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Item 63 of the preliminary list*

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A
ZONE OF PEACE

Note verbale dated 6 April 1990 from the Permanent Representative
of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him that the United Kingdom is withdrawing from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, with immediate effect. The reasons for this are set out in the attached memorandum.

The Permanent **Representative** of the United Kingdom would be grateful if the Secretary-General would circulate the text of this **note** and its annex as an official document of the General Assembly under item 63 of the preliminary list, and have it brought to the attention of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, during its forthcoming session which, in accordance with General Assembly resolution **44/120** of 15 December 1989, is due to take place in New York from 16 to 20 April **1990**.

* A/45/50.

ANNEX

Memorandum

The Government of the United Kingdom has decided to withdraw from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. Accordingly it will not participate in further sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee or in any preparations for a Conference as mandated under resolution **44/120**.

The Government of the United Kingdom has taken this decision for the following reasons. First, the principle of consensus which has guided the work of the Ad Hoc Committee since its inception was broken when resolution **44/120** was put to a vote: 10 of the 11 members of the Western Group either voted against it or abstained. Second, resolution **42/120** reiterates the decision to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean despite the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee has failed to reach agreement on what matters the Conference should discuss.

As was made clear in the explanation of vote given by the United Kingdom representative on resolution **44/120** during the last session of the General Assembly, the 1971 Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and **in** particular its references to "great power confrontation" in the region, raises serious difficulties, since this ignores the causes of instability in the region. The Government of the United Kingdom could not agree to attend any conference convened on that basis.

The decision not to attend a conference under present circumstances is consistent with resolution **43/97**. The terms of that resolution make it quite clear that completion of the preparatory work - which, in particular, requires agreement on the matters to be addressed - is the prerequisite for the convening of the Conference.

The Government of the United Kingdom notes that the Declaration on International Security and Disarmament contained in the final document of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, emphasized the importance of the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and of the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the process of creating an Indian Ocean zone of peace. In present circumstances, however, this process will not enjoy the participation of three of the five permanent members of the Security Council, nor of a number of major maritime users of the Indian Ocean.

The Government of the United Kingdom has concluded that no purpose would be served by its continued participation in a process based on the 1971 Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
