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France

Macron relaunches nuclear weapons

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By announcing an “advanced deterrence” and a strengthening of the nuclear arsenal, French president Emmanuel Macron is reviving the logic of an arms race and turning his back on disarmament policies. On 2 March, at the Île Longue operational base, in front of the last nuclear submarine, the Téméraire, Macron announced a decisive turning point in the doctrine of the use of nuclear weapons.

Expanded nuclear deterrence

Until now, nuclear deterrence was closely linked to a Gaullist vision of national independence (feeding the fantasy of a powerful and respected France). Today, “advanced deterrence” would extend the nuclear umbrella to several European countries. Nuclear weapons would make it possible to carry out “nuclear” gesticulation by deploying French planes equipped with their nuclear warheads to European partners.

At the same time, Macron announced an increase and modernization of nuclear warheads, as well as the construction of a new nuclear ballistic missile submarine. There is no justification for this build-up of the nuclear arsenal since we already have enough resources to annihilate any aggressor... and the entire planet!

A bomb that can be used on the battlefield

For the president, nuclear weapons would no longer be the weapon of last resort against a possible aggressor, but could be considered a weapon of battle. He even uses the notion of the “final warning”, a new concept, very debatable and extremely dangerous: a step towards its possible use.

With this weakening of the boundary between conventional weapons and nuclear weapons, Macron is explicitly part of a new age of nuclear weapons: “The coming half-century will be an age of nuclear weapons”, a nuclear-dominated horizon where Macron/Zeus would be invested with the power of life and death.

A turn away from disarmament

This position taken by France is a strong signal of participation in the nuclear arms race. This trivialization of nuclear weapons (and their use) gradually makes acceptable what should remain impossible. At a time when geopolitical tensions are at their peak, involving nuclear powers (Russia, the United States, Israel, India, Pakistan), there is an urgent need to relaunch an international policy of nuclear disarmament. How will French and European diplomats be able to credibly defend non-proliferation at the next NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) review conference, from 27 April to 22 May, while promoting the value of nuclear weapons for their own security?

Lack of democratic debate

No parliamentary consultation has preceded this announcement and no debate in the National Assembly is scheduled. The president warns that no information will be given about the number of additional nuclear warheads.

Similarly, negotiations on employment conditions between European countries (notably with the United Kingdom, another European nuclear power) will be conducted away from public debate bodies.

To stop the militaristic drift of the EU leaders, the movement against nuclear weapons must mobilize and react quickly and strongly — in conjunction with the anti-war movement, the associations against civil nuclear power and all our European partners.

[L'Anticapitaliste](#) 14 March

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