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

Note verbale dated 6 April 1990 from the Permanent Mission of France
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him that, as of today, it will no longer participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. The reasons for this are set out in the annex to this note.

The Permanent Mission of France would be grateful if the Secretary-General could arrange to have the text of this note and its annex distributed 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 at its next session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/120 of 15 December 1989, which is to be held from 16 to 20 April 1990.

* A/45/50.

2p.

ANNEX

Memorandum

France has decided to withdraw from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. France will not participate in the forthcoming meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee nor in the preparations for the Conference on the Indian Ocean called for in General Assembly resolution 44/120.

Two considerations have led the French authorities to take this decision. First of all, the principle of consensus, which has guided the work of the Ad Hoc Committee since its inception, was broken when General Assembly resolution 44/120 was put to a vote and 10 of the 11 Western States members of the Committee voted against it or abstained. Secondly, resolution 44/120 calls for the convening of a conference even though the Ad Hoc Committee has not yet reached an agreement on the matters the Conference would actually discuss.

As the representative of France clearly stated in his explanation of vote on resolution 44/120 at the most recent session of the General Assembly, the 1971 Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace raises serious difficulties, particularly as it refers to great Power confrontation in the region without mentioning the causes of instability there. Under no circumstances could the French authorities agree to the convening of a conference on the basis of that Declaration.

The decision not to participate in a conference on the Indian Ocean under the current circumstances is in keeping with General Assembly resolution 43/79. It is obvious that, under the terms of that resolution, the completion of the preparatory work - which specifically implies an agreement on the matters to be discussed at the Conference - must precede the holding of the Conference.

The French authorities note that the declaration on security and international disarmament contained in the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, stresses the importance of the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the process of making that Ocean a "zone of peace". Under the current circumstances, however, this process will not enjoy the participation of three of the five permanent members of the Security Council nor, apparently, of a significant number of the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. In conclusion, the continued participation of France in a process based on the 1971 Declaration no longer seems to serve any purpose.
