

DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE

by

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THE DECLARATION

Many of you will recall that it was at Sri Lanka's initiative, later joined by Tanzania, that the United Nations General Assembly at its 26th regular session in 1971 declared the Indian Ocean "within limits to be determined, together with the air space above and the ocean floor subjacent thereto . . . for all time . . . a zone of peace" (A/RES/2832 (XXVI)). While preserving free and unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels, whether military or not, for all nations in accordance with international law, the Declaration called on the "great powers" to halt "further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean", and to eliminate from the Indian Ocean "all bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great power military presence . . . conceived in the context of great power rivalry". (Operative paragraph 2).

The previous year, at its 25th anniversary session, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2749 (XXV), the Declaration of Principles governing the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, which in part called for reservation of the seabed beyond national jurisdiction for use "exclusively for peaceful purposes" in accordance with international law, with the Charter of the United Nations, and with a new international regime to be established (paragraphs 4-6 and 8). The General Assembly had at the same session by resolution 2660 (XXV) commended to member States a Treaty prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof beyond a 12-mile zone as defined in Part II of the 1958 Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. The Seabed Declaration, while including reservation for peaceful purposes as an essential principle, was aimed at the establishment of a resource regime, and was unlikely to lead to detailed formulations on "peaceful purposes". The Seabed Treaty, on the other hand, was in the words of one writer, of low arms control value, in effect binding only the super powers and permitting "the use of the seabed for facilities servicing free-swimming nuclear weapons systems". (Jozef Goldblatt, "The Seabed Treaty", in *Ocean Yearbook*, Vol. 1, pp. 398-9)

The Peace Zone Declaration, with its roots in the ferment of the 1960s that inspired these resolutions, was an initiative of a different order. While in terms directed at ultimately achieving formal international agreement for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace (paragraph 3(c)), the Declaration was, at least in the medium term, of an essentially political character: designed to compel political focus on a region with shared apprehensions regarding its traditional interest to the great powers, and a sense of vulnerability in the context

of the latter's global schemes for maintaining a balance of military capability. It would serve as a rallying point, as a regular call to action, in the years ahead, as the States of the region grappled with the issues involved in translating the peace zone concept into regulatory norms and rules capable of being administered at the national and international level.

Adopted by the General Assembly by 61 votes in favour with none against, but with some 55 abstentions (including all of the permanent members of the Security Council except China), the Declaration addresses itself to three categories of States : (1) the "great powers" a term that must surely subsume the "permanent members of the Security Council", which are, nevertheless mentioned separately; (2) the "major maritime users of the Indian Ocean", or those States whose ships or goods frequently traverse the area; and (3) the "littoral" (perhaps more generally referred to as "coastal") States and the "hinterland" States of the Indian Ocean. The fact that there is a substantial overlap in categories — for example France, in the category of a "great power", might also through its Indian Ocean territories, be considered a "littoral State"; and some littoral States may well be categorized as "major maritime users" — appears to be of little significance. The categories essentially counterpoised to one another are the "great powers" on the one hand, and the "littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean" on the other.

The Declaration makes its fundamental appeal for action to the "great powers" which must eventually (a) halt expansion of their "military presence" in the Indian Ocean; and (b) remove from the area all manifestations of their military rivalry. Such manifestations include fixed elements such as military bases, installations and logistical supply facilities, as well as movable ones such as ships and aircraft to the extent that they maintain a "military presence" and are not merely engaged in transit on their lawful occasions. It is important to note that the Declaration speaks of "military presence", which implies a situation subsisting in time of peace. Its primary aim is the elimination of any warlike presence in time of peace, a presence that could lead to, or contribute to, destabilizing an existing situation of calm in the area, with attendant economic consequences.

The Declaration makes its second, more generalized, appeal at once to the "great powers", to the "littoral and hinterland States", and to the "major maritime users" : it calls on all of them to enter into consultations with a view to implementing the Declaration. Implementation of the Declaration is contemplated through the elaboration of an international agreement, which must bring into balance two elements : (1) the prohibition, addressed principally to the great powers, of the use of ships and aircraft against the littoral and hinterland States in contravention of the Charter of the UN, and (2) the right of ships and aircraft, whether military or other, of all nations, to "free and unimpeded use" of the Indian Ocean and its air space in accordance with international law.

The Declaration finds a legal basis in the right of the States of the region to take measures of self-defence appropriate in an era when the speed of ships, aircraft and weapons delivery systems make obsolete the rigid adherence to any principle that such measures may only be legitimized in the face of armed attack. Nor is it open to the usual criticism of such a thesis, since these preventive measures do not themselves imply the use of force, but on the contrary the establishment of an agreed status and procedures negotiated in advance and operated in a spirit of openness and co-operation, with due regard to the legitimate rights of all States in the use of seas beyond national jurisdiction, and the air space above them. The proposal was the result of an early concentration by the Non-Aligned Movement on the military perils

of "great power rivalry". Thus, Iran and Pakistan had proposed that the West and South Asian regions should be nuclear-weapon-free zones. The countries of ASEAN in 1971 had called for recognition of South East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers.

But the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace, more specific than any similar initiative in its thrust, called for a more specific response from countries with global strategic concerns; and that response was far from encouraging. While the peace zone concept found universal support among the Non-Aligned, with some enthusiasms being tempered by national or regional concerns, the attitude of the great powers has generally varied between scepticism and scarcely-veiled hostility. I would like now to examine briefly in relation to the stated objectives of the peace zone concept, reports of great power military presence in the Indian Ocean and the situation as regards the coastal and hinterland States. I shall conclude with a review of action taken at the United Nations and the issues that await resolution.

It was Ambassador Shirley Amerasinghe, a former Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Ocean Institute and then Permanent Representative of Ceylon to the United Nations, who introduced the Peace Zone resolution in the General Assembly's First Committee on 2 November 1971. I would like to recall the objectives of the resolution in his words, as much for their content as for sentimental reasons. He said :

"We would have the United Nations declare that an area of the Indian Ocean lying beyond an outer limit of 12 miles from the base lines from which the territorial sea is measured and situated within certain limits which will be specified by reference to longitude and latitude, that all land areas falling within those limits, their air space above and the seabed and the ocean floor subjacent to that area are designated for all time as a zone of peace. The exact limits of the peace zone will have to be determined primarily in consultation with the littoral and the immediate hinterland States and also with the major maritime nations. . . . our proposal envisages the exclusion from this zone of all military bases, military installations, fortifications, logistical supply facilities, weapons testing, the conduct of manoeuvres and the use, deployment, installation or storage of weapons and war-like devices of any kind, whether offensive, defensive or detective.

.in consonance with the policy of non-alignment, we would also wish to see as early as possible the exclusion of all foreign military bases even from the territories of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean. It is our intention that non-self-governing territories should be brought within the zone of peace and thereby be demilitarized in the manner contemplated in our proposal.

We propose that vessels of all nations may traverse the zone subject to such special regimes as may be prescribed by the coastal States in areas within their jurisdiction. . . . such as. . . fisheries zones, but activities in the areas. . . . that fall outside the 12 mile coastal zone should be subject to a system of international supervision and regulation.An essential part of (any agreement to give effect to the Declaration) shall be the provision of appropriate international machinery to verify and secure compliance with the obligations undertaken by the contracting parties.

The next stage would be the exclusion of all foreign military bases from the territories of littoral States of the Indian Ocean and, we hope, also the immediate hinterland States

The acceptance of a Declaration as proposed calls for faith, imagination and courage”

What the Declaration would prohibit is a menacing presence in time of peace — the presence of a menace to the security of a region at peace, the menace of a response to perceived threats from outside the region and unrelated to its communities; a menace that places the innocent bystander in peril, and to that extent lacks justification on moral or legal grounds.

MILITARY PRESENCE OF THE GREAT POWERS

A great power would maintain a military presence in the Indian Ocean in time of peace for one or more purposes that are now part of the political tradition of such countries : (1) to assure the security of military, commercial or fishing fleets; (2) as a measure of national defence against possible attacks against its territories and associated interests; (3) as a strategic deterrent in relation to other powers competing for military supremacy in the region or globally; (4) as a visual threat or show of force, by way of support for the political penetration of a foreign country, or for the maintenance of hegemony over it; (5) for the gathering — often clandestine— of information relevant to policy decisions concerning the foregoing; and (6) for the carrying out of scientific research for commercial, military or other purposes. The purpose for which a particular military presence is manifest at a particular time in the area may well be lost in the convoluted military-bureaucratic processes of the power concerned. The purpose may be publicized — indeed, making the purpose public may well be essential to its achievement; or the purpose may remain secret; or the purpose made public may not be the true purpose or the presence. All that the outside world may be certain of is that, in the perception of the power concerned, its military presence in the area is necessary for the protection either of its direct interests, or the interests of friendly States which it deems essential to protect in order to safeguard its direct interests. The peace zone concept which, in essence, is a manifestation of the right of collective self-defence evolving in response to the development of modern weaponry and the complex shifting patterns of derived political tensions, here meets squarely the claim of powers outside the region to defend their own interests not the less vital, it is said, for being far from their shores. The greater the power, the wider the range of its interests and their geographical scope. On that view geography becomes irrelevant, and the peace zone concept is nothing if not a concept based on geography.

The British military presence in the Indian Ocean, by far the most significant for over a century, declined after the Second World War with the dissolution of the Empire and withdrawal from long-held bases such as those in Aden, Colombo and Singapore. A decision by Britian’s labour government in 1968 resulted in a drastic cut-back of its presence in the area so that a force that had comprised some 43 ships in 1968 diminished to 14 in 1981.

United States presence in the Indian Ocean, on the other hand has shown a steady increase. Under a complex arrangement with the Government of Mauritius, Britian, by an exchange of letters with the United States in 1976, felt able to grant the latter the right to establish a “naval support facility” on the island of Diego Garcia at the heart of the Indian Ocean. Talks between the Soviet Union and the United States under President Carter in 1977-8, aimed

at a staged reduction of their forces in the Indian Ocean, accomplished little, and were suspended in February 1978. The increase of Soviet influence in the area through Afghanistan and Ethiopia and the loss of a military ally following the Islamic revolution in Iran, seemed to call for a consolidation of its own position. The United States reportedly currently has military agreements with Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and South Africa on the western border of the Indian Ocean, and with Australia in the east. The core of United States forces in the Indian Ocean in 1982-3 was said to be some 25 ships of its 7th fleet, including 2 aircraft carriers with some 150 combat aircraft. Two squadrons of B-52 aircrafts reportedly cover the Indian Ocean from a base in Darwin and note has been taken of the presence of Phantom F-4 aircraft at airports in Egypt and Kenya since mid-1980.

According to another observer (IISS "The Military Balance 1983-4") the United States has currently deployed in the Indian Ocean 1 carrier group (some 6 surface combatants), 9 stores ships, as well as a Middle East Force (Arabian/Persian Gulf) of 1 command ship and 2 destroyers, and a Marine Amphibious Unit comprising 4-7 amphibious ships, with reinforced infantry battalion group including tanks, artillery, composite air squadron with helicopters and logistics group.

Various motives have been suggested for the presence of the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean. Some suggest that it perceives the four main entry points to the Indian Ocean, viz. the Suez Canal, the Straits of Malacca, the Australian coasts and the South African Cape as being under the influence of the western industrialized countries, intent on maintaining their supplies of oil and raw materials, and feels compelled to react by maintaining a force to protect its own interests in the area. With the nearest home base at Vladivostok some 20,000 km away, the Soviet Union has found it necessary to set up its own network of military agreements in the area. In 1967 the Soviet Union received port facilities from Somalia, and in 1969 from the People's Republic of Yemen. In 1970 the Soviet Union is said to have had 3 submarines and 6 surface ships in the area. The conflict which brought Bangladesh into being saw Soviet naval strength increased to some 20 ships, and by the time of the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, to 30 ships. Following reverses in its political fortunes in Egypt and Somalia, its centre of operations shifted to Ethiopia (Dahlak Island). In 1979 and 1980 the strength of its Indian Ocean fleet was augmented by the aircraft carriers *Minsk* and *Kiev* and several support vessels. The force today reportedly comprises some 25 military ships (including 3-4 destroyers, 2-3 troop carriers and 4-5 submarines) and a number of scientific research vessels. According to another observer (IISS "The Military Balance 1983-4") the Soviet Union has currently deployed in the Indian Ocean a detachment of its Pacific Fleet providing an average of 2-3 submarines, 8 surface combatants, 2 amphibious and 12 support ships. In addition, it reportedly maintains the following other forces in the area: 105,000 troops and air and armoured divisions in Afghanistan; and various military personnel in Ethiopia (2400), Iraq (2000), Mali (200), Mozambique (300), Syria (7000), North Yemen (500), South Yemen (1500).

While anchoring and food supply facilities are provided by India at Visakhapatnam, Bombay, Madras, and the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and by Bangladesh at Chittagong, important Soviet facilities are reportedly located in Africa: at Assab and Massaouah on the Red Sea in Ethiopia; at Aden and the island of Socotra, 250 km from Cap Gardafui, and thus strategically placed with respect to traffic from the Gulf *via* the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb; at Nacala, Beira and Maputo in Mozambique; at Mahe in Seychelles; and Port Louis in Mauritius.

Madagascar has reportedly permitted the location of 3 Soviet radar stations on its west coast, and may consider the granting other facilities in small islands strategically located in the Mozambique channel (Europa, Bassas de India, Juan de Nova and Tromelin).

While the interest of France in the Indian Ocean date from colonial times, its concerns today appear to be based primarily on the assessment that the safe transport of 70% of Europe's oil depends on the region's stability. With the grant of independence to its Indian Ocean territories, France's military presence has shifted away from Madagascar, Djibouti and the Comoros, and since 1973 has centred on the island of Reunion. However, some seven treaties of friendship and co-operation with its former colonies permit it to maintain a strategic position with respect to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb as well as in and around the horn of Africa. In Djibouti alone France has reportedly deployed 2 regiments of its land forces, 3 combat companies, 4 patrol boats, and 2 detachments of its air force comprising 12 "F-100", 9 "Jaguar" and 11 "Mirages" aircraft. From a relatively modest force of 3 corvettes, 3 patrol boats, 1 troop carrier, 1 support ship, a tanker, helicopter carrier and escort ship in 1976, the French military presence in the Indian Ocean is reported to have increased to some 20 vessels, including ships equipped with sophisticated missile systems, and some 3000 men.

I would like at this point to acknowledge my indebtedness for the foregoing information to a series of articles by Michael Kayfman in the *New York Times* in April 1981, to a recent article by Pascal Chaigneau in *Defense nationale* vol. 39, April 1983, and to "*The Military Balance 1983-4*" issued by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. My remarks thus far, which merely attempt an outline, are taken from material presented in those publications in much greater detail. On the basis of the information available one may feel obliged to conclude, as some commentators do, that the concept of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has been reduced to a pious wish; or go even further, to suggest that what was conceived as a zone of peace has actually become a zone of confrontation. But before taking stock of the position we should review the efforts being made by proponents of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace to foster and progressively develop the concept.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEACE ZONE CONCEPT

The Non-Aligned countries continue to give the concept general support, as will be seen from the Declarations issued every four years by meetings of their Heads of State and Government. Several coastal and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, as we have seen, maintain close relations with one or other of the great powers. But a tilt in one direction or another would not appear to compromise a country's non-alignment, provided that it is not perceived by the generality of the membership as being overtly partisan in a military sense exclusively in the context of "great power rivalry".

But the Peace Zone Declaration addresses itself as much to the "great powers" as to the coastal and hinterland States, and since 1971 the forum of choice for concerted action has been the United Nations. At its twenty-seventh regular session in 1972, the General Assembly decided to establish an Ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean consisting of 15 members (resolution 2992 (XXVII)). But while the *Ad hoc* Committee has met regularly each year, and while its membership had expanded to 47 States by 1983, the objectives of the original peace zone concept seem as remote as ever. Since 1978 the Ad hoc Committee's efforts have been directed toward the convening of a meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian

Ocean, as an essential step toward defining responses to various clauses in the Declaration and determining the feasibility of obtaining commitments worthy of inclusion in an international agreement.

The General Assembly's resolution, 38/185, adopted without vote on 20 December 1983, called for "renewal of genuinely constructive efforts through the exercise of the political will necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration", and requested the Ad hoc Committee to "make decisive efforts in 1984 to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean" with a view to enabling the Conference to open in Colombo in the first half of 1985. At its first session in 1984, which concluded on 23 March, the Ad hoc Committee authorized the Secretariat to prepare draft Rules of Procedure for the Conference for consideration at a session to take place 9-20 July, stipulating however, that those rules *should provide for the taking of decisions by consensus*. While agreement on decision-making by consensus may well have eased some of the basic apprehensions of the great powers, and thus enhanced prospects for the holding of the Conference, it may well have diminished possibilities for resolution of issues of substance in the foreseeable future. The March session of the Ad hoc Committee also received, but did not fully consider a draft agenda for the Conference proposed by Sri Lanka on behalf of the Non-Aligned. The proposed agenda calls for "Consideration of principal elements of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace", as well as the adoption of "Modalities and Programme of Action for finalizing an international agreement and other practical measures for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace".

The problems that would confront a conference convened to deal with the "principal elements of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace", are of a formidable order. One can only conjecture at how representatives with diverse and firmly held positions believed to touch vital security interests, will grapple with the meaning of terms like "bases", "military" and "manifestation of great power military presence conceived in the context of great power rivalry"; with determining the geographical limits of the Indian Ocean as a peace zone; and with satellites as an aspect of "military presence" in the zone; all with a view to reaching a *consensus* on the rules to govern the conduct of States in the region.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF PEACE

It was against the background of slow and painful progress at the United Nations that the leader of the Sri Lanka delegation to the 21st Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee in 1981, Mr. H. W. Jayewardene, proposed exploring a new approach to the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. That approach is best expressed in his own words :

"The littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean share a common history of colonial exploitation and today, perhaps as a result of that common history, a relatively low level of economic development. It was in order to remove the area from great power rivalries, and ensure the Indian Ocean States the peace and security needed for their economic development that the idea of a Zone of Peace was first conceived. It is the same goal of economic development that motivates our idea for a study of the ways and means of promoting co-operation in the management of the marine resources of this area."

In essence, Sri Lanka was proposing that, parallel with the efforts being made at the United Nations to realise the de-militarization thrust of the Peace Zone concept, the countries of the region, whether coastal or land-locked, should begin to explore a different, and hitherto neglected aspect of that concept — the idea of a community of States working together in a spirit of cooperation and self-reliance to establish the institutions of peace. Inspired by the progress achieved at the Conference on the Law of the Sea, and anticipating the comprehensive provisions on maritime co-operation contained in the Convention on the Law of the Sea to be signed the following year, Sri Lanka called on the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee through a study of the Indian Ocean area, to

- (1) “determine its limits for the purpose of identifying it as a special area for development;
- (2) compile a list of national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions with competence or expertise in marine activities that are or could be operative in the area, as a basis for initiating co-operation and exchange of information among the States concerned or their nationals;
- (3) consider the feasibility of establishing a consultative institutional framework for promoting the peaceful uses of the Indian Ocean, including co-operation in activities such as marine scientific research, management of living and non-living marine resources, assessment and management of environmental problems; and possibly dispute settlement mechanisms;
- (4) carry out a survey of legal and institutional developments taking place at a national, sub-regional, regional or global level which have a bearing on marine activities, and are of relevance to the States of the Indian Ocean”.

Thus, while the high political issues connected with the delimitation of the Indian Ocean continued to absorb political representatives at the United Nations, the scientists, lawyers and administrators of the States of the region would be working quietly to develop co-operation in the peaceful uses of the Indian Ocean. In doing so they would draw inspiration from certain tenets increasingly urged with the Third World, such as self-reliance, and its derivatives, technical and economic co-operation among developing countries. They could find support in the programmes of inter-governmental organizations aimed at developing the scientific and technical capabilities and infrastructures in the developing countries, such as the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission’s Long-term and Expanded Programme of Oceanic Exploration and Research (LEPOR), and the comprehensive programme of assistance in the development and management of fisheries in economic zones of developing coastal States established by the Indian Ocean Fishery Commission of FAO. They would also need to rely heavily, in the first instance, on the more industrialized and scientifically advanced countries of the region, in particular those able to make significant financial contributions.

In response to Sri Lanka’s initiative, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee has undertaken a programme of research on “Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation in the use of the Indian Ocean”, and presented a preliminary report on the subject to the Committee’s 23rd session in 1983.

CONCLUSION

We find, then, that the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, which began primarily as an effort to demilitarize the region, and has been treated as such by the main forum in which it was presented, the United Nations, is gradually evolving in scope and content. The added dimension of organizing peaceful co-operation through establishing the institutions of peace in the area has derived arms control value when seen from at least two points of view. The first is best expressed in the words of Elizabeth Young. Writing in 1973, she said :

“The activities of the various existing and planned United Nations bodies and of an ocean regime’s own organization are bound to result in a considerable international presence in ocean space This presence, of itself, would have an arms control effect, proportionate to its scale and the range of its activities, and at some point it will be necessary to consider how this effect can be enlarged and enhanced Any inspectorate, research exercise, monitoring body is part of a de facto, international verification system. In setting them up, the arms control significance of the information they are to acquire should be kept in view and eventually concerted.”

From a second point of view, organizing peaceful co-operation in the region cannot but have the effect of promoting, through social, economic, scientific and technical contacts and exchanges, the region’s sense of cohesiveness and security. Such an effect would contribute to dampening, and ultimately reducing, the tensions between individual States in the region—tensions which are the cause of arms accumulation and nuclear proliferation, of the draining of slender resources into military budgets, and ultimately of the subversion and weakening of the development process.

States outside the region could contribute to this sense of security through offering guarantees as they have done, for example, in Latin America by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, through participation in a future international agreement on the Indian Ocean. Such a multilateral approach is to be preferred to bilateral treaties with the great powers, which adversely affect cohesiveness in the region, and could actually increase tensions. States outside the region could also assist through providing finance and expertise aimed at enhancing and accelerating the process of organizing co-operation, and in establishing the institutions through which it will be maintained. Funds channelled into an endeavour such as this must be seen as an investment in the demilitarization of the area, quite apart from its more obvious economic development aspects.

While under the auspices of the United Nations efforts continue toward making a reality of the peace zone in the Indian Ocean, it is, after all the prime responsibility of the coastal and hinterland States themselves to achieve that end. United through peace among themselves there is little doubt that they could speak with authority and be heard by the great powers, in insisting that the essentials of the Declaration or any implementing treaty be adhered to. Divided, and either induced to enter into special relationships of reciprocal advantage with the great powers, or embroiled in regional conflicts of attrition, there is little likelihood of their being able to command respect for their claim to guarantees of protection of their special identity.

Unhappily, a tragic circle of events is involved here: entering into a situation of confrontation within or across its borders, a government appeals to one or other of the great powers for the military support needed to ensure victory. But the pact that follows has Faustian consequences, and can be redeemed only through concessions which endanger or actually lead to sacrifice of the very political independence that it was first intended to protect.

It is more urgent than ever, therefore, that emphasis be given to both aspects of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, for they complement one another; and it is difficult to see how demilitarization can be achieved in practice without at the same time bringing about a substantial reduction in the tensions with which the region is plagued. It is upon strengthening or building regional institutions—economic, scientific and technical—that a new and deliberate emphasis must be placed. A modest beginning has already been made in the initiative of the Seychelles in response to which the International Whaling Commission declared the Indian Ocean a sanctuary for whales; in the Centre for the Study of Marine Mammals set up by the Government of Sri Lanka at Trincomalee; in the steady progress made by the Asian-Africa Legal Consultative Committee in fields such as uniform legislation and regional dispute settlement, and by UNEP through its regional seas programme. Proposals were made last year at Pacem in Maribus XII for the holding of a regular Indian Ocean Scientific Conference. Such institutions would have as their purpose not regional government, but rather regional co-operation, co-ordination and exchange, aimed at fostering an essential minimum of confidence and cohesiveness among an Indian Ocean community, as the surest foundation for peace in the region.