3) the call for all nuclear powers to transparently dismantle their nuclear testing sites; 4) the call for more transparency from all five nuclear weapon states; 5) the continuation of the disarmament process by the United States and Russia. France sees great achievements in the future, but only if all parties fully commit. As

Sarkozy ended his Cherbourg speech: “Here too, France will make its contribution.” (Sarkozy, 2008, p. 9).

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