
2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Working paper submitted by France

(Review of the implementation of Article VI)

The French delegation would like to see the following elements included in the report on the implementation of Article VI:

1. Changes in the strategic environment have allowed France to modify the structure of its nuclear forces and to make significant unilateral reductions.

2. The alert status of French nuclear forces was twice reduced, in 1992 and in 1996. These reductions were in both the response times of forces and the number of weapons systems on alert.

3. The President of the French Republic announced in 1997 that, with the dismantling of the missiles on the Plateau d'Albion, no component of the French nuclear deterrent remained aimed at designated targets.

4. In order to adapt the format of its nuclear forces to the new strategic realities, France has chosen not to continue the development of a number of programmes and has reduced both its nuclear arsenal and its budgetary allocations to the military nuclear sector. Note should be taken in particular of the complete withdrawal and dismantling of the surface-to-surface nuclear component, namely, the strategic missiles from the Plateau d'Albion and the HADES short-range missiles, the reduction in the format of the airborne and sea-based components (from five to four nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines (SSBN)), the resulting reduction of the French nuclear deterrent force to two components, and the reduction by over a half in the total number of delivery vehicles.

5. France has definitively ceased its nuclear tests, signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 24 September 1996 and ratified it on 6 April 1998. It has closed its nuclear testing facility in the Pacific and completed the dismantling of the facility in July 1998. For the sake of transparency, an in-depth scientific survey of the radiological situation of the atolls was conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during a two and a half-year period beginning in 1996.

6. Following its announcement in 1995 of a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, France definitively closed its Pierrelatte

uranium enrichment plants and the Marcoule spent fuel reprocessing plant. The decision was taken to dismantle these facilities and dismantling operations are currently under way.

7. To date, all non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT have received negative and positive security assurances from France. Over 100 States have received negative assurances in the form of international treaties which are binding through protocols additional to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

8. France is an active participant together with Germany in a programme for the elimination of Russian military-grade plutonium in excess of defence needs by recycling this plutonium as mixed oxide (MOX) fuel for irradiation in reactors to make it unsuitable for subsequent military use.

9. In the field of general and complete disarmament, particular note should be taken of the ratification by France of the Chemical Weapons Convention, on 2 March 1995, and of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, on 8 July 1998, as well as the signature of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, on 18 November 1999.
