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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Note verbale dated 20 April 1988 from the Permanent Mission of
France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat of
the Organization

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Organization and has the honour to refer to its note A/43/152/Add.1 of 14 April 1988, transmitting a communication of 29 March 1988 received from New Zealand regarding nuclear explosions allegedly carried out by France at Mururoa in 1987.

The French authorities wish to make the following observations about this document:

1. The French delegation voted against the adoption of resolution 42/38 C by the General Assembly on 30 November 1987 and made a statement in the First Committee in order to indicate clearly the reasons of principle underlying its negative attitude. This statement appears in the record of the First Committee's discussion on 13 November 1987 (A/C.1/42/PV.43) and reads as follows:

"I wish to explain the negative vote of the French delegation on draft resolutions A/C.1/42/L.9, L.29, L.38 and L.77, pertaining to the nuclear tests. These various texts do not, in our view, reflect appropriate treatment of the question of nuclear tests. The banning of nuclear tests must be part of an effective process of nuclear disarmament, which is moreover stipulated in paragraph 51 of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly, held in 1978. This can only happen when progress in [disarmament becomes] possible without jeopardizing the bases of international security.

* A/43/50.

It [cannot] therefore [constitute] a prerequisite, nor even [have] priority [over] the very substantial reduction of the nuclear arsenals of the [two most heavily armed Powers. France conducts nuclear tests to] keep its deterrence force to the minimum level [of credibility] required to maintain its security."

2. Moreover, with regard to the information transmitted by New Zealand concerning the nuclear explosions which allegedly occurred at Mururoa in 1987, of which New Zealand specifies the date, time and yield, France has a general reservation about all information of this type.

Whether in relation to French tests or those of other nuclear Powers, the reliability of information provided by third countries or by specialized research institutes can in no case be guaranteed and must instead give rise to the most serious doubts within the international community.

The Permanent Mission of France would like this note verbatim to be circulated to States Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly under item 64 (c) of the preliminary list.
