



**Third Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference
(New-York, 29 April- 10 May 2019)**

**Statement by H.E. Yann Hwang
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New York**

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mr. President,

France fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few comments in my national capacity.

1/- France is proud to fully comply with its commitments under article VI of the NPT. It does so within the framework of a progressive and realistic approach, in order to promote regional and international stability, on the basis of undiminished security for all.

We share the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, when the strategic context allows.

Since the end of the Cold War, my country has taken significant unilateral measures: the detargeting of its limited nuclear arsenal; the irreversible dismantling of its fissile material production facilities for nuclear weapons; the complete dismantling of the ground-to-ground nuclear component; the reduction in the number of its submarines and airborne component; the irreversible dismantling of the Pacific test site and the ratification of the CTBT; the reduction by half of its arsenal compared to its level at the end of the Cold War. These measures reflect our sincere commitment to nuclear disarmament, translated into action.

These efforts were possible because the international post-Cold War context had helped to restore confidence and reduce tensions. In a strategic environment that is now once again degraded, we must work to recreate the pathway for such progress.

France attaches great importance to transparency efforts. It specified the composition of its nuclear arsenal, with a ceiling of 300 weapons, 4 nuclear submarines launching devices, three batches of 16 missiles carried by submarines, and 54 airborne missiles. It regularly sets out its doctrine of deterrence, limited to the defence of vital interests, in extreme circumstances of self-defence, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. You will find on your tables a

report on French nuclear forces, written by an independent expert, which shows you that a lot of information on the French arsenal is accessible in open source, starting with military programming laws, the defence code and parliamentary reports. The exercise of nuclear deterrence in a democracy involves specific requirements that oblige us.

France also provides negative security guarantees to all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT that respect their non-proliferation commitments and has supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the Pacific, Africa and Central Asia. These commitments were confirmed at the highest level of the French government in February 2015. We also hope that a dialogue with all the States of South-East Asia will lead to the signing of the Bangkok Treaty by the nuclear weapon states. We hope that Russia will reconsider its position on the subject to allow such progress before 2020.

Mr. President,

2/- It would be dangerous to disconnect nuclear disarmament issues from the security context, which is currently characterized by growing global and regional tensions and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

That is why France is opposed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The entry into force of this Treaty could weaken the NPT as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime by creating an alternative and contrary norm. For this reason, France reiterates that it does not intend to accede to it. Those who have joined must explain how to preserve security and stability, particularly in Europe and Asia, in the absence of nuclear deterrence, in the face of rearmament and the resurgence of threats, without risking high-scale conventional warfare.

3/- France will continue its resolute and determined action in favour of realistic and gradual next steps in nuclear disarmament:

The first objective must be to continue to reduce in a verifiable manner the stocks resulting from the arms race conducted by the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War. France therefore calls for the preservation of the New Start Treaty, its extension in 2021 and the negotiation by Russia and the United States of a successor treaty. As long as there are weapons, we will need arms control.

That is why we regret Russia's violation of the INF Treaty. This treaty only makes sense if it is respected by its States Parties. But a world without INF will no longer be safe for anyone. There is still time for the necessary actions to be taken to save this treaty and we call on Russia to move in this direction.

The entry into force of the CTBT is another priority and we call on all States that have not already done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. France recalls that United Nations Security Council Resolution 2310 endorsing the moratoria declared by the five nuclear-weapon States also reaffirms that simulation programmes respect the fundamental obligations of the CTBT.

The negotiation, in the Conference on Disarmament, of an FMCT Treaty, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate it contains, is also an essential and irreplaceable step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. An FMCT will prevent the quantitative development of nuclear arsenals. There will be no nuclear-weapon-free world without FMCT.

Exchanges on the technical issues of nuclear disarmament verification between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States are also important to increase understanding and build trust among NPT States parties. France actively participates in the work of both the International Partnership on Verification of Nuclear Disarmament (IPNDV) and welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the role of verification in nuclear disarmament. Together with Germany, we will conduct a field exercise, NuDive, at the Jülich nuclear research center, with the participation of representatives from a dozen states. We encourage all States to support these different processes.

Efforts to reduce the strategic risks associated with nuclear weapons must continue. They are based on the transparency of nuclear doctrines, dialogue between political and military leaders of the possessor states or NWS, crisis communication instruments and reassurance measures. To reduce risks, strategic dialogue must be reactivated. This is the call made by the G7 Ministers of Foreign Affairs in their Dinard communiqué.

France rejects Russia's erroneous and deliberately misleading statements regarding NATO's nuclear sharing agreement. This arrangement was an integral part of the NPT negotiations and was accepted by the Soviet Union, a fact well known to Russia. Much less clear are the current features of Russia's extended deterrence.

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament is being built with patience, perseverance and realism. It requires a cooperative approach and consideration of everyone's security concerns. It is in this constructive spirit that France wishes to contribute to the work for the 2020 Review Conference.

Thank you for your attention./.