



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.159/SR.433
23 September 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 433rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 13 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. KALPAGE

(Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/82 OF 16 DECEMBER 1993
(continued)

GENERAL DISCUSSION

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF NEW ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

FUTURE ROLE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, as requested at the end of the discussion at the previous meeting, he had drawn up a preliminary draft of conclusions and recommendations which would be considered during the informal consultations.
2. Mr. RAHIM (Bangladesh), recalling the mandate which had been conferred on the Committee by General Assembly resolution 48/82, said that his delegation had consistently supported both the initiative to declare the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and its major underlying objectives, namely: the creation of a neutral, demilitarized and denuclearized zone; the creation of an environment that would preserve and consolidate national independence and sovereignty; the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law; the strengthening of peace, security and stability in the world; and the convening of an international conference to study those problems.
3. Those objectives had originally been a response to threats posed to the region by super-Power rivalry and the arms race, as well as the possible risk of hegemony or domination by regional Powers. Recent unprecedented upheavals in international relations, however positive they were, had slowed down implementation of the Declaration and the convening of the international conference.
4. In that context, the onus had fallen upon the Ad Hoc Committee to restart that complex process, building upon past successes and the many positive aspects which had come out of recent developments. It could in particular build upon the significant progress made towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, reduction in armaments and efforts made towards nuclear non-proliferation. Another favourable change was the stress placed today upon economic rather than military power, the advances in the resolution of regional conflicts, many of which concerned the Indian Ocean region, for example, the Middle East peace negotiations and the changes in South Africa. Further encouraging factors were the global fight against environmental degradation, drugs and terrorism, the possibilities for cooperation in terms of maritime activities and naval operations opened up by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the creation of Asian security strategies inspired by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the movement towards regional association to encourage economic and political cooperation between Asian countries.
5. The Committee should concentrate its efforts on two goals. Firstly, it should consolidate the process of implementing the Declaration by using to its

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(Mr. Rahim, Bangladesh)

advantage the consensus which had emerged over the past few years, and by encouraging the holding of informal workshops, meetings of groups of experts, regional and subregional seminars, as well as a second meeting of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean with a view to the convening of an international conference.

6. Secondly, in order to more clearly define the substantive content of the goal of cooperation and peace, security and stability, the Committee would have to be careful to address the full range of military, economic and political problems - regional conflicts, nuclear and conventional disarmament, confidence-building measures, economic cooperation, marine resources management, fisheries, telecommunications, drug control, illegal arms transfer, etc. - while developing a sense of identity and community amongst all States in the region.

7. His delegation would support all those proposals, but would like to stress that the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean was an essential precondition for any progress towards peace and security in the region.

8. Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had for a long time been working towards peace, security and stability in the region of the Indian Ocean, and attached a great deal of importance to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. The goals embodied in the 1971 Declaration remained valid for the most part. Although super-Power rivalries had given way to an era of confidence and cooperation, a foreign military presence still continued to threaten the security of States in the region.

9. His delegation considered that the Ad Hoc Committee should continue to consider new approaches, but needed to clarify the relationship between regional and universal initiatives. The most important of the confidence-building measures appropriate to the Indian Ocean region was the elimination of the foreign military presence, since in view of the positive developments in South Africa, Cambodia, Mozambique and Afghanistan, the end of the war between Iran and Iraq, and the ending of alignments created by the cold war, extraregional States no longer had any justification for keeping a presence in the region.

10. However, the realization of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace would be achieved gradually, and presupposed a sincere dialogue between the States concerned. The Ad Hoc Committee would have an important role to play as a multilateral forum, which would require the active participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users. However, it should be emphasized that progress in the Ad Hoc Committee should not necessarily be conditional upon their participation.

11. His delegation had already proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee should embark on a review of the 1971 Declaration, as some of its elements were no longer relevant, and should redefine the issues of security and stability in the light of post-cold-war developments. It had also suggested that the Secretary-General, with the help of experts, should undertake an in-depth study on the complex ramifications of the issues involved, particularly on the conceptual

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(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

aspects of creating a zone of peace, in order to make recommendations on the measures and approaches necessary to achieve the goals of the 1971 Declaration. One of the objectives of that two-track policy could be a new declaration which would strike a realistic balance between the ideas, concerns, rights and responsibilities of regional and extraregional States.

12. Finally, his delegation hoped that the Ad Hoc Committee would present to the General Assembly a report which was as clear, concise and constructive as that of its previous session.

13. The CHAIRMAN, reviewing the main points of the Iranian representative's statement, said that it summarized perfectly the points of view expressed at the previous meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.