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AGENDA ITEM 59

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE: REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN (A/38/29; A/C.1/38/L.85)

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, Ambassador Fonseka of Sri Lanka.

Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean: It is my honour and privilege to introduce to the Committee today the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which appears in document A/38/29, and which has been prepared pursuant to resolution 37/96 of 13 December 1982.

By that resolution, the Ad Hoc Committee, inter alia, was requested to continue its work on the necessary harmonization of views on the relevant issues, including the remaining issues related to the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean, and to make every effort to accomplish the necessary preparatory work for the conference, including consideration of its convening not later than the first half of 1984.

During 1983 the Ad Hoc Committee held three sessions, from 31 January to 9 February, from 11 to 22 April, and from 12 to 22 July, and two additional meetings, one on 15 November and one on 30 November, when the Committee adopted its report, which is now before the First Committee. In the course of the year, the Ad Hoc Committee held 32 formal meetings as well as a number of informal meetings.

The report contained in document A/38/29 consists of three parts. Besides a brief introductory section, the report essentially encompasses the work accomplished by the Committee during the year, as well as the Committee's recommendation to the General Assembly in the form of a draft resolution.

At its sessions in 1983 the attention of the Ad Hoc Committee was focused mainly on item 4 (a) of its agenda, namely, work on the substantive and organizational issues related to the conference on the Indian Ocean, in accordance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of resolution 37/96, including consideration of 1984 conference dates.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

Regrettably, the Ad Hoc Committee was once again unable to reach consensus on the key issue before it, namely, on finalizing the dates for the convening of the conference. The divergence of views on the question of the date for convening the conference is adequately reflected in the report, which states that

"Many delegations were of the view that the continued deterioration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area had established the urgency for the early convening of the conference, and that the early establishment of a zone of peace as contained in resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971 would, inter alia, contribute to strengthening the security of States within the zone and to international peace and security as a whole. Other delegations took the view, however, that until the necessary harmonization of views on the remaining issues had been achieved, and until there was closer agreement on the scope and nature of a zone of peace, and on how the conference would contribute to its establishment, the setting of conference dates was premature, and that the prevailing political and security climate in the region prejudiced the likelihood of success of any such conference." (A/38/29, para. 16)

This year the Ad Hoc Committee was enlarged by the addition of one new member. Following its application for membership of the Ad Hoc Committee, the President of the General Assembly, on the basis of a recommendation of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 1 of resolution 34/80 B, appointed the United Arab Emirates as the forty-seventh member of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Concerning the question of participation in its work, the Ad Hoc Committee also received applications from several other countries, as listed in paragraph 20 of the report. However, the Committee was unable in the time available to reach consensus on those applications.

Needless to say, in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and as representative of the host country for the proposed conference in Colombo, I cannot but express my disappointment that a more successful outcome has not attended the work of the Committee, despite the strenuous efforts expended by all concerned.

As representatives are aware, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the First Committee, has adopted three resolutions calling for the convening of a conference in Colombo. Briefly, these were resolution 34/80 B of 1979 calling for holding a conference in Colombo during 1981, followed by resolution 36/90 of 1981 calling for that conference not later than the first half of 1983, and then by

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

resolution 37/96 of 1982 calling for a conference to be held not later than the first half of 1984. The draft resolution now before this Committee asks that a conference be opened in the first half of 1985. This is the third occasion on which the conference has been postponed. I feel obliged as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to make some comments on these recurring postponements. The reasons, as each of those resolutions state, are the prevailing political climate and the argument that there has not been adequate, much less complete, harmonization of views. Opinion within the Committee differed as to the extent of the harmonization that is either necessary or possible before we go to a conference.

The question, therefore, is whether on other important issues, including disarmament issues, completion of all preparatory work - which, I believe, is synonymous with harmonization - is a prerequisite for a conference. I would submit that conferences have been scheduled, preparatory work has been undertaken and a conference has actually taken place, and yet the objectives of that conference have fallen short of realization.

An example which comes to mind and which is very timely is the third review conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which this Committee has decided will be held in 1985. Preparatory meetings have been scheduled, and, of course, the conference itself will take place. The review conference was decided upon notwithstanding the fact that the second Review Conference, held in August and September 1980 did not measure up to expectations and produced no more than a pro forma final document. I have no wish to sound like a prophet of gloom, but it will not be disputed that the circumstances today and the prognostications for the coming months are even less auspicious for a review conference with a successful outcome than they were in 1980. Nevertheless, the depositary States have initiated and obtained adoption of a draft resolution calling for such a conference.

One is compelled to conclude that, irrespective of the completion of preparatory work - or, may I say, harmonization of views - irrespective of the political climate, and irrespective of what the outcome might be, there is a will among those for whom a review conference is an imperative to hold a conference, and that therefore a conference will take place. I might be reminded that the review conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a requirement of article VIII of the Treaty itself and that comparisons or parallels are not quite appropriate.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

That, however, does not detract from my contention that if there is a will to hold a conference - in this case a conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace - it can be held. That willingness, unfortunately, has been less than forthcoming on the part of some members of the Ad Hoc Committee and hence this third postponement of the Conference to 1985.

As I mentioned earlier, part III of the report contains the recommendation of the Committee, in the form of a draft resolution.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution the General Assembly would, inter alia, reaffirm its conviction that concrete action for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would be a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security and express its deep concern at the danger posed by the grave and ominous developments in the area and the resulting sharp deterioration of peace, security and stability which particularly seriously affect the littoral and hinterland States, as well as international peace and security. The General Assembly would also call for the renewal of genuinely constructive efforts through the exercise of the political will necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, express its regret that the Ad Hoc Committee has failed to reach consensus on the finalization of dates for the convening, during 1984, of the Conference on the Indian Ocean and would emphasize its decision to convene the Conference at Colombo as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted in 1971, as stated in paragraphs 2 and 3 respectively.

The negotiations surrounding the formulation of paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution consumed a great deal of the time of the informal drafting group, which began meeting subsequent to the last session of the Committee in July. Paragraphs 5 and 6, on which we spent a great deal of time, read as follows:

"Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to make decisive efforts in 1984 to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean, in consideration of the political and security climate in the region and with a view to enabling the opening of the Conference in Colombo in the first half of 1985, it being understood that such preparatory work would comprise

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

organizational matters including the provisional agenda for the Conference, rules of procedure, documentation and consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and substantive issues".

Paragraph 6 reads as follows:

"Requests the Ad Hoc Committee at the same time to make determined efforts in 1984 for the necessary harmonization of views on the remaining relevant issues".

Furthermore, the General Assembly would renew the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee as defined in the relevant resolutions and would request the Ad Hoc Committee to hold three further sessions in 1984 of a duration of two weeks each, with the possibility of holding a fourth session to be considered as required.

Finally, the General Assembly would request the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to continue his consultations on the participation in the work of the Committee by States Members of the United Nations which are not members of the Committee, with the aim of resolving this matter at the earliest possible date.

When recommending the adoption of the draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, I wish to make this last comment.

As members of the First Committee well know, I come before the Committee at this very late date - in fact, later than the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has done in the past. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as well as other members of the First Committee, will undoubtedly wish to offer their comments on the report and the draft resolution.

I expect all those who intervene to express in varying degrees their dissatisfaction with the draft resolution before the Committee. I can appreciate this to the extent that at the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee itself our time was consumed in the attempt to reach agreement. When we strive for consensus, it is almost an axiom that no delegation - and I repeat, no delegation - could have expected to obtain even what might be described as a moderately satisfactory result. As to which delegation came away more satisfied or less satisfied, that will remain a matter of opinion. I shall only express the hope that when delegations intervene, they will endeavour to strike a reasonable balance between their cumulative dissatisfactions and the less obvious satisfaction that a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is a worthwhile endeavour which they have decided to pursue by renewing the Ad Hoc Committee's mandate.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

My task will be complete only after I have expressed my appreciation to all members of the Ad Hoc Committee for having made this outcome possible, to the members of the Secretariat and to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kheradi, for their constant co-operation and hard work and of course to you, Sir, for the understanding and patience you have shown. I have often wondered during these last weeks whether the biblical Job's other name had been Tom Vraalsen.

Mr. BHURGARI (Pakistan): My delegation would like to offer its comments on the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean contained in document A/38/29.

We are aware of the arduous consultations undertaken by the Chairman of the Committee in recent weeks, the result of which is the document referred to. While my delegation had fervently hoped for a consensus in regard to the draft resolution contained in part III of the report, the formulation contained in paragraph 24 of the report is also welcome, because it represents an accepted text which enjoys the support of the entire Committee.

In this connection, I should like to point out that paragraph 16 of the report contains a reference to resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, without an accompanying reference to the meeting of the littoral and hinterland States in July 1979.

It is the considered view of my delegation that a reference to resolution 2832 (XXVI) in isolation from the other accompanying references as contained in document A/AC.159/L.35 of 1980 is incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory to us, as well as to a number of other delegations. This position is well known to the members of the Committee. For Pakistan, the reference to the meeting of the littoral and hinterland States in 1979 is germane to our position on the entire question of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

We note that the text of the draft resolution as formulated this year represents an advance over that of last year in the request for decisive efforts to complete the preparatory work aimed at enabling the opening of the Conference in the first half of 1985.

While the date for the holding of the Conference has been extended, the mandate for the Committee's work is more precise. Understandably, the critical factor in the holding of the Conference in the new time frame will be the accomplishment of necessary preparatory work in the Ad Hoc Committee, which will be the focus of my remarks.

(Mr. Bhurgari, Pakistan)

As a littoral State of the Indian Ocean, we regard the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region as an important element in our quest for regional security and stability. At the heart of the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace lies the desire of the peoples of the region to strengthen the fabric of peace and security, so that they can devote their collective energies to promoting their economic well-being to ensure a future of progress and prosperity.

The security of the entire region is indivisible and the questions relating to it will have to be faced squarely in a comprehensive manner.

The threat to the security of the States of the Indian Ocean region has two aspects: non-regional and regional. When we speak of the non-regional threat, we have in mind all aspects and manifestations of great Power rivalry and confrontation in the region, the presence of foreign military forces and bases within the region or its vicinity, and all those doctrines which attempt to justify a foreign military presence in the area or military intervention in the affairs of the States there, on one pretext or another. In its regional aspect, the threat to security arises from resort to the use of force and to policies seeking military preponderance and regional hegemony. Unless we address ourselves to both these aspects, the goal of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean will remain elusive.

It must be recognized that the climate of peace and security in the region has deteriorated sharply in recent years. The foreign military intervention in Afghanistan, a hinterland State of the Indian Ocean, is a case in point. It is our belief that a political settlement of the Afghanistan question consistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, is indispensable for a meaningful advance towards the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region. On its part, Pakistan is co-operating with every international endeavour, particularly the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, for a just and honourable political settlement of the problem.

We perceive an integral relationship between improvement in the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean region and expectation of positive results from the Colombo Conference scheduled for 1985. For us this linkage is self-evident. It remains our fervent hope that in the next one and a half years peace in the region will be strengthened and a climate of trust and confidence will be created to ensure that the Colombo Conference becomes an important milestone in transforming the Indian Ocean region into a zone of peace.

(Mr. Bhurgari, Pakistan)

The convening of the Conference within a time frame has been the subject of intensive discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee for the past two years. On the one hand, there is the view that the Conference should be convened only when the political climate in the region has improved and it is assured that the Conference will produce substantial results. On the other hand, there is the view, shared by a large majority, that the early convening of the Conference is essential and is bound to have a salutary impact on the political and security climate of the region.

We believe that the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is a process, and any static concepts or imposition of unrealistic preconditions would not advance this process. The Conference will be a positive step even if our expectations from it are modest. We are, therefore, of the opinion that during the next one and a half years the Ad Hoc Committee should focus on the preparatory work.

In this context, we are ready to consider all ideas before the Committee, which include the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the 1979 report of the meeting of the littoral and hinterland States, and any contributions which may be relevant to the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. We are confident that the substantive work accomplished in the Committee can become a sound basis for ensuring a successful outcome for the Colombo Conference. I wish to take this opportunity to pledge our full co-operation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the realization of that objective.

Mr. KRYSTOSIK (Poland): Today, as the First Committee is proceeding with its consideration of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, my delegation wishes to let its position be known concerning this document, particularly its part III, containing the draft resolution recommended for adoption.

We wish to present our point of view as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and as one of the major maritime users of the seaway, whose long standing and lively interest in the work of that body has been proved, not by words alone, but well manifested in practice through our active participation, inter alia, in the drafting proceedings of the Group of the Friends of the Chairman.

Our consistent and constructive approach to the work of the Committee has always stemmed from our unswerving and strong support for the proposal by the Indian Ocean States to convert that region into a zone of peace. It has always derived from the main principles of our foreign policy and its guidelines, which emphasize the importance of the strengthening of international peace and security.

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

We have always considered that ensuring the safe and unimpeded use of major international maritime communications and restricting and lowering the level of the military presence and activity in appropriate regions can well serve the cause of peace and the stabilization of the international situation, as well as improving the international atmosphere. We have always looked upon the guaranteeing and strengthening of security in the region as one of the fundamental principles in establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, a step that could lessen confrontation, avoid further escalation of the military presence, and introduce the principle of non-use or threat of force and non-interference in international affairs in building up a structure of peace and developing diversified mutually beneficial co-operation in the region. Hence, we gave our firm support, together with other socialist countries, to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace in Colombo.

We have always regretted the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee during its consecutive sessions in 1980, 1981, 1982 and this year as well, failed to reach consensus on the finalization of dates for the convening of the conference at Colombo. It must forcefully be stated that we cannot be blamed for this failure. With deep concern we watched how through the manoeuvres of the Western Powers obstacles were being developed that could be used to postpone the decision on a date, how impediments were being created that could be employed for the purpose of hindering the preparatory work for the conference. It was with a profound feeling of concern and alarm that we witnessed the attempts of those countries to change into a meaningless formulation the request to make every effort to accomplish the necessary preparatory work for the conference, including consideration of its convening not later than the first half of 1984. In all these attempts I have stated, those who were not interested in convening the conference on the Indian Ocean very often used the principle of consensus, which constitutes the basis and practice of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, as a shield behind which they safely could act to impose on others their concepts, ideas and formulations suiting only their purposes, and to eliminate everything introduced by others with the intention of creating the balance that is necessary for reaching a consensus. It was taken for granted by them that after the discussion, others, and particularly the socialist countries to which consensus is an important, valid and useful basis for the Committee's work, would finally agree to their proposals. Consequently, in the course of negotiations, the argument of the necessity to reach consensus was used

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

more than once, if not frequently, as an instrument of leverage and pressure to achieve the desired goal.

At the same time, the work of the Committee was being used as a screen behind which the build-up of United States naval forces, rapid deployment forces and foreign bases like Diego Garcia could be carried out.

Only a few months ago, at the session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean in July, my delegation welcomed with great satisfaction the drafts of a resolution presented by Sri Lanka on behalf of the non-aligned States members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. It contained the date for the opening, namely, 4 June 1984, of the United Nations conference on the Indian Ocean as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace adopted in 1971, document A/AC.159/L.57. We strongly supported the proposed date and were of the opinion that it constituted a response to the urgency for the early convening of the conference, thus raising new hopes for the early establishment of a zone of peace and for the strengthening of security in the region and in the world at large. Our support reflected our unchanged and consistent commitment to the idea of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It was yet another indication of our consistent stand, side by side, with the non-aligned countries in their intensified efforts to achieve the implementation of the idea.

Having before us the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, we wish to make the following comments: first, we wish to express our deep disappointment and strong dissatisfaction with the latest postponement of the opening of the conference in Colombo. Once again, the date has been shifted, this time to the first half of 1985. Once again, the Committee has failed to reach consensus on the finalization of dates for the convening of the conference during 1984. The reasons for that are well known. Secondly, we have to state that preparatory work relating to the conference has not been stressed in such a way as to enable us to reach some progress in the future. Thirdly, once again, the formulations concerning the so-called necessary harmonization of views and consideration of the political and security climate were introduced to both the preambular and operative paragraphs of the draft resolution in such a way that, as a matter of fact, as one could see, the so-called harmonization of views has been put on the same footing with the efforts to complete preparatory work relating to the conference. In this way, a sort of linkage has actually been created.

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

Therefore, my delegation has serious reservations as to operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report. There is a lack of clarity in the text of the draft resolution. It emphasizes some issues, such as harmonization of views, and diminishes the importance of other outstanding problems, such as the completion of the preparatory work. These two paragraphs of the draft resolution constitute an instrument that has been built into the text that would allow it to block the work of the Committee. They could be applied as a brake by those who introduced these formulations whenever they wished to slow down or stop and let the engine of the Committee run idle. They could be used again and again to procrastinate in reaching decisions concerning the opening of the conference.

When the discussion and drafting of the text was taking place we did not keep silent. Openly and frankly we pointed to the dangers of not taking a balanced approach and underlined that consensus is not achieved by rejecting all the suggestions of others in favour of one's own. It is particularly characteristic that whenever, in a spirit of compromise, some concessions were made, new demands were immediately put forward, many times with determination and unconditionally. One might say that, whenever a finger was given, an effort was made to grasp the entire hand. The lack of political will to seek consensus and to consider the points of view of others as well as one's own was clearly visible during the entire painful and protracted process of drafting in which we participated.

In these circumstances we feel compelled to request separate and recorded votes on operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution on the Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in Chapter III of the report A/38/29 of 1 December 1983. We did not insist on a vote in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean because we felt that the ardent appeals not to have votes stemmed from sincere intentions to maintain the previous practice in the work of the Committee. We decided to do so having in mind mutual interests. However, in the forum of this First Committee, where decisions are taken by means of voting, we see importance and merit in putting the aforementioned paragraphs to a separate and recorded vote. Having a vote would be in the interests of progress towards holding the conference. It would serve as a warning signal that we and our socialist friends cannot remain indifferent and aloof vis-à-vis the attempts to build into the draft resolution structures allowing the indefinite postponement of the Conference and to lend consensus to such machinations.

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

Poland will not support paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution. We shall abstain from voting. However, we are in favour of the draft resolution as a whole being adopted without a vote, to manifest once again our unfailing support for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, for the early convening of the conference in Colombo and for the non-aligned countries, which spare no effort to implement this idea. It is our firm belief that this proposal of ours will serve the attainment of this end.

The CHAIRMAN: Regarding the representative of Poland's request for a separate vote on two of the operative paragraphs, we will revert to that procedural motion on completion of the list of speakers and before we take action on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/38/29.

Mr. KAHN (German Democratic Republic): My delegation would like to explain its position concerning the recommendations in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, in Part III, paragraph 25.

Although this year the Ad Hoc Committee was able to complete its report only during the course of this session of the General Assembly, the draft resolution introduced by Sri Lanka at the 225th meeting of the Committee, on 19 July 1983, was submitted in good time. That draft resolution called for the opening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo on 4 June 1984 and proposed that it be of three weeks' duration. My delegation welcomed that decision submitted to the Committee. Much to our regret, however, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean was induced to agree to another postponement of the Conference, as stated in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution.

My delegation is greatly disappointed by this fact. The responsibility for preventing the holding of the Conference has to be borne by those who regard the region as a sphere of their vital interests, thereby transforming it into a military threat to the littoral and hinterland States and their legitimate rights.

As the draft resolution shows, the tactics of delaying the Conference have been practised once again. The reference to substantive issues in paragraph 5 could be misused to hamper preparations for the Conference, and caused my delegation to raise serious objections. The request for the necessary harmonization of views and the reference to consideration of the political and security climate in the region in operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution constitute elements of a conditional character and my delegation had to express reservations.

(Mr. Kahn, German Democratic Republic)

My delegation therefore supports the request for separate votes on operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution, as submitted by my friend and colleague the representative of Poland.

Since we nevertheless are not refusing to join in the adoption of the draft resolution, the following aspect has to be taken into account. The draft resolution gives the orientation to make preparations for the holding of the Conference and, accordingly, sets forth concrete tasks to be completed by the Committee during the course of its 1984 session.

My delegation thanks you, Mr. Chairman, and takes this opportunity to thank also the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, Mr. Fonseka of Sri Lanka, for his tireless efforts in the course of very difficult consultations to complete the report of the Committee, undertaken with his friends in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

Mr. SALMAN (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation wishes to speak on item 59 of the agenda, Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Iraq considers that the implementation of that declaration has been a continuing process since the adoption of resolution 2832 (XXVI) in 1971 by the General Assembly and will continue until the conference is held and the Declaration genuinely implemented.

In view of the responsibility of the Committee on the Indian Ocean, which is as important as the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, Iraq has co-operated in a positive spirit with that Committee and we have done our utmost to help the conference take place. Bearing in mind the interests of the coastal and hinterland States and those countries which benefit from the Indian Ocean, we supported the postponement of the conference until 1983, pending an acceptable balance among all the States of the area. For the same reason, we supported the convening of the conference in the first half of 1984. Regrettably, the work of the Committee on the Indian Ocean during the past three years has been deadlocked by reason of the intransigence of certain countries which assert their own interests over those of others. Consequently, the conference has been postponed until the first half of 1985.

My delegation has read the report of the Committee in document A/38/29 which is before us. Iraq declares its full support for the paragraphs contained in the first and second parts of the document and we support the draft resolution

(Mr. Saiman, Iraq)

regarding the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which is contained in the third part of this document. We feel that this is the very least that the members of the Committee of the Indian Ocean can agree to, even if it does not meet the wishes of the coastal and hinterland countries.

Turning now to paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, we supported this draft resolution fully before an amendment was submitted. The Ad Hoc Committee did important work during the three sessions it held. The procedural and substantive questions raised in paragraph 5 are very important to the conference to be held in the first half of 1985. This paragraph is complemented by paragraph 7. The members of the Special Committee on the Indian Ocean should show flexibility and a sense of positive responsibility in its 1984 meetings so that the conference can take place in 1985.

International problems, as members are aware, cannot be settled from a distance. They can be settled only by agreement, by a convergence of views, and by positive opinions expressed by a majority. Solution of a small problem might lead to solution of a large one. It is certainly true that we should not overstress details and lose sight of our final objective. When principles are agreed upon which lead to the final solution, it is always easy to solve matters of detail. Agreement on the general principles in the final document regarding the meeting to be held in 1985 between the coastal and hinterland countries could make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

Mr. VERMA (India): In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the historic Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace contained in resolution 2832 (XXVI). This Declaration represented the hopes and aspirations of the littoral and hinterland States to turn the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace by halting the further escalation and expansion of the military presence of the great Powers and by eliminating any manifestation of great-Power military presence conceived in the context of great-Power rivalry. The Declaration was a manifestation of the desire among the States of the region to secure the absence or exclusion of great Power rivalry, tension, confrontation and conflict from the Indian Ocean, and thus preserve their hard-won independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to embark on the task of national reconstruction free from external interference and influence under conditions of peace and tranquility. Even after a lapse of over 12 years since the adoption of the 1971 Declaration, these hopes still remain to be fulfilled.

(Mr. Verma, India)

While India joined the consensus in favour of the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, we do feel a great sense of anguish and disappointment at the outcome of our work. It is no secret that during the session of the Ad Hoc Committee in July 1983 the non-aligned countries had laboured hard to present a resolution which was pragmatic and innovative, and which would have marked a step forward in the implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In our approach, we were naturally guided by the directive given to us by our Heads of State or Government at the Seventh Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi in March 1983. To recapitulate, the Heads of State or Government had urged the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee to complete its preparations for the conference in strict accordance with its mandate. They had welcomed and supported the efforts of the non-aligned members of the Ad Hoc Committee to finalize preparations for the Conference despite unwarranted delays resulting from the attitude of some great Powers, which had thus far prevented completion of preparations for holding the Conference. They had further urged all great Powers and other maritime users to participate in the Conference in a constructive spirit, and in the meanwhile, to start a process of reduction of their military presence in the Indian Ocean area. It was our expectation that the constructive proposals put forward by the non-aligned countries to further the work of the Committee with a view to implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would be supported by all States. Our hopes were belied.

Turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace is even more imperative today than it was in 1971. At that time, when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, the Indian Ocean was relatively - through by no means entirely - free from great Power military presence and rivalries. Apprehensive that in the years to come this rivalry could grow dangerously and pose a threat to their security, the non-aligned States brought up the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace for endorsement by the General Assembly. The Declaration was not meant to restrict the freedom of navigation traditionally enjoyed by the great Powers and other maritime nations, in respect of which it contains a specific provision.

Unfortunately, our fears have come true, and recent years have witnessed a sharp deterioration of the situation in the Indian Ocean as a result of the escalation of extra-regional military activity in the context of bloc confrontation. External Powers have sought to entrench themselves in the Indian Ocean area on the basis of strategic theories of maritime access and maritime

(Mr. Verma, India)

power. The Indian Ocean has become another arena for global strategic confrontation, with the introduction of nuclear-missile submarines, inter-continental ballistic missiles and long-range bombers. Existing military bases such as Diego Garcia are being continuously expanded, and new base facilities are being sought, indicating clearly that the military presence is meant to be permanent. These developments have added a new dimension to the insecurity of the littoral and hinterland States, making external intervention and occupation a constant and real nightmare.

The tense situation in the Indian Ocean makes it imperative for the non-aligned countries of the Indian Ocean area to pursue the concept of the zone of peace more vigorously than before. Successive resolutions since 1971 have reiterated the call to the great Powers to enter into consultations with the littoral and hinterland States, with a view to, first, halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence, and, secondly, eliminating from the Indian Ocean bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and any manifestation of great-Power military presence in the Indian Ocean, conceived in the context of their rivalry and confrontation. This process of consultation, strictly speaking, began with the expansion of the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to securing the co-operation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the implementation of its mandate.

The proposal to convene the conference on the Indian Ocean was mooted by the littoral and hinterland States, with a view to finding practical measures to implement resolution 2832 (XXVI), and we look upon the proposed conference on the Indian Ocean as the first important step in achieving this objective. We believe that the conference will provide an appropriate forum to arrive at agreements that will govern the use of the waters of the Indian Ocean solely for peaceful purposes, and lead to the reduction of an external military presence in the area and to its eventual elimination. We appreciate the offer made by the Government of Sri Lanka to host the conference. It is unfortunate that the dates for the convening of the conference have been postponed, due to the intransigent attitude of some States.

Over the years, the Ad Hoc Committee has been working towards the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, with varying degrees of interest from the great Powers. In recent times, the Ad Hoc

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Committee has suffered a set-back as a result of international power play, with some States attempting to alter the very concept of the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and to shift the focus of attention away from the dangers posed to the littoral and hinterland States by the increasing military presence of great Powers in the Indian Ocean area. We find that the Ad Hoc Committee has been subject to a systematic attempt to whittle away its very basis, in order to suit the interests and concerns of a few members, which is certainly contrary to the expressed will and interests and aspirations of the overwhelming number of littoral and hinterland States. Consideration by the Committee of matters alien to its mandate will undermine the very basis on which it was established. The characteristics of the zone of peace were clearly spelt out in concrete terms in resolution 2832 (XXVI), and we should focus attention on these issues.

On numerous occasions we have been told that, while there is general acceptance of the decision to convene the conference on the Indian Ocean as a necessary step for the implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, substantive preparatory work cannot be completed overnight, and requires time. We would like to ask whether in the last several years the work of the Ad Hoc Committee has not in fact been directed towards this very end. Is it now intended that preparations for the conference should extend ad infinitum into the blue horizon, or is it still considered unrealistic to set a date, the setting of which has been suggested by all the non-aligned members of the Committee?

The setting of preconditions with regard to either the harmonization of views or the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area, is, we feel, merely a pretext to kill the proposal for the conference. While it is generally accepted that some degree of harmonization of views is necessary before a conference of this kind can be convened, surely such harmonization is an on-going process and cannot become a precondition for its convening. If harmonization is interpreted to mean full agreement, and preparation is meant to suggest a finalization of the outcome of the conference, then the work of the conference would have been concluded even before it was convened, and there would be no need at all for the conference.

As regards the political and security climate, it is the very seriousness of the political and security situation in the Indian Ocean, caused by the presence of great Powers and their confrontation in the area, which necessitates the early and urgent convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean. We do not at this stage wish to refer to instances of military might and muscle of the great Powers being

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flexed in the Indian Ocean, as well as the variations in the form of this military and strategic presence which are being employed in an effort at power projection, or to serve as a deterrent to other perceived great-Power advances in the area. We deeply regret that the Committee has been precluded from arriving at an agreement on the finalization of dates for the convening of the conference in 1984, and now has to consider its being convened not later than the first half of 1985. We hope that this new deadline, at least, can be adhered to.

There has been an attempt to portray the question of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace as a purely regional disarmament measure. This approach is contrary to the facts, since the peace of the Indian Ocean is being threatened by the escalating military presence of great Powers. It is precisely this extra-regional military presence which has necessitated the declaration of the area as a zone of peace. The gatherings of the non-aligned countries have repeatedly emphasized the imperative need for the implementation of the Declaration. We hope that the negativism of some members of the Ad Hoc Committee will not paralyze its functioning. We trust that we can continue to work together in the coming months to enable the Committee to concentrate on the remaining preparatory work so that the conference may be held in 1985.

In conclusion, I should like to recall the words of the Prime Minister of India in her keynote address to the seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983:

"[An] issue on which we stand as one is in opposing the intensive militarization of the Indian Ocean and the nuclearization of the Diego Garcia base. We should redouble our efforts to ensure that the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean is convened as earlier decided. The littoral States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations have declared time and again that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace. Can we develop the strength to make this a reality?" (A/38/132, p. 148)

Mr. JEICHANDE (Mozambique) (interpretation from French): Today there is general awareness that the outbreak of nuclear war in any region of the world would lead to a catastrophe with unimaginable consequences for all of mankind. That is why we are concerned by the growing militarization and nuclearization of the Indian Ocean region. Diego Garcia, a territory arbitrarily wrenched from the national whole of Mauritius, has now become the most threatening base of aggression against the peoples and countries of the Indian Ocean region.

(Mr. Jeichande, Mozambique)

When in December 1971 the General Assembly adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI), the peoples of the area thought that the Assembly had succeeded in removing the threat of armed confrontation in that region. But their disillusionment has been great. Year after year we see delaying tactics preventing the transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

The opponents of the freedom of peoples and of peace are always looking for the most treacherous and scornful ways of thwarting the will and the deepest aspirations of peoples. They introduce linkage everywhere: just like Namibia, the Indian Ocean has its linkage. That is why the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has made no progress. Twelve years have passed since the Assembly adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI), and we are still far indeed from taking steps to put into effect an international agreement on the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. For us, a zone of peace means a zone free from foreign military bases and installations, and free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The holding of a conference on the Indian Ocean - which since 1981 has been scheduled for convening in Sri Lanka - is always being questioned by certain countries which, on the pretext of the existence of a new situation in the region have the audacity not only to postpone the conference, but even to question the very notion of a zone of peace as defined by resolution 2832 (XXVI). But why did those same countries not accept the convening of a conference before those so-called new events took place? Just as they are doing in the case of Namibia, these countries are attempting to link the question of the demilitarization and denuclearization of the Indian Ocean to matters which have nothing to do with that question. Such linkage is unfounded and amounts to an argument which permits militaristic Powers to increase the tensions and dangers in the region.

In the Ad Hoc Committee, we joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/AC.159/L.56/Rev.1, despite our reservations on paragraphs 5 and 6. If that draft resolution is put to the vote in this Committee, my delegation will abstain on those two paragraphs.

We hope that the conference on the Indian Ocean will finally take place in 1985, as provided for in the draft resolution before this Committee.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The statement made by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, Ambassador Fonseka, prompts me to make a few off-the-cuff comments on this subject. I wish to begin by saying that my delegation is very grateful to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the very skilful and patient way in which he conducted that Committee's work.

As we all know, the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was adopted in 1971, 12 years ago. As the draft resolution before the Committee says, convening the conference on the Indian Ocean would be a

"necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace."

The General Assembly has already adopted three resolutions on this subject: 34/80 B of 1979, 36/90 of 1981 and 37/96 of 1982.

Why do some States appear to be reluctant to see this conference convened? There are two basic reasons put forward: first, that the prevailing political climate is not very favourable for the holding of a conference, and secondly, that there has not yet been complete harmonization of views.

As to the first argument, we share the view just expressed by the representative of India: it is when the climate is politically delicate that greater efforts have to be made in international forums to change it.

With regard to the second argument, we regret that the positions of certain States, in particular of certain States permanent members of the Security Council, are in complete contradiction to the positions that those same delegations have adopted on other subjects. Here all I can do is repeat what Ambassador Fonseka has told us this morning, and I want to repeat what he said because I too have been an eye-witness to what I am talking about; I attended the Second Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which he referred to. With respect to the Third Review Conference, scheduled for 1985, that will be the same year that the Ad Hoc Committee will be asked, as it is in this draft resolution, to hold the Conference. Ambassador Fonseka stated:

(spoke in English)

"An example which comes to mind and which is very appropriate at the present time is the third review conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which this Committee has decided will be held in 1985. Preparatory meetings have been scheduled, and, of course, the

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

conference itself will take place. The review conference was decided upon notwithstanding the fact that the second Review Conference, held in August and September 1980 did not measure up to expectations and produced no more than a pro forma final document. I have no wish to sound like a prophet of gloom, but it will not be disputed that the circumstances today and the prognostications for the coming months are even less auspicious for a review conference with a successful outcome than they were in 1980. Nevertheless, the depositary States have initiated and obtained adoption of a draft resolution calling for such a conference.

"One is compelled to conclude that, irrespective of the completion of preparatory work - or, may I say, harmonization of views - irrespective of the political climate, and irrespective of what the outcome might be, there is a will among those for whom a review conference is an imperative to hold a conference, and that therefore a conference will take place. I might be reminded that the review conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a requirement of article VIII of the Treaty itself and that comparisons or parallels are not quite appropriate.

"That, however, does not detract from my contention that if there is a will to hold a conference - in this case a conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace - it can be held. That willingness, unfortunately, has been less than forthcoming on the part of some members of the Ad Hoc Committee and hence this third postponement of the Conference to 1985." (supra, p. 4)

(continued in Spanish)

I hope that those countries whose negative attitude has led to the constant postponement of the Conference on the Indian Ocean will adopt a position in keeping with the position they have adopted on the holding of the Third Review Conference of the NPT in 1985.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/38/29 and its financial implications, contained in document A/38/C.1/38/L.85.

We shall return to the request put forward by the representative of Poland in his statement to have a separate and recorded vote on operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution in document A/38/29. If I hear no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

A roll-call vote has been requested.

A roll-call vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: None

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 5 was adopted by 97 votes to none, with 16 abstentions.*

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now vote on operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution in document A/38/29.

A roll-call vote has been requested.

A roll-call vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda,

* Subsequently the delegations of Morocco and Somalia advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: None

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Upper Volta, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 6 was adopted by 94 votes to none, with 20 abstentions.*

The CHAIRMAN: We turn now to the draft resolution as a whole. It appears in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/38/29), and the financial implications are in document A/C.1/38/L.85.

The representative of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, requested in his statement at the outset of this meeting that the draft resolution as a whole should be adopted without a vote; and in his statement asking for separate votes on operative paragraphs 5 and 6 the representative of Poland said that he would have no objection to the Committee's adopting the draft resolution as a whole without a vote. Therefore, I would suggest to the Committee that we proceed accordingly and adopt the draft resolution without a vote. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

The draft resolution as whole was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those delegations which have asked to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The question of implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has a rather lengthy history, starting in 1971 when the General Assembly adopted a resolution aimed at that goal. Frequently - and even last

* Subsequently the delegations of Guyana and Morocco advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

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year - the General Assembly has confirmed the necessity of convening a conference on declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and has even adopted approximate dates for such a conference. Frequently those dates have been extended and at this session also we are adopting a decision to hold a conference not in 1984, as previously contemplated, but in 1985.

Such a practice has now become routine and if we follow it we may anticipate that next year also we shall agree to postpone the convening of the conference once more - that is to say, from 1985 to 1986 - and then once again, and so forth.

In recent years, the Soviet delegation has regretted this very greatly. We have noticed a sort of "fakery" in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. Every year the Committee holds three sessions. The first session deals with general political debating procedural issues; the second with the discussion of the issue of when and how the Conference on the Indian Ocean is to be convened; and the third with preparing the Committee's report to the General Assembly. In the Assembly we adopt a rather ambiguous and watered-down resolution which determines a similar order of discussion for the following year.

Can one consider such a situation satisfactory? Of course not, inasmuch as it indicates that a decision on the question of declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace is not making any progress.

One of the obstacles is that from year to year the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly contain no precise indications of what has to be done to prepare the conference and how it has to be done. At the same time the resolutions, on the insistence of some States, include preconditions for the convening of the conference, and those preconditions fall into two categories: one demanding that during the course of the preparation issues of substance should be decided, the second that some agreement should be reached or some harmonization of views. As has already been indicated by a number of speakers, to carry out these preconditions is practically impossible. Questions of substance should be resolved at the Conference itself, since the harmonization or agreement of views on a broad range of international political problems is also practically unattainable. Despite appearances, the Ad Hoc Committee has made no discernible progress in its work.

At the same time, in the Indian Ocean region itself we see events occurring which are evidence that that vast area of our planet is increasingly becoming

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transformed into an arena for an accelerated arms race, with the accumulation of the most up-to-date weapons of war, including nuclear weapons, and an increase in the number of military bases.

Let me cite some examples: In Diego Garcia, which was torn away from Mauritius, we find the consolidation of a major United States military and air base. In the region of the Indian Ocean the United States has created an entire military structure headed by the so-called Central Military Command, whose sphere of activities includes a very large number of Asian and African countries. An example of the action of this Command and of the rapid deployment forces of the United States was the organization in August of this year of the Bright Star 1983 military manoeuvres which involved certain Indian Ocean countries. Those manoeuvres were carried out ostensibly to "protect" the vital interests of the United States in regions which are far distant from Washington, including the Indian Ocean itself. Their sphere of activities included the territories of many Afro-Asian countries and practically the entire airspace of the Indian Ocean. During the course of the manoeuvres B-52 bombers were used, as were F-107 fighter bombers, which are capable of carrying nuclear weapons, as well as F-16 pursuit planes and bombers. United States nuclear aircraft carriers also participated in the manoeuvres.

Therefore, all the countries adjacent to the Indian Ocean, and all peace-loving countries, have every right to be concerned, as was reflected in the decisions of the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries which took place in New Delhi in March of this year - in particular, that the creation and consolidation of military bases on Diego Garcia are a threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful development of Mauritius and other States. The Heads of State or Government also appealed for a rapid restoration of that Island to Mauritius. The Conference expressed the view that any military presence, military bases or military objectives in the Indian Ocean, as well as military and other weapons of mass destruction, are a crude violation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The Declaration of the Non-Aligned Countries adopted in New Delhi called upon the United Nations Special Committee to complete its preparations for a conference on the Indian Ocean, in strict conformity with its mandate. We fully support this position of the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. Their concern at the actions taken against declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace was reflected in the draft resolution of

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the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which they proposed be submitted to the present session of the General Assembly.

In our view, this draft resolution, which the Soviet delegation is ready to support in full, is an adequate basis for progress in preparing the Conference. It states that the continuing deterioration in the military and political situation in the Indian Ocean makes the most rapid convening of the conference an urgent necessity. It gives a specific date for the conference, 4 July 1984, and provides for further work on developing the agenda and agreeing to the organizational and procedural aspects of the conference, participation, order of work, rules of procedure, representation and so forth. However, those opposed to convening this conference continue their obstruction in the Ad Hoc Committee. They stubbornly refuse to permit a decision to be taken which would direct the Committee to do any practical work to convene the conference. As a result, the very positive proposals of the non-aligned countries on this issue could not be adopted.

Once again the Ad Hoc Committee has been pushed around in the same vicious circle. Unfortunately, we have to note that some of the paragraphs in the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly by the Ad Hoc Committee, particularly paragraphs 5 and 6, detract from the fulfilment of its task with respect to the Indian Ocean and, in fact, serve the purposes of those who would use those paragraphs to substitute pointless discussion for active work in preparing the conference.

For that reason, the Soviet delegation abstained from voting on this draft resolution. We cannot be associated with provisions which do not give a definite and precise mandate to the Special Committee to undertake practical work to prepare the conference. In this connection, we fully support the explanations given by our friend, the representative of the Polish People's Republic.

The Soviet delegation feels that if concrete steps can be taken in certain regions of the world, such as Europe, despite political, military and other complexities, to reduce tension - evidence of which can be seen, for example, in the Madrid Conference, which recently concluded its deliberations, and the Stockholm Conference on Confidence-Building Measures and on Disarmament in Europe, the same steps can also be taken in the Indian Ocean region.

The Soviet delegation, in conclusion, wishes to declare its willingness to co-operate with all countries - non-aligned and others alike - that are interested

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in working out measures to promote the convening of an international conference on the Indian Ocean. We also hope to see an end to attempts to thwart the Special Committee's preparation of that conference. My delegation will continue to lend every effort to achieve those goals.

Mr. ALEXANDROV (Bulgaria): The People's Republic of Bulgaria has repeatedly stated its position of principle in the United Nations concerning the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. My country has consistently supported the efforts of the countries of the region to implement this idea, mainly because we fully share their concern over the deterioration of the military and political situation in the region of the Indian Ocean.

The New Delhi Declaration of the non-aligned countries explicitly and unequivocally points out the factors involved in that deterioration, namely, the escalation of foreign military presence in the region, the expansion of existing military bases, the search for new base facilities and the establishment of new military command structures, all against the wishes of the littoral and hinterland States and other non-aligned countries.

As a country with significant maritime activities, the People's Republic of Bulgaria is interested in an easing of tensions in the region of the Indian Ocean, through which important sea lanes pass, as well as in the promotion of fruitful co-operation with the littoral and hinterland States. At the same time, as a country situated in a region which is at the crossroads of three continents, my country attaches particular importance to reducing the military threat in the southern part of the Eastern hemisphere, a threat which has already acquired tangible proportions.

There is no doubt that the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would contribute significantly to the elimination of the factors generating tensions in that part of the world, and would have a propitious impact on the political climate in the region and in the world as a whole. That, in turn, would favourably affect the settlement of the various conflict situations and be conducive to the socio-economic development of the countries of the region.

Reviewing the results of the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean so far, I cannot but note that despite all the efforts in that direction - and here I pay tribute to the personal contribution of the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador Fonseka - and the clear mandate given it by the General Assembly, the Committee has not been able to complete its work on the preparation of the

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international conference. Our participation in the discussions leads us to conclude that the lack of results is due not so much to the essence of the issues under consideration as to the absence of the necessary political will on the part of some States, and their unwillingness to participate in any concrete preparatory work. The delegations of those States have tried to drag the Committee into futile polemics on questions not directly related to the convening of a conference on establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. Persistent attempts have been made to alter the Committee's mandate and to trivialize its work. Such a position is easily understood against the background of the official policy of the United States and its allies aimed at expanding their military presence in the Indian Ocean.

At the same time, a number of objective prerequisites are at hand for the speedy and successful conclusion of the preparations to convene an international conference on the Indian Ocean. A broad discussion took place in the Committee, as a result of which the positions of States concerning the substance of the issues under consideration were sufficiently clarified. The framework of a general agreement on which the conference could be based has crystallized. A sound basis for the co-ordination of procedural and organizational matters has also been established.

At this advanced stage in our work it would have been logical for the Ad Hoc Committee to concentrate its activities on the drafting and adoption of the conference agenda, since the agenda is the focus and embodiment of the entire range of questions relating to the holding of such a major international conference.

Proceeding from such considerations, the Bulgarian delegation was hopeful that, despite all existing difficulties, the Ad Hoc Committee would be in a position in 1983 to submit a draft resolution constituting an extended programme for direct preparation of the conference on the Indian Ocean. Unfortunately, the all-too-familiar events of the previous years repeated themselves. A number of preconditions found their way into the draft, preconditions which could be used as a pretext further to delay the convening of the Colombo conference.

While the document as a whole pinpoints the problem and accentuates the need to carry out as a matter of priority the necessary preparatory work, the above-mentioned considerations and preconditions, contained above all in operative paragraphs 5 and 6, threaten to reduce the draft resolution's general positive thrust. My delegation has repeatedly drawn attention to this unfortunate

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circumstance during the deliberations in the Group of Friends of the Chairman during the past three months.

The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria accepts the document in its entirety as a compromise which, despite its shortcomings, enables the Committee - more or less - to continue its efforts to carry out the responsibilities conferred upon it by the General Assembly. At the same time, we cannot subscribe to formulations which in essence express a thesis alien to the urgent necessity to take practical measures to strengthen peace and security in the Indian Ocean, which is intended to be the basic idea underlying the draft resolution.

That obvious inner contradiction should not, and cannot, be concealed or ignored if we value the draft resolution that we are to adopt. Such uncritical adoption would be tantamount to basing all our future work on uncertain ground.

Prompted by this consideration, my delegation decided to second the call for a separate vote on the above-mentioned provisions, and abstained in that vote.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to express my delegation's appreciation of the efforts made by Ambassador Fonseca, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, to achieve a consensus in document A/38/29. He had to deal with delaying tactics and manoeuvres by certain circles, which impeded the Committee's work and impeded the implementation of its mandate by the introduction of certain questions which were not part of the mandate.

At its twenty-sixth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI), declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. The objectives of the resolution were to eliminate from the Indian Ocean military bases and installations, the emplacement of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any military manifestation of great-Power rivalry.

Although 10 years have passed since the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, of which we are a member, was created in accordance with resolution 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, although the General Assembly has decided to hold a conference in Colombo to implement the Declaration; and although the preparatory work on the conference has already been decided upon, the Committee has had to cope with various obstacles raised by the delegations of the United States and certain other Western Powers, and has had difficulty in carrying out its mandate.

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Those countries did their utmost to abort the conference on the Indian Ocean and prevent its being held in 1982 or 1983 and have persisted in their attempts to prevent its being held early in 1984 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/96. My delegation accepted adoption of the draft resolution on implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, as prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee, for submission to the General Assembly, even though it was adopted with the inclusion of operative paragraphs 5 and 6, but we support the position of the non-aligned countries in the Committee. We are indignant about the conference's postponement until 1985. We hope that its postponement from one year to the next will not become a practice in the Committee's work in 1984, but that in 1984 the Committee will complete preparations for the conference. That is how we interpret operative paragraph 5, which requests the Ad Hoc Committee to complete preparatory work on the conference, in consideration of the political and security climate in the region, with a view to enabling the opening of the conference in Colombo in the first half of 1985, it being understood that such preparatory work would comprise organizational matters.

We wish to stress the importance of paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which emphasizes the Assembly's decision to convene the conference at Colombo as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted in 1971.

In his statement at this session of the General Assembly my Foreign Minister stressed the threats which exist in the Indian Ocean region. As a coastal State of that Ocean, Democratic Yemen attaches great importance to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. It must be implemented to ensure the security of the region and to put an end to the arms race there. The Indian Ocean and the surrounding regions must become a zone of peace. It is our belief that assured security is of vital importance for the development of the countries of the region.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution reaffirms the conviction that concrete action for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would be a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security. It also expresses the Assembly's conviction that the continued military presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean area, conceived in the context of their confrontation, gives urgency to the need to take practical steps for the early achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

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The importance of the early achievement of those objectives is made especially obvious by the threat posed to the area by the forces and military bases of imperialism, which jeopardize the peace and security of the peoples of the area and of the entire world. The build-up of United States military forces in the Indian Ocean region has caused increased military and political tensions in the area. The strengthening of military bases, especially the base on Diego Garcia, and the establishment in the area of a Rapid Deployment Force headquarters in the area following the declaration of the region as being an area of vital interests for the United States, in disregard of the sovereign interests of the States in the region, constitute a threat to the peace and security of the peoples in the area.

Furthermore, the provocative manoeuvres carried out in the area by the United States run counter to the provisions of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. That Declaration states that warships and military aircraft may not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of any littoral or hinterland State of the Indian Ocean.

We agree with the call in the preamble of the draft resolution for the exercise of the political will necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We hope that political will will be manifested in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in the course of 1984, which would make it possible for the Ad Hoc Committee to overcome the obstacles raised by the pressure brought to bear by a minority of countries and for the Committee to fulfil its mandate and, as requested in paragraph 5, to complete preparatory work relating to the conference on the Indian Ocean.

We reaffirm that the claim that procedural matters must be resolved before substantive issues can be approached is unacceptable. It simply constitutes an attempt to obstruct the Ad Hoc Committee's work. That Committee's difficulties in 1983 teach us that consensus must be employed in the Committee to help achieve the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and that its absence must not be used as a pretext on which to obstruct the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and prevent the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean.

That is especially true in the light of the dangers to the peace and security of the area and of its peoples. We consider that the lack of progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee in its work in 1983 and in previous years had an influence on the

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voting on paragraphs 5 and 6. This should be taken as a warning to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee, who must strive to complete preparatory work for the conference on the Indian Ocean during the 1984 sessions. We must not find ourselves in this same position at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. THAINDRO (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): We joined in the consensus on the draft resolution as a whole, but had difficulties with paragraphs 5 and 6. As members know, my delegation is in favour of the early convening of the United Nations conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo. We have often stated our reasons for this in this Committee and in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. We regret, therefore, that paragraphs 5 and 6 are ambiguous and unclear and will not promote the rapid convening of the conference.

We consider furthermore that the insistence of certain delegations that certain substantive matters be discussed and that there be a harmonization of views as preconditions for holding the conference has been used in the past by those delegations to block the convening of a conference at Colombo, and that is why we abstained in the vote on paragraph 6.

As His Excellency Mr. Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar, stated at the seventh summit of non-aligned countries, held at New Delhi,

"It is very obvious that the systematic blockage of a meeting under United Nations auspices does not contribute to promoting the concept of peace in the Indian Ocean."

Mr. BEYENE (Ethiopia): My delegation would like to express its views on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, as contained in document A/38/29, and which this Committee has just adopted. At the outset however, I should like to pay a deserved tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Fonseka of Sri Lanka, for his patient and skilful guidance of the difficult work of the Committee.

As one of the group of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, Ethiopia has an abiding interest in the transformation of the area into a zone of peace. The holding of a conference towards that end, therefore, was an idea which secured our early support. Regrettably, however, the conference, first planned to be held three years ago, has been subjected to numerous artificial blocks and dilatory tactics and has thus been postponed from year to year by quarters not terribly well disposed to the idea of a zone of peace.

(Mr. Beyene, Ethiopia)

Indeed, since 1981 the establishment of new military bases and the expansion of existing ones, the acquisition of military facilities, and the frequency of provocative military exercises have increased so dramatically as to make a mockery of the concept of a zone of peace. This state of affairs has put in jeopardy the independence, territorial integrity and peaceful development of sovereign States, thus adversely affecting the political and security climate of the region.

When this is added to the already tense international situation, the absence of dialogue between the big Powers, and the public advocacy of the policy of force, it should not be difficult to imagine its ominous impact on global peace and stability as a whole.

The Ethiopian delegation, therefore, continues to put special emphasis on the urgency of the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean for the speedy implementation of the United Nations Declaration of 1971, before it is too late. To that end, my delegation will do its utmost to contribute to the finalization of the necessary preparatory work for the conference, yet again postponed, this time to 1985.

It is in light of this that my delegation joined others in the adoption without a vote of the recommendation as a whole. My delegation, however, wishes to place on record its serious misgivings about the advisability or even the logic of a discussion of substantive issues, implied in paragraph 5, as a precondition for the convening of the Colombo conference, when, in fact, the central purpose of the holding of the conference is to tackle matters of substance.

This, in my delegation's view, is either a lack of good will or a thinly veiled attempt perpetually to hold the conference hostage to the realization of strategic objectives of Powers outside the Indian Ocean region.

As regards paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, my delegation is of the view that harmonization of views, though helpful, cannot be a precondition for the holding of the Conference. We view harmonization as a process that has already commenced and should continue even during the Conference itself.

Furthermore, Ethiopia believes that the adverse political and security climate prevailing in the Indian Ocean region, instead of being an obstacle to the early holding of the Conference, is indeed a compelling political reason for its convening without any further delay. Even though we voted in favour of paragraphs 5 and 6, Ethiopia dissociates itself from the obvious motivation of a

(Mr. Beyene, Ethiopia)

group of States and the hidden implication of some of the language in the draft resolution, particularly in paragraphs 5 and 6, further to delay the convening of the international conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

Mr. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, we voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, although we abstained on paragraphs 5 and 6. In connection with the conference on the Indian Ocean, we find ourselves in a situation similar to that of the General Assembly vis-à-vis the Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. There a small number of countries - the same small number of countries - have been working against the interests of the international community. Ever since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, my delegation has supported its full implementation. But we know that the members of the Preparatory Committee have had to deal with stalling tactics by those who wish to maintain their military presence in the Indian Ocean region. Specious arguments have been advanced which are simply attempts to obstruct the holding of the conference. However, we are now well aware of the motives for this: we know that the United States Government has tried to establish a permanent force in the Middle East and in the Gulf area, made up of navy and army troops. In our statement next Tuesday on international security, my delegation will go into details on this subject, but through you, Mr. Chairman, I should like to express thanks to the members of the Preparatory Committee and in particular to its Chairman, Ambassador Fonseca, for their efforts in presenting a draft resolution to us promoting the interests of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. We support those interests.

Mr. VO AHN TUAN (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Viet Nam abstained in the voting on paragraphs 5 and 6 for the following reasons.

We live in a region adjacent to the Indian Ocean and therefore we entirely support the initiative of the non-aligned countries to convene a conference in Colombo to implement the General Assembly's Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. At the present time, the convening of such a conference is all the more urgent given the deterioration of the international situation, the intensification of the alien military presence in the Indian Ocean - in particular that of the United States - the expansion of existing military bases, such as the gigantic air and naval complex on Diego Garcia, the deployment of strategic bombers and rapid deployment forces, and so on. Those are all threats to the peace and security, not only of the littoral countries but also of countries in regions adjacent to the Indian Ocean.

(Mr. Vo Ahn Tuan, Viet Nam)

My delegation welcomes the resolute and sustained effort by the socialist and non-aligned countries members of the Ad Hoc Committee to complete the preparatory work and convene the conference on the date proposed. What is more, my delegation cannot refrain from expressing its profound disappointment at the postponement of that conference for the third time. Once again, the pretext of harmonizing views on the remaining relevant issues has been invoked by certain Western members of the Ad Hoc Committee in order to obstruct the Committee's work and postpone to the Greek Calends the convening of that conference and at the same time to undermine the very concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

Despite these serious reservations on paragraphs 5 and 6, my delegation supported the draft resolution as a whole in order to reiterate our unswerving support for the speedy transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and our desire to register our continuing support for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

Mr. SORZANO (United States of America): The United States has participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean for several years on the clear understanding that the work of that Committee and its reports to the General Assembly proceeded on the basis of consensus. Until now, consensus has always been achieved within the Ad Hoc Committee. The achievement of consensus has by no means always been easy or without compromise for all participants, including the United States. However, we have always made clear to all our firm dedication to the continuing use of consensus as the guiding principle and procedure of that Committee. The recent work of the Ad Hoc Committee has perhaps involved more effort and ingenuity by the members of the Committee than ever before in the pursuit of consensus. As was made very apparent by the statements of numerous Western and non-aligned representatives at Wednesday's meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, no single delegation obtained everything it desired in the drafting process. There were compromises on all sides. Certainly, if the document which we have considered had been written exclusively by the United States it would look very different. The same could be said by other delegations with which we have co-operated in the prolonged and difficult work of the Ad Hoc Committee. None the less, some delegations have chosen to depart from the consensus procedure, which has been the basis for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee for years. My delegation deplores this move. We also deplore the obvious intent of this action, which is to attack the very underlying principles on which the work of the Committee has

(Mr. Sorzano, United States
of America)

proceeded in the past and must in the future. The implications of this action by a small number of willful delegations are grave and cannot be properly assessed in the short time we now have at our disposal. As my delegation worked on the assumption that consensus on this draft resolution was the collective objective, we, as required by the process of consensus and in the spirit of compromise and flexibility, reluctantly agreed to less than fully satisfactory language in the draft resolution. However, now that the assumption of consensus has been replaced by the entirely different approach of having to vote on paragraphs of this draft resolution, my delegation, seeing this text in this new light, wishes to announce that while the United States would have posed no objection to the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution, the United States requests that the record reflect that we are not - I repeat: not - participating in the decision that the Committee has just taken.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the United Kingdom, who wishes to speak in exercise of his right of reply.

Mr. SLINN (United Kingdom): My delegation had not intended to speak this morning, but we have now heard two delegations refer to the "wrenching" or "tearing away" of Diego Garcia from Mauritius. I therefore beg the indulgence of the Committee while I set the record straight.

The United Kingdom is in no doubt about its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago of which Diego Garcia is the principal island. The Archipelago was ceded, along with Mauritius, the Seychelles and other islands, to Great Britain from France under the Treaty of Paris in 1814. The Chagos Archipelago remained a Dependency of Mauritius until 1965, but it was loosely administered. The Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, was detached from Mauritius in 1965 with the full agreement of the Mauritian Council of Ministers to form part of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now completed action on agenda item 59.

Before adjourning, I would first like to remind members of the Committee that Friday, 2 December, at 6 p.m. - that is today - is the deadline for speakers to inscribe their names on this item. As to the submission of draft resolutions under agenda items 65, 66 and 67, as I previously announced, we had decided and that the

(The Chairman)

deadline should be today at 6 p.m. However, at the request of several delegations that are still in the process of consultation, I propose, with the Committee's approval, to extend the deadline until noon on Monday, 5 December.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

Mr. RATHORE (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to inform the Committee that the delegations of Bahamas, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Togo and Trinidad and Tobago have become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/38/L.83.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.