



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

General Debate

**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,

First of all, France fully concurs with the declaration by the European Union presented by the Irish Presidency.

As a nuclear power, however, France would like to discuss certain aspects which it considers especially important.

You have taken on a heavy responsibility in agreeing to chair this third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. I am confident that your personal abilities, your courage and experience, and the help of your team, will enable you to guide this forum's proceedings toward the best possible outcome. You may be certain that the French delegation will fully support you in working to ensure that the NPT emerges strengthened from this new session.

The NPT continues to be a vital instrument in the preservation of peace and international security. All of us, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike, realize the degree of security it affords us, by limiting the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, by encouraging nuclear disarmament within the framework of general and complete disarmament, and by guaranteeing that transfers of nuclear assets for civilian uses will not be diverted from their peaceful purposes. Having originated at the behest of a handful of States, today it represents a multilateral response to the threat of nuclear proliferation and hence to the risk of nuclear war, which hang over us all.

France wishes to reaffirm here its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and its conviction that there is no substitute capable of guaranteeing a comparable level of security for the international community.

Throughout its history, the NPT has had to contend with crucial challenges, including: respect for Article VI, while the cold war arms race was in progress; the question of its universality and its long-term existence; finally, the question of limits to the effectiveness of the safeguards system, with the discovery of Iraq's clandestine programme in 1991.

The international community has organized in response to several of these challenges: the end of the cold war set the scene for effective implementation of Article VI; the Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995; it achieved near-

universality in 2002; and the instruments available to the IAEA have been reinforced.

On the eve of the 2005 Review Conference, the NPT faces a new challenge to its relevance and credibility, namely the circumvention of the non-proliferation standards it has established.

Mr. Chairman,

Although there have been many cases of breaches of Treaty obligations in years past, they are not all identical.

Libya reached the point of engaging in a full-scale military nuclear programme. Tripoli acknowledged this notably by revealing plans for a nuclear weapon. Libya's dialogue with the United States and the United Kingdom, and cooperation with the IAEA, shed full light on this violation of Libyan commitments, and the United Nations Security Council was informed of it. We congratulate Libya on having chosen to rejoin the international community by henceforward complying with its norms and principles. Its decisions will enhance its security, as well as regional and international security.

In 1991 Iraq was effectively pursuing a military nuclear programme. A long-term inspection programme, interrupted in 1998, led to the dismantling of this nuclear programme. The resumption of even more robust inspections, decided by the Security Council in November 2002, confirmed that there had been no elements showing a revival of the Iraqi nuclear programme. When the time is right, the United Nations, through the IAEA in particular, must be involved in the certification of Iraq's disarmament.

North Korea notified its intention to withdraw from the NPT, openly admitted to having a military nuclear programme, and may have built at least one nuclear explosive device already. Faced with this challenge from North Korea, we need to find a political solution within a multilateral framework, the involvement of all of the States concerned, in the region especially, together with a firm and coherent line among all of the States Party present here. The aim is the comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of North Korea's programmes. And, naturally, there must be a clear commitment by the United Nations Security Council to support a settlement of the crisis.

The succession of revelations regarding Iran's nuclear programme since August 2002 and the serious breaches of its safeguards agreement have had a profoundly unsettling effect on the NPT community. France, Germany and the United Kingdom are currently seeking to assist Iran in restoring the confidence of the international community through full cooperation with the IAEA, implementation of the Additional Protocol, and suspension of activities connected with enrichment and reprocessing. But grave concerns remain, and it is up to Tehran to create the right conditions for its programme of construction of nuclear power plants to be able to proceed in future, in a climate of confidence. We intend to pursue our dialogue with Iran together with fostering the remarkable efforts undertaken by the IAEA.

Finally, how can we fail to mention the particular problem of the three non-NPT States? Revelations of the involvement in nuclear proliferation networks of non-State entities based in Pakistan have furnished a further example of the grave difficulties facing the non-proliferation regime. These States must align themselves as closely as possible with international norms in regard to non-proliferation and export controls, and must draw the appropriate conclusions at home. That is the spirit in which France is pursuing its dialogue with these countries. France and the European Union attach great importance to the universality of the NPT, as recalled in the Common Position of November 11, 2003 and the Common Strategy of December 12, 2003.

Mr. Chairman,

The community of States parties to the NPT must adopt a "zero tolerance" policy on nuclear proliferation. The slightest deficiency, the slightest suspicion, risk damaging the mutual trust upon which the Treaty's equilibrium rests. If we fail to respond, the actions of a tiny minority of States neglectful of their commitments will swiftly undermine the system of collective security and of technology exchanges desired by the great majority of States.

The action of the IAEA is a major element of the international community's reaction. The Agency has a vital responsibility for verifying commitments entered into under Article III of the NPT. For its verification mission to be credible and effective, it must have the human, financial and technical resources to match the mandate given to it by the international community. France welcomes in that

respect the agreement reached in July 2003 to increase the Agency's safeguards budget, as part of a comprehensive funding package for 2004-2007.

The IAEA safeguards system provided for by the NPT, moreover, must be applied by all. The Agency, after all, can act solely on the basis of prerogatives granted to it by the States, and in particular through the signature of the Additional Protocols. France welcomes the entry into force of several comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols since the last Prepcom. But this is still not enough, and France calls on all of the States parties to the NPT that have not yet done so, and in particular those with nuclear activities, to sign and implement as soon as possible a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. France, for its part, ratified its Additional Protocol on April 10, 2003. It proposes that the additional protocol be made a condition for supply of the most sensitive nuclear goods.

But we also need to look beyond the assurances provided by the IAEA. We need to think about sanctions for non-compliance with non-proliferation commitments, about the conclusions to be drawn in the event of withdrawal from the NPT, about extending the code of good behaviour to all potential nuclear goods exporters, especially with respect to the most sensitive technologies in the fuel cycle. France has made concrete proposals within the framework of the G8 and the European Union. It will be reiterating them on the occasion of the debates devoted to specific themes regarding non-proliferation and peaceful uses.

Mr. Chairman,

The savagery of the attacks of recent years is a constant reminder of the threat that international terrorism represents for each of us, and of the risk of terrorist organizations acquiring or developing weapons of mass destruction or dangerous substances, radioactive sources especially.

At their Kananaskis Summit in June 2002, the G8 adopted six principles aimed at preventing terrorists, or those who shelter them, from obtaining weapons of mass destruction and related materials. France calls upon all countries to adhere to these principles.

Within the G8, France is contributing to the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. When the Global Partnership was

launched, in 2002, the G8 countries decided to raise up to 20 billion dollars for this initiative over ten years.

The IAEA is, by its nature, playing a major role in preventing the risk of nuclear and radiological terrorism. The Agency has intensified its efforts in this sphere, in particular by helping States to improve their control over and physical protection of nuclear materials, and in seeking, localizing, securing, and where necessary evacuating the most dangerous orphan radioactive sources. My country fully supports the work of the IAEA, and we welcome the adoption in 2003 of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. My country will sustain the dynamic set in motion, notably by organizing an international conference on this subject in 2005, in keeping with the G8 Plan of Action adopted at the Evian Summit in 2003. Moreover, France has actively participated in discussions on the revision of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. It fully supports the ongoing process, and has high hopes that a diplomatic conference can be held before the end of the year with a view to adopting a clearly-worded amendment to the existing convention.

France participates to activities undertaken to interdict shipments of WMD, in particular within the framework of the PSI. This initiative is consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks. It seeks to involve all States that participate in the fight against proliferation.

Finally, it is a necessity to reaffirm the role of the UNSC, which is the relevant body to face threats to international peace and security. In particular, we hope that the Council will shortly be able to adopt a resolution giving fresh impetus to national and international efforts to combat proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

France notes the risk of another kind of crisis of confidence within the NPT. This is connected with the future of exchanges in the field of peaceful uses. Several developing countries indeed are wondering about the likely consequences of measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime for their own nuclear electricity generation programmes, or for their other civilian programmes involving the use of nuclear technologies.

Fifty years after the Atoms for Peace initiative, peaceful applications of the atom have largely demonstrated their benefits in terms of improving people's lives and health, while respecting the environment and within a context of sustainable development. It is important to keep up the momentum in the service of progress, in a climate of greater confidence among all concerned.

France has resolutely chosen this path for itself. It is convinced of the importance of nuclear power within a diversified energy policy and as an essential contribution to sustainable development, owing to the absence of CO₂ emissions associated with this energy form. It is also playing an active role in international programmes to design the reactors for the second half of the 21st century—inherently safer, more economical, and potentially less prone to proliferation. It also attaches great importance to ensuring that countries wishing to pursue their development are able to enjoy the benefits of nuclear technologies for applications as varied as medicine, agriculture, water resources management, and the environment, to mention but a few.

France wants to pay heed to developing countries' questions regarding the determination of States with nuclear technologies to facilitate exchanges in the field of peaceful uses, and to respond to those questions. It reiterates here its firm belief in the right of all Parties to the NPT that respect their non-proliferation commitments to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is convinced that a strengthening of the instruments of non-proliferation should, in parallel, allow transfers of nuclear goods to the developing countries. In its actions in this regard, it will endeavour to avoid creating fault-lines within the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

It is imperative to restore confidence in the NPT's equilibria while efforts to implement the various aspects of Article VI continue.

Disarmament is one of the NPT's stated goals. Article VI provides, and I quote, that "each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Since its accession to the NPT at the beginning of the 1990s, France has met its obligations under Article VI in good faith, through a series of gestures of a scale well known to the States Party to the Treaty.

In 1995, when the Treaty was extended indefinitely, an action programme with three objectives was adopted, namely: a comprehensive nuclear test ban; the cessation of the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons; and the determination to move forward systematically and progressively in cutting nuclear weapons as a whole within the framework of general and complete disarmament.

France has made every effort to implement this programme. It signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1998; as early as 1996 it announced the cessation of production of weapons fissile materials and shut down the corresponding fissile materials production plants at Pierrelatte and Marcoule, which are now being dismantled. France has also cut its nuclear arsenal, eliminating all of its surface-to-surface nuclear weapons; reducing the number of its ballistic missile nuclear submarines; and halving its total number of delivery vehicles. Also, I would remind you, it has dismantled its nuclear testing centre in the Pacific.

These measures have been possible because France has consistently defined the format of its nuclear arsenal at a level of strict sufficiency. They have been possible thanks to the post-Cold War political and strategic climate. For, as the States Party noted in the final document to the 2000 Review Conference, disarmament measures need to be taken in such a way as to reinforce international stability, on the basis of the principle of undiminished security for all.

Mr. Chairman,

The Preparatory Committee will this year be called upon to make recommendations for submission to the Review Conference. The aim of France, at this meeting, is to reach agreement on procedural recommendations for 2005, while fully realizing the importance of questions of substance. France will spare no effort in helping the Chair to arrive at a consensus on each of these two points.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.