



**REPORT**  
**OF THE *AD HOC* COMMITTEE**  
**ON THE INDIAN OCEAN**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 29 (A/32/29)

**UNITED NATIONS**



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New York, 1977

#### **NOTE**

**Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 31/88 of 14 December 1976, the General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to continue their consultations with a view to formulating a programme of action leading to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean; invited once again all States, in particular the great Powers and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, to co-operate in a practical manner with the Ad Hoc Committee in the discharge of its functions; and also requested the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work and consultations in accordance with its mandate and to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-second session a report on its work.
2. The Ad Hoc Committee reconvened on 18 April 1977 and held 13 formal meetings (A/AC.159/SR.39-51) and a number of informal meetings at United Nations Headquarters between that date and 14 October 1977. The littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean held one informal meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 3 October, which was presided over by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.
3. As established by General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and 3259 B (XXIX) of 9 December 1974 the membership of the Committee continued to be as follows: Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia.
4. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee continued to serve as follows:  

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe (Sri Lanka);
<u>Vice-Chairman:</u>	Mr. Djoko Joewono (Indonesia);
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar).

## II. CONSULTATIONS PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 31/88

5. In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 31/88, the Acting Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, in a letter dated 14 April 1977, invited the great Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean "to participate in consultations looking forward to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean" and to co-operate in a practical manner with the Ad Hoc Committee in the discharge of its functions. Replies were received from the following countries: Canada, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. Among the Governments that have replied, two - Greece and Panama - have accepted the invitation. The delegation of Italy noted that it was forwarding the invitation to its Government in order to obtain instructions. The remaining States, while not responding affirmatively to the Ad Hoc Committee's invitation, have, however, expressed a sympathetic attitude towards the creation of conditions of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean, and for keeping the region free from military competition on the part of outside Powers. Several of

these countries have stated in specific terms their reasons for not participating in the consultations. (For the substance of the replies, see annex I.)

6. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 31/88 and to the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee adopted at its 42nd meeting on 22 April, the Acting Chairman of the Committee, in his letter dated 11 May 1977, invited the members of the Ad Hoc Committee, the other littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, as well as the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, which had accepted the Committee's invitation to co-operate in its work, to communicate their views and suggestions on the question of a programme of action leading to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean. Replies were received from the following countries: Australia, Burma, China, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Mauritius and Pakistan. All Governments supported the establishment of such a peace zone to ensure peace and security in the Indian Ocean and recognized the need to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean for advancing the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. (For the substance of the replies, see annex II.)

### III. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GREAT POWERS

7. The Ad Hoc Committee, at its 39th meeting on 18 April 1977, decided to entrust the Acting Chairman with the task of entering into consultations with the great Powers principally concerned, the United States and the Soviet Union, in order to discuss with them the co-operation they would give the Committee in the discharge of its functions, and to seek further clarification of the statements made by the respective leaders of the two countries relating to developments in the Indian Ocean. The Committee requested the Acting Chairman to report on the results of the consultations at the Committee's next meeting.

8. At the Committee's 42nd meeting, on 22 April, the Acting Chairman reported that he had been informed by the representative of the United States that at the current stage the United States Government was not in a position to give any further clarification of the statements of its leaders. He indicated that whereas, in his view, there was a clear desire on the part of both the United States and the Soviet Union to deal in a positive manner with the escalating arms race in the Indian Ocean, there had so far been no steps undertaken of a substantial nature, although some initial procedural actions had been undertaken. The Acting Chairman stated that the representative of the United States had informed him that substantial talks might be commenced within a few weeks. He further pointed out that the United States position with regard to the problem of the Indian Ocean and to the Committee remained unchanged so far, while its future position could not be divorced from mutual and reciprocal actions on the part of the Soviet Union.

9. Reporting at the same meeting on his consultation with the representative of the Soviet Union, the Acting Chairman stated that he had been informed that the Soviet Union considered first of all that a basic point relating to the establishment of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean was the dismantling of foreign military bases, and his country had never had any intention of building military bases in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet delegation, therefore, regretted that in the relevant General Assembly resolution reference was made to "an escalation of the military presence of the great Powers conceived in the context of great Power rivalry". The representative of the Soviet Union had, however, expressed the

willingness of his country to seek, together with other Powers, ways to reduce on a reciprocal basis the military actions of non-coastal States in the Indian Ocean and the regions directly adjacent thereto. He had added that the Soviet readiness to contribute to the materialization of the idea for establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean should not entail any obstacles to freedom of navigation and research in the Indian Ocean. The participation of the Soviet Union in consultations relating to convening an international conference on the Indian Ocean was dependent on the willingness of the Committee to take into account the Soviet Union's approach to those matters.

10. At the 43rd meeting, the Chairman was requested to provide the Committee with a written report on his discussions with the representatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which he had undertaken subsequent to the earlier consultations by the Acting Chairman pursuant to the Committee's decision at its 39th meeting (see para. 7 above).

11. The following is the text of the Chairman's report on his consultations:

"(a) The Acting Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ambassador James Leonard, called on the Chairman on 19 July 1977, and handed him a letter of that date conveying the United States Government's reactions to the Acting Chairman's letter. A copy of the United States Mission's letter of 19 July 1977 has already been circulated to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee (see annex I).

"(b) In a reply of 21 July 1977 to Ambassador Leonard's letter of 19 July 1977, the Chairman had expressed his gratification that President Carter had expressed the willingness of the United States to join the Soviet Union in seeking ways to achieve mutual military restraint in that region, and that the United States fully shared the desire of the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland States that the region not become an arena for military competition on the part of outside Powers.

"(c) In the same reply, the Chairman noted with satisfaction that the United States and the USSR have already initiated talks on this subject, and that, while having certain reservations, the United States is prepared to extend its practical co-operation to the Committee by keeping it informed of important developments that might have a bearing on its work and might be of interest to its members.

"(d) The Chairman stated, however, that he would not be completely candid if he did not express his disappointment at the inability of the United States to participate in consultations which have as their express purpose the formulation of a programme of action leading to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean. He said, however, that the Ad Hoc Committee would continue to persevere in its efforts in a manner which would be best designed to promote the attainment of its objective, and further said that States of the region and outside the region which shared the Committee's concern would welcome this slight advance.

"(e) On 25 July 1977, Mr. R. S. Ovinnikov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations, called on the Chairman to convey to him, on the instructions of his Government, the Soviet Union's response to the

Acting Chairman's letter of 14 April 1977. Mr. Ovinnikov stated that talks had taken place between the United States and the USSR between 22 and 27 June, that the talks were organized in the general framework of the arms reduction negotiations between them and possible steps towards arms limitation by both States in the Indian Ocean area had been considered. He stated that these talks had been conducive to a better understanding of each other's position and that the two Governments had noted that the littoral States of the Indian Ocean and others were actively interested in promoting peace in the Indian Ocean. Both States, namely, the United States and the USSR, had expressed the conviction that in the establishment of a peace zone full account should be taken of the universally acknowledged rules of the freedom of navigation and overflight, the unimpeded conduct of commercial navigation and oceanographic and other scientific research as well as other applicable rules of international law.

"(f) The Chairman drew Mr. Ovinnikov's attention to the fact that paragraph 3 of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971) had indicated that the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels of all nations would be unaffected and that warships and military aircraft could 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 in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. By inference warships and military aircraft could use the Indian Ocean for other purposes. The Chairman added that in every statement made by him he had repeated this assurance and stated that oceanographic and other scientific research was the concern of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, which was still in progress. He further made it clear that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union nor any other countries that had declined to co-operate with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean were justified in citing these reasons for withholding their co-operation.

"(g) The Chairman expressed concern that while the two super-Powers expected from us full co-operation in any measures proposed by them in regard to arms limitation or disarmament, this courtesy had not been reciprocated by the super-Powers.

"(h) The Chairman explained to Mr. Ovinnikov that he could not comment on the Soviet Union's contention that they never had, and did not now intend to have, military bases in the Indian Ocean. The Chairman explained that the Ad Hoc Committee's appeal was a general one to all Powers to dismantle such bases and refrain from establishing, maintaining or expanding military bases.

"(i) The Chairman had further stated to Mr. Ovinnikov that the Ad Hoc Committee's sole purpose was to ascertain from the super-Powers the problems that confronted them in regard to the implementation of the Declaration, as neither the Ad Hoc Committee nor the littoral and hinterland States which it represented wished to make any proposals to the General Assembly on mistaken premises. It was for that reason that the Ad Hoc Committee had sought their co-operation and that the Ad Hoc Committee had not even asked them to subscribe to the principles but merely to indicate their respective positions.

"(j) It is against the background of these exchanges that the Chairman now reports the further reactions expressed by the two super-Powers.

"(k) On 26 July 1977, Mr. Ovinnikov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Soviet Mission saw the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and handed him the following note, which contains in substance the USSR's position:

- '(i) The Soviet Union shares the desire of a number of Asian and African States to turn the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. Our country has shown its readiness to contribute to the realization of the idea. In the Soviet Union's view, the key point is that there should be no foreign military bases in the area which constitute the main element of a permanent military presence. In other words, the bases which have been established there should be dismantled and no new bases should be established. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has never had and does not now intend to build military bases in the Indian Ocean.
- '(ii) In resolving the problems of foreign military bases along these lines, the Soviet Union is ready, together with other Powers, to seek ways of reducing on a reciprocal basis the military activities of non-coastal States in the Indian Ocean and the regions directly adjacent thereto. Naturally, measures of this kind must take fully into account the generally recognized rules of international law regarding freedom of navigation on the high seas, the need for putting into ports of coastal States, and freedom of scientific research.
- '(iii) If due account is taken of this our approach by the States concerned, the Soviet Union will be able to participate in consultations on matters relating to preparations for convening an international conference on the Indian Ocean.'

"(l) Mr. Ovinnikov, in the course of the meeting, drew attention to paragraphs 125 and 127 of the Political Declaration of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo in August 1976, which he quoted as follows:

'125. The Conference condemned the establishment, maintenance and expansion of foreign and imperialist military bases and installations, such as Diego Garcia, by the great Powers ...'

'127. The Conference called on them /the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean/ to dismantle existing foreign bases and military installations ...' 1/

"(m) The Chairman would like to point out that the correct reference, however, is to paragraphs 3 and 4 of resolution 11 - Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal - which read as follows:

'3. Strongly condemns the establishment, maintenance and expansion of foreign military bases, such as Diego Garcia, and the escalation of great Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean to the detriment of the political

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1/ A/31/197, annex I.

and economic well-being of the littoral and hinterland States, and calls for the dismantling of all such military bases:

'4. Urges the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to make sure that their facilities are not used by warships and military aircraft, especially those of the great Powers, for purposes incompatible with the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the States of the zone or for purposes which might endanger the peace and security of the region.' 2/

"(n) On 27 July 1977, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Leonard, called on the Chairman and handed him the following note, which gives the position of the United States on the issue:

'The United States has expressed on several occasions its firm desire to avoid an escalating arms race in the Indian Ocean and to promote peace and stability in the region. We share the desire of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to see progress towards these goals and to that end the United States has begun discussions with the Soviet Union aimed at limiting the military presence of the two States in the region. These talks are in accordance with an earlier understanding between the two countries and are part of a series of discussions which the two sides have begun on a variety of arms control issues. The initial meeting of the two delegations took place in Moscow between 22 and 27 June.

'During the course of this meeting there was an exchange of views on possible steps, to be taken by both sides, which would contribute to an arms limitations arrangement in the Indian Ocean. This exchange of views contributed to a better understanding of each side's position as well as identifying areas of existing difference between them.

'During the talks, both sides noted that the littoral States of the Indian Ocean as well as other States which use its waterways have taken an active interest in strengthening peace in the area. The two parties stated that they share this goal and are hopeful that their talks will contribute to this objective.

'The two sides agreed that, in moving towards the goal of strengthening peace in the area, full account should be taken of universally recognized rules of international law regarding freedom of navigation, the rights of aircraft to overfly the waters of the high seas, the unrestricted right of all States to conduct commercial navigation and to conduct oceanographic and other research as well as other rules of international law.

'The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to continue these talks in the near future, although the time and venue of the next round of talks have not yet been decided.'"

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2/ Ibid., annex IV.A.

12. Comments of members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Chairman's report (see para. 11 above) appear in the summary records of the Ad Hoc Committee (A/AC.159/3R.45 and 48). A synopsis of these comments follows.

13. One member stated that the attitude adopted so far by the Soviet Union and the United States to the question of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone, and the development of the situation during the past year, had demonstrated that the two super-Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, were not at all sincere about the issue. Their military rivalry in the Indian Ocean had not abated in the slightest. The so-called bilateral negotiations conducted by the Soviet Union and the United States on the question of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone were nothing more than a device for bargaining. Their rivalry extended across the entire globe and the Indian Ocean was a strategically important area of contention. The two hegemonic Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly the social imperialist Power, are continuously seeking and expanding overt and covert military bases and installations, augmenting their military strength and vying for superiority in the region.

14. The root cause of the serious threat to the peace and security of the countries and peoples of the Indian Ocean region and of the obstacles to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean was the contention between the two super-Powers. In order to achieve the objective of establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, it was necessary to eliminate any manifestation of great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean, as had been pointed out by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

15. It was absolutely impermissible for the super-Powers to prevaricate by advocating what they call "stabilization" or "freezing" of their military strength or by talking about "arms limitation". Nor was it permissible for them to engage in sophistry by using such pretexts as "freedom of navigation" or "freedom of oceanographic and other scientific research".

16. In that member's view, the super-Powers should make an unequivocal commitment to eliminate "any manifestation of their military presence" in the Indian Ocean region, and scrupulously respect the independence and sovereignty of the countries of that region.

17. The commencement of bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union was regarded by some members as a positive development towards the realization of the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. The terms of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace were, of course, very broad, while the scope of the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union was much more limited. Nevertheless, those talks were considered by one of the members as being in line with the Declaration in so far as both had implications for the future peace and security of the Indian Ocean. While each member of the Committee interpreted the talks in a different light, it was to be hoped that they would all regard the decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to keep the Committee informed of their talks as a positive development.

18. This same member observed that although the two Powers, despite repeated invitations, were still unable to join in consultations on the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean, they had at least responded to the Committee's repeated requests for practical co-operation. The Committee should welcome that development and encourage the two Powers to continue to keep it informed about the progress of their bilateral talks.

19. One member noted that it was clear from the Chairman's report that the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union were still far from meeting the Committee's long-term objectives of full demilitarization and denuclearization of the Indian Ocean, and its more immediate objective of the dismantling of military bases in the region. In that member's view, little would be gained from the bilateral talks until the United States and the Soviet Union were prepared to take into account the over-all interests of the littoral and hinterland States. Those States were not seeking to legitimize the presence of the two major Powers in the Indian Ocean, still less to limit their activities; they were trying to guarantee their own security. The United States, the Soviet Union and other Powers outside the region must not be allowed to determine the security needs of the countries in the region.

20. The view was also expressed that the Chairman's report demonstrated that the goals of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace were far from being realized and that it would be useful for the littoral and hinterland States to work together to determine common goals for the region.

21. One member felt that it was impossible, at this stage, to judge what those bilateral talks had achieved, but their outcome could have an important bearing on future developments in the Indian Ocean. The results would, also, be important to the future course of action by the Ad Hoc Committee. Although the United States and the Soviet Union were not yet prepared to participate in the Committee's work, it was significant that they had expressed their readiness to co-operate with it in practical terms.

22. One member, referring to the initiation of consultations between the two super-Powers on the subject of their military presence in the Indian Ocean, pointed out that there was some reason for disquiet about the precise objectives of those consultations and the apparent encouragement of hegemonistic tendencies within the Indian Ocean. Consultations relating to peace and security in the Indian Ocean should be held in the Ad Hoc Committee with the full participation of all the States concerned. The same member expressed the view that a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean could be established by eliminating the military presence and rivalry of the great Powers and creating conditions of security within the region, inter alia, by commitment to the principles of sovereignty, equality and independence of States, establishing a balance in the military strength of littoral States, resolving existing disputes and conflicts and by denuclearization of the Indian Ocean region.

23. At the 49th meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on 6 October, the Chairman informed the Committee that the representatives of the Permanent Missions of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had seen him separately on 5 October to give him further information regarding the progress of the talks on questions relating to the Indian Ocean.

24. These Soviet-American talks had been continued in Washington from 26 to 30 September 1977. During the talks there was a further exchange of views on the approaches to arms limitation in the area. Various aspects of the problem under consideration had been specified, elements of similarity in the positions of the two sides had been explored and questions which required a further effort to overcome the remaining differences had been clarified.

25. Both sides had expressed their interest in achieving practical results in the talks which would be conducive to the strengthening of peace in the Indian Ocean area and contribute to the relaxation of international tension. The two sides noted that the talks had entered an advanced and practical stage. The possibility of a step-by-step implementation of appropriate measures was considered. The two sides concurred in the view that these initial steps should contribute effectively to preventing the build-up of the arms race in the Indian Ocean area and expressed their intention to move promptly in the period of implementation of such initial steps to further talks on reductions.

26. Both sides confirmed that they viewed with understanding and respect the desire of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean area to bring about the strengthening of security and the development of co-operation in the area. They will continue to take that desire into account in their bilateral discussion. In this connexion, they agreed to keep the Ad Hoc Committee informed, through its Chairman, on the progress of the talks. Soviet-American talks on questions relating to the Indian Ocean will be continued in the near future.

27. The Committee did not have the opportunity to deliberate on the Chairman's report of his consultations with the representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States on 5 October (see paras. 23-26 above).

#### IV. OTHER MATTERS

##### A. Observer status in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee

28. By letters dated 18 and 19 April 1977, respectively, Panama and Greece accepted the Committee's invitation, contained in the Acting Chairman's letter of 14 April (see para. 5 above) to co-operate with the Committee in its work. Accordingly, at its 41st meeting, on 21 April, the Committee decided to invite Panama and Greece to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee as observers.

29. By a letter dated 21 September, Democratic Yemen requested the Committee to permit it to take part in the Committee's work as an observer. At its 44th meeting, on 22 September, the Committee decided to accede to the request made by Democratic Yemen.

##### B. Proposal for a conference of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean

30. In the course of the Committee's deliberations, the suggestion was made by one member that it would be useful to hold a preliminary meeting of the States in the Indian Ocean region with a view to arriving at a common position on various issues. In that member's view, the countries in the region could not hold a conference with the great Powers and the other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean until they had reached an agreement among themselves, and a formal conference of littoral and hinterland States might be the only way to achieve such an agreement.

31. At the 48th meeting of the Committee, on 4 October 1977, the Chairman reported that, while at the informal meeting of the littoral and hinterland States held on 3 October, there was no objection to the proposed conference, no agreement had emerged regarding a suitable date and venue. Accordingly, he had decided to send a letter to all the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean inviting their views and suggestions concerning an appropriate date and venue for the conference.

##### C. Expansion of the Ad Hoc Committee's membership

32. At the 48th meeting of the Committee, the Chairman announced that Ethiopia, Greece and Democratic Yemen had expressed their desire to become members of the Ad Hoc Committee. At the 49th meeting, on 6 October, the Chairman informed the Committee of requests addressed to him by Oman and Mozambique for membership in the Ad Hoc Committee.

##### D. Letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee

33. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had received a letter dated 3 October 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations regarding the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee and of the group of littoral and hinterland States. The text of the letter is reproduced in annex III.

V. RECOMMENDATION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE  
ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

34. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean unanimously recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean  
as a Zone of Peace

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace contained in its resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, and its resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, 3080 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, 3259 A (XXIX) of 9 December 1974, 3468 (XXX) of 11 December 1975 and 31/88 of 14 December 1976,

Reaffirming its conviction that concrete action in furtherance of the objectives of the Declaration would be a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security,

Encouraged by the support extended to the concept of zones of peace by non-aligned countries at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo from 16 to 19 August 1976,

Recalling its resolution 3259 A (XXIX) in which it requested the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to enter, as soon as possible, into consultations with a view to convening a conference on the Indian Ocean,

Considering that the continued military presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean, conceived in the context of great Power rivalry, with the danger of a competitive escalation of such a military presence, makes the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace an even more imperative necessity,

Considering also that the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean requires co-operation among the regional States to ensure conditions of peace and security within the region, as envisaged in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the littoral and hinterland States,

Noting that talks between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America regarding their military presence in the Indian Ocean have been initiated and that the two countries have established contacts with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean through its Chairman,

Expressing the hope that those talks between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and lead to practical and effective co-operation on their part with the Ad Hoc Committee and the littoral and hinterland States,

Noting the reactions of certain great Powers and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to the invitation extended to them by the Ad Hoc Committee, in

pursuance of paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 31/88 by which the General Assembly requested the Committee and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to continue their consultations with a view to formulating a programme of action leading to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean,

1. Renews its invitation to the great Powers and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean that have not so far seen their way to co-operating effectively with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to enter with the least possible delay into consultations with the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean in pursuance of paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 3468 (XXX);

2. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee 3/ and in particular the stage reached in its deliberations in regard to the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean;

3. Decides that, as the next step towards the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean, a meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean be convened at a suitable venue in \_\_\_\_\_, which other States not falling within this category but which have participated or have expressed their willingness to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee could attend;

4. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to make the necessary preparations for the meeting referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. Decides to enlarge the composition of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean by the addition of \_\_\_\_\_;

6. Renews the general mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee as defined in the relevant resolutions;

7. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session a full report on its work;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary provision for the meeting referred to in paragraph 3 above and to continue to render all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Committee, including the preparation of summary records.

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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/32/29).

ANNEX I

Substantive parts of replies to the letter dated 14 April 1977 from the  
Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee

CANADA

/Original: English/

Canada is strongly sympathetic to concepts of denuclearized or demilitarized zones where these are feasible and would promote stability. In Canada's opinion such zones should be based on proposals which at first emanate from, and are agreed to by, most countries in the region concerned. For its part, Canada is not a major maritime user of the Indian Ocean. Therefore, we do not believe it would be appropriate, at this stage, for Canada to participate in the consultation to which you have kindly invited us.

I should like to take this opportunity, however, to express Canadian appreciation for the efforts that have been made to initiate and carry out consultations on the possibility of establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and hope that those consultations will be fruitful.

You may be assured that this Mission and the Canadian Government will continue to follow with interest the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and the progress of consultations among littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean with a view to defining more precisely the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, as we would not wish to rule out the possibility of adding our constructive support to these endeavours at the appropriate stage.

GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF

/Original: English/

The Federal Government shares the concern of the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean that the region might become an arena for the arms race. Yet the Federal Government feels unable at the present time to take part in the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace for the following reasons:

The Federal Government would like to defer its decision as to possible future co-operation in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee pending the results of the current talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on mutual military restraint in the Indian Ocean.

The Federal Government also fears that the proposed designation of the Indian Ocean as a nuclear-weapon-free zone might adversely affect the principle of the freedom of the seas embodied in international law and thereby set a negative precedent regarding other areas of the high seas. The Federal Government has stressed this point already on earlier occasions.

Yet despite these concerns about participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, the Federal Government will follow with interest all efforts to maintain the security of the region.

GREECE

/Original: English/

Referring to your letter dated 14 April 1977, I wish to reconfirm my Government's acceptance of your invitation to co-operate with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean in discharge of its function.

ITALY

/Original: English/

I refer to your kind letter of 14 April 1977, containing the invitation to Italy as well as to other major maritime countries to participate in the consultations for considering the question of a conference on the Indian Ocean. I wish to assure you that I am forwarding it to my Government.

As soon as instructions are received, I shall have the pleasure of informing you accordingly.

NETHERLANDS

/Original: English/

In the framework of its desire to promote global disarmament, the Netherlands continues to attach importance to the prevention of an arms race in the Indian Ocean. My Government feels that the consultations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean have not yet yielded a sufficient degree of unanimity on specific issues concerning the convening of the conference to warrant constructive participation by the Netherlands at the present stage. The Netherlands, however, remains prepared to consider participation at a later stage.

NORWAY

/Original: English/

I would like to inform you that Norway holds a positive view of the basic intent of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971. In spite of this general assessment, however, Norway has seen it proper to abstain from voting on this and subsequent resolutions in the matter. The abstentions have been motivated by the absence of agreement among the States involved as to main criteria of the envisaged zone arrangement, such as the substantive content of the concept, the delimitation of the area and the definition of littoral and hinterland States.

In view of the fact that it has not yet proved feasible to obtain the necessary degree of consensus among the States directly concerned, Norway does not find sufficient basis for participation in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean or in the consultations of the littoral and hinterland States on the subject of convening a conference on the Indian Ocean.

PANAMA

/Original: Spanish/

I wish to inform you that the delegation of Panama has taken note of the valuable comments made in your letter and that Panama will be pleased to co-operate with the Ad Hoc Committee in order that the Indian Ocean might effectively become a zone of peace, free of nuclear weapons.

SWEDEN

/Original: English/

As was underlined in Sweden's reply to the invitation from the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to participate in the consultations of the littoral and hinterland States last year, my country takes the greatest interest in matters of disarmament and we consider regional agreements for the establishment of zones of peace or nuclear-free zones to be useful in that context.

I wish to express to you and through you to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and to the participants in the informal consultations of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, Sweden's interest and appreciation of the work carried out under your guidance. I would also like to express the hope that you will be successful in the efforts to realize in a realistic manner the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

/Original: English/

As you know, we share the desire of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean for some form of arms limitation in the area. We believe, however, that this will depend upon mutually agreed restraint in the region by the United States and the Soviet Union. My Government has publicly welcomed the initiative of President Carter, which led to the decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to explore this issue, and are pleased that initial discussions have already been held. We hope that these will result in a successful outcome.

While we shall continue to play our part in the maintenance of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean, you will be aware that our general reservations in connexion with the Ad Hoc Committee remain unchanged. Accordingly, we must regretfully decline the Committee's invitation.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

/Original: English/

The United States fully shares the desire of the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland States that the region not become an arena for military competition on the part of outside Powers. President Carter, as you know, has stated that we are willing to join the Soviet Union in seeking ways to achieve mutual military restraint in the region. When Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was in Moscow in March, he suggested that the United States and the USSR jointly explore this issue. Our two countries have already initiated talks on this subject.

We are thus ready to work towards the goal of promoting peace and security for all in the Indian Ocean region. We remain unconvinced, however, that an Indian Ocean conference is the best way to achieve that goal. Nevertheless, in view of the interest expressed by the Ad Hoc Committee in this same goal, the United States is prepared to extend its practical co-operation to the Committee by keeping it informed of important developments that may have a bearing on its work and be of interest to its members.

At the same time, we must respectfully decline to participate in consultations having as their express purpose the formulation of a programme of action leading to the convening of a conference. We look forward, however, to sharing views with States of the region and others on how best to protect the peace and security of the Indian Ocean.

ANNEX II

Substantive parts of replies to the letter dated 11 May 1977 from  
the Acting Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee

AUSTRALIA

/Original: English/

It has been Australia's long-standing position that a conference on the Indian Ocean zone of peace issue should only be held after adequate preparation and the establishment of a basis for agreement. This would require the prior agreement of the great Powers and major maritime users to participate with littoral States in such a conference. To date that agreement has not been forthcoming.

A new and potentially significant development related to the zone of peace concept has of course been the opening of discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union on the possibility of mutual arms limitation measures in the Indian Ocean. The outcome of these discussions could have important practical implications for the zone of peace concept.

BURMA

/Original: English/

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 11 May 1977, addressed to the Permanent Representative of Burma, in connexion with your invitation to communicate views and suggestions of Governments to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean concerning the convening of a conference. The matter has been transmitted to the authorities in Burma for their consideration.

CHINA

/Original: Chinese/

The Chinese delegation's position on the question of the Indian Ocean peace zone and its basic stand on the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean was contained in the statement made by the Chinese representative at the forty-second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean on 22 April this year. Following are excerpts from the statement:

"The Chinese Government and people have always given active support to the Indian Ocean States in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism and supported their just proposal for the establishment of the Indian Ocean peace zone. At the same time, we hope that the countries of this region, big or small, will firmly do away with super-Power intervention and meddling, combat expansionism in all its forms, promote closer relations between themselves on the principles of respect for State sovereignty and

territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, strengthen their unity and oppose jointly the imperialist and hegemonic policies of aggression and war and make concerted efforts to promote the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean and the realization of the Indian Ocean peace zone.

"In order to realize the just proposal for the establishment of the Indian Ocean peace zone, it is imperative, first of all, to halt all the super-Power activities of military expansion and rivalry for hegemony in the region and to demand the withdrawal of all their military presence there, including the dismantling of all their overt and covert military bases and installations. Herein lies the crux of the matter." a/

GREECE

/Original: English/

As it has repeatedly stressed, the Greek Government stands for the principles set forth in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which are consonant with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and constitute a significant contribution to endeavours already assumed for world disarmament and for the strengthening of international security.

It is, therefore, the considered view of the Greek Government that the littoral and hinterland States of that region as well as the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean should come to an understanding on main issues related to this Ocean, with a view to achieving the goals set forth by the said Declaration. This understanding, which constitutes a requirement for the attainment of the goals of the Declaration, would greatly enhance the chances of convening the Conference on the Indian Ocean, as provided for by General Assembly resolution 31/88. It follows that substantive discussions of formal or informal character either on the bilateral or the multilateral level should be carried on in order to lay down a common basis enabling the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean and the elaboration of a programme of action.

Further, the Greek Government believes that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean should be guided, in the discharge of its mandate, by the provisions of the Charter, especially those related to international peace and security, the principles contained in the basic resolution 2832 (XXVI), the relevant international instruments concerning the strengthening of peace and reduction of armaments, as well as international law and customs, one of its major principles of which is the freedom of navigation.

In this regard, the Greek Government welcomed the assurances given by the countries, which have taken the initiative to convene the Conference, of their adherence to the principle of freedom of navigation.

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a/ See A/AC.159/SR.42, pp. 4-5.

## INDONESIA

/Original: English/

Indonesia continues to support the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Towards this end, it was among the first to propose the convening of a conference in order to attain the objectives of the Declaration.

In the five years since its adoption, the Declaration has gained considerable support among the members of the United Nations. Despite these expressions of support, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has so far found it possible only to achieve a consensus on the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean, and significant differences still exist regarding the modalities and purposes of such a conference.

Recent developments in the area make it increasingly urgent for littoral and hinterland States to undertake serious and concerted efforts to harmonize their views and positions with all interested Powers, including the maritime and great Powers. Thus, while recognizing the complexities that are attendant upon the implementation of the Declaration, Indonesia is, nevertheless, of the view that efforts to reconcile these divergent positions can no longer be delayed.

Further, experience has shown that issues with far-reaching implications and of world-wide concern require continuing efforts over a period of time for their resolution. In this light, Indonesia believes that the complex issues connected with the question may be resolved by holding meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee over extended sessions and by modifying its mandate so that it will be able to focus its attention on the formulation of a draft treaty for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. Among its provisions would be included an elaboration of the principal ideas that fall within the Declaration as well as elements of regional co-operation in several fields of activity.

The Ad Hoc Committee may also consider the possibility of recommending to the General Assembly the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean with a view to examining the objectives of the Declaration in a broader context and of an exploratory nature.

Indonesia expresses the hope that future sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee will go forward expeditiously and will succeed in advancing the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration.

## JAPAN

/Original: English/

The Government of Japan fully understands the desire of all the States concerned not to allow the Indian Ocean to become an arena for military confrontation and instead to establish a zone of peace in the region, and considers that the establishment of such a zone there will contribute to the relaxation of international tensions as well as to the attainment of general and complete disarmament.

2. Every year since 1973 consultations have been held by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and among the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. However, no tangible achievements have yet been obtained in advancing the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. This is because no common understanding has been reached among the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean on such important issues as the very concept of a zone of peace and the scope of the Indian Ocean to be proclaimed as a zone of peace, which are prerequisites to the convening of a conference for the establishment of a zone of peace in the region. Accordingly, the Government of Japan considers it indispensable, as a condition for convening a conference on the Indian Ocean, to reach a common understanding on the important issues mentioned above, with the participation not only of the littoral and hinterland States, but also of major world Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. For this purpose, the Japanese Government believes it necessary that substantive discussions, formal or informal, continue to be held seriously. Only if such a common understanding is reached will it be possible to formulate a detailed action plan for convening this conference. In convening it, it is also necessary to keep in mind that the participation of major Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean is vital to its success.

3. The Government of Japan considers it desirable for the littoral States of the Indian Ocean to become parties to the existing treaties relating to disarmament, in particular to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the partial test ban treaty and the sea-bed treaty, in order to maintain and promote peace and security in the Indian Ocean. Such efforts on the part of littoral States would, in the long run, prove useful in creating general support for convening a conference on the Indian Ocean.

KUWAIT

/Original: English/

The Government of the State of Kuwait believes that the main objective of the programme of action should be the concrete implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The question of the creation of the zone of peace should be isolated from great Power rivalry and ideological conflict.

An international convention should be formulated to ensure respect by the great military Powers and the major maritime users of the status of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. In the convention, the littoral and hinterland States should pledge to refrain from granting military and naval facilities to foreign Powers. The great military Powers should agree to dismantle existing bases and not to seek the establishment of new ones.

The relevant provisions in the Charter of the United Nations should be reaffirmed, particularly respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of the Indian Ocean States and non-interference in their domestic affairs.

MAURITIUS

Original: English

It is the firm policy of Government that the Indian Ocean should, as soon as practicable, become a zone of peace, free from any nuclear presence.

It is recognized that this objective may not be realizable in the immediate future. The Government will therefore support any initiative designed to reduce military presence and thus international tension in the area.

It is appreciated that certain foreign Powers have substantial trade interests, particularly with reference to the passage of trade, in the area and therefore a continuing requirement and wish to protect it. Nevertheless, the Government feels that this protective role could and should be assumed, as early as possible, by those Indian Ocean littoral States which are in a position to do so. Thus security in the Indian Ocean area would be assured by and be the responsibility of the littoral States rather than other Powers.

In pursuance of the policy objectives set out above, the Government feels that the Ad Hoc Committee, or any other suitably representative body, should convene, as soon as possible, a meeting of representatives of littoral States with a view to determining a common position on the question of demilitarization and Indian Ocean security. If such a position can be achieved, then the Government of Mauritius feels that the next step would be to delegate representatives to open discussions with the non-littoral Powers presently maintaining a military or other security presence in the area with a view to reaching agreement on the establishment of a treaty or international convention to give effect to the wishes of the littoral States.

PAKISTAN

Original: English

1. A programme of work leading to the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean should naturally be related to the steps required to evolve a general consensus to transform the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.
2. Some of the major Powers and maritime users of the Indian Ocean have so far not endorsed this objective. However, the United States and the Soviet Union have reportedly initiated bilateral discussions to mutually restrain their military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean. While this is a welcome development, it remains uncertain whether the discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union will be designed to achieve the objectives of the peace zone or merely to reach mutual strategic and political accommodations.
3. The first step in the programme of work, therefore, should be to convey to the United States and the Soviet Union, and other States concerned, the fundamental prerequisites for transforming the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. This could be done in the form of a joint statement by the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. It is suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee should seek to finalize such a joint statement by August 1977.

4. Thereafter, the major Powers may be invited to a special meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, possibly at the ministerial level, during the initial part of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly for an exchange of views to identify the areas of agreement and disagreement with the position of the littoral States. This exchange could lead to setting out the general directions and areas in which further negotiations can proceed later in the year and early next year.

5. The Ad Hoc Committee could submit a report to the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament outlining the areas of agreement as well as the points of difference. The principles and elements for creating a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean could be further elaborated at the special session which is proposed to be held in early 1978.

6. Thereafter, the Ad Hoc Committee could meet as a preparatory body for the Conference on the Indian Ocean and elaborate the draft of the agreements and proposals to be discussed at the Conference. The Conference could be scheduled tentatively to meet in late 1978.

ANNEX III

Letter dated 3 October 1977 from the Permanent Representative  
of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of  
the Ad Hoc Committee

/Original: English/

Israel has followed with considerable interest the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and of the group of littoral and hinterland States. Israel's interest springs from its geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean and its concern for the safety of its maritime routes there which are vital to the economy of Israel.

In addition, Israel obviously falls into the category of States referred to by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean at its 24th meeting, on 5 June 1975.

In the light of this, Israel would like to express its interest and its willingness in principle to participate in the meetings of the littoral and hinterland States or any other relevant bodies.

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