# THE GROWTH OF SUPERPOWER NAVAL RIVALRY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND SRI LANKAN RESPONSE

By

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Ocean has experienced a process of profound change in its political and strategic map since World War II. This began with the British withdrawal from East of Suez, and was followed by the entry of the superpowers into the Indian Ocean, the growth of superpower naval rivalry, and the proliferation of security problems of the states in the region. The essence of these developments is the transformation of the Indian Ocean from the stability of one-power domination to the instability of superpower rivalry. The thesis examines the process of this transformation and the Sri Lankan response from a historical perspective.

The transformation of the power structure in the Indian Ocean was essentially an outcome of the changes in power configurations in world politics. The growth of superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean must be understood in relation to the evolution of political, economic, and strategic interests of the superpowers, advances in weapons systems and naval technology, and political developments in the region.

The superpower naval rivalry has three interrelated elements, viz, naval deployments, weapons deals, and jockeying for bases/logistic support in the region. It evolves in three phases: from 1968 to the 1973 oil crisis; from the oil crisis to 1978; and since 1978.

There are definite linkages between superpower naval rivalry and the conflict patterns in the region. The states in the

region count on the superpowers for their security because of the inherent weaknessess of the ruling elites in the region, the limits of their security options, and economic dependence. The invariable outcome is a chain reaction resulting in military pacts, puppet governments, political supression, and proxy war, which forms the texture of the international politics of the Indian Ocean region.

Sri Lankan responses to superpower naval rivalry can be explained in relation to the geo-political framework of her strategic thinking, and her internal political and economic processes. In the period 1948-56, Sri Lanka identified herself with the British defence structure in the Indian Ocean. With the changes introduced by the M.E.P. regime, non-alignment became the foreign policy approach of Sri Lanka after 1956. In accordance with the growth of superpower naval presence, Sri Lanka became more sensitive to Indian Ocean strategic issues in the 1960s. After 1970, Sri Lankan policy towards the Indian Ocean took a more coherent form and was designed to balance two considerations - first, at the the sub-regional level, how to deal with India; and at the Indian Ocean level, how to check superpower naval rivalry and the increasing militarization of the Indian Ocean. This was reflected in Sri Lanka's proposal for an Indian Ocean Peace Zone (IOPZ). After 1977, under the changed internal and international situation, Sri Lanka soft-pedalled her earlier more articulated position regarding superpower naval riavlry in the Indian Ocean.

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## Abbreviations

ABM - Anti-Ballistic Missiles

ADGES - Air Defence Ground Environment System (India)

AGOR - Oceanographic Research Ship

AGS - Survey Ship

AREN - Army Radio Engineering Network (of India)

ASEAN - Association of South-East Asian Nations

AWACS - Airborne Warning and Control System

BARC - Bhabha Atomic Research Center

BIOT - British Indian Ocean Territory

CGN - Guided Missile Submarines

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CINCLANT - Commander-in-Chief Atlantic

CINCPAC - Commander-in-Chief Pacific

CENTO - Central Treaty Organization

CENTCOM - Contral Command (U.S)

CER - Circular Error Brobability

CP (S.L) - Communist Party of Sri Lanka

FRELIMO - Frente de Liberacca de Mozambique

HAL - Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd

ICBM - Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles

IOPZ - Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal

JVP - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)

LSSP - Lanka Sama Samaja Party

MAD - Mutual Assured Destruction

MEP - Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front)

MILCON - Military Construction Programme

MIRV - Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle

MSO - Minesweepers

NALT - Naval Arms Limitation Talks

NAM - Non-Alligned Movement

OAU - Organization of African Unity

OAPEC - Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries

OPEC - Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

RAF - Royal Air Force

RDJTF - Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force

SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation

SAC - Strategic Air Command

SAM - Surface-to-Air Missiles

SEATO - South East Asian Treaty Organization

SLBM - Sea-Launched Ballistic Missiles

SANFZ - South Asian Nuclear Free Zone

SLFP - Sri Lanka Freedom Party

SPR - Strategic Petroleum Reserve

SSBN - Ballistic Missile Submarines

SSC - Second Strike Capability

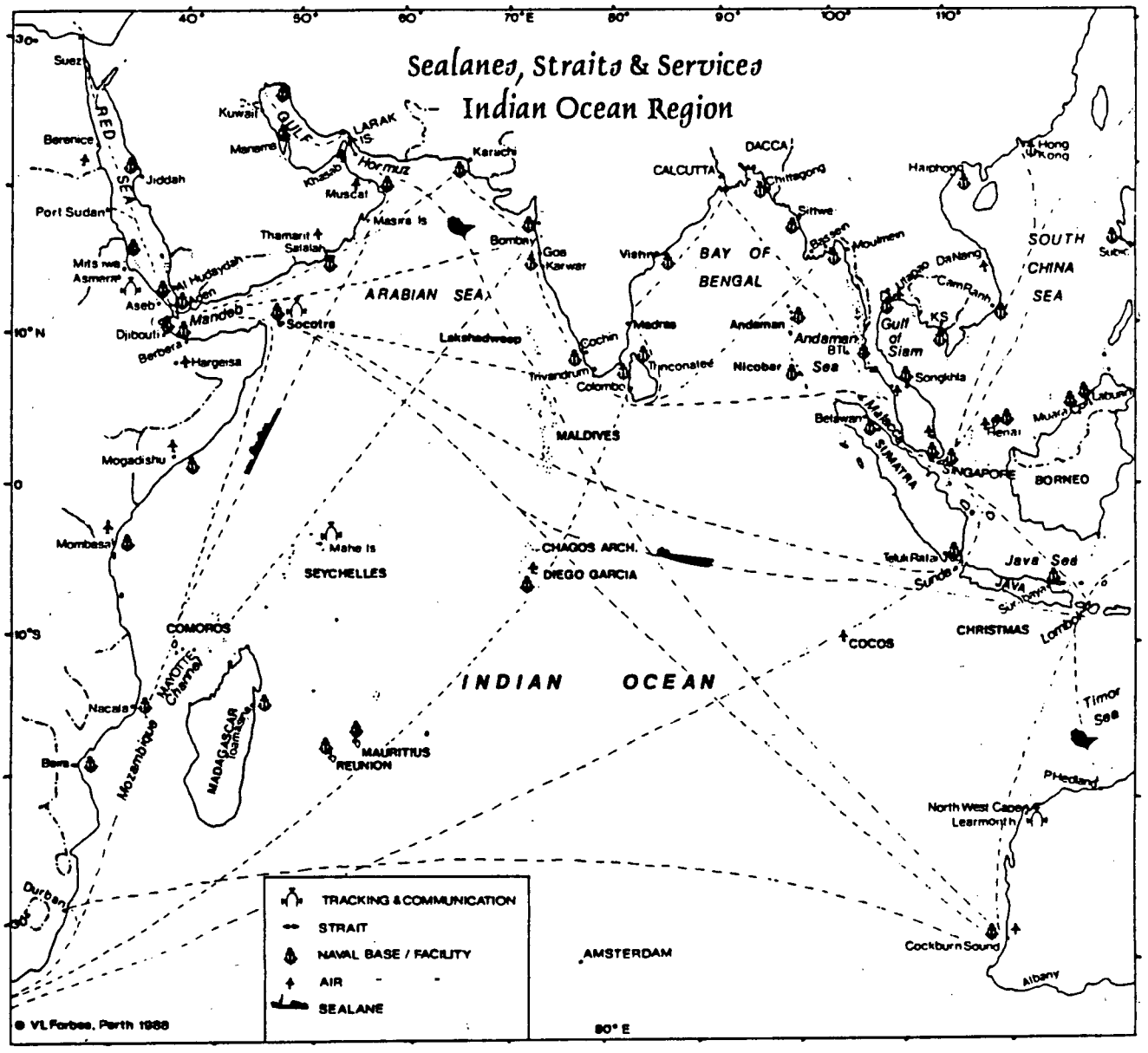
SSM - Surface-to-Surface Missile

UNCLOS III - Third U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea

UNP - United National Paty

ZANU - Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU - Zimbabwe African People's Union




Source: Viv L. Forbes, "Of Sealanes, Straits and (Military) Services: Indian Ocean Region", The Indian Ocean Review, 1:2 (June 1988), p. 13.

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Chapter I

## The Historical and Theoretical Setting

> It has always been a restless giant, this Indian Ocean; beautiful, violent, often mystifying. But today, symbolically at least, it simmers as never before.1

In the last few decades the Indian Ocean has undergone a fundamental change in its internal and external power relations and has come to the forefront as a pivotal geostrategic region in the power configuration of interternational politics.[2] The dissolution of the old forms of colonial empires in the face of the growing strength of national liberation movements after World War II gave birth to a host of post-colonial states in the region. The self-assertion of these new entrants to the global state system in regional and world affairs added a new dimension to international politics. The British, who had dominated the Indian Ocean for more than one and a half centuries, finally decided to withdraw from the Indian Ocean in 1968. While the oceanic regime associated with British naval overlordship was losing its vitality, new defence and security problems inherent in the period of nation state formation began to engulf the region. In this changed political and strategic milieu, the United States

[1]Bart McDowell, "Crosscurrents Sweep a Strategic Sea," National Geographic, 160:4 (October 1981), p. 423.

[2]Following Saul Cohen, geostrategic region is defined here as "the expression of the interrelationship of a large part of the world in terms of location, movement, trade orientation, and culture or ideological bonds". See, Saul Cohen, Geography and Politics in a World Divided (New York, 1973), p. 64.

and the Soviet Union entered into the Indian Ocean to push their own political, economic, and strategic interests, thereby transforming the former 'British lake' into an arena of superpower naval competition. This Thesis will examine the processes involved in the transformation of the Indian Ocean from the stability of one-power domination to the instability of superpower rivalry; and will explain and analyse Sri Lankan responses to the growth of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. It will argue that changes that took place in the Indian Ocean in the period from 1945 to 1982 were essentially an outcome of changes in power configuration in world politics. Sri Lankan response will be explained in relation to her security perceptions conceived in her geo-political context, developments in the strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean, and her internal political and economic dynamics. This study is intended as a contribution to the study of the international relations of regions.

The growth of the study of the international relations of regions is a result of the proliferation of area studies after the Second World War. At first, some scholars in International Relations who worked with a systems perspective conceptualized geographically distinct groups of states as subsystems or subor dinate systems. Leonard Binder can be considered as the pioneer to use the subsystem approach to the study of regions.[3] Later, he was followed by a number of scholars such as Michael Brecher,[4] William Zartman,[5] and Larry W. Bowman.[6] Today

[3]Leonard Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate Interna tional System," World Politics, 10 (April 1958), pp. 408-29.

[4]Michael Brecher, "International Relations (conti..to p. 3)

the study of the international relations of regions constitutes and recognized as an important branch in the academic study of International Relations. These regional studies, as William L. Dowdy has pointed out, "have gone beyond the area studies tradition of intense interest in one particular area for its own sake towards a heightened interest in the relationship between the global system and regional subsystems".[7]

In the 1970s, the Indian Ocean became one of the highly volatile areas in world politics. The third Indo-Pakistan war and the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Arab-Israeli war and subsequent Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) oil embargo in 1973, the collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, the Iranian revolution and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, repeatedly changed the political and strategic landscape and made the Indian Ocean a focal point of global concern. In view of the importance of these developments, the Indian Ocean, as a geostrategic region, has attracted the attention of many scholars and gained recognition as a viable unit of analysis. Writing on regional subsystems,

(conti.. from p. 2) and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia," World Politics, 15 (January 1963), pp. 213-35.

[5]William Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations," International Organization, 21 (Summer 1967), pp. 545-64.

[6]Larry W. Bowman, "The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa," International Studies Quarterly, 13 (September 1968), pp. 231-63.

[7]William L. Dowdy, "The Indian Ocean Region as Concept and Reality," in The Indian Ocean-Perspectives on a Strategic Arena, William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), p. 4.

William R. Thompson presented four conditions to identify a regional Subsystem.[8] The Indian Ocean meets these four necessary and sufficient conditions.[9] However, scholars such as Barry Buzan challenge the validity of the concept of the Indian Ocean region as an analytical unit because of the "problems of omission and superficiality which arise from the scale and diversity of the area".[10] The problems arising out of its expanse and diversity could be handled by identifying sub-regional subsystems. Besides, more importantly, the Indian Ocean states themselves and the external powers, especially the superpowers, perceive the Indian Ocean as a unit, a 'distinctive theatre of operation'.

A precise geographical definition has been a moot point in discussions of the Indian Ocean. However, this question was resolved by the expert committee appointed by the U.N. Secretary General in 1974.[11] Accepting this definition, this study identifies the Indian Ocean as the body of water the northern frontiers of which are clearly marked by the Asian land mass. The dividing line between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic should be

[8]They are: 1, The actors' pattern of relations or interaction exhibit a particular degree of regularity and intensity to the extent that a change at one point in the subsystem affects other points; 2, The actors are generally proximate; 3, Internal and external observers and actors recognize the subsystem as a distinctive area or 'theatre of operation'; 4,The subsystem logically consists of at least two and quite probably more actors. See William R. Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem-A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," International Studies Quarterly, 17 (March 1973), p. 101.

[9]For a good discussion on this point see, Dowdy and Trood, op. cit., pp. 4-23.

[10]Barry Buzan, "Book Review - The Indian Ocean in Global Politics of Bowman and Clark," Survival, 24 (January-February 1982), p. 44.

[11]U.N. Doc A/AC.159/1.

the Meridian of Cape Agulhus (20.0'E), and between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific should be the Meridian of the Southeast Cape of Tasmania (147.0'E), the western exit of the Bass Strait, and the Meridian line between north-west Australia and the Malay Peninsula. For the south, the dividing line between the Indian Ocean and the Antarctic should be 60.0' S. Accordingly, the two great bays on either side of the Indian sub-continent, the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west, with its arms, the Gulf of Aden and Oman, belong to the Indian Ocean. Hence, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf may be considered as extensions of the Indian Ocean. The bed of the Indian Ocean attains depths up to 2,000 fathoms, very important when considering the deployment of nuclear submarines. The water space of the Indian Ocean is also dotted with about a thousand islands.

**Historical Setting**

The beginning of navigation in the Indian Ocean goes back to protohistory.[12] As trade and other forms of communication developed between centres of ancient civilizations bordering the Indian Ocean, attempts were made to develop sea communications and to control adjacent sea areas. In keeping with the rise and fall of ancient empires, the imperium in the Indian Ocean moved from one centre to another. However, no imperial power was able to dominate the entire Indian Ocean prior to the establishment of the Portuguese thalassocracy in the Indian Ocean area in the 16th century.

It is a well established fact that the discovery of the Cape

[12]For a good survey of the history of the Indian Ocean past see August Toussaint, History of the Indian Ocean (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).

route was a major turning point in the history of the Indian Ocean. From the very outset the Portuguese conceived it as a single strategic unit. Therefore, they did not limit their activities to one region. In the Western Indian Ocean, they captured Mozambique and Kilwa on the African coast and Socotra and Ormuz in the Arabian Sea. On the Western coast of India, the Portuguese began with Cochin and moved to Goa, Daman, and Diu. In the eastern part, they approached the Kotte Kingdom in Sri Lanka, Masulipatam and Nagapatam on the Indian east coast and, more importantly, Malacca, an Alexandria in the Indian Ocean. "It had taken the Portuguese about two centuries to discover the Cape route. It took them less than fifteen years to secure all the key positions of the Indian Ocean".[13] Alfonso d'Albuquerque, the second Portuguese Viceroy of India (1508-1515), was the architect of the Portuguese maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean. His naval strategy entailed establishing bases at the gateways to the Ocean and building bases or strongholds at strategic points along the trade routes, making alliances with rulers of territories important for trade. It was true that the Portuguese were the masters of the Indian Ocean for over a century but their thalassocracy was not always and everywhere effective. The Portuguese constantly confronted resistance from some regional forces. On the African coast the center of resistance was Mombasa. In the western Indian Ocean they could not prevent the Gujarati merchants from trading with Sumatra. In the Malay Peninsula the Portuguese stronghold of Malacca was opposed by the Sultan of Achin in Sumatra. However, by using superior ships,

[13]Toussaint, History of the Indian Ocean, p. 104.

well developed maritime strategy, and exploiting regional rivalries to their own advantage, the Portuguese were able to prevail over local rulers.

At various times throughout the 17th century, other European powers namely, the Dutch, the British, the French, and the Danes also entered into commercial competition and for this purpose formed their own East India Companies. According to Toussaint, the period from the fall of Malacca to the completion of the British conquest in 1815 was really one long interregnum.[14] During this interregnum some regional rulers such as the Omani ruler of Muscat and the Achin ruler of Sumatra re-established their power in their respective areas. The struggle among the European powers in the period of interregnum following the Portuguese decline "marked the beginning of the use of the Indian Ocean as a theatre where rivalries among foreign navies were thrashed out and where extra-regional wars and alliances could affect local security".[15]

The real struggle for the mastery of the Indian Ocean was carried on between the British and the French. The British began from a small trading post at Surat in the Gulf of Cambay and one at Masulipatam on the Coromandal coast. Later they moved to Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The chief French base was Pondichery near Madras. Looking for a halting place on the way to India, the French first attempted to expel the Dutch from the Cape. After this failed they occupied Mauritius, where they found a natural

[14]Toussaint, "Shifting Power Balances," p. 7.

[15]Melinda W. Cooke, "Strategic Considerations," in Indian Ocean: Five Island Countries, Frederica Bunge, ed. (Washington: American University, 1983), p. 252.

harbour-Port Louis. In the Bay of Bengal the main French base was Chandernagore while Calcutta was the British. The Anglo-French duel for the mastery of the world's oceans lasted throughout the 18th century and only came to an end in 1815 when British naval supremacy was firmly established in the Indian Ocean.

After their naval supremacy was established, the British adhered to the classical assumption of freedom of the sea. It was in this context that the British rediscovered Grotius and Mare Liberum which they had buried 200 years previously. Now, freedom of the sea became the catch-word of British naval supremacy. But in historical reality, as Rene-Jean Dupuy observed, "only the great maritime powers were able to make use of it (freedom). Freedom of the sea has been akin to 'freedom of labour' in the industrial Europe of the 19th century; in effect the right of the great was licence, that of the poor was submission."[16] Later on, the superpowers themselves used this concept in order not to endorse the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal at the United Nations after 1971. From the Peace Settlement of Vienna in 1815 until World War II the Indian Ocean was practically a British lake. Toussaint observes:

> Adopting d'Albuquerque's ideas and even giving them a new twist, for d'Albuquerque had not foreseen industrial capitalism, the English were to set up in the Indian Ocean the most absolute hegemony of all time, and were to impose upon Asia a yoke which was to be shaken only by Japanese cannon a century and a half later.17

The opening of the Suez canal in 1868 and the widespread use of

[16]Rene-Jean Dupuy, The Law of the Sea: Current Problems (Leiden: Oceana Publications Inc., 1974), p. 3.

[17]Toussaint, History of the Indian Ocean, p. 188.

steamships in the late 19th century opened up a new phase in the history of the Indian Ocean. The ocean became even closer to Europe with these developments. British control over Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said and Aden and the acquisition of Egypt and the annexation of Cyprus brought the Suez route under the firm control of Britain. After 1870, the Germans and the Italians entered into the colonial race in the Indian Ocean area with the thrust of the "new imperialism". Nevertheless, no power at the time was capable of posing an effective challenge to the British naval hegemony in the Indian Ocean. Germany, which was late to enter the colonial fray, found that the Atlantic and the Red Sea routes to the Indian Ocean were virtually closed. Thus, they attempted to reach the Indian Ocean overland and planned the controversial Berlin-Baghdad railway line. It was an attempt on the part of the Germans "to outflank strategically British sea control".[18] Though Germany posed a formidable challenge to British naval power in the early 20th century, World War I effectively frustrated German plans.

The Washington Naval Conference in 1922 marked the end of Britain's exclusive maritime supremacy, at least in theory, by establishing the United States' naval parity with Great Britain. That, however, did not affect the British position in the Indian Ocean. In the period between the end of World War I to about 1935, the focus of attention was East Asia in view of the rapid growth of Japanese naval power. Severe losses suffered by the Royal Navy in 1941 and early in 1942 signalled the beginning of

[18]Monoranjan Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy in the Indian Ocean: The International Response (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 5.

the end of the British phase in Indian Ocean history.

In the years following World War II the defence of the Indian Ocean once again remained with Britain but, in practice, the days of British thalassocracy in the Indian Ocean were over. Under the new power configuration in world politics after the war it was clear that Britain could not continue to play the role of guardian of the Indian Ocean for long.

As was the case after the Portuguese decline, the waning of British power set in motion naval competition among the other external powers in the Indian Ocean; this time it was the super-powers. It is not simply that the naval hegemony of a single dominant power was replaced by the strategic parity of the supe-powers. The littoral states collectively and independently also began to assert themselves in the affairs in the region. As such, they have become an important element in the new power balance in the Indian Ocean. One striking aspect of this power equation is the acquisition by certain littoral states, notably India, of "blue water" naval power and nuclear capability, making the pattern of potential conflict more complex. Therefore, what is going on in the Indian Ocean region constitutes an important subject in regional as well as international politics. The signi-ficance of this question should be viewed against the backdrop of the increasing importance of the Indian Ocean in international politics.

**Political and Strategic Importance of the Indian Ocean**

The Indian Ocean has become an important geostrategic region in contemporary world politics. The strength of the human resour-ces of the Indian Ocean, though it ranks third in size in world

oceans, should be noted first. One important factor in the post-World War II international environment that brought about decisive changes in the Indian Ocean region was the tide of national liberation forces which expedited the de-colonization process. As a result, former colonies gained political independence one by one and entered into world politics as autonomous actors. One-third of the global population and also one-third of the independent states belong to the Indian Ocean region. Because of the numerical strength of the Indian Ocean littoral states, both superpowers give high priority to the Indian Ocean in their effort to wield power and influence in world politics.

It should be noted, however, that most states located in the geographical system of the Indian Ocean are economically weak and politically vulnerable. In a sense, the Indian Ocean is a 'third World' Ocean because virtually all the states in the region are economically underdeveloped and politically post-colonial. There is no single regional state that is capable of extending its power over the entire Indian Ocean. In the regional sub-systems, medium powers such as India may exercise considerable preponderance of power. Their sphere of influence, however, does not extend beyond their respective sub-systems. Many littoral states are weak in relation to their internal political structures, too. They are still in the primary stage in the state-building process. The internal political structures of many of these countries are so weak that political instability has become a pervasive feature of the region. In many cases, post-colonial attempts at national integration have proved to be

less than successful. These features inherent to the region have contributed to its vulnerability to extra-regional machinations.

The history of the Indian Ocean since the Second World War is fraught with violent political conflicts. They cannot be solely attributed to external sources. Shortcomings, if not failures, in the post-independence strategies and processes of national integration and state building, boundary disputes and ethnic divisions, cut across national lines. In addition, the extra-territorial loyalties of the ethnic minorities, especially in the context of the failure of the post-colonial states to integrate them into the political system, play a considerable part in the violent conflicts prevalent in the region. An outstanding example of this is the relationship of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka with India. Because of the multiple linkages of these conflicts with the central strategic balance between the superpowers, regional conflicts have global repercussions.

The Indian Ocean region is not at all politically passive, submitting itself to extra-regional pressures. Having refused to fall in line with Cold War polarization, the countries of the Indian Ocean took the lead in developing an alternative course of action identified as non-alignment. With the passage of time, the non-aligned movement gained momentum and began to play a leading role in international forums to push forward the interests of the 'neglected majority'. The heritage of the colonial past, problems of underdevelopment, and economic dependence on the industrial centers have given a common identity to the countries of the region in spite of the presence of clear divisions on political,

religious and ethnic lines.

The economic importance of the region should not be underestimated because of its widespread underdevelopment. The economy of the Indian Ocean region is an organic and an essential part of the world economic order. Economic changes set in motion during the colonial past integrated the region economically with the industrial centres of the west. Therefore, any change in the economic organization and relations in the region would have world wide significance. Since they gained political independence, Indian Ocean states have been attempting to restructure their subordinate economic relations with the industrial centres. This attempt is embodied in the demand for a new international economic order and in the North-South debate in which the Indian Ocean states play a leading role.

The major issue in the debate on the new international economic order and the north-south dialogue is the unequal trade pattern. In the import-export orientation of the colonial past, the economies of these countries were structured to supply primary agricultural goods to the industrialized countries. The colonial powers conducted their trade relations with their colonies in a way that made the latter serve as spokes to a metropolitan hub. During the colonial period, these trade spokes remained unconnected to each other. Once the colonial yoke was removed, the littoral states attempted to develop intra-regional trade and established organizations of regional economic cooperation such as ASEAN, GCC, and SAARC, But these spokes are not sufficiently inter-connected so that the countries in the region remain heavily dependent on ocean waters for their external

trade. Similarly, industrialised countries are also dependent for some important raw materials on the Indian Ocean region. It should be noted that the importance of the ocean for the trade of the littorals derives from its geography. The Indian Ocean is situated as a huge bay with few strategic exit points. Due to the scarcity of good overland trade routes between the littorals, the ocean is the major artery for them. Therefore, whoever controls the Indian Ocean controls the trade of the region and therefore not only the economies of the littoral countries but also those of many industrialised countries.

The availability of some important mineral resources in the region is one of the important factors that contributes to the geostrategic importance of the Indian Ocean. Countries bordering on the Indian Ocean have considerable stocks of nearly twenty strategically important raw materials, among them uranium, thorium, bauxite, manganese, tin, mica, chromite, nickel, and cobalt. In addition, oil resources have made the Indian Ocean a pivotal region in the world economy. Today, the Indian Ocean contributes nearly 40 per cent of the total oil production of the world. Japan imports nearly 85 per cent and Western Europe 75 per cent of their oil from the Persian Gulf. For a long period these resources were extensively controlled by Western multinational enterprises. After they attained independence, some of the littoral states attempted to bring these resources under their control through nationalization. Furthermore, they have come forward to use their economic resources as a weapon to influence the policies of the major powers.

Another important dimension of the economic resources of the

Indian Ocean is deep sea bed mineral resources. Though manganese nodules are the most promising known resources of the sea-bed, other minerals such as copper, aluminium, nickel, and cobalt are also available in large quantities. But most states in the Indian Ocean region are technologically weak so that they are not in a position to exploit or control such resources. The UNCLOS III convention in 1982 granted littoral states 200-mile exclusive economic zones. But in order to exploit resources, especially off-shore oil and sea-bed minerals, these states need technical assistance in the form of royalty contracts or joint ventures from technically advanced countries.

The fishing industry has also made the Indian Ocean economically attractive to the major maritime powers who have developed world-wide fishing fleets comprised of hundreds of factory ships with sonar to locate the catch. Securing access to the fish resources of the Indian Ocean is important to several extra-regional powers, notably the Soviet Union, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, which operate fishing fleets in the high seas throughout the area.

Furthermore, the Indian Ocean region provides an important market for the arms industries of the superpowers and other major arms exporters. The demand for arms in this conflict-ridden area is extremely high. Only a few states in the region, namely South Africa, Australia, and India, have their own military-industrial structures. In order to trace the relationship between the arms trade and superpower involvement, two features should be taken into account; economic and military-strategic. On economic grounds it is a lucrative source of profit. On the other hand,

arms deals are a major instrument of pressure on littoral states to lend logistic support for superpower military plans. Supplying arms is also a major means of solving balance of payment problems in relation to the inflow of essential raw materials from the Indian Ocean region. For the Soviet Union, arms deals with the countries of the region are a principal device for solving her hard currency problem.

The interaction between political and economic interests and military plans is well established. The three elements are inter-related aspects of the phenomenon of power politics which is a central theme in international relations. The military importance of the Indian Ocean for the superpowers has a dual basis. First, at the regional level, in order to be politically powerful, it is necessary to be in a position to flex military muscle. Secondly, at the global level, military positions in the Indian Ocean figure largely in the central strategic balance between the super powers. Developments in weapons technology, especially in missile systems, and the global reach of the superpowers' navies have made the Indian Ocean an essential factor in the global military strategies of the superpowers. A major tendency in military strategies in the recent past that has given the Ocean an added military importance should be noted at this point: the increasing militarization of continental shelves and ocean floors. The naval competition of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean should be viewed against the background of this survey of the political, economic, and military importance of the world's third largest water body.

**Descriptive and Analytical Questions**

The changes and main processes that took place in power politics in the Indian Ocean in the period following World War II can be summarized in terms of four broad themes: the British withdrawal of the Royal Navy from East of Suez; the entry of the superpowers into the Indian Ocean; the growth of superpower naval rivalry and the increasing militarization of the region; and, finally, the intrusion of the post-colonial states in the affairs of the region. In 1947, the Indian Ocean continued to be a British lake and did not fall within the primary strategic concerns of the superpowers. Two decades later, in 1968, Britain retreated from her traditional position as the guardian of the Indian Ocean and was poised to withdraw her naval forces from the region. Simultaneously, the Indian Ocean entered into the strategic calculations of the superpowers, as reflected in the plan of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff plan for a base on Diego Garcia and in the Soviet decision to deploy naval forces into the Indian Ocean. Ten years later, in 1978, superpower naval competition and consequent militarization of the Indian Ocean became a major aspect of power politics in the Indian Ocean. The essence of these processes is the demise of the earlier international regime in the Indian Ocean and replacement of the naval hegemony of Great Britain by the naval competition of the superpowers. The object of this study is to analyse and explain these processes.

The basic question to be answered is why the British withdrawal was followed by another form of external, namely superpower, naval competition. To be specific, what were the main objectives and interests of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean

and also what have been the major components and courses of action of superpower naval competition in the Indian Ocean? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to place them in a broader historical, politico-economic, and military-strategic context.

The point of departure of the analysis is an examination of the British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean. The immediate question in this context is why the British did not adjust the defence system designed in the imperial framework to suit the post-imperial order soon after the war under a new international and regional power configuration? Thus, what was the relationship between the political withdrawal and the defence contraction in British policy in the Indian Ocean? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to trace the stages of British withdrawal and the reasons for taking each step. This is done in chapter two.

The analysis of the U.S. entry into the Indian Ocean should begin with the question of why the Americans did not enter into the Indian Ocean in the early years following the war when they assumed the leadership of the western camp in other areas of the world. At the height of Cold War tension the Indian Ocean was more or less insulated from the US-Soviet conflict. Though the Americans did not enter navally into the Ocean, they played a leading role in the Asian continent by extending the containment policy to the area. The United States pursued a policy of acting under the British naval umbrella for about one and a half decades. After the Suez crisis, the U.S. changed this policy and decided to project naval power directly into the region. What

accounts for this change is a basic question addressed in chapter three, which provides an analysis of the US entry into the Indian Ocean.

The western monopoly of seapower in the Indian Ocean was decisively challenged by the entry of Soviet naval forces into the Indian Ocean in 1968. Any analysis of the Soviet move into the Indian Ocean has to begin by answering one primary question: was there any relationship between the earlier imperial Russian and Soviet (under Stalin) moves and the 1968 Soviet naval entry? If the answer is negative or only partially relevant, how can we explain the Soviet move in 1968? In order to determine this, chapter four examines Soviet objectives and goals of achieving naval power in the Indian Ocean. What was the relationship between the Soviet political strategy vis-a-vis the third world and the military strategic moves on the one hand and the American naval advances and Soviet naval responses on the other?

After addressing issues pertaining to the British withdrawal and American and Soviet entries, in chapters five, six, and seven we come to the central theme of the study - the growth of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. The analysis first conceptualises superpower naval rivalry by attempting to identify the major elements of that rivalry. As the focus of the study is on the growth of superpower naval rivalry, attention will be paid to tracing the stages in the evolution of this rivalry and the factors contributing to it. The correlation between developments within the region and the evolution of superpower naval rivalry also needs to be examined. What were the factors contributing to the decision of the superpowers in this regard? Which was

primary: the general political decisions of the policy-making center, the decisions of the adversary, or developments at the regional level? It is important to establish the extent to which these factors contributed to each decision. These questions finally take us to another important aspect of the problematic, namely, the relationship between regional dynamics and global mechanisms.

Sri Lankan responses to the superpower naval presence in the Indian Ocean have to be examined in the broader context of regional responses. How do regional powers perceive and react to the external naval presence? Why do some states in the region depend on external powers in their search for security? Is this due to economic dependence, or to the limits of security options, or to inherent limitations of their internal politics? The approaches of the regional powers to the Indian Ocean issue converge at one point, that is, the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal. As such, attention will be paid to examining the origins, evolution, and divergent intepretations of the Peace Zone concept. In order to examine Sri Lankan responses, first of all, it is necessary to trace major elements of Sri Lanka's defence and security perceptions as a small island state strategically located in the Indian Ocean. This will show how the imperative of geo-politics of Sri Lanka's location and the internal political and economic processes influence Sri Lanka's foreign policy decisions.

**An Overview of Existing Theoretical/Analytical Trends**

Many constituent aspects of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean have been subjected to detailed investigation in the

last two decades. However, the main focus of existing studies has generally been confined to the national security interests of extra-regional powers or the medium powers in the area. Studies on the regional security dimensions of the superpower naval presence are overwhelmingly by those scholars who represent the point of view of medium powers.[19] Nothing substantial has been done on this subject from the point of view of the peace and security of the smaller states in the Indian Ocean. This thesis is intended to fill this gap by examining the problem in a Sri Lankan perspective.

The dominant trend in the existing literature is to explain the superpower naval rivalry in relation to the concepts of power vacuum and reciprocal escalation.[20] According to the power vacuum concept, the British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean created a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean which prompted the superpowers to project their naval power into the region in order not to let the Indian Ocean fall into the hands of the adversary by default. Closely related to the power vacuum concept is the theory of reciprocal escalation. The action of one superpower is sufficient to explain action of the other superpower, according

[19]For the Pakistan position see, P. Iqbal Cheema, Conflict and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean: Pakistan's Interests and Choices (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1980), and Raul Bux Rais, The Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political, and Strategic Perspectives (London: Croom Helm, 1986). For the Indian position see K. Subrahmanyam, Indian Security Perspectives (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1982), and K.R. Singh, The Indian Ocean: Big Power Presence and Local Response (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977).

[20]For example see, Anthony Harrigan, "Soviets may 'own' Indian Ocean if US Does Not Make Countermove," Navy: The magazine of Sea Power, (December 1969), p. 15.

to this escalation theory.[21]

The confrontational paradigms associated with power vacuum is fraught with many serious conceptual and empirical pitfalls. First of all, the theory of power vacuum is based on the assumption that the Indian Ocean should be dominated by some one. It neither explains why the British decided to withdraw from the Indian Ocean, nor the evolution of their military position after World War II. This thesis will present the historical evidence that clearly reveals that the superpower entry into the region was taking place well before the British announcement of their withdrawal. In addition, this theory ignores the economic and political dimensions of superpower involvements in the Indian Ocean. It is important to note that the economic interests of the superpowers in the region are not always conflictual. Last, but not least, the power vacuum concept does not attempt to examine linkages between regional economic, political, and security dynamics and superpower naval strategy.

Soviet entry and Soviet policies in the Indian Ocean have generated an impressive body of literature.[22] One school still

[21]The majority of writings in the United States represent this view. Nevertheless, some serious scholars have challenged confrontational paradigms. For example, Howard Wriggins argues that American efforts to increase its naval force in the Indian Ocean are undesirable both for the United States and the countries of the region. See, Howard Wriggins, "Heading Off a New Arms Race: Let's Try to Neutralize the Indian Ocean," War/Peace Report, (September 1971), pp. 7-11.

[22]For a good introduction to the leading hypotheses that have been advanced to explain Soviet motivations see, Robert H. Donaldson, "The USSR, the Subcontinent, and the Indian Ocean: Naval Power and Political Influence," in The Subcontinent in World Politics - India, Its Neighbors, and the Great Powers, Lawrence Ziring, ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), pp. 168-93.

maintains that the Soviet entry is an outgrowth of the historical desire of the Russians to have access to warm waters.[23] The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has shed new light on this approach. Writings with an orthodox cold war approach still constitute a large portion of the works on the Soviet entry into the Indian Ocean. These writings emphasise the Soviet intention to acquire military capability in order to disrupt western oil supply and other western economic and political interests;[24] but scholars in the revisionist tradition have presented analyses in which attempts are made to understand Soviet economic and political interests and also strategic necessities as growing out of the Soviet Union's competition with the United States.[25]

On the part of Sri Lanka, it is surprising to know that the attention of scholars to issues pertaining to the country's defence and security have been meagre especially in view of the importance of the subject to such a strategically located country. Although a few studies on Sri Lankan foreign policy are available, its defence and security dimensions are a neglected area. The only published work is one written by S.U. Kodikara.[35] It is a general survey of strategic factors in inter-

[23]See Alvin J Cotterell and R.M. Burrell, " The Soviet Navy and the Indian Ocean," Strategic Review, 2:4 (Fall 1974), p. 25-35.

[24]This is the widely prevalent view in the U.S. Service Departments. The writings of Robert J.Hanks, Ronald I Spiers, and William F. Hickman could be cited as axamples.

[25]See works by Jukes, Oles Smolansky, McConnell, and MccGwire cited in the bibliography of this thesis..

[26]S.U. Kodikara, Strategic Factors in Interstate Relations in South Asia (Canberra, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1979).

state relations in South Asia. The major existing works deal with the evolution of Indo-Sri Lanka relations[27] and Sri Lanka's role in non-alignment or present general surveys of Sri Lanka's foreign relations.[28] No substantial study has hitherto been carried out on Sri Lanka's defence and security problems in the context of Indian Ocean political and strategic framework. This study is an attempt in the direction of filling a strikingly felt lacuna existing in the area of security studies in Sri Lanka.

[27]Ibid., Indo-Ceylon Relations Since Independence (Colombo: The Ceylon Institute of World Affairs, 1965).

[28]Ibid., Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka. A Third World Perspective (New Delhi: Chanakya Publishers, 1982), H.S.S. Nissanka, Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy - A Study of Non-Alignment (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984).

Chapter II

## The British Withdrawal from the Indian Ocean, 1945-1968

The Indian Ocean was practically a British lake from the time the British defeated the French in the late 18th century. After firmly establishing her hegemony in the Indian Ocean, Britain maintained an international regime based on 'freedom of the sea' which was underwritten by British naval supremacy. The defence structure that Britain raised in the Indian Ocean was an integral part of this larger design of oceanic regime. For nearly one and a half centuries, until the Second World War, Britain was able to decide and impose principles, norms, and rules and carry out decision-making procedures associated with the 'Mare Liberum' concept in the Indian Ocean. The strength of the Royal Navy, the political advantages accruing to Britain as the predominant colonial power, and her control over the gateways to the Indian Ocean sustained the defence structure without a serious challenge during this period. However, with the changes in power constellation in the post-war world politics and the emergence of new states as a result of the de-colonization process in the Indian Ocean region, this oceanic regime gradually began to lose its vitality after 1945. The British decision in 1968 to withdraw their naval forces from the Indian Ocean was the culmination of this process and it symbolically marked the end of an era in naval politics in the Indian Ocean. An examination of the evolution of British defence policy in the period from 1945 to

1968 provides the point of departure for the inquiry into super-power naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean and Sri Lanka's response to it.

**British Defence Structure in the Indian Ocean Before 1947**

The defence system Britain developed in the Indian Ocean was historically designed for the strategic requirements of defending her colonial empire in Asia and the sea lanes to Australia and New Zealand. As the British empire expanded from the Red Sea to the Malay Peninsula, the isolated defence measures taken by the British to maintain the security of different parts of the empire in Asia finally evolved into an unified system of defence in the Indian Ocean. Throughout the period of the Second Empire, India was considered the jewel of the British empire; hence its protection was considered a prime necessity. The unique strategic location of India made her the natural centerpiece of the defence of the Indian Ocean. From historical experience, British policy-makers were aware that the security of India could be threatened both from land and sea. Therefore, Britain's East of Suez defence strategy encompassed both the oceanic as well as the land-based defence arrangements. As for the overland threat, the most likely challenger was Russia. As a result, British Balkan and Mediterranean policy sought to check Russian expansion to the south. The policy of maintaining protectorates and buffer states around India was a means of neutralising the overland threat. As far as oceanic strategy was concerned, British policy was based upon two fundamental conceptions: first, that of not allowing any great power to establish bases and fortified ports in the Indian Ocean; second, that Britain should always control the naval

gateways to the region.[1]

Throughout the period India was the keystone of the arch of defence in the Indian Ocean. However, once the oceanic regime based on British naval power was established and the gateways to the ocean were firmly latched, security concerns of the spokes of the defence system, rather than the hub itself, assumed greater importance. For example, the eastern and western flanks, the Middle East and the Far East, became important in their own right over time. With the development of a colonial economic order and the assimilation of colonies as organic but dependent units into its workings, each colony acquired an importance of its own. As a result of later developments defence arrangements became more complicated, and, as Darby points out, "the detail of settlement and annexation, maritime activity and diplomatic manoeuvring admits no neat order".[2] On the whole, the British defence structure in the Indian Ocean comprised three basic elements, namely, bases, territorial commands, and the transportation of troops by sea.

It is important to note, however, that the defence structure the British maintained in the Indian Ocean was not as tight as it appeared and that the key strategic positions had not all been fortified adequately. Stability and security of the Indian Ocean were taken too much for granted. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Indian Ocean defence system could not be sustained autonomously of British forces in other areas. As Admiral Terence

[1]Philip Darby, British Defence Policy East of Suez (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 2.

Lewin pointed out "in 1914 the German cruiser Emden gave warning of what could happen if that stability and security were taken too much for granted".[3] With the passage of time the defence system lost its original compulsion. Defence issues tended to be dealt with in an isolated manner. However, the Indian Ocean did retain the status of a single unit in strategic thinking.

The decisive challenge to British naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean finally came during the Second World War after the Japanese entry into the war. With a single stroke, Japan was able to put the British position in the area at jeopardy. The loss of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse soon after Pearl Harbour and the sudden and cataclysmic collapse of Singapore illustrated the fragility of the British defence posture in the Indian Ocean in face of a real threat. According to Michael Howard, on the day the Japanese Army took Singapore along with 130,000 prisoners of war, the British Empire, as Kipling had known it, came to an end.[4] Without going that far, it was obvious that Britain could not return to the pre-war position in the Indian Ocean after the war.

The Second World War was a severe setback to the colonial empires in Asia. Nationalist and anti-colonial forces in Asia gained a huge momentum during the war. Though the colonial powers regained most of their territories soon after the war, their rule could not be restored in its pre-war form. The nationalist tide

[3]Lewin, "The Indian Ocean and Beyond: British Interests Yesterday and Today," Asian Affairs, IX:3 (October, 1978), p. 250.

[4]Howard, "Britain's Strategic Problems East of Suez," International Affairs, 42:2 (April, 1966), p. 179.

could not be reversed. The change in South Asia was not as dramatic as that in South-East Asia. The gradual development and evolution in the political processes made the transfer of power in the British South Asian possessions take a less conflictive form. Though different in form, the 'peaceful' South Asian and the 'violent' South-East Asian developments were parts of one and the same process. The emergence of new states in the Indian Ocean region had extremely important long term consequence for British defence policies in the area.

These developments in Asia, i.e. the dissolution of old forms of empire in the face of resurgent nationalism, were contemporaneous to the East-West polarization process that later came to be described as the Cold War. In this context, the United States emerged as the undisputed leader of the Western Bloc in the Cold War. The European powers, in the post-war period, had to rely on the U.S., economically as well as militarily.

Britain's position in the world power balance significantly changed in the aftermath of World War II. Firstly, Britain had become a secondary power in relation to the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Secondly, Britain was beset with severe economic problems arising from an acute balance of payments crisis. The declining economic strength of Britain became a key factor that determined her position in world affairs. In this context Britain was not in a position to play an independent role in the Indian Ocean as she had done earlier.

Therefore, it is important to place the independence of the South Asian colonies in the broader context of the changed regional and global political environment in order to gauge its real

significance. The ending of colonial rule over the South Asian colonies was a landmark both in the history of these countries and in British colonial policy in the region. It signified the emergence of a new milieu in Indian Ocean politics.

The significant role played by the Indian colonial administration in maintaining the Indian Ocean defence structure in the pre-independence period was naturally absent after independence. The withdrawal of British forces from India released nearly 50,000 men who could be deployed elsewhere. But this advantage was negated by the loss of control over the Indian army which acted as a peacetime strategic reserve for the protection of British positions in the Middle East and the Far East. Indian independence meant not only the loss of the reservoir of Indian manpower but also the loss of economic resources, airfields, military installations, and communications facilities.

According to the conventional argument, Indian independence, on its own, was the turning point in British Indian Ocean policy. As Darby puts it, India was to some extent both object and source of British power East of Suez. With the transfer of power to India and Pakistan, the basis of Britain's position as an imperial power was gone. "Without the Indian empire, Britain might still be a great power but it was no longer an imperial power in the full sense of that term".[5] The British had, it is argued, certain responsibilities even after Indian independence, i.e. that of assisting in the defence of Australia and New Zealand, maintaining their dominance in the Middle East and the Far East, and protecting the lines of communication. The transfer

[5] Darby, op. cit. p. 15.

of power in South Asia necessitated a reappraisal of the imperial role and the readjustment of the British defence structure in the Indian Ocean in accordance with the conditions of the post-imperial order. In this situation it is surprising that no such reappraisal took place. Darby explains this failure as due to "a combination of institutional factors, external circumstances and patterns of thought which only slowly lost their hold on decision making in Whitehall".[6]

The question of why Britain failed to reappraise the role of the spokes in the absence of the Indian hub after 1947 is raised and also answered incorrectly by misreading the British position and their security objectives in the Indian Ocean. First of all it is necessary to point out that the British empire needs to be conceptualised not only as a political unit but also as an economic entity. In that sense, the economies of most of the Indian Ocean countries after 1947 were still spokes of the British imperial economic hub, whether they were independent or not. Even in a formal political sense, the British still had an empire around the Indian Ocean littoral. The hub-spokes metaphor as it was used to analyse the security system was actually not valid in 1945. It is true that the Eastern and Western flanks of the defence system were first developed as spokes of the Indian hub. However, the relationship between India and these flanks in the defence structure in 1947 was by no means that of a hub and spokes. One and a half centuries of development had given these colonies an independent importance and a place in this structure. The overemphasis on the significance of Indian independence is

[6] Loc cit.

based upon a misconception regarding the position of India in the Indian Ocean defence structure. In reality, Britain did not need to redefine the structure just then because of her continuing interests and commitments in the region. In order to understand why the British defence structure continued without a substantial change for some period after 1947, it is necessary to examine Britain's continuing interests and commitments in the Indian Ocean.

**British Interests and Commitments in the Indian Ocean after 1947**

The transfer of power in South Asia only marked the beginning of the decolonization process in the Indian Ocean region and Britain did not immediately cease to be a colonial power in the region as a whole in 1947. Britain, in fact, had a number of colonies bordering the Indian Ocean even after 1947. These included the East African colonies of Tanganyika, Uganda, Kenya and Zanzibar, whose security depended on the power balance in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, in the Western Indian Ocean Britain had the colonies of Mauritius, Aden, the Seychelles, and in the Eastern Indian Ocean region, Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sabah, Sarawak and Hong Kong. In 1947, it was considered that independence for these other colonies was not likely in the immediate future. Britain had to grapple with the specific problems of these colonial territories e.g. it was required to win the Malayan war and to put down the Mau Mau in Kenya. In addition to these formal colonial commitments Britain had certain responsibilities in her protectorates in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Britain was committed to the defence of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the Trucial Coast, Muscat, Oman, and other South

Arabian States through various nineteenth century defence agreements.

Even in South Asia the responsibilities of the empire did not disappear with the formal transfer of power. It was considered, though not clearly spelled out, that it was Britain's responsibility to provide security for those newly independent countries. In the case of Burma and Sri Lanka the transfer of power was accompanied by formal defence agreements. The treaty between the Government of Britain and the Provisional Government of Burma was signed in London on 17th October 1947. According to this agreement, Britain was "to provide a Naval, Military and Air Force mission to Burma and training facilities in his Majesty's establishments for personnel of Burma Force".[7] The Government of Burma agreed "to receive a Naval, Military and Air Force Mission from the U.K. Government and not from any government outside the British Commonwealth".[8]

In Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom was even more deeply committed to the security of the country through two treaties - the Defence Agreement and the External Affairs Agreement - signed on 15th November 1947 at Colombo as appendices to the Ceylon: Proposal for Conferring on Ceylon fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations. According to the Defence Agreement, both governments "will give to each other such military assistance for security of their territories for defence against external aggression and for the protection of

[7]United Kingdom, Foreign office, Treaty between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Provisional Government of Burma (Cmd 7240), 1947, para 4.

[8]Ibid., para 8.

essential communications as it may be in their mutual interests to provide".[9] As for Indian Ocean defence, article two of the said agreement states:

> The Government of Ceylon will grant to the Government of the United Kingdom all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article I as may be mutually agreed. These facilities will include the use of naval and air bases and ports and military establishments and the use of telecommunications facilities, and the right of service courts and authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said Forces as they exercise at present.10

In addition to military and political commitments, the British had wide economic interests in the Indian Ocean area. The relationship between military and political commitments and economic interests was not always apparent. In the Middle East, South Asia and Far East the British had different economic interests. These necessitated British military presence in the area and strengthened their political commitments.

The Persian Gulf remained basically a British economic enclave and Britain's main source of oil. Oil import figures plainly reveal Britain's dependence on Persian Gulf oil. For example, in the financial year 1949-50, Britain's imports of crude oil from Kuwait and Bahrain were valued at £22.1 million and at £25.4 million from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. Total imports from the rest of the world amounted only to £8.4 million.[11] British dependence upon Persian Gulf oil was one

[9]United Kingdom, Colonial Office, Ceylon: Proposal for Conferring on Ceylon Fully Responsible Status within the Commonwealth of Nations (Cmd 7257), 1947, para 1.

[10]Ibid., para 2.

[11]Economic Cooperation Administration, The Sterling Area: an

American Analysis (London: ECA, 1951), p. 257.
aspect of the picture. The other aspect was Britain's stake in the major oil companies by direct investment. British oil companies such as the Kuwait Oil Company, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and Iraq Petroleum Corporation, controlled a large part of Middle Eastern oil supplies and brought huge profits back home. It was believed that if Arab nationalism were permitted to run unchecked, Britain's oil supplies and the security of British investments in oil companies would be in danger.[12]

The transfer of power in South Asia did not in any way hurt Britain's economic interests there. These interests can be explained in terms of private investment and foreign trade. India's foreign trade was not heavily dependent on Britain as was the case with Sri Lanka whereas British investment in India was significant.

In the Sri Lankan case, British dominance in the economy was even more obvious. The island's export-import trade was heavily London-centered. In the period 1935-1947, Sri Lanka's trade with Britain and other sterling areas came to more than sixty-five per cent of total trade.[13] In the tea industry, which generated two-thirds of Sri Lanks's export earnings, even twenty-four years after the transfer of power, i.e in 1972, Sterling Companies owned 26.46 per cent of all tea lands in the country.[14] Though the data relating to British investment in South-East Asia is not satisfactory, there was no doubt that investment in Malaya,

[12]Darby, op.cit., p. 26

[13]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol.3, 9 July 1948, cc. 984-94

[14]Administrative Report of the Tea Controller 1972

(Colombo: Govt. Printer, 1974).
especially in tin and rubber plantations, was immense. A.C. Allen calculated that in 1939 total Western investments in Malaya were about U.S.$455 million and seventy per cent of this was British.[15]

After the independence of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka the Labour leaders in Britain believed that British economic interests in the Indian Ocean region offered a good reason for the continuation of a British presence East of Suez.[16] The Labour insider, Richard Crossman, recalls that Ernest Bevin reminded the Parliamentary caucus that Britain had to hold on East of Suez for purely economic reasons.[17]

Continued economic interests and trade relations with the countries in the Indian Ocean region resulted in efforts to protect trade routes and communication lines. The 1953 Statement on Defence states:

> No matter what the future may hold, the Oceans of the world must always be kept free for the passage of our merchant shipping. No nation in the Western world can afford to forget that the life and commerce of its industrial and trading societies depends on unmolested movement of shipping on the high seas.18

The fact that the communication lines to Australia and New Zealand lay across the Indian Ocean further added to the

[15]G.C. Allen and A.Donnithorne, Western Enterprises in Indonesia and Malaya (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 290.

[16]Bezboruah brings out this point clearly, see Monoranjan Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy in the Indian Ocean - The International Response (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 15

[17]Richard H.S. Crossman, "Western Defence in the 1960's" Journal of the Royal United Services Institute, (August 1961), p. 238.

[18]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Statement on Defence 1963 - Report on the Navy (Cmnd 1936), 1963, para 4.

importance of controlling that ocean. As original members of the Commonwealth and transplantations of English society, Britain had both a formal and a moral obligation to protect these communication lines to Australia and New Zealand. Thus, the maintenance of a British presence in the Indian Ocean was integrally related to the security of these countries.

**The Early Post-War Defence Scheme**

Plainly, Britain had enduring interests and commitments in the Indian Ocean after the independence of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka,and Burma. But there were other reasons for the continued British presence. In the Cold War context of a world divided into spheres of influence, the Indian Ocean was considered by western Cold War strategists a British sphere of influence. Britain's duty was to keep the Indian Ocean safe from Communist expansion. The early post-war British policy of attempting to cooperate with the Soviet Union was abandoned at the end of 1947. Then it was assumed that a war with the Soviet Union was a strong possibility and subsequent Defence White Papers were presented in terms of possible war with the Soviet Union. The Defence White Paper 1953, for example, states :

> The effort we are making falls broadly into two parts, though these to a considerable extent overlap. First, there are our overseas obligations and our commitments in resisting the Communist campaign known as the Cold War; and second, there are the preparations which we must make together with our Commonwealth partners and our allies against the risk that Communist policy, whether by accident or design, might force us to defend ourselves against a direct attack. Into the first part fall the forces which the United Kingdom maintains in overseas theatres ...20

[20]Ibid., Statement on Defence, 1953 (Cmd 8768), 1953, pr. 31

Thus, the defence initiatives Britain took in the Indian Ocean in the post-war years until 1956 should be placed in the general framework of British Cold War strategy. The concern in defence thinking in this context was Europe. Churchill put this very plainly in a BBC talk in August 1950, "My eyes are not fixed upon Korea ... the supreme peril is in Europe. We must try to close the hideous gap on the European front"[21] Philip Darby explained the impact of this perception on the Indian Ocean very lucidly :

> The various moves on the Indian Ocean chess-board were viewed [by Britain's policy makers] against a background of Europe, of the Communist threat, and of the fear of global war. The picture that emerges is of the three services taking up the remnant of the imperial system, making such adjustments as the post-war developments necessitated, and attempting to relate the whole to the global war theme.22

Accordingly, Britain maintained her past strategy in the Indian Ocean which depended upon bases, territorial commands, and transporting troops by sea. Until the Suez crisis challenged its validity, this scheme continued without substantial change. However, the loss of the Indian bases and territorial commands necessitated certain adjustments to the scheme. At the time of the independence of India and Pakistan, transit and overflight rights were negotiated with those two countries. An agreement was signed with the Indian Government over the Dum-Dum base at Calcutta. Above all, the loss of Indian bases was substantially overcome by the Defence Agreement with Sri Lanka which ensured

[21] Observer (London), 27 August 1950, Quoted in Darby, op. cit., p. 45.

[22] Darby, op. cit., p. 10.

continued use of naval facilities at Trincomalee, a strategically located natural harbour, and the air facility at Katunayake.

The basic problem in the Far East was lack of coordination of the three services. The naval headquarters was in Hong Kong while the Air and Army headquarters were at Singapore. In 1948, it was decided to move Naval Headquarters to newly fortified Singapore. In the Middle East the concentration was in the Suez canal area and the Army and Airforce headquarters were situated there. The Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) maintained five sub-commands in this area. In the Middle East, Aden played a key role analogous to Singapore in the Far East. Further, Britain retained the Simonstown base in South Africa which was one of the two sentinels of the Indian Ocean.

Britain did not intend to play an unilateral role in the Indian Ocean defence structure and expected close cooperation with Commonwealth partners. At every annual Commonwealth conference in the late 1940s the need for close cooperation between Commonwealth countries in Indian Ocean defence was discussed in detail. In 1948 Britain, Australia, and New Zealand signed the ANZAM agreement which covered Australia, New Zealand, Malaya and the adjacent area. The three countries agreed to act cooperatively, in the context of growing instability in South East Asia, for defence of the area .[23] In 1949, a New Zealand Flight of Dakotas was stationed at Singapore and the Australian Air Force arrived in Malaya in 1950. Britain hoped to get Australia and New Zealand into the Middle East, too. After a conference in London in 1951

[23]For details see Royal Institute of International Affairs, Collective Defence in South East Asia: the Manila Treaty and Its Implications (London: RIIA, 1958).

Australia and New Zealand agreed to participate in an allied command in the Middle East with Britain, the U.S., France, and Turkey to internationalize the Suez base. In the face of opposition from Egypt, the plan was not implemented. However, despite the opposition of the Arab states, a Commonwealth Air Unit was established in the Middle East. In 1951 an Australian Air Force Fighter Wing was sent there.

The Conservative government that came to power in October 1951 questioned the viability of the costly rearmament programme initiated by the Labour government. The new government believed that the only way to match military requirements with Britain's limited economic capability was to rely on nuclear weapons. In 1952, the Chiefs of Staff presented a report on defence at the invitation of the government. The first part of the report emphasized the importance of nuclear deterrence. The second section dealt with NATO and concluded that manpower problems could be solved by introducing nuclear weapons. The third section of the report examined Britain's Indian Ocean and other overseas responsibilities.[24] This presentation marked the beginning of the era of British nuclear deterrence. From this time to 1959, the focal theme of discussions of British defence strategy was nuclear deterrence.

**Regional Alliance Systems and Collective Defence**

The heavy reliance on nuclear deterrence in British defence calculations in the 1950s meant that the specificity of Indian Ocean military requirements was overlooked. However, British

[24]For details of this unpublished report see. 'Defence and Strategy,' Fortune, (December 1953), pp. 77-84, and Darby, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

participation in the collective defence alliances sponsored by the United States in the Indian Ocean, the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact, addressed the issue of specificity of Indian Ocean security requirements from the British point of view. It is important to note that the driving force and the source of strength of these alliances was the United States and they should be viewed in the context of the U.S. Cold War strategy of the containment of Communism. Nevertheless, as a traditionally imperial power in the Indian Ocean and the junior partner in the western Cold War strategy, Britain's participation in SEATO and the Baghdad Pact came as part of the normal order of things.

Even though the Indian Ocean was still taken as a single unit mainly because of communications requirements, the wings of the past defence system, namely the Middle East and the Far East, began to reappear as separate strategic entities in the early 1950s. It was believed that each area had specific problems of its own and they should be dealt with separately with due consideration for specific threats and for the prevalent political climate.

In the context of the Cold War both areas, the Middle East and the Far East, were considered vitally important in security terms. They were held to be crucial to the policy of containing communist expansion and their defence was thus a matter of world wide significance. Therefore, the preservation of the status quo against alleged Communist subversions was not only Britain's responsibility but that of the West as a whole. The period in which Britain had played a unilateral role had come to an end.

The time had come for Britain to go into the alliance business in the Indian Ocean.

Both the Conservative and Labour parties acclaimed the alliances as a significant achievement of British East of Suez policy. SEATO and the Baghdad Pact substantially increased British obligations in the area. For instance, under Article IV of the SEATO Pact Britain as a signatory agreed to "act to meet common danger in the event of armed attack in the treaty area against other signatory states."[25]

Even though the SEATO and CENTO (the successor of the Baghdad pact) pacts furthered British commitments to the Indian Ocean area, Britain neither formulated a strategy taking the distinctive military needs of the area into account nor allocated the material and resources necessary to make honouring those commitments possible. This neglect was partly due to the over-emphasis on nuclear deterrence. Even though there was a recognition of the distinctiveness of the Indian Ocean military role in some quarters of the Defence Ministry, this was overshadowed by preoccupation with the thermonuclear bomb. Still, the main concern of defence thinking was the global war with the Communists; various moves in the Indian Ocean theatre were evaluated in the context of global war and nuclear deterrence. The 1954 Defence White Paper, like that of the previous year, framed the issues in terms of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Paragraph 9 of the White Paper states :

> First, we must maintain our resistance to world communism and to communist adventures and

[25]United Kingdom, Foreign Office, South East Asia Collective Treaty (Cmnd 265), 1957, article iv.

> discharge our other peace time obligations overseas. Secondly, we must, with other allies, build up the most effective possible deterrent against a major aggression which would lead to a global war. Thirdly, we must do all we can, within the limits of our resources, to be prepared to meet such an aggression should our efforts to prevent it fail.26

At this time the Central Strategic Reserve (C.S.R.), later to become the central element of the British defence scheme, was established. The idea of establishing a strategic reserve which could be airlifted to troubled areas when needed goes back to 1946. Since then, successive Defence Secretaries had discussed the possibility of establishing a Central Strategic Reserve (C.S.R.), but due to manpower shortage it was deferred. The withdrawal of troops from the Suez Canal Zone and Korea gave the opportunity to establish the Reserve. The Secretary of Defence, Lord Alexander, announced the plan to establish the C.S.R. on 27 January 1954.

The main problem with the C.S.R. was mobility. The 1955 Statement on Defence announced that the C.S.R. was to be airlifted. But the airlifting capability of the R.A.F. was extremely limited at this time. The transport command had about 40 obsolete Hastings and 50 Valettas.[27] Though another 20 Beverleys were ordered, the problem of transporting the C.S.R. was not resolved. The R.A.F. was preoccupied with the V-bomber programme and it was not keen to assume an overseas role. Another reason for the R.A.F.'s reluctance to provide mobility to the

[26]Ibid., Ministry of Defence, Statement on Defence 1954 (Cmd 9075), 1954, para. 9.

[27]United Kingdom, House of Lords, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol.190, 17 March 1954, c. 465.

C.S.R. was the heavy and bulky equipment still used by the Army.

It was at this point that the Admiralty came forward to provide a naval solution to the transport problem of the C.S.R. In early 1954 Lord Mountbatten became First Sea Lord and the Admiralty took a fresh look at its overseas role. The Explanatory Statement of the Navy Estimates for 1955-56 states

> In peace time, naval power plays a prominent part in supporting national policy overseas and in ensuring that our world-wide trade continues unmolested. In war, two outstanding qualities of seapower become even more evident; namely mobility and relative independence of land bases.28

The development of this position into an alternative strategy could be seen after the Suez crisis. The Suez crisis marked a watershed in British defence policy in the Indian Ocean in many respects but before proceeding to discuss post-Suez developments in the Indian Ocean it is appropriate to trace the British-Sri Lankan defence relationship, because the period between 1948 and 1956 presents a distinct stage in the evolution of this relationship.

**Anglo-Sri_Lankan Defence Relationship, 1948-1956**

The granting of independence to Sri Lanka in 1948 did not make any significant change in Sri Lanka's defence relationship with the United Kingdom as it had evolved during the colonial past. In the period 1948-1956, Sri Lankan policy was based on close defence cooperation with her former colonial master. This defence alliance between the two unequal partners was further reinforced by the Commonwealth link and the trade relationship.

[28]ibid.,Ministry of Defence, Explanatory Statement on the Navy Estimates 1955-56 (Cmd 9396), 1955, para. 3.

The nature of the transfer of power in Sri Lanka, the general conservative political outlook and defence perceptions of the new Sri Lankan ruling elites, and the Defence Agreement (and to a lesser extent the External Affairs Agreement) concluded on the eve of independence kept the two parties close and kept Sri Lanka in the British defence network in the Indian Ocean.

The nature of the transfer of power in Sri Lanka was determined to a considerable extent by the character of the independence movement in Sri Lanka.[29] The independence movement was by and large overshadowed by the constitutional reform agitation, and its leadership was dominated by the conservative section of the Sri Lankan elites. Lacking any broader concept of nationalism, their political agitation was limited to the series of petitions and representations to Whitehall, entreating it to grant them greater representation in the legislative councils. The primary objective of D.S. Senanayake, who led the final negotiations for the transfer of power, was Dominion Status and he firmly believed that "this should be attained in association with rather than in opposition to the British".[30] In the process of negotiations, D.S. Senanayake made his position quite clear: "the only satisfactory arrangement - satisfactory to either government - would be one in which the Ceylon government was

[29]According to B. Gajameragedera "(T)he distinguishing features of the country's independence movement was, as is well known, that it constituted an exclusive upper class enterprise, supported by upper-middle class professionals and such vested interests as the newspaper establishments in Colombo, the Catholic Church and rural gentry social strata whose fortune invariably depended on the colonial administration in the country'. Modern Sri Lanka Studies, 1:2 (December 1986), p. 1.

[30]K.M. de Silva, A History of Sri Lanka (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 449.

collaborating with the Imperial government".[31] One of the main features of the Independence Settlement, as B. Gajameragedera correctly observes, was that it "embodied an outstanding degree of community of interests between the conservative leadership of Sri Lanka and the British authorities".[32] British authorities and British business interests, both in London and Colombo, were quite certain that their interests were bound to remain safe in the hands of the conservative leadership of Sri Lanka.[33] In sum, the independence settlement in Sri Lanka did not mark any significant break in the past relationship with the United Kingdom. It rather represented a continuation of the economic and defence relationship developed under British colonial rule.

The Defence Agreement under which Britain maintained a naval base in Trincomalee and an air base in Katunayake was an integral part of the independence package. Under the changed international and national atmosphere following the Second World War, a constitutional revision to effect the transfer of power in Sri Lanka was considered in order by the mid-1940s. A major issue of concern, perhaps the piece de resistance, was the strategic importance of Sri Lanka to the Imperial - Commonwealth defence network in the Indian Ocean. D.S. Senanayake was also well aware of the strategic importance of Sri Lanka to Britain in her base-strategy of Indian Ocean defence and in the Imperial-Commonwealth

[31]Ceylon Daily News, Ceylon's Path to Freedom (Colombo: Lake House, 1948), p. 14.

[32]B.Gajameragedara, op. cit., p. 3.

[33] It is important to note that during the negotiations for the transfer of power to Sri Lanka the Ceylonese Association of London, which represented British interests in Sri Lanka and the local British business community, asked for no safeguards.

communication lines. He was thus prepared to offer a Defence Agreement to Britain to induce her to grant Sri Lanka Dominion status as early as 1945. D.S. Senanayake declared in the State Council:

> We should be ready and anxious to give all the assistance and all the facilities that His Majesty's government might require, provided that we were given control of our own country. ... I said I was ready to pledge my colleagues .. to any reasonable agreement about defence as an integral part of any agreement for Dominion status and, indeed, I went to the length of preparing the draft of such an agreement to govern the relations between Ceylon and United Kingdom, particularly in matters of defence and external affairs, on lines which would be acceptable to State Council.34

By about 1947 it was obvious that Britain would not be in a position to dismantle her defence scheme in the Indian Ocean for sometime to come. Therefore, Britain had to face the problem of maintaining a defence network after the transfer of power to her South Asian colonies. Britain had no doubts about D.S. Senanayake's loyalty. He was acknowledged as a trusted friend of Britain. Secretary of State for the Colonies Arthur Creech-Jones acknowledged in the House of Commons that "Ceylon has consistently co-operated with Britain and has taken pride in her loyalty, her contribution to the war and her ties with the United Kingdom". However, the Deputy Permanent Under Secretary later stated:

> From the point of view of the British Government, the question was not quite as simple as all that. There were, to begin with, defence interests of Britain and her allies. Ceylon was vital a point. If independence were once granted, there could be no going back. Every one was prepared to trust

[34]Ceylon Daily News, Ceylon's Path, p. 12.

> Mr. Senanayake, but he had yet to be elected, and even if he were, an independent Ceylon might well at some future time come under the control of a Government which was not friendly to Britain.35

Therefore, from the British point of view, it was necessary to formalise the defence relationship by entering into a defence agreement. From D.S. Senanayake's point of view, he had to produce some positive results from his strategy of collaboration. Because of the growing opposition from the radical left to the collaborative strategy and the discontent within the Ceylon National Congress itself, any delay in transfering power would be disastrous to both parties. D.S. Senanayake, thus "repeated his offer of agreements on defence and external affairs and urged that the drafts of such agreement should be ready for consideration by the Ceylon Cabinet as soon as it came into office."[36]

It is wrong to argue that the Defence Agreement was imposed upon Sri Lanka unilaterally by Britain. Indeed, the defence agreement served the interests of the ruling elites of Sri Lanka well. In order to understand what they expected from the Defence Agreement, one needs to examine their defence and security perceptions at the time of independence. One of the major factors that shaped the defence and security perspective of Sri Lankan decision-makers was their perception of the strategic importance of Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean and the sense of insecurity in view of the limited defence capacity of the country. D.S. Senanayake, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka who was

[35]Sir Charles Jeffries, Ceylon - The Path to Independence (London : Pall Mall Press, 1962), p. 115.

[36]Ibid., p. 117.

also responsible for defence, stated that:

> The defence of the country is one of the primary obligations of an independent state, and this is not the sort of world in which small nations can be secure without large and expensive armed forces. We are in a specially dangerous position, because we are in one of the strategic highways of the world. The country which captures Ceylon would dominate the Indian Ocean. Nor is it only a question of protecting ourselves against invasion and air attack. If we has no imports for three months, we would starve, and we have therefore to protect our sea and air communications.37

It was believed that Sri Lanka required protection from a great power. Sri Lankan rulers saw no country other than Britain who could fulfill that role. The Ceylon Daily News, a publication of the Lake House Group which had close associations with the ruling elites, asked: "(C)an it be had on better terms from a country which may be interested in dominating Ceylon than from a country which has voluntarily and handsomely yielded power and renounced its authority.?".[38] Because of their conservative outlook and strong pro-British sentiment, the rulers of the governing United National Party felt secure under the British defence umbrella. Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake further stated:

> Let us confess that our freedom depends on somebody or other undertaking to help us defend ourselves. Nor can we afford to pay anybody to defend us. As I look around the countries of the world, I see at the moment only one country with sufficient interest in us to defend us at their expense, and that country is Great Britain ... Fortunately our security is involved in her security. She must keep the Indian Ocean open to her ships and aircraft. These ships and aircraft

[37]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. 1, 1 December 1947, c. 444.

[38]Ceylon Daily News, 15 November 1947.

> carry the great mass of supplies which feed and clothe us.39

The U.N.P. leadership was certain, in the world scene as well as in the Indian Ocean arena, that Sri Lanka could secure protection under the British defence umbrella. Sri Lanka under D.S. Senanayake's premiership perceived her national security concerns mainly in terms of the immediate geo-political situation in South Asia. Certain elements of Sri Lanka's traditional threat perceptions about India appear to have revived at the time of independence. Sri Lanka believed that British withdrawal from South Asia would create a power vacuum in the region and feared that India might attempt to fill it. The U.N.P. leadership was very explicit in expressing their aprehension of possible Indian domination. D.S. Senanayake, for example, stated:

> We consider India to be one of the greatest nations in the world, but we do not expect India to play the role trying to establish rights where they have no rights, or privileges where they have no privileges or of trying to deprive other countries of their rights.40

It is true that memories of Indian invasions in the past influenced to some extent this kind of perception but the main factors responsible for fear of India could be found in contemporary politics. Ivor Jennings elucidates the Sri Lankan attitude to India at the time of independence as:

> India thus appears as a friendly but potentially dangerous neighbour to whom one must be polite but a little distant ... It is not that India and Indians are unpopular, but that the Ceylonese, while admiring much that is Indian, and feeling themselves racially akin to Indians have a

[39]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol.1, 1 December 1947, c. 445.

[40]Ibid., Vol. 5, 9 December 1948, c. 427.

> sensation of living under a mountain which might send down destructive avalanches.41

The questions yet to be resolved by the two neighbouring countries, such as the issue of citizenship for Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin, strengthened this thinking. The major factor contributing to Sri Lankan perception of India as a threat was some pronouncements by those who were close to the Indian policy-making process about Indian strategic designs which included Sri Lanka in India's defence plans. Sardar Panikkar, India's foremost proponent of oceanic strategy and also a close associate of Nehru, advocated the strategic unity of India, Sri Lanka, and Burma prior to independence. The prerequisite to a realistic policy of Indian defence, for Panikkar, was an integrated defence arrangement among India, Burma and Sri Lanka.[42] Panikkar abandoned this scheme after Sri Lanka's independence. Yet, Pattabhi Sitaramaya, the President of the Indian National Congress in 1949, was reported to have suggested that India and Sri Lanka should have common defence strength, resources, and strategy.[43] To another Indian writer, K.B. Vaidya, "(T)he first and primary consideration is that both Burma and Ceylon must form with India the basic federation for mutual defence whether <u>they will like it or not</u>".[44] Sitaramaya's

[41]Sir Ivor Jennings, <u>The Commonwealth in Asia</u> (London: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 113.

[42]K.M. Panikkar, <u>India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History</u> (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962) p. 95.

[43]<u>Ceylon Daily News</u>, 23 April 1949.

[44]K.B. Vaidya, <u>The Naval Defence of India</u> (Bombay: Thacker and Company, 1949), p. 30.

statement aroused hostile response in Sri Lanka.[45] Pandit Nehru was very sensitive to the reactions in Sri Lanka to such statements.[46] Therefore Nehru sent a special message to assure Sri Lanka that India had no designs on her and would not interfere with her sovereignty.[47] But this was not sufficient to alleviate Sri Lanka's fears. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sir John Kotelawala, stated in Parliament in 1953:

> What I am worried about is that Mr. Panikkar has made several statements in one of his books that India must have Trincomalee for its safety. ... He was also supposed to know Pandit Nehru's thoughts and has said that India, Ceylon and Burma must have a Monroe Doctrine, that India will be the father of two children, Burma and Ceylon. We do not want that fatherly advice nor their protection.48

The U.N.P viewed the Commonwealth as the counterpoise to Indian domination. On the one hand, Commonwealth membership gave Sri Lanka some status of formal equality with India. On the other, it was believed to provide a measure of military security. The Sri

[45]Times of Ceylon, 27 April 1949.

[46]Prime Minister Pandit Nehru stated in the Lok Sabha in March 1953 that (T)he difficulty of a place like Ceylon, more so than others, is the fear that Ceylon has of India ... Here is a great big continent lying astride north of Ceylon, and they are, I am sorry, I think unreasonably, just afraid of being swamped or swallowed by India, or by the Indian people ... I have seen that the real difficulty one has to face is the psychological difficulty of the people of Ceylon ... a fear that this great and big continent of a country might overwhelm them, and that fear and that apprehension come in their way'., quoted in B. Gajameradera, 'The Defence Policy of Sri Lanka 1948-1956'Seminar, for Asian Studies, University of Peradeniya, Discussion paper No. 1987/40, p. 6-7.

[47]S.U. Kodikara, Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka A Third World Perspective (New Delhi : Chanakya Publications, 1982), p. 36.

[48]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 20, 7 Sep. 1954, c. 51.

Lankan leadership began to look at the Defence Agreement with Britain as the best strategy that could keep India under restraint.

Some writers have pointed out that the U.N.P. leadership looked at the Defence Agreement as a protection against the possible internal disorder that the left would create.[49] It is true that government spokesmen branded the left as the trouble makers of the country who had international connections. The Prime Minister himself made several statements to that effect. However, it is necessary to go beyond the face value of such political rhetoric. In effect, rulers were not worried about the Sri Lankan left which was divided on ideological as well as on personal lines. D.S. Senanayake once made it plain that "as far as Reds in Ceylon are concerned, no one seemed to be worried at all".[50] What they were really worried about was the general instability then existing in the whole region of South and Southeast Asia. In this context the defence alliance with Britain was expected to provide some security to the Sri Lankan ruling class. It is difficult to substantiate the argument that the signing of the Defence Agreement was motivated by the threat from the left.

The euphoria associated with the Defence Agreement did not go beyond the government benches. The conclusion of the External Affairs and Defence Agreements, especially the latter, came under severe attack from the parliamentary opposition. They

[49]Denzil Peiris, 1956 and After (Colombo: Associated Newspapers, 1958), p. 20-21 and also see The Tribune, 2 June 1956.

[50]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 5, 15 March 1949, c. 1846.

charged that the Defence Agreement was detrimental to the declared status of independence and sovereignty of the country, and viewed the entire package of the Independence Settlement "as a shady transaction which was nothing less than bartering away of the country".[51] There was a strong suspicion at the time that there could be some secret annexures to the Agreement. The left feared that the British troops stationed in Sri Lanka under the Defence Agreement could be used in the internal affairs of the country, especially to safeguard British interests.[52] Secondly, the left criticised the Defence Agreement claiming that it would link Sri Lanka to the wagon tail of western military plans and, through it, would unnecessarily involve Sri Lanka in Cold War politics. Colvin R. De Silva, the deputy leader of the L.S.S.P, declared that "we are being planned not only as the cannon fodder of the next war but also as the military bases for I do not know what contemplated attack".[53]

Thirdly and more importantly, the opposition questioned the validity of the anti-Indian sentiment in the government defence perspectives. By emphasising the importance of having good relations with India, N.M. Perera, the Leader of the Opposition, pointed out,

> There is a feeling among sections of the government and the U.N.P. that we have to safeguard ourselves against India that we have to fight against India and therefore it is necessary

[51]Ceylon Daily News, 19 November 1947

[52]Ceylon House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 1, 1 December 1947, c. 445.

[53]Ibid., Vol. 8, 4 July 1950, c. 273.

> that we must lean upon Britain for the purpose ... I say that it is political myopia of the worst type. It may be that India at the present moment is going through troubled times. But Hon. members are oblivious of the fact that fifteen and twenty years hence India will like colossus bestride this narrow world, and it is important that we live in amity and amicable relations with India, and not to create Sudetenland problem for Ceylon by leaving so much hatred and bitterness among a large section of Indians with connections in Ceylon.54

From hindsight it is not difficult to discern the importance of taking the realities of geopolitics in South Asia into account in the formulation of Sri Lanka'a defence policy as pointed out by Dr. N.M. Perera in 1947. Ridiculing D.S. Senanayake for his faith in Britain, Perera remarked that "in this matter the Prime Minister had been consistent - that (he) suffers from two diseases: one is Indophobia and the other is Anglomania."[55]

Whereas the Sri Lankan defence perspective was conditioned to a considerable degree by the Defence Agreement with Britain, the Commonwealth link provided the framework for foreign policy thinking to the U.N.P. leadership. A cornerstone of Sri Lankan foreign policy under the first U.N.P. regime (1948-1956) was the Commonwealth framework. By emphasizing the importance of Commonwealth membership, in his speech to the Parliament, the Governor-General stated that:

> Government is keenly aware of the significance and unity of purpose of the Commonwealth in the effort to preserve peace in the post-war world and will use its utmost endeavour to cherish and safeguard these valuable associations.56

[54]Ibid., Vol. 4, 19 August, 1948, c. 1696.

[55]Ibid., c. 1695.

[56]Ceylon, Senate, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 4, 20 June 1950, c.5.

The economic policy of the U.N.P government and the country's economic links with Britain further reinforced Sri Lanka's cordial relationship with Britain. The U.N.P leadership believed that the prosperity of the country depended on the trade ties with the west, mainly with Britain, and made no attempt to remodel the colonial economic structure with which their interests were also identified. Great Britain was Sri Lanka's main trade partner taking about one-third (Rs.m. 335.3) the value of exports, and accounting for over one-sixth (Rs.m. 185.3) the value of total imports.[57]

D.S. Senanayake counted heavily on Britain for foreign policy guidelines and was ready to follow Britain's lead. Sri Lanka recognized the People's Republic of China just one day after Britain did. This was not a simple coincidence. As S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike later revealed, even over the Indonesian issue in 1947 he was instructed to follow the line that Britain had adopted.[58]

In sum, during the period of 1948-1956 Sri Lanka became an integral part of the British defence structure in the Indian Ocean through the bases maintained under the Defence Agreement. For instance British Beaufighters used Sri Lankan airfields in the course of war manoeuvers associated with the Malayan anti-guerilla campaign.[59] When the Iranian Government decided to nationalize oil wells in 1951, it was from Trincomalee that the

[57]Ceylon Yearbook 1949, p. 41.

[58]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parlimentary Debates, Vol. 12, 17 June 1952, c. 76.

[59]Ibid., Vol. 4. 2 Sept. 1948, c. 2008.

British sent a cruiser to Iran to show military muscle on behalf of the Anglo-Iranian oil company.[59] This defence relationship between Sri Lanka and Britain changed after 1956 with the defeat of the U.N.P. Government at the hands of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and with the British debacle at Suez.

**Changes in the Anglo-Sri Lankan Defence Relationship After 1956**

The defeat of the U.N.P. government in 1956 at the hands of the Mahajana Eksath Peramana (MEP) led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was in many respect a turning point in the post-independence political development of Sri Lanka.[60] In the foreign policy field, the new government pledged to reverse the pro-western policy of the U.N.P. government. The true perspective of Sri Lankan foreign policy since that time may be called "dynamic non-alignment". As a result, Sri Lanka's close defence relationship with Britain underwent a change.

In order to place the new directions of Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1956 in their broader historical context, it is necessary to understand the changed internal political environment in Sri Lanka in the mid-1950s and the nature of the 1956 political change as well as the political and social complexion of the new regime and its foreign policy perceptions. It is important to remember that the MEP rode to power on a huge nationalistic wave. The political and social make up of the MEP

[59]Ibid., vol. 10, 27 June 1951, c. 213.

[60]For a detailed discussion on the 1956 political change see W. Howard Wriggins, Ceylon; Dilemmas of a New Nation (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960).

was too complex to give a plain analysis. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the main partner in the MEP coalition, was a left-of-center party with strong populist leanings. On the one hand the MEP included the left Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party - the most rural-based of left parties at the time - led by Philip Gunawardena. On the other hand, groups and grouplets led by right wing personalities such as W. Dahanayake and I.M-R.A. Iriyagolla were also included. As far as social background was concerned, it was a multi-class coalition with strong backing from the rural petty bourgeoisie. The 1956 political change was interpreted as a victory of the 'common man' over the 'Brown Sahibs' represented by the U.N.P.. The most significant outcome of the MEP victory was that the general masses and the rural intelligentsia perhaps for the first time came to grips with the realities of political power.[61]

In economic policy also the MEP wanted to turn away from the laissez-faire economic doctrine of the previous government. The first Throne Speech of the MEP government declared that "(I)n pursuance of its socialist policy my government will take every step, where the best interests of the country so require, to nationalise certain essential services such as transport".[62] Realizing the vulnerability of relying heavily on the plantation sector, the government initiated a modest programme of industrialization through import substitution.

[61]A.J. Wilson, Electoral Politics in an Emergent State - The Ceylon General Election of may 1970 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 23.

[62]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's parliamentary Debates, Vol. 24, 20 April 1956, c. 26.

One important issue during the election campaign was the pro-western nature of the U.N.P. government. Sri Lanka's defence link with Britain loomed large in the election debate. The MEP promised to get the British bases out of the country. They even talked of the nationalization of foreign-owned plantations and of making Sri Lanka a republic.[63] In its foreign policy the MEP wanted Sri Lanka to be a friend of all, an enemy of none. The new government took steps to open diplomatic relations with the socialist bloc. Emphasizing the importance of pursuing a non-aligned policy, Bandaranaike stated that the ideal position for Sri Lanka should be a "Swizterland in Asia".[64] Broadly speaking, two important aspects of Bandaranaike's foreign policy outlook could be identified: first was his pragmatic approach to foreign policy issues and the second was his strong sense of identity with the Afro-Asian world.

One important aspect of the new direction of Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1956 was the changed attitude towards India. The new regime did not subscribe to its predecessor's perception of threat from India. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike wanted to cultivate close and amicable relations with India. Regarding the earlier held fear perception of India, Bandaranaike stated that "I have no duty cast upon me to meet the unreasonable fears of the people and I do hope the present cordial and friendly relations between India and Ceylon will be preserved and maintained".[65] He

[63]D.M. Prasad, Ceylon's Foreign Policy under the Bandaranaikes (1956-65) A Political Analysis (New Delhi: Chand & Co., 1973), p. 61.

[64]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 14, 1953, c. 509.

[65]The Hindu, 12 July 1956.

was an admirer of Nehru's non-aligned policy line and, with the change of direction of Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1956, both countries came closer to each other. Soon after the assumption of the Premiership, Bandaranaike stated in an interview with the B.B.C.:

> I am generally in agreement with the spirit of Pandit Nehru's foreign policy. He has been a friend of mine of many years' standing and we had the opportunity of discussing these policies on more than one occasion. I feel generally that his approach is the correct one.66

This changed attitude towards India influenced Sri Lankan foreign policy. Prior to 1956 Sri Lanka has looked to London for foreign policy guidelines; the new regime emphasized the importance of consulting India in the foreign policy area. "New Delhi, rather than London or Washington, thus becomes the new centre of Ceylon's future diplomatic activity".[67] The change of direction in Sri Lankan relations with India also contributed immensely towards shaping defence thinking also.

In its first policy statement, the new government declared that "it will not align with any power blocs. The position of the base at Katunayake and Trincomalee will be reviewed. Every endeavour will be made to establish these relations and cooperation with other countries".[68] Bandaranaike believed that continuation of British bases on Sri Lankan soil was contradictory to his declared policy of neutrality and non-alignment as well as a derogation from Sri Lanka's independent status.

[66]Ceylon Daily News, 23 April 1956.

[67]Ibid., 24 July 1956.

[68]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 24, 20 April 1956, c. 26.

Admiral Lord Mountbatten paid an informal visit to Sri Lanka in 1956 and Bandaranaike communicated to him Sri Lanka's position regarding the bases.[69] Bandaranaike also had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, a personal friend of his during his days at Oxford, when he visited London in June 1956 to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. At the discussion it was agreed "Britain should hand over the bases but be allowed to retain facilities for communications, movements and storage".[70] A team of British officials arrived in Sri Lanka to work out details of the hand over. It was now clear that no secret annexes were attached to the Defence Agreement as S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had originally suspected. Furthermore, as the Defence Agreement contained no reference to bases it was not necessary to abrogate it.

There were two issues involved in the hand over of bases: first, the "rundown process" with limited use of facilities and, second, the financial issues involved in the purchasing of some installations on the bases by the Sri Lankan government. According to the agreement reached between Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom, consisting of an exchange of letters dated 7th July 1957, the naval base at Trincomalee and the Royal Air Force Station at Katunayake were formally handed over to Sri Lanka on 15th October 1957 and 1 November 1957 respectively. Subject to the general control of the Sri Lankan government, the United Kingdom government would continue to use certain facilities for a

[69]Ibid., c. 45-46.

[70]W.C.B. Turnstall, The Commonwealth and Regional Defence (London : the Athlone Press, 1956, 1959), p. 55

limited time referred to as "the rundown". The use of some of the facilities would cease in two or three years and the rest by 1st March 1962.[71] The installations on the bases were estimated at Rs.98 million by the British officers and Sri Lanka decided to purchase a large part of them. However, Sri Lanka offered only a sum of Rs.22 million which the British finally agreed to. This sum was to be paid in five annual installments of a little over Rs.4 million per annum.[72]

One of the striking features of the entire transaction was the cordiality and friendliness with which both parties behaved. The termination of defence links did not affect the close diplomatic and economic relationships between the two countries. In a way it strengthened them by removing a sore point on the part of Sri Lanka. Addressing the Commonwealth Press Association on 5 July 1956, Bandaranaike explained:

> In pursuit of this policy - not motivated by any dislike or hatred of this country [the United Kingdom], of whose people we have, all, my country and myself, personally, a high regard - the present Government of Ceylon has expressed its intention that the bases in Ceylon of Britain should cease to exist.73

Both parties had vested interests in the maintenance of good relations. The United Kingdom still had massive investments in

[71]United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Exchange of Letters Between the Government of Ceylon and the Government of the United Kingdom regarding United Kingdom Service Establishments in Ceylon, 7 June 1957, (Cmnd 197), 1957.

[72]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 29, 30 July 1957, c. 85-86.

[73]The Foreign Policy of Ceylon - Extracts from Statements by the Prime Minister, The Hon. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (Ceylon: Information Dept., n.d.), p. 15.

the island mainly in tea plantations. According to one estimate the total British investments in Sri Lanka amounted to about Rs 4,255 million.[74] In view of the M.E.P. government's general policy of intervening in the major sectors of the economy, the possibility of the nationalization of British tea plantations was also there. On the other hand Sri Lanka's trade was still overwhelmingly with Britain and her international transactions were in British currency. As such, both parties had good reasons to come to an agreement over the bases without jeopardising mutual economic interests.

Bandaranaike also wanted Sri Lanka to be a Republic but within the Commonwealth[75] as he highly valued the Commonwealth relationship. He had many practical reasons:

> I do not think we ought to indulge in mere sloppy sentimentality over the Commonwealth. I do not think we have much to gain by that type of sentimental statement over the Commonwealth. Therefore, of course, there are certain obvious advantages of the Commonwealth - belonging economically to the Sterling bloc, the advantage we gain from mutual consultation and discussions on a friendly basis and various problems and so on.76

After the Katunayake air base was handed over, the United Kingdom developed a R.A.F. stopping point at Gan island in the Maldives, Sri Lanka's southern neighbour. Sri Lanka did not oppose the U.K.'s lease of Gan island for a hundred years and its transformation into a British air base was not considered a security threat.

[74] Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. 36, 24 May 1962, p. 405.

[75] Ceylon Daily News, 5 July 1956.

[76] The Foreign Policy of Ceylon, op. cit., p. 23-24.

Sri Lanka's response to the Suez crisis was a good manifestation of the changed nature of the relations between the two countries. From the very beginning of the crisis Sri Lanka endorsed the right of Egypt to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. Sri Lanka was interested in developments in the Suez area for two reasons. First, it amounted to the assertion of national sovereignty and independence of an Afro-Asian state vis-a-vis the former colonial power. Second, and more important, in Bandaranaike's words, "we are also concerned with certain uses that we make of the Suez canal for our trade, incoming as well as outgoing".[77] During the period between the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in July and the joint French, British, and Israeli military actions in October 1956 Sri Lanka was active in trying to find a peaceful solution to the problem. She participated in the conference convened in London to discuss how to reach a peaceful solution and vehemently opposed the international control of the canal proposed by Britain and France. The conference did not produce any acceptable solution to the problem though Sri Lanka produced a three-point proposal.[78] During this period Bandaranaike was in close and regular touch with the Colombo powers (India, Pakistan, Burma, and Indonesia). The British and French military action against Egypt generated hostile reactions in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka officially expressed her disapproval of Britain at the U.N. and supported the U.S. sponsored resolution demanding an immediate cease fire and

[77]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 25, 30 July 1956, cc. 1103-05.

[78]Ceylon Daily News, 17 August 1956.

establishment of a U.N. Emergency Force to keep the belligerents apart. Further, Bandaranaike declared Sri Lanka would remain neutral in the event of a major war over the crisis.[79] She identified herself closely with the Colombo powers and her responses were channelled through them. The Colombo powers met in New Delhi on November 12-14 to discuss the situation and the joint communique expressed their "strong disapproval and distress at the aggression of and the intervention by the great powers against weaker countries. Further, it demanded the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Egypt".[80] It is important to note that Katunayake and Trincomalee were still in the hands of the United Kingdom when the military hostilities erupted and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister obtained an assurance from the United Kingdom that these bases would not be used for the operations against Egypt.

This behaviour during the Suez crisis illustrated the new type of relationship evolving between Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom, the senior Commonwealth partner, which became the normal pattern afterwards. Sri Lanka's Commonwealth ties posed no hindrance to oppose, very strongly, the policy of the senior Commonwealth member over the Suez issue. It further manifested the changing nature of the Commonwealth.

**Post Suez Developments**

The year 1956 marked a turning point in the Sri Lankan-British defence relationship because of the election victory of the MEP which initiated a policy of non-alignment in Sri Lankan

[79]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 27, 21 September 1956, c. 426.

[80]New York Times, 15 November 1956.

foreign affairs. The same year marked a watershed in post-war British defence policy in the Indian Ocean because of the implications of the Suez crisis. The transfer of power in the South Asian countries should in reality have been a more important event than the Suez crisis in the transformation of the British presence in the Indian Ocean. But more than Indian independence it was the lessons of the Suez debacle that made British policy makers open their eyes to the realities of the new international situation. It is true that the immediate post-Suez years did not mark a sharp break or substantial change in Britain's Indian Ocean policy. But the factors pinpointed by the Suez crisis, namely the significance of post-colonial nationalism in Asia, the importance of the superpowers in international politics, and the declining political and economic strength of Britain came forward to reshape British policy in the Indian Ocean.

The experiences of Suez revealed certain important shortcomings of British defence thinking in relation to the Indian Ocean. First of all it revealed the ineffectiveness of nuclear force in limited conflicts. The dilemma Britain faced was that where nuclear force could not be used the conventional forces were inadequate. In the military sphere, it revealed the advantages of sea and air mobile forces. This cleared the ground for the development of 'limited war' theory in the early 1960s and for a change in strategy.

Furthermore, the experience of Suez exposed the precariousness and fragility of the base strategy. The limits placed upon the use of bases by Libya, Jordan, and Sri Lanka during the Suez crisis brought home to Britain the realities of

decolonization in Asia. Much more important were the political repercussions of the Suez operation in Asia. British actions were viewed as imperialist and were seriously condemned by Asian leaders. Despite the Cold War rhetoric of alleged Communist aggression, Asian countries began to re-examine their relations with Britain.

In the period between the Suez crisis and the Kuwaiti operation in 1961, British defence thinking on the Indian Ocean underwent a series of transformations. First of all, a geographical reorientation was clearly evident. In the early 1950s, in the atmosphere of an impending world war with the Soviet Union, the main geographical concentration was Europe. After 1956 this situation gradually began to change and the Indian Ocean area assumed a high importance in British overseas defence. Secondly, Britain had to define the purpose of its military role in the area. The British presence was primarily directed to preserve the status quo, by aiding rulers identified with British interests to maintain internal security and local stability. Thirdly, the service departments developed new military strategies for limited conflicts as against the earlier nuclear deterrence strategies.

Even after 1947, Britain was able to control all air routes across the Indian Ocean. The Suez crisis changed this situation for the first time. After Suez, the air routes across the Middle East became highly vulnerable and uncertain. In these circumstances, existing air communication lines between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean had to be revised. There were two alternatives: the Turkish-Iranian corridor to the north; and the

southern route via Libya and Sudan. Owing to problems stemming from difficult terrain and from poor air traffic control and meteorological service, the Turkish-Iranian corridor did not provide an acceptable solution. Its close proximity to the Soviet border was another factor to be taken into consideration. The second alternative was also not quite satisfactory because it depended upon the rather fragile goodwill of the rulers of the two countries concerned.

At the same time, Britain had to revise her South Asian air routes. In South Asia the main British staging posts were the Katunayake Air Force base and the Trincomalee naval base in Sri Lanka, and, to a lesser extent, the bases at Dum-Dum in India and Karachi in Pakistan. Britain attempted to overcome the loss of Katunayake by moving the air communication route further southwards and decided to develop a military air base on Gan island in the Maldives group. The distance between Gan and Penang is greater than that between Penang and Katunayake or Dum-Dum but the range of the existing aircraft, namely the Hastings and the Comets, was adequate. At the same time Australia developed a major airfield on the Cocos Islands. The communication line with Australia now lay across Mombasa, the Maldives and the Cocos Islands.

Considering its unique location, the loss of Trincomalee was strikingly felt. The Board of Admiralty reacted to the loss of Trincomalee by amending the Indian Ocean Naval Command structure. In 1958 the Admiralty decided to abolish the East Indies Command and the responsibilities of the dismantled Command were divided between the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Command in

Singapore and the Commander of the newly established Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf station at Aden.

Another consequence of Suez was the move to cut defence expenditure. Even before the Suez crisis, financial difficulties had forced the British government to freeze the defence budget as a first step. After the crisis defence expenditure became the centre of debate. Some believed that Britain was not getting maximum benefit out of her defence expenditures. When the new Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, assumed office in January 1957 it was expected that defence spending would be revised. MacMillan, an advocate of lower defence spending and nuclear deterrence, appointed Duncan Sandys, a strong believer in nuclear deterrence, as Secretary of State for Defence and gave him wide powers to effect the necessary revisions.

The Defence Paper, Defence: Outline of Future Policy, presented by Duncan Sandys in April 1957, was important not because it marked any change in defence thinking but because it presented existing defence thinking in a coherent form. The Paper stated :

> The time has come to revise not merely the size, but the whole character of the defence plan. The Communist threat remains, but its nature has changed; it is now evident that, on both military and economic grounds, it is necessary to make a fresh appreciation of the problem and to adopt a new approach towards it.81

The underlying theme of the White Paper was nuclear deterrence: thermo-nuclear weapons would be added to the existing atomic armoury; the V-bomber would be supplemented by ballistic

[81]United Kingdom, Minister of Defence, Defence: Outline of Future Policy (Cmnd 124), 1957, para 4.

missiles as they became available; conventional forces were to be small but better equipped and more mobile; conscription was to be ended by 1962 and service manpower would be reduced from 690,000 to 375,000 by that year. Further, it declared the intention to reduce overseas garrisons. A central reserve was to be maintained in Britain and reinforcements were to be sent where necessary on short notice.[82] Manpower reductions did not mean future reductions of Britain's overseas commitments. Sandys clearly stated that Britain was not contracting out of her obligations. However, his Indian Ocean strategy was based on two rather flimsy premises: the use of tactical nuclear weapons and the possibility of airlifting strategic reserves.

In this context, the Board of Admiralty turned to the limited war strategy from general war doctrines. The part played by the Royal Navy in the Suez crisis made it possible to argue a strong case for a major role for the Navy in similar situations. With the Admiralty's change of strategy from general war to limited war, there was a shift in focus from NATO and Europe to the Indian Ocean. Paragraphs 37 to 39 of the White Paper outlined a new conception of the Navy in which the Admiralty's plan for carrier groups was approved. A carrier group consisted of an aircraft carrier and a number of destroyers and frigates. One carrier group would be stationed in the Indian Ocean.

The political tension that emerged in the Indian Ocean area in the early 1960s provided an opportunity to test the post-Suez strategic apparatus and defence doctrines relating to the

[82]Ibid.

limited war. In the early 1960s, Britain intervened in a number of regional conflicts in the Indian Ocean - Kuwait 1961, Thailand May 1962, East Africa (Kenya, Tanganayika, Uganda) January 1963. It further revealed the practical ramifications of involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post-colonial period.

The first intervention, the Kuwait operation, proved the success of the new strategy and the effectiveness of the strategic mobile force. A crisis developed soon after Kuwait was granted independence in 1961. Iraq declared her territorial claims on Kuwait, refused to recognize Kuwait's independence, and threatened an invasion. Britain's stake here was very high. Britain imported almost half of its oil from Kuwait. In addition, her economic investment in Kuwait was substantial. Prime Minister MacMillan believed that Kuwait was really the key to the overall Middle East oil production problem.[83] Britain responded very promptly and successfully to the request of the Kuwaiti ruler for assistance against a threat from Iraq. Britain assembled her forces and transported them to Kuwait by sea and air with unprecedented speed. The Commando Forces and Royal Marines landed from HMS Bulwark and a squadron of Centurion tanks disembarked from HMS Striker within 24 hours.[84] British forces were able to take up all defensive positions within three days and declared their readiness to handle any attack from Iraq. By August 1962, the threat dissipated in the face of the Arab League's

[83]Dwight D. Eisenhower discusses MacMillan's attitude over the Kuwaiti issue clearly in his The White House years (New York: Doubleday, 1963-65), p. 123.

[84]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Explanatory Statement on the Navy Estimates 1962-63 (Cmd 1629), para 3.

recognition of Kuwait's independence and its admission to the Arab League. The British forces were able to withdraw shortly after. British policy-makers were complacent that the way the Kuwait operation was handled might encourage newly independent states to rely on British assistance.

After the Kuwait operation, the confrontation between Pathet Lao and Thai forces on the Thai border in May 1962 brought home to Britain the extent of her commitment under the SEATO Pact. Britain responded promptly to a Thai request for troops and equipment and her action in sending forces to Thailand on a bilateral request indicated that she had accepted the U.S. view that SEATO obligations were both individual and collective. Similarly, British forces intervened in Brunei to suppress the Azahari rebellion in July 1962. The Sultan of Brunei decided to accept the invitation to enter the Malaysian Federation. But Azahari, the leader of the Nationalist Party that controlled all elected seats in the Legislative Council, decided to launch direct action against this move. The fighting began in December and the Sultan requested help. British forces intervened promptly to suppress the rebellion. Even after the Azahari rebellion was quelled the Far Eastern headquarters had to keep forces on a continuous alert because of Indonesian opposition to the Malaysian Federation. In the Sino-Indian war of October 1962, Britain quickly expressed her willingness to support India. The Kennedy-MacMillan agreement at Nasau in December resulted in an offer of $42 million in military aid to India. Britain and other Commonwealth countries were to contribute half and the other half was to come from the U.S.. Notwithstanding Britain's ready

responses to the Indian request for help and statements on Britain's readiness to help India there were no long-term commitments made. India's reluctance to rely on British military strength partly explains this.

In the same period, Britain had to militarily intervene in the Western Indian Ocean. In East Africa, following a coup in Zanzibar under the leadership of Abdul Karume, s series of mutinies broke out in certain sections of the armies of Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda. The three governments requested British assistance in January 1963 and British forces were deployed.

Despite immediate satisfaction at the success of these operations, certain negative aspects of the strategy began to attract more attention. The military cost of landing even small forces was not insignificant. As Darby pointed out "to land and maintain a small force had necessitated drawing troops, aircraft, and naval units from British establishments all over the world".[85] A small group of rebels could create an emergency that could require a large-scale mobilization of British mobile forces. For example, to suppress the Azahari rebellion, the British had to alert half the strategic reserve in Britain and to plan to employ the Fifth Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery.[86] Defence budget limitations posed the most serious problem. Rapid advances in military technology and the increasing complexity and sophistication of weapons systems necessitated the re-equipment of British forces whereas Britain was not in a position to finance

[85]Darby. op. cit., p. 245.

[86]United Kingdom, House of Commons, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 673, 4 march 1963, c. 46.

such a huge re-equipment programme.

The success of the new strategy depended on two factors: coordination and mobility. Since the commando operations were joint ventures, cooperation between the three services was essential. By 1963 efforts were made to develop greater cooperation. This development can be seen in the Defence White Paper - Central Organization for Defence - presented in July 1963.

The main problem in the area of mobility was not capacity but the reliability of the staging posts. The experiences of Suez showed that post-colonial states could deny Britain staging rights at any time. The concept of an island chain of staging posts, which became very important to later Indian Ocean political developments, was proposed at this point. The concept first appeared in the context of air barriers in the Middle East after the Suez crisis. The idea of a chain of island bases as an alternative to carrier air power attracted attention after the military interventions in early 1960s. In 1964, the islands which already had facilities were considered as possible staging posts. Masira, Mauritius, Gan in the Maldives, and the Cocos Islands already had staging facilities. Socotra, the Seychelles, Aldabra, Diego Garcia, and Prince Edward Islands were considered as candidates for development. In 1964 the U.S. entered the picture and discussions commenced on the establishment of joint British-U.S. staging posts in the Indian Ocean. During July and August an Anglo-American group surveyed prospective islands and concluded that Diego Garcia and Aldabra were most appropriate. Joint action by the U.S. and Britain was considered to be in the interest of

both countries. Britain hoped to reduce her financial burden by sharing the cost with the U.S.

**The Final Retreat**

After the Labour Party victory in the October 1964 election the debate over Britain's role in the Indian Ocean reached another stage. British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean now became an item in the agenda of defence debate. At first the new government showed no marked difference from its predecessors on the Indian Ocean policy and adhered to the concept of Britain's world role. The Labour Party had been a severe critic of Britain's Indian Ocean role after Suez. However, Labour policy had undergone a remarkable change in 1963 and the Party now saw the British mission in the Indian Ocean not as that of leaving but of staying. After 1964, however, critics of this Indian Ocean policy began to swell within the ranks of the Labour Party as well as outside.

Soon after the Labour Party assumed office, Prime Minister Wilson stated that "whatever actions the government might take in the field of cost effectiveness, value for money and a stringent review of expenditure, Britain could not afford to relinquish its world role".[87] In addition to the Prime Minister's grand conception of Britain's world role, pressure from the U.S. government played an important part in Labour's decision to continue with the Indian Ocean role. The U.S. pressure to maintain such a role can be seen as early as 1961. The British government used its 'Indian Ocean role' to maintain its 'special

[87]Ibid., Vol. 704, 16 December 1964, c. 423-4.

relationship' with the United States. In December 1964, Prime Minister Wilson and U.S. President Johnson discussed Britain's role in the Indian Ocean and reportedly agreed on the nature of that role. After these discussions, Wilson stated in the House of Commons on 16th December 1964 that the government was considering the development of a plan for nuclear balance in Asia and that a portion of the V-bomber forces would be stationed in the Indian ocean to guarantee the security of non-nuclear powers against nuclear attack.[88]

But a severe economic crisis forced the government to cut back on defence expenditure. Even before the new government assumed office the Treasury had prepared a report arguing for reductions in defence spending. The cabinet accepted the report and began reviewing the defence programme. The first step in the review was cutting down the weapons programme and the reserve forces. As the review proceeded the existing commitments themselves were re-evaluated.

The dilemma the government was facing, namely the reluctance to reduce commitments in the Indian Ocean and the inability to provide resources to meet those commitments, can be seen in the Statement on Defence Estimates 1965. Though the White Paper emphasized the importance of keeping up Britain's world role, it further stated that "(I)f some of our burdens can be assumed or shared by our allies, we may not need the full range of military power we should require to carry them all alone".[89]

[88]Ibid., c. 434-42.

[89]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Statement on the Defence (Cmnd 2592), 1965, para. 21.

After the publication of the Statement on Defence 1965, the critics of the British Indian Ocean role within the Labour Party parliamentary group became more vociferous. The benefit of the Indian Ocean role was questioned not just by backbenchers in the Labour Party but even by the shadow Secretary of Defence of the Conservative Party - Enoch Powell - who questioned the longterm value of the Indian Ocean bases.[90]

By 1966, the question of British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean had been raised and discussed in newspapers and in academic circles. Michael Howard and Alastair Buchan, the most noted British Defence analysts, agreed on the need for British withdrawal.[91] Howard argued that withdrawal should take a generation while Buchan pointed out that it might occur within a period of four to ten years.

In the face of growing opposition within the Labour Party Parliamentary group, fuelled by the pressures of the economic crisis, the government began to think of further scaling down Indian Ocean commitments in early 1966. The Statement of Defence Estimates 1966, Part I : Defence Review acknowledged that Britain had important economic interests in the Indian Ocean region but stated that military force was not the appropriate method of protecting them. Britain would maintain her military capacity outside Europe but it would be subject to three major limitations:

> First, Britain will not undertake major operations of war except in co-operation with allies. Secondly, we will not accept an obligation to

[90]C.J. Bartlett, The Long Retreat (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 216

[91]See articles by Howard and Buchan in International Affairs, 42:2 (April 1966), pp. 179-183, 184-193.

> provide another country with military assistance unless it is prepared to provide us with facilities we need to make such assistance effective in time. Finally, there will be no attempt to maintain defence facilities in an independent country against its wishes.92

The White Paper also announced the government's decision to abandon the Aden base when Aden became independent (as South Yemen) in 1968. In the debate in the House of Commons over the Defence Estimates in February 1967, Dennis Healey, the then Secretary of Defence, stated that his disagreement with critics was not about withdrawal but about the fixing of a date in advance.[93] After the Defence White Paper of 1967 and the parliamentary debates it was clear that the government would reduce British involvement in the Indian Ocean in the near future. By the end of March 1967 the Defence and Overseas Policy Working Party presented its report on defence review to the Defence and Overseas Policy committee headed by the Prime Minister. In April, the government decided to reduce the forces in the Far East to half the existing number by 1970-71 and to withdraw totally by the mid-seventies. The Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy 1967 announced the government's decisions.[94] Towards the end of 1967 government was again speculating on a short time table for the withdrawal. The announcement came on 16th January 1968. The Prime Minister declared in January 1968 in the House of Commons

[92]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Statement on Defence Estimates 1966 (Cmnd 2901), 1966, para 19.

[93]United Kingdom, House of Commons, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 742, 27 February 1967, cc. 115-18.

[94]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Supplementary Statement of Defence Policy 1967 (Cmnd 3357), 1967.

that British forces would be withdrawn from East of Suez.[95] This did not mean that Britain was to withdraw her forces from the Indian Ocean completely. Britain did not give up a number of strategically located staging posts. Those included Gan Island in the Maldives, Masira island, the Seychelles group, Mauritius, and the British Indian Ocean Territory which consisted of the islands of the Chagos Archipelago.

The immediate reasons for the decision to hasten the withdrawal from the Indian Ocean were, no doubt, economic. The balance of payments problem forced the government to reduce defence expenditures drastically. The inevitable outcome of Britain's inability to provide resources for defence requirements was the scaling down of her defence obligations. The dilemma of the British defence policy, as far as the Indian Ocean was concerned, was the imbalance between commitments and resources. In 1966 the Statement on Defence declared that "to maintain all our current military tasks and capabilities outside Europe would impose an unacceptable strain on our overstretched forces, and bear too heavily both on our domestic economy and on our resources of foreign exchange".[96]

The reasons for British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean cannot be explained only in terms of British inability to provide resources to keep up her Indian Ocean role. As the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1966 admitted, defence should be the servant of foreign policy not its master. In a wider sense, the

[95]United Kingdom, House of Commons, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. 760, 16 January 1968, cc. 1580-85.

[96]op. cit., (Cmnd 2901), 1966, para. 19.

decision of 1968 to withdraw forces can be seen as the culmination of the process of adjusting the British position in the Indian Ocean to the post-imperial order. The main characteristics of the changed international situation - namely, the decline of old forms of colonialism, the emergence of new states, the rising tide of nationalism, the emergence of the Soviet Union and the U.S. as the prinicpal world powers, and the Cold War polarization of the world, had a delayed but decisive impact upon the British position in the Indian Ocean.

For some time after 1947, the British role in the Indian Ocean was rationalized by British economic interests in the area, alliance obligations, and moral commitments. By the mid-1960s this rationalization could no longer stand. The relationship between economic interests and military presence was questioned. Some critics of the Indian Ocean role pointed out the economic success of West Germany and Japan despite the lack of a military presence in the Indian Ocean, to refute the relationship between economic interests and military power.[97] With the development of post-colonial states, the British military presence in the Indian Ocean, with its taint of an imperial past, became more and more unacceptable. As India, Sri Lanka, and Burma began to launch on an independent course and to put forward the non-aligned strategy, the concept of moral obligation lost its ground too.

[97]Bartlett, op. cit., p. 217.

Chapter III

## The United States in the Indian Ocean - 1945-1968: from British Umbrella to the Application of Naval Power.

The United States emerged as a naval and political power in the Indian Ocean only after the Second World War but her association with it can be traced back in history to the days of the great clipper ships. It is well known that "New England whalers ventured through the Indian Ocean in the latter part of the 18th and well into the 19th century".[1] These early contacts led to the first U.S. treaty with an Indian Ocean State, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, in 1832. U.S. involvement in the Indian Ocean during this period, however, was very meagre and she was not involved in the power struggle in the Indian Ocean in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. When the United States emerged as an imperial power at the close of the 19th century, the Indian Ocean was firmly under the control of Britain which had transformed it into a British lake. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt sent his 'Great White Fleet' around the world marking the entry of a new naval power into the world oceans. As Commander Gary Sick (U.S. Navy) remarked "that brief passage may have represented the first introduction of U.S. naval force into the area.[2]

[1]U.S., Congress, House, Sub-Committe on the Near East and South Asia, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Proposed Expansion of U.S. Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean. testimony of Seymour Weiss, 93rd Cong., 2nd Sess.,(Washington: G.P.O. 1974), p. 22.

[2]Gary Sick, "The Evolution of U.S. Strategy towards the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Regions," in The Great Game - Rivalry in the Persian Gulf and South Asia, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ed. (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 49.

It was during the Second World War that the United States moved into the Indian Ocean on a large scale, though the responsibility for the defence of the Indian Ocean remained with the British. It assumed considerable importance in the U.S. war strategy as a major supply route of lend-lease weapons to the Soviet Union.[3] In order to protect these sea lanes and meet the advancing Japanese forces, the United States developed her naval strength in the Indian Ocean substantially. An American military mission was attached to the Imperial Iranian Government in 1943 and the supply of lend -lease aid was extended to Saudi Arabia. At the same time the U.S. Air Force constructed an air field at Bahrain and the U.S. Navy leased the Kagnew naval base in Asmara, Ethiopia, from Great Britain.[4] Thus, by the end of World War II, American interest in the Indian Ocean had already been demonstrated.

**The Indian Ocean in the Cold War**

In the early phase of the Cold War the main theatre of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union appeared to be Europe. Hence, U.S. strategy was concerned mainly with the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific, leaving the Indian Ocean once again to the British. The establishment of the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan Socialist Republics in Nothern Iran by Soviet troops in 1946 triggered the first direct conflict

[3]Rear Admiral Robert J. Hanks (USN), " The Indian Ocean Negotiations: Rocks and Shoals," Strategic Review, VI:1 (Winter 1978), p. 20.

[4]Monoranjan Bezboruah, U.S.Strategy in the Indian Ocean-The International Response (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 34.

between the two sides. However, in the face of western diplomatic pressure, backed by the U.S. military power, the Soviet Union decided to withdraw. The Iranian episode, along with Soviet claims to the territories of Karz and Ardahan in Turkey, highlighted the U.S. strategic interest in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area. In 1947, a U.S. military advisory mission was attached to the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie.[5] In the following year, the Truman administration negotiated the lease of British facilities at Bahrain to establish a small naval force in the Persian Gulf known as the Mid-East Force. "This small force consisted of a flag-ship home-ported at facilities made available by the British at Bahrain with two destroyers periodically deployed on a rotational basis from the Atlantic fleet".[6] Nevertheless, the underlying assumption of U.S. policy was acceptance of the pre-eminent position of Great Britain in the Indian Ocean, diplomatically as well as militarily. The U.S. intended to protect its interests under the British umbrella which aroused less hostile feelings and which seemed to have gained legitimacy and acceptance merely as an historical fact. Zurhellen, Deputy Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, states that

> While the British were there in the area, many of their interests coincided with ours (U.S.) and we were, therefore, able in the main, to tailor our presence along with their presence so that together we were accomplishing very much of a

[5]U.S., Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, The Persian Gulf, 1975: The Continuing Debate on Arms Sales, Statement by Amos A. Jordan, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1975), p. 121.

[6]Ronald I. Spiers, "US National Security Policy and the Indian Ocean Area," Department of State Bulletin, August 23, 1971, p. 200.

common interest between us.7

U.S. strategic thinking in the immediate post-war period did not perceive the Indian Ocean as a separate strategic entity[8] and U.S. policy vis-a-vis the Indian Ocean was only part of her general global strategy arising out of Cold War imperatives. In order to understand U.S. military strategy in the context of the Cold War, it is necessary to take into account the technological features of the weapons systems at the time. Air power associated with nuclear weapons occupied a pre-eminent position in U.S. strategic thinking in the aftermath of the Second World War. U.S. strategy was based on long-range bombers, carrying nuclear weapons (Strategic Air Command), supplemented by forces garrisoned at the most likely points of land confrontation.[9] Establishment of bases for Strategic Air Command bombers became a

[7]Proposed Expansion of U.S. Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, testimony by J. Owen Zurhellen, p. 10.

[8]Neither the Department of Defense nor the Department of State had a desk dealing with the Indian Ocean as a whole. In the Department of Defense, responsibility for the Indian Ocean was divided between the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT) and the Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC). In the Department of State, three regional desks dealt with Indian Ocean affairs. Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman, Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development (1971), stated "(F)or most Americans, the Indian Ocean has a split personally, our maps of the world centered as they are upon the United States, provide an intact view of both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, but sever the Indian Ocean into two. This geographical bifurcation of the world's third largest body of water is an expression of the fragmented view which we have had of the Indian Ocean and its littoral". See U.S., Congress, House, Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development,Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Indian Ocean : Political and Strategic Future, Statement by Clement J. Zablocki, 92nd Cong. 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1971), p. iii.

[9]K.R. Singh, The Indian Ocean: Big Power Presence and Local Response (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977), p. 14.

major element of U.S. strategy. Diplomatic manoeuvres to facilitate accommodation of such bases became an integral part of the global strategy. Accordingly, defence networks encircling the Soviet Union were set up which is identified as the policy of containment.

The Indian Ocean littoral, not the ocean itself, was the area where the policy of containment was to be implemented. After 1948, the U.S. extended various elements of the containment policy, as embodied in the 'Truman Doctrine', to Asia. In 1951, under an arrangement with the Saudi Arabian Government, a Strategic Air Command recovery base was established in Bahrain. In addition, bilateral defence agreements were negotiated with Iran in 1950 and with Pakistan in 1954. Military advisory and training missions were sent to a number of Indian Ocean littoral States including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia.[10] The supply of arms to selected littoral countries was an integral part of the containment policy. These military relations were reinforced by substantial U.S. economic aid.

The other important aspect of the post-war U.S. strategy was the propagation of particular ideals and values such as 'democracy', 'free society', and 'private enterprise' as an alternative to Communist ideology. "The continuing interaction between these ideals and the political realities of the Cold War forms a skein in American policies towards the Third World which is not easy to define in neat phrases".[11]

[10]Spiers, op. cit., p. 200.

[11]Shahram Chubin, "The United States and the Third World : motives, objectives, policies," Adelphi Papers - 167 (Summer 1981), p. 1.

**Sri Lanka's Intimacy with the Western Camp**

Thus, the international scene into which Sri Lanka entered as a formally independent actor in 1948 was highly polarized between two opposing camps. A corresponding pattern of polarization based on political ideologies could be seen in the internal politics of Sri Lanka. The group which gained power after the transfer of power was highly anglicized, extremely conservative, and had economic interests that were strongly identified with the colonial economic order. The opposition consisted of Marxist parties advocating structural changes in the socio-economic set up. Accordingly, the ruling party and the opposition had diametrically opposite foreign policy positions, giving rise to intense debates in Parliament. Both the ruling party and the opposition were well aware of the importance of developments in the Indian Ocean because of the strategic location of Sri Lanka and the vulnerability deriving from it.[12]

It is important to note that, because of the Defence Agreement with Great Britain which allowed the British to maintain an air base and a naval base in the island, Sri Lanka became an integral link in the Commonwealth defense network and in the global defence strategy of the West. As Nicholas Mansergh correctly observes "(T)he 1947 Defence Agreement formally associated Ceylon throughout the period of the Cold War with the senior Commonwealth partner, who was also a principal associate

[12]D.S. Senanayake, the Prime Minister and Leader of the United National Party stated in December 1947 that he had sat in the War Council for three years without learning the implications of Ceylon's strategic location. Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vo. 1, 1 December 1947, c. 444.

in the North Atlantic treaty Organization".[13] However, there is little evidence that Sri Lankan rulers had realized the implications of this defence link in the context of the Cold War. As S.U. Kodikara points out, "Sri Lanka's affinity to the West at this time was more a reflection of the post-Independence 'honeymoon period' with the metropolitan power than an identification with the bloc politics of the Western alliance".[14] The Speeches from the Throne repeatedly declared that the policy of the Government was based on the maintenance of friendly relations with the British Commonwealth countries and the desire to live in peace with all nations. However, the two types of relations were not elucidated in detail. The Prime Minister himself stated that Sri Lanka wanted to be on the friendliest terms with every country of the world.[15] In practice, however, Sri Lanka's friendly relations were confined to non-Communist countries. In this context, Pieter Keuneman, the Opposition Communist Party spokesman on foreign affairs stated:

> In the past four speeches the members of the front benches always spoke about their intentions of maintaining relations with all nations. Of course, their knowledge of geography was very limited. Apparently for them it was the Anglo-Saxon countries and Western European countries and the North American hemisphere which constituted the territory of the Globe.16

[13]N. Mansergh, The Multi-Racial Commonwealth (London: RIIA, 1955) p. 37.

[14]S.U. Kodikara, Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka (New Delhi: Chanakya, 1982), p. 82.

[15]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 4, 3rd August 1948, c. 105.

[16]Ibid, vol. 10, 27 June 1950, c.205.

In January 1951 D. S. Senanayake announced after the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in London, that his Government was following the policy of the 'middle way' as regards foreign policy.[17] The Prime Minister's reference to the concept of 'middle way' cannot be cited as a foreshadowing of Sri Lanka's non-alignment. The Parliamentary debate over the Prime Minister's statement clearly revealed that the term the 'middle way' was used in the context of the Buddhist concept of 'Majjima Pratipada' (middle path). When the opposition demanded that the Prime Minister explain what the concept middle way meant, he stated that people who did not believe in religion could not understand 'Majjima Pratipada'.

Sri Lankan foreign policy began to assume a decidedly pro-U.S. tilt after 1950. The trend of drawing closer to the United States first became evident in ideological pronouncements made by the Prime Minister and others in Parliament. D.S. Senanayake stated that "(A)s far as the U.S. is concerned there is not the slightest doubt that she holds the view that we hold. That is, they are for democracy".[18] In the course of debate on the government's foreign relations, J.R. Jayewardena, Minister of Finance, went further and stated:

> In this world today there are really two powerful factors, the United States of America and the U.S.S.R. We have to follow either the one or the other. There can be no half way house in the matter. We have decided, and we intend as long as we are in power, to follow the United States of America and its democratic principles.19

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., Vol. 8, 7 July 1950, c.487

[19]Ibid., 4 July 1950, c.293

The outbreak of the Korean War, the establishment of the Colombo Plan, and the signing of the Agreement for Technical Co-operation under the Point Four Programme with the United States influenced Sri Lankan foreign policy. When the Korean War broke out the main Sri Lanka newspaper establishments, the Times of Ceylon and Lake House, which had intimate relations with the ruling party, adopted a very strong pro-U.S. stand.[20] They interpreted the war as a struggle between aggressive Communism and the democratic forces headed by the United States. The Colombo Plan,[21] and especially the Agreement for Technical Co-operation, enhanced expectations of economic benefits that Sri Lanka could obtain from the West.[22]

The pro-U.S. tilt in Sri Lanka's foreign policy was manifested in a number of ways. During the Korean War, Sri Lanka provided harbour facilities to a U.S. flotilla in the war.[23] The Opposition wanted to know why the Government did not follow the procedure adopted in the Indonesian crisis in 1949 and refuse to grant any facilities to these ships. The Prime Minister did for

[20]See Ceylon Daily News, 4 July 1950. Times of Ceylon, 5 July 1950.

[21]The Colombo Plan originated in the Commonwealth framework but Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and finally the United States joined the project extending it beyond Commonwealth borders.

[22]The enthusiasm associated with the Agreement for Technical Co-operation under the Point Four Programme with the United States proved to be short-lived. Sri Lankan expectations for more U.S. aid were frustrated when the U.S. Congress passed the Kem Amendment to the Third Supplementary Appropriations Bill by which Sri Lanka bacame ineligible to receive U.S. aid because of rubber trade with China.

[23]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 8, 7 August 1950, c. 857.

his part not see any reason why facilities which were available to the Americans in the past should not be made available now.[24] Further, during the latter stages of the battle of Dien Bien Phu in the Indo-China War, the Sri Lankan government allowed the United States to use Katunayake for American military aircraft carrying French troops between France and Hanoi.[25]

It is true that the Defence Agreement with Britain linked Sri Lanka organically to the strategy of the West but it alone is not sufficient to explain the pro-Western tilt in Sri Lanka's foreign policy. The ideology and the structure of the ruling class played a more important role. The ruling party's attitudes on international issues were highly conditioned by anti-Communism.[26] For instance, the struggle of the Indo-Chinese people against French domination was not considered an anti-colonial freedom fight simply because it was led by Communists but the Sri Lankan government extended its unreserved support to the Indonesian struggle for independence because it was led by non-Communist elements.

It goes without saying that the Sri Lankan ruling class shared a strong ideological affinity with the West. Their social background, economic interests, and political schooling made them natural allies of the West. The ideals advocated by the West such as democracy, free society and free economy were very

[24]Ibid., col. 1860.

[25]Times of Ceylon, 24 April 1954, p. 6.

[26]It was reported that Sir John Kotelawela stated that he would even join the devil himself in order to oppose Communism. See Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 17, 7 May 1954, c. 536.

attractive to the conservative rulers of the country. They believed that the prosperity of the country lay in trade ties with the West.[27] Yet, it is also important to note that Sri Lanka hesitated to identify squarely with the bloc politics of the West. The factors such as India's refusal to enter into the bloc politics of the Cold War and the Asian solidarity framework, manifested in the Asian Relations Conference called by Nehru in March 1947 and other subsequent gatherings in which Sri Lanka took part, thwarted an unchecked movement towards one bloc.

**Extension of Regional Defence Alliances into the Indian Ocean**

In the early 1950s new developments could be seen in U.S. strategy vis-a-vis the littorals of the Indian Ocean as the new Secratary of State in the Eisenhower administration, John Foster Dulles, initiated the extension of regional collective defence alliances to the Indian Ocean. By about 1950 military planners in the West realized that the Cold War would stabilize for some time instead of moving towards a general war with the Soviet Union as earlier thought. In this context, the two wings of the Indian Ocean littoral, namely the Middle East and Far East assumed a greater importance in the security calculations of the West. The Middle East was seen as a base area which could be used to attack the Soviet southern flank if deterrence failed. The Far East was the area where Communist infiltration through China could be checked. The Communist threat in the two areas was believed to be different in form - in the Middle East the danger was southward

[27]A.J. Wilson, Electoral Politics in an Emergent State : The Ceylon General Election of May 1970 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 14.

expansion by the Soviet Union to gain control over the oil fields; in the Far East it took the form of internal subversion.

In addition to these Cold War considerations the maintenance of the status quo became necessary in both areas because of U.S. economic interests. It was believed that U.S. military pressure was necessary to safeguard the economic interests.

The first move in the direction of forming regional defence alliances dates back to May 1950. At the urging of the United States the Philippines government convened a conference of certain Asian countries at the Philippine health resort of Baguio with the aim of forming a military-political bloc.[28] The main objective was not achieved due to the opposition of India, Indonesia, Burma and Sri Lanka, but the United States was able to conclude bilateral pacts with Thailand and the Philippines. In 1951 a collective defence treaty known as ANZUS was entered into by the United States, Australia and new Zealand.

In 1954 the United States revived its initiative for a collective defence bloc for South East Asia. The immediate cause was the collapse of the French colonial system in Indo-China after the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The United States feared that the fighting in Indo-China would spread to other countries in the region during the early months of 1954. In this context the U.S. initiated the move by inviting the French and British Governments to issue a warning to China as a first step and then to set about organizing a collective defence of South-East Asia. The issue was taken up during the Berlin Conference of January

[28]Alexander Larventyev, U.S.A. and Asia (New Delhi: Sterling Publications, 1982), p. 34.

1954 and was followed by further discussions in London in April between Dulles and Sir Anthony Eden. After the meeting the two governments issued a statement indicating that they were examining the possibility of establishing a collective defence agreement in South-East Asia.[29] However, Britain wished to wait until the end of the on-going Geneva negotiations on Indo-China, thinking the negotiations would be prejudiced.[30] The United States and Britain differed on the issue of membership. Britain wanted to extend the proposed collective defence to Asian Commonwealth countries including India. Churchill and Eden met Eisenhower in Washington in July and the joint communique on the discussions issued on the 28th July stated that the two countries were ready to go ahead with plans for collective defence in South-East Asia irrespective of the outcome of Geneva negotiations.[31] After the Geneva talks wound up, the United States and Britain proceeded quickly, according to the plan, to establish a defence alliance.

There followed a busy period of selling the plan to South and Southeast Asian countries. First of all, Britain approached the five Colombo Powers: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Indonesia. India, Burma and Indonesia categorically refused any involvement with the proposed alliance. The Sri Lankan Prime Minister was more sympathetic but finally declined, for reasons that will be explained shortly. Pakistan accepted the invitation.

[29]Sir Anthony Eden, Full Circle: Memoirs of the Rt. Honourable Sir Anthony Eden (London: Cassell, 1960) pp. 97-98

[30]Darby, op. cit., p. 61

[31]Ibid.

On 8th September 1954 representatives of the United States, Britain, France, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand met in the Philippines and signed the Manila Treaty to establish the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The SEATO Treaty made it obligatory for the signatories to consult each other on measures for common defence in the event of any threat to the inviolability or the integrity of the territory, sovereignty or political independence of any signatory party or territory covered by the treaty. But, as Robert E. Osgood observed, the political-military consensus in SEATO was limited in reality:

> The Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan were included partly to give the treaty the sanction of Asian membership. Yet the ties of interests among these States are extremely thin or non-existent, and their ability to assist each other is negligible. For the Asian members, SEATO constituted a channel and claim for preferential economic assistance but not a significant instrument of military security, apart from its formalization of the American commitment.32

In the case of the Middle East, it was Britain which first suggested collective defence. The British suggestion in October 1951 for an Anglo-American allied Middle Eastern Command with headquarters in Cairo failed due to Egypt's refusal to join the scheme. After the failure of this attempt the United States took the initiative. In the spring of 1953, Dulles made a fact-finding tour to the Middle East to explore the possibility of expanding his scheme of regional defence pacts to the area. His Middle East mission convinced him that there was no possibility for a broad

[32]Robert E. Osgood, Alliances and American Foreign Policy (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pp. 81-2.

Middle Eastern alliance. As a result, Dulles put forward his 'Northern Tier' plan which was aimed at Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. The first step in this direction was the signing of a security and friendship treaty with the United States by Pakistan and Turkey. It was believed that Iraq would remain outside temporarily, hoping to bring other Arab States into the alliance. However, there was a U.S.-Iraq military assistance agreement in operation from April 1954. As the effort to bring in other countries failed, Nuri Pasha, Iraq's Prime Minister, signed an agreement with Turkey in February 1955. Up to this point Britain had some reservations regarding the Pakistan-Turkey Pact as she did not want to antagonize India. After the Iraq-Turkey Pact Britain made up her mind and decided to accede to it in April 1955. This became known as the Baghdad Pact. Pakistan acceded to the Baghdad Pact in September and Iran in October. The Baghdad Pact, which was renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) after Iraq's withdrawal in 1958, differed from that of SEATO. Although the United States had bilateral military agreements with all the signatory parties of the Baghdad Pact she was not a direct party to it.

What did the United States expect from the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact? As Jansen points out, there was no need for Asian manpower from the military point of view but only for bases in order to encircle the Communist powers in the strategy of containment. Further, he notes the United States did not establish militarily important bases in Iran, Pakistan or Thailand.[33] On

[33]J. H. Jansen, Afro-Asian Non-Alignment (London: Faber & faber, 1966), p.135.

the other hand, since the U.S. had bilateral treaties with all these powers she could have obtained what she needed without grouping these powers into a multilateral alliance. The U.S. military relationship with Saudi Arabia is a good example in this regard. There is no doubt that multilateral alliances make co-ordinated planning more convenient. Even then, SEATO or the Baghdad Pact did not establish a joint central command as was the case in NATO. The United States did not increase its locally-based military power in accordance with the military commitments of the alliances. The mutual defence agreements relied on global U.S. military strength rather than the presence of any U.S. forces in the Indian Ocean area. These alliances provided, first a legal and institutional framework to project U.S. deterrent power against Communist expansion, and secondly, a political framework to oppose internal threats to their local allies. Osgood writes:

> They are an aggregation of disparate formalized special relationships that have no linkage other than their common purpose to clarify and sanction the projection of American deterrent power along the periphery of Eurasia and to provide the political framework for fostering indigenous local resistance to Communist penetration in a highly diversified, fragmented and rapidly changing environment inhabited by weak States.34

Furthermore, SEATO and CENTO organically linked the areas to the U.S. military communications network. As Commander Gary SIck points out:

> Much more important was the scattering of communications and intelligence-gathering sites throughout the region that tied the area into a global U.S. military communications network and provided invaluable information about Soviet and

[34]Osgood, op. cit., p. 85.

Chinese strategic weapons development and testing.35

**Response of the Kotelawela Government to the Formation of SEATO**

The response of the Sri Lankan government to the SEATO proposal was a manifestation of the dilemma that the government faced in the foreign policy arena. After the Eden-Dulles communique of April 1954 Sir Cecil Syers, British High Commissioner in Colombo, informed the Sri Lankan authorities of the plan for the collective defence of South East-Asia.[36] Accordingly, the Sri Lankan authorities and the British High Commissioner had 'frank and cordial' discussions two days later.[37] During the course of the debate on external affairs in Parliament on 7th May 1954, two government speakers, J.R. Jayewardena, then Minister of Agriculture, and V. Nalliah, Junior Minister for Defence and External Affairs, revealed the Eden-Dulles plan for collective defence.[38] It bacame clearly evident during the debate that some elements in the government were in favour of the plan. On 30th July 1954, Sir Anthony Eden sent a message to the Colombo powers formally inviting them to participate in the proposed collective defence. The responses of the others except Sri Lanka were quick and clear. The invitation created a dilemma for Prime Minister Kotelawela. The Plan, no doubt, was attractive to him as a bulwark against communism. In this context he sent personal

[35]Sick, op. cit., p. 52

[36]The Hindu, 21 April 1954

[37]Ibid., 25 April 1954

[38]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 17, 17 May 1954, cc. 561-566.

messages to the Colombo powers proposing that they should confer before replying to the British offer.[39] According to Jansen "probably the Ceylon Premier, in asking for this meeting so soon after the Colombo Conference, intended to force Mr. Nehru to articulate an alternative security scheme for the region".[40] Sir John Kotelawela apparently misread the Indian Prime Minister's correspondence on this issue and believed that he had an alternative to SEATO.[41] India and Indonesia declined to consider an alternative but categorically rejected joining any alliance. The failure of Kotelawela's diplomacy left individual decisions up to the government. After a period of veering towards acceptance, the Premier finally decided not to participate in SEATO. He stated that the government was prepared to maintain an open mind on the subject although it would not participate in it.[42] The term "to maintain an open mind" is important because SEATO left it open to non-signatory powers to join later if they so wished.

Given Kotelawela's general policy tilt towards the West, particularly towards the United States, and his anti-Communism, a decision to join SEATO would not have been surprising. Why did he decide to the contrary? The flat refusal of the majority of the Colombo powers, no doubt, had a heavy bearing on Kotelawela. The predominant mood at the Conference of the Colombo Powers held as recently as April 1954 was against any alliance with power

[39]New York Times, 3 August 1954, p.5

[40]Jansen, op. cit., p.169.

[41]Kodikara, op. cit., p.90

[42]The Ceylon Daily News, 14 August 1954, p.1.

blocs. Even the anti-Communist U Nu of Burma revealed on his way to the conference that about a year earlier Burma had turned down a U.S. offer of mutual security arrangements and had also rejected further economic assistance.[43] Specifically, Nehru's unequivocal rejection of SEATO had restricted the Sri Lankan Premier's room for manoeuvre. Because of the geo-political framework of Sri Lanka's defence thinking and the climate of Indo-Ceylon relations at the time, Sri Lanka was not in a position to ignore India's stand completely. The Ceylon Daily News quoted the Prime Minister as saying:

> We want friends. We want to have India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Burma as our friends because we now form a new clan. Therefore, we will discuss the matter and come to a decision unanimously, as we have done in the past.44

A powerful section of the ruling establishment itself came forward to oppose Sri Lanka joining SEATO. During the Prime Minister's period of indecision this element, generally identified as the Senanayake faction, openly voiced its opposition to joining the Pact. R.G. Senanayake, former Junior Minister for Defence and External Affairs and the Minister for Trade in the Kotelawela government until he resigned from the cabinet on the foreign policy issue, stated that "if we join SEATO on a defence basis and lend ourselves to offensive action, I think we will go contrary to the basic principles laid down by our late Prime Minister and those of our party from the time of

[43]Jansen, op. cit., p.147.

[44]The Ceylon Daily News, 4 August 1954.

its inception".[45] Further, Dudley Senanayake, former Prime Minister, warned Kotelawela "do not be caught up in any world crusade against Communism".[46]

Another important factor was the strong opposition of S.W.R.D Bandaranaike and also of the Left. Bandaranaike's opposition to SEATO was based on three arguments. First, entering into a military pact such as SEATO would violate the government's declared policy of the 'middle way'. Second, since the purpose of SEATO was containment of China, Sri Lanka's entry would adversely affect the Sri Lanka-China Rubber-for-Rice Agreement. Finally, he argued that SEATO was dominated by non-Asian powers and what was needed was a non-aggression pact among Asian powers.[47] The left parties -- Communist Party, Nawa Lanka Sama Samaja Party, and Viplavakari Sama Samaja Party -- were united in opposing SEATO. Dr. N.M. Perera, the leader of the Lanka Sama Samja Party, challenged the Prime Minister to elucidate how SEATO could be reconciled with the 'Pancha Seela' that the Colombo Powers thought would enable them to maintain peace in the world.[48]

On November 25, 1954, Premier Kotelawela had a discussion with the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden. At the subsequent press conference Kotelawela stated that SEATO did not offer the best method of preserving peace in Asia and that the machinery adopted by SEATO was very different from what was

[45]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 19, 4 August 1954. c. 484.

[46]Ibid., cc. 483-484.

[47]Ibid., cc. 452-462.

[48]Ibid., c. 471.

needed for peaceful co-existence in Asia. What was needed was non-aggression among Asian countries. He further stated that what Asia needed most was a fair economic deal, consisting especially of a fair market to help her develop.[49]

**Emergence of Sri Lanka's Policy of Non Alignment**

The defeat of the pro-Western Kotelawela government created little enthusiasm in the United States. In its editorial of 8 April 1956, The New York Times, stated "from almost every angle it looks like a set-back for the course of free world".[51] The United States was not quite prepared to tolerate in 1956 the policy of non-alignment and neutrality on the part of the newly independent countries. To the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, neutrality was "an immoral and short-sighted conception".[52] But events soon showed there was no reason for the United States to be displeased at the 1956 political change in Sri Lanka. True, M.E.P. government under Bandaranaike's Premier-ship broke down the cordon that had existed between Sri Lanka and the Socialist bloc and developed good relations with those countries. However, Bandaranaike's foreign policy was by no means anti-American. When he visited the United States in 1956, after the Suez Crisis, Bandaranaike highly commended the role played by the U.S. during that crisis to oppose British, French and Israeli action. Because of Bandaranaike's political upbringing, he was rather close to western political ideals and institutions.

[49]Ceylon Today, Vol. III, No. 12, Dec. 1954, p. 10.

[51]Quoted in Prasad. op. cit., p. 53

[52]Ceylon Daily News, 14 June 1956.

Furthermore, he declared that "we are closer to the United States because we believe in a democratic way of life".[53]

After 1956 Sri Lanka's economic relations with the United States experienced a substantial growth. It should be noted that the pro-Western U.N.P. government was not quickly forgiven by the United States for concluding a trade pact with China. In early 1955 the United States modified this position and decided to extend a $5 million aid package to Sri Lanka for the year 1955-1956. The MEP regime became the beneficiary of this decision.

During the later period of Bandaranaike's premiership, American policy in the Middle East became a matter of concern especially after the enunciation of the Eisenhower Doctrine and U.S. military intervention in Lebanon. After the coup in Iraq in 1958, which replaced a pro-western regime with a nationalistic military regime, disturbances spread to Lebanon and Jordan. The Eisenhower administration, which obtained authority from Congress to use forces in West Asia, sent armed forces to Lebanon and, at the same time, Britain sent troops to Jordan. According to Bandaranaike, this was an intervention by one country in the affairs of another. He stated in Parliament:

> Obviously, in the interests of peace - we are interested in peace, we are interested through our general policy of anti-Colonialism and through our adherence of the Bandung resolutions one of the most important of which was that we oppose intervention of one country in internal affairs of another - we feel that these forces, the United States and United Kingdom forces, must be withdrawn without delay.54

[53]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 32, 14 August 1958, c. 318.

[54]Ibid.

At the General Assembly of the U.N. Sri Lanka supported the resolution moved by the Soviet Union which called for the withdrawal of British and U.S. forces from West Asia.

Though the M.E.P. regime of 1956 was more sensitive to developments in the Indian Ocean region, the naval build-up by external powers had not emerged as an issue as yet. Naval build up by other world powers became a major issue only after 1960. It was not S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike but Sirimavo Bandaranaike who had to grapple with this development.

**The Projection of U.S. Naval Power into the Indian Ocean**

The beginning of the 1960s marked a new stage in the evolution of U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean. Hitherto U.S. strategy had been basically diplomatic, economic, and political, rather than military in nature.[55] The United States intended to secure its interests under the shade of the British umbrella and U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean acknowledged Britain's naval pre-eminence. Britain was still the imperial great power of the region. After 1960, the United States began to project its naval power directly into the Indian Ocean. This shift in U.S. strategy should be viewed in the light of post-Suez conditions in the area and also developments in weapon and delivery systems.

The 1956 Suez conflict taught a number of political and military lessons to American strategists. The Suez episode highlighted the political realities of the decolonization era. It emphasized the power of post-colonial nationalism on the one hand and the erosion of Britain's historic position as the imperial

[55]Sick, op. cit., p. 52.

great power in the Indian Ocean on the other. Suez prompted the United States to look anew at the Indian Ocean. The failure of British military action raised serious doubts about the efficacy of relying on Britain to protect western interests in the Indian Ocean area. The most important military lesson of the Suez crisis was the failure of the base strategy that underlay Britain's naval policy. As Bezboruah remarked,

> The denial of various base facilities and over-flight privileges to the British by the littoral countries brought home the fact that the extensive paraphernalia for logistic support might not be automatically available in the event of any U.K. - U.S. peace keeping role in the future.56

The changes in U.S. strategy in the early 1960s should also be viewed in the context of new developments in weapons systems. Advances in military technology transformed the post-war weapons systems by the end of 1950s. Supersonic fighters, more sophisticated systems of radars to detect enemy bombers, and counter-electronic devices had been developed. Furthermore, manned bombers were supplemented by Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) and Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM). However, the concurrent development of similar missile systems by the Soviet Union highlighted the vulnerability of fixed ground bases. As the Circular Error Probability (CEP) of these missiles was less than a mile, the success of the entire system was dependent on the efficacy of the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) programme. However, the ABM programme at the time was not capable of providing full coverage to ground bases. Consequently, the efforts of military planners were directed to developing a new

[56]Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 35.

weapon system whereby the missile platform would be undetectable yet capable of delivering long range missiles. The Navy came forward at this point. In 1960, the U.S. Navy initiated the Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile System (SLBM), also known as the Polaris programme. Nuclear-powered submarines capable of firing long range missiles without surfacing were introduced in 1961 under the SLBM programme. However, the efficacy of the System depended on an efficient communications network.[57]

In the face of developments in naval and military technology the oceans began to acquire renewed importance in U.S. strategic calculations. The U.S. Navy, which was searching for a bigger role, seized the opportunity to push for a greater share of U.S. budgetary allocations. The importance of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases was overshadowed by these developments in naval technology. As a result, from a military point of view, the gradual shift of U.S. interests from the littoral to the Indian Ocean proper is clearly evident after 1960. This shift was reflected by two developments in the Indian Ocean, namely the beginning of the process of projecting U.S. naval power directly into the Indian Ocean and the emergence of the strategic islands bases concept from the debate on U.S. Indian Ocean strategy within U.S. service circles.

In 1960, an American aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard, visited the Indian Ocean for the first time. Around the same time, some elements in the U.S. services voiced the need for military facilities in the Indian Ocean. However, the then

[57]For a vivid discussion of the impact of military technology on U.S. strategy see K.R. Singh, op. cit., pp. 19-24.

Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, was not in favour of the extension of U.S. naval power into the Indian Ocean. McNamara thought it would be disastrous to become committed to another ocean.[58] Despite this reluctance, the U.S. Navy and the State Department pushed the Indian Ocean case very hard and argued that the extension of U.S. naval power would be necessary in the near future. In view of the vulnerability of land-based facilities due to the nationalistic upsurge and the growing tide of non-alignment in countries along the Indian Ocean littoral, attention was directed to the development of bases in unpopulated or sparsely populated islands in the ocean that were "strategically located and that might be expected to remain relatively immune to the nationalistic pressure being felt on overseas bases around the world".[59]

There were a number of developments in the early 1960s that contributed to the process of projecting naval power into the Indian Ocean. With the direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam after 1962, the Indian Ocean directly entered into U.S. strategic calculations. The Indian government's request for U.S. air defence assistance during the Sino-Indian war of 1962 strengthened the proponents of a more active U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean. During the Sino-Indian war in October 1962 a part of the U.S. Seventh Fleet stationed in the Pacific was ordered into the Bay of Bengal. But the war ended before the fleet could cross the Malaccca Strait. As Sick remarks:

[58]Darby, op. cit., p. 265.

[59]Sick, op. cit., p. 53.

> partly as a result of the Indian experience, the Department of State became convinced of the need to have a U.S. military presence to lend muscle to American diplomacy in the region and to underline, for our friends in the region, U.S. ability to meet its commitments".60

In 1963 there was a growing movement within U.S. defence circles to inject U.S. naval power into the Indian Ocean. This was shown first by the visit of General Maxwell Taylor to the area and his speculation in New Delhi on what this would mean in terms of ships.[61] U.S. press opinion advanced this idea still further.[62] Finally, the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Paul Nitze, justified it on the ground that there was a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean which, by implication at least, the United States intended to fill.

At the end of 1963 the United States was obviously on the way to projecting her naval power into the Indian Ocean. The aircraft carrier U.S.S. Essex and a naval task group participated in the Mid-Link naval exercise of CENTO in November 1963 in the Arabian Sea. In early 1964, President Johnson authorized entry of a carrier task force into the Indian Ocean which highlighted American intentions to extend their naval power there. Accordingly, Concord Squadron, composed of aircraft carrier

[60]Ibid., p. 54

[61]At the Palam Airport, New Delhi, on 19 December 1963, General Taylor was reported to have stated that "the U.S. task force (to be stationed in the Indian Ocean) might comprise one aircraft carrier, two or three destroyers and one oil tanker". For details see Singh, op. cit., p. 24.

[62]New York Times, for instance, remarked that "it seems clear that naval power of some sort must ultimately be assigned to the Indian Ocean, and today this can only mean U.S. naval power, for no other nation in the western world has the strength or capability to provide it". 23 December 1963, p. 24.

Bon Homme Richard, four destroyers, and one fleet tanker entered the Indian Ocean in early April 1964. The Concord Squadron spent about six weeks in the Indian Ocean and conducted manoeuvres named Operation Delaware for three days in co-operation with Iran.[63] The United States at last was preparing to apply her naval power in the Indian Ocean. Concomitant to the commencement of the direct application of American naval power in the Indian Ocean the strategic islands bases concept came to the forefront in American naval strategic designs in the region which later became a major component of the American strategy in the Indian Ocean.

**The Origin and Development of the Strategic Island Bases Concept**

The origin of the concept of strategically located island bases in the Indian Ocean dates back to the early post-war years.[64] Probably it was an introduction of the strategy which Americans were already using in the Pacific. In the early 1960s an "off shore base study team" from the Pentagon undertook planning of the first stage. Diego Garcia was found to be the most suitable because of its protected lagoon and the necessary space for an airstrip, in addition to its strategic location.[65] Admiral La Rocque stated to the Congress:

[63]Singh, K.R. op. cit., p. 24.

[64]The Sunday Times (London) in an article entitled 'Diego Garcia, The Islands Britain Sold' pointed out that "the islands of the Chagos Archipelago first swam into the collective consciousness of western defence strategists in the late fifties". The Sunday Times, 21 September 1975. For the origin and development of the concept see, U.S., Congress, House, Special Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, Diego Garcia, 1975: The Debate over the Base and the Island's Former Inhabitants, ,94th Cong., 1st Sess., 1975, p. 95.

[65]Bezbouruah, op. cit., p. 58.

> Plans for moving into the Indian Ocean date back to the early 1960s and even before. Quiet efforts were undertaken to search for new bases in the Indian Ocean and other areas. I participated in some of that search while I was in Strategic Plans in the Navy Department. Many plans to establish several new overseas naval bases were kept highly secret in order not to alarm foreign countries or the American people and Congress. Diego Garcia emerged as the ideal location for coverage of the Indian Ocean.66

Furthermore, the then civilian Assistant Director of the Long-Range Objective Group of the Chief of Naval Operations (1954-1970), Stuart B. Barber, admitted that he

> (D)etected a vacuum of realistic planning to meet possible future national and Navy needs in the Indian Ocean, and in 1960 initiated through Admiral Burke [Arleigh Burke] U.S.N. (Retd) the political efforts which kept Diego Garcia under British control (rather than automatically becoming a dependency of remote Mauritius) and led to the remarkably generous base rights agreement.67

The two aspects of U.S. strategy, namely, the periodic naval presence and the search for strategically located island bases, proceeded simultaneously but independently in the first part of the 1960s. U.S. carrier task forces were claimed to be self contained and not requiring independent base support and the proposed strategic island bases were viewed as an investment for the future.[68] In November 1963, a new joint command for the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia was established under the general direction of CINE STRIKE, an air force command, and strategic planning was placed under this command.[69]

[66] U.S., Congress., house, Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit.

[67] Ibid., p. 174.

[68] Sick., op. cit., p. 54.

[69] C. Beazley and Ian Clark, (Conti...to p. 116)

In 1964 a joint U.S.-U.K. team surveyed a number of island states in the Indian Ocean in regard to the proposed strategic island bases.[70] The task of the joint survey team was to select a few strategically located islands to create a chain of island stepping stones across the Indian Ocean independent of problematic land bases.[71] After their survey in July and August 1964, the joint U.S.-U.K. survey team selected Diego Garcia and Aldabra as possible candidates for development.[72] While the U.S. Navy favoured Diego Garcia, the U.S. Air Force's choice was Aldabra.[73] In view of the fact that the Aden base had to be phased out as Britain's main base west of Singapore, "the 'thin red line' of Anglo-American peace keeping would almost certainly be anchored on one or two Indian Ocean bases".[74]

The constitutional and legal framework to proceed with the plan had to be taken by Britain. Hence, the Minister of State for the Colonies, Anthony Greenwood, announced in the House of Commons on 10th of November 1965 the establishment of a new colony called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) which included the three islands of Diego Garcia, Peras Banchos, and Solomon of the Chagos Archipelago detached from Mauritius, and the islands of Aldabra, Deschares, and Farquahar taken from the

(conti...from p.115) Politics of Intrusion: The Super Powers and the Indian Ocean, (Sydney: Alternative Pub., 1979), p. 7.

[70]The New York Times, 30 August 1964, p. 16.

[71]Christian Science Monitor, 22 April 1965, p. 11.

[72]Darby, op. cit., p. 265.

[73]Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 61.

[74]Christian Science Monitor, 22 April 1965, p. 11.

Seychelles. After the establishment of the BIOT formal discussions were conducted between the United States and the United Kingdom and an agreement was reached by exchange of notes signed at London on 30 December 1966 between George Brown, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for Britain, and David Bruce, U.S. Ambassador in London for the United States. The Agreement of 1966 for 'Availability of certain Indian Ocean Islands for Defence Purposes' provides that the islands of the Chagos Archipelago as well as other islands comprising BIOT would be made available as required to meet the need for both governments for defence. Article II of the Agreement states:

> Accordingly, after an initial period of 50 years this Agreement shall continue in force for a further period of twenty years unless, not more than two years before the end of the initial period either government shall have given notice of termination to the other, in which case this agreement shall terminate two years from the date of such notice.75

The Agreement stated that "the required sites shall be made available to the United States authorities without charge".[76] However, there were secret annexes under which the U.S. government agreed to provide one half of the cost establishing BIOT, but not exceeding US $14 million.[77] U.S. financing was provided by waiving to the extent of US $14 million, the 5% research and development surchage accruing in connection with the U.K. purchase of the Polaris missile System.[78]

[75]U.S., Congress, House, Diego Garcia 1975, p. 51.

[76]Ibid., p. 50

[77]Ibid., p. 57.

[78]Ibid.,Report on the Resettlement of Inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago, p. 43.

From the very beginning the plans for Diego Garcia were not limited merely to an austere communications station.[79] According to Admiral La Rocque "Diego Garcia was selected because of its central location and potential for a major naval base rather than simply because it could serve as a site for a communications facility.[80]

The U.S. felt very strongly that the islands should be depopulated.[81] The British government, which retained full sovereignty over the BIOT under the agreement, assumed responsibility for relocation of the inhabitants. Detachment costs included compensation to Mauritius for loss of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and for the relocation of the approximately one thousand inhabitants of the Archipelago. In 1967 the British government purchased the leasehold of the copra plantation on the island held by the Chagos Agalega Company. It was hoped that the closing down of copra plantations, which provided a means of livelihood to the inhabitants, would ease their relocation in Port-Louis, Mauritius.[82] It should be noted that no compensation reached the Ilois, inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelagos, until 1978, by which time land prices in Mauritius had risen drastically.[83] Having disrupted their traditional way of life these Ilois were forced to live in squalour in ghettoes in Port-Louis,

[79]Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 62.

[80]Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit., p. 90.

[81]Diego Garcia, The Islanders Britain sold, op. cit., p. 95.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Bart McDowell, "Crosscurrents Sweep a Strategic Sea," National Geographic, 160:4 (October 1981), p. 440.

periodically taking part in demonstrations and hunger strikes.

It is important to note that the Diego Garcia project was originally identified as a joint U.K.-U.S. project. In reality, the British lent their name to the project as a cover for actual American control.[84] Put bluntly, as Darby stated, the United States had hired the British Flag.[85] However, once the ground was cleared and the plan proceeded, the United States came forward to shoulder the weight of the project almost unilaterally. The role of the United Kingdom became more and more marginal.

In the summer of 1967, the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented a limited proposal for the establishment of fuelling facilities for the U.S. Navy on Diego Garcia.[86] Even this ran into stormy opposition from within the American planning establishment and the proposal was rejected.[87]

After this unexpected rejection, the U.S. Navy tried again in the spring of 1968, this time proposing a naval communications facility and a forward base for deploying nuclear submarines. This time, objections to the proposal were set aside. Robert McNamara had been replaced by Clark Clifford as the Secretary of Defense and former Secretary of the Navy, Paul Nitze, was the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Despite objections from the systems analysts, the new Pentagon administration approved Option B and included the $26 million request in the 1969 defence budget. It

[84]Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit., p. 91.

[85]Darby, op. cit., p. 294.

[86]Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit., p. 82.

[87]Ibid, p. 83.

was a clear victory for the U.S. Navy in its sectoral struggle to stake out its claims to be in the Indian Ocean area. Along with other developments in 1968, namely, the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw forces east of Suez, and the entry of Soviet naval forces into the Indian Ocean, the U.S. decision to construct a communications station on Diego Garcia ushered in the first stage of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

**Sri Lanka's Role in Indian Ocean Politics in the Early 1960s**

The shift of U.S. Indian Ocean strategy from that of acting under the British umbrella, to that of direct application of naval power started in 1960. In Sri Lanka, 1960 marked the beginning of the political career of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, a champion of the policy of dynamic non-alignment. The Sri Lankan government under her premiership played an active role in international politics presenting the Sri Lankan response to developments in Indian Ocean naval politics.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike came to power in 1960 vowing to follow the path of her late husband in the field of foreign affairs. She declared that her government would pursue a policy of non-alignment with power blocs and neutralism and coexistence.[88] The policy of non-alignment required more elaboration during this period because of new developments. On the one hand, the projection of U.S. naval power directly into the Indian Ocean added a new dimension to the naval-strategic set up of the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the family of Non-Aligned nations expanded rapidly due to the process of decolonization. The Non-

[88]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 39, 12 August 1960, c. 51.

Aligned movement also gained more strength and recognition in international politics. Under Sirimavo Bandaranaike Sri Lanka identified squarely with the 'political club' of the 'Tiers Monde' and began to play a leading role in the movement. Consequently, Sri Lanka's relations with the United States went through a difficult period. After Sri Lanka nationalized the importation and distribution of oil, which was a monopoly of three foreign companies - Caltex (U.S.), ESSO (U.S.), and Shell (U.K./Holland), some petrol station facilities belonging to the American and British companies were acquired by the government in April and May 1962. This was done under the provisions of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation Act (28 of 1961).[89] The Sri Lankan Government assured the companies that compensation for the acquired properties would be paid after prompt and adequate assessment of what was due. However, the parties could not agree on the amount of compensation. The oil companies demanded Rs.42 million for the property acquired by the government while the government offered Rs.12 million. Meanwhile, the U.S. government warned that, under the Hickenlooper Amendment to the Foreign Aid Act, aid to Sri Lanka would be cut off unless steps were taken to compensate U.S. oil companies.[90] Officials representing the two governments met on the 3rd and 6th January, 1963 to resolve the problem. Despite another meeting being scheduled for the 11th January, the U.S. government conveyed its decision to cut off aid on the 8th of the same month. Consequently, the Sri Lankan government called off negotiations for the payment of

[89]Ibid., Vol. 42, 1961, c. 4372.

[90]The Times, 9 January 1963, p. 1.

compensation.91

A wide spectrum of political opinion in Sri Lanka condemned the U.S. decision to suspend aid. Even J.R. Jayewardena stated that "the United States, as far as we can see, was too hasty. It should have considered more carefully before taking such a step as stopping aid'.[92] Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike stated:

> (T)hough we are a poor nation we cannot permit any intrusion in our internal affairs because we are bound to maintain and indicate our self-respect as a free and a proud nation.93

Negotiations over compensation and the resumption of aid by the United States took place later, but not during the Sirimavo Bandaranaike regime.

The Prime Minister visited China in January 1963 and at a banquet in her honour in Beijing she openly expressed her disenchantment with the West. She stated:

> The nations that have newly emerged in Asia and Africa must stand together in their struggle or must run the risk of succumbing once more to the rapacious designs of the West. The old saying that 'united we stand divided we fall' applies with equal force to nations as it does to individuals.94

Her critics at home claimed that the term 'rapacious designs of the West' was too harsh and that her policy of non-alignment was titled towards the Communist powers at the expense of the West. In Parliament, she reaffirmed that this threat was basically a

[91]Ceylon Daily News, 9 February 1963, p. 1.

[92]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 50, 22 February 1963, c. 2038

[93]Ceylon Daily News, 4 March 1963.

[94]China Today, Feb. 1963, p. 12.

threat that could only come from some Western countries, as recent international history had shown.[95]

Soon after Mrs. Bandaranaike returned from Beijing, rumours emanating from Soviet bloc sources suggested that she had discussed with the Chinese the possibility of granting them permission to establish a naval base in Sri Lanka in return for substantial long term economic assistance. The Ministry of Defence and External Affairs issued a denial on 8th February 1963 and stated that the news report was absolutely false and without foundation.[96]

In the period 1960-65, Sri Lanka under Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership came forward to play a leading role in international affairs of the region. On the one hand, Sri Lanka increasingly identified herself with the Third World and its political movement, non-alignment. On the other hand, Sri Lanka began to take care of her national security interests in a broader framework of an Indian Ocean setting. It was clear in the early 1960s that the United Kingdom would not be able to maintain her position and role in the Indian Ocean for long. In accordance with the changes in the power constellation in world politics, power relations in the Indian Ocean would change, creating an interregnum there. In such circumstances, developments in the Indian Ocean would be crucial to the security of a strategically located island country like Sri Lanka. Mrs. Bandaranaike was very sensitive to these matters. The basic elements of her foreign

[95]Ceylon, Senate, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol.19 23 January, 1964, c. 2421.

[96]Ceylon Today, March 1963, p. 2.

policy orientation towards Indian Ocean politics, which developed in full scale in the period 1970-77, took initial form during her first premiership from 1960-65. Bandaranaike perceived Sri Lanka's defence and security concerns at two levels - the South Asian sub-regional level and the broader Indian Ocean level.

At the sub-regional level, one of the main elements of Mrs. Bandaranaike's policy was the maintenance of close relations with the People's Republic of China while, at the same time, having good relations with Sri Lanka's giant neighbour-India. Mrs. Bandaranaike very carefully played this balancing game and brought the China link as a countervailing device to the dominant power in the South Asian set-up. There were many factors in favour of close Sri Lanka-China relations. China's geographical distance acted definitely as an advantage because Sri Lanka felt that there was no reason to fear domination. There were also long-standing historical links and religious relations between the two countries. Strong economic relations had developed between the two countries in which China was very generous to Sri Lanka, especially during the period of 1960-65.[97] Finally, geo-political factors brought the two countries closer. During the Sino-Indian war Mrs. Bandaranaike resisted the pressure, from within her party and outside, to brand China the aggressor.

At the end of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government Sri Lanka's close relationship with China became an issue in internal politics, too. The controversy centered around the Sri Lanka-

[97]For detailed discussion on Sri Lanka's economic relations with China, see. D. H. Prasad, Ceylon's Foreign Policy under the Bandaranaike (1956-65), (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., 1973), pp. 337-395.

Chinese Maritime Agreement concluded in July 1963 which gave 'most favoured nation' treatment to commercial vessels engaged in cargo and passenger services of both countries. In view of the fact that the bulk of Sri Lanka-China trade was carried on through Trincomalee, the Maritime Agreement aroused many speculations. The Opposition, the U.N.P., charged that there was a secret agreement with China to lend Trincomalee as a Chinese naval base. The government categorically rejected such charges. The Prime Minister explained that "the relationship between Ceylon and China cannot depend on the relations between India and China".[98]

Sirimavo Bandaranaike was very sensitive to great power moves in the Indian Ocean and their impact on Sri Lanka's security. American decisions to extend the operational sphere of the Seventh Fleet to include the Indian Ocean and to send a naval task force into the Indian Ocean in 1964 were considered to be matters of great concern. The Sri Lankan government believed that such a decision would trigger superpower naval rivalry which would make Indian Ocean states passive victims of the power politics of external powers. On 16 December 1963, the Sri Lankan government expressed its concern to the United States over a report that a nuclear task force was to be sent to the Indian Ocean. The Americans brushed aside these concerns and said that their ships would not visit Colombo if there were objections on the part of Sri Lanka.[99] The Sri Lankan government then

[98]Ceylon, Senate, Parliamentary Debates, 23 January 1964, Vol. 19, c. 2415.

[99]Ibid., 23 January 1964, cc. 2402-3.

decided not to allow naval vessels or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons to enter Sri Lankan seaports, airports, or territorial waters and conveyed the decision to all diplomatic missions accredited to the country.[100]

Sirimavo Bandaranaike raised the issue at the Second Conference of Heads of States and Governments of Non-Aligned countries held at Cairo in October 1964. Sri Lanka sponsored three specific proposals at the Conference which were directly linked to developments in the Indian Ocean. The first resolution recommended the establishment of de-nuclearised zones covering the oceans of the world which had hitherto been free from nuclear weapons, in accordance with the desires expressed by the states and peoples concerned. The second resolution requested non-aligned states to take immediate action to close their ports and airfields to ships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. The third resolution requested colonial powers to liquidate existing bases and to refrain from establishing new bases in colonial territories.[101] All these resolutions were accepted and incorporated in the Programme for Peace and International Co-operation adopted by the Conference. The Programme states:

> The Conference condemns the expressed intention of imperialist powers to establish bases in the Indian Ocean, as a calculated attempt to intimidate the emerging countries of Africa and Asia and unwarranted extension of the policy of neo-colonialism and imperialism.102

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ceylon Daily News, 12 November 1964.

[102] Non-Aligned Conferences: Basic Documents, 1961-1975, (Colombo: Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, 1976), p. 30.

The survey of certain islands in the Indian Ocean, including Diego Garcia, by a joint Anglo-American team did not go unnoticed in Sri Lanka. Some left-oriented newsletters and journals reported the British decision to make several British islands in the Indian Ocean available to the United States for naval and air bases. For instance, the Tribune, a Colombo-based news review, carried articles on U.S. strategic concerns in the Indian Ocean and stated that Sri Lanka seemed to be in the middle of the nuclear zone of the United States.[103] Both the U.S. and the U.K. governments rejected these concerns.[104] But this did not alleviate concern over the possibility of having nuclear bases close to Sri Lanka. It was in this context that Sirimavo Bandaranaike presented the third resolution to the Cairo Conference and the final communique included it as

> The conference considers the maintenance and future establishment of foreign military bases and the stationing of foreign troops on the territories of other countries, against the expressed will of these countries, as a gross violation of sovereignty of States, and as a threat to freedom and international peace.105

Sirimavo Bandaranaike elaborated on these concepts in 1970 when she presented her 'Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal'. The origin of this proposal can clearly be seen in these resolutions presented to the Second Non-Aligned Summit. In 1964, these proposals were made in the context of the extension of U.S.

[103] Tribune (Colombo), Vol. 10, 5 September 1964, p. 6.

[104] Ceylon Daily News, 18 September 1964

[105] Non-Aligned Conferences: Basic Documents., op. cit., p. 29.

naval power into the Indian Ocean and were basically directed against U.S. naval activities.

After Sirimavo Bandaranaike's defeat in the general election of 1965, Dudley Senanayake became Prime Minister as the head of a coalition government dominated by his United National Party. The return to power of the U.N.P. did not result in the complete reversion of Sri Lanka's foreign policy to its pre-1956 state. The new government had to acknowledge the new directions initiated after 1956 and it affirmed its adherence to the policy of non-alignment. However, it wanted to dissociate itself from the policies of the previous government and advocated a policy of 'strict non-alignment'. Dudley Senanayake declared:

> I have always stated that my concept of non-alignment is rather different from the concept of non-alignment of the previous Government. I believe in being throughly non-aligned. For instance, my concept of non-alignment does not vary with the nature of the power bloc that does a wrong act.106

Under the rule of the U.N.P.-led coalition government, certain changes of foreign policy were clearly discernible. It is true that the 1965-70 U.N.P. regime did not share the vision of a crusade against world communism; but relations with Communist countries deteriorated rapidly to the point of near break-down with the People's Republic of China.[107] The government was more concerned with maintaining cordial relations with the West in general, and with the United States in particular. One of the first steps in this direction was the conclusion of an agreement

[106]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 60, 23 April 1965, c. 1165

[107]See Kodikara, op cit., pp. 119-120.

with the United States regarding the issue of compensation to the nationalized oil companies. According to the agreement signed with the United States in June 1965, the Sri Lankan government agreed to pay Rs.55 million over a period of five years.[108]

The National Government led by Dudley Senanayake placed high hopes on U.S. aid and economic assistance for its development strategy. Indeed, the government was able to obtain massive aid as well as loans from the West. In February 1966, an agreement was signed with the United States by which Sri Lanka obtained U.S.$7.5 million.[109] It seemed that obtaining economic aid had priority over pursuing a consistent line in international relations.[110] Nevertheless, on Vietnam, Dudley Senanayake basically maintained the policy laid down by Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Soon after he resumed office, he signed a joint appeal for peace in Vietnam made by seventeen heads of Non-Aligned states in pursuance of the 1964 Cairo Declaration.[111] When the United States extended bombing to the oil installations in Hanoi and Haiphong in 1966, Dudley Senanayake expressed his deep concern and stated that

> I feel that an extension of the bombing must inevitably harden positions and retard the realization of this objective of a negotiated peace. It would further lead to a widening of the conflict with serious implications for the peace

[108]Keesing's Contemporary Archives, Vol. 15, July 10-17, 1965, p. 2081.

[109]Ibid., Vol. 16, March 5-12, 1966, p. 212-72

[110]Kodikara, op. cit., p. 126

[111]Ibid., p. 126

of our region and the wider world community.112

It is important to note that the Vietnam issue had huge repercussions in Sri Lankan politics. Left-oriented student bodies and trade unions and also many powerful Buddhist organizations were vociferous against American actions in Vietnam and made this a live issue in internal politics. In such a context, Dudley Senanayake had to spell out his government's stand.

In general, Dudley Senanayake seemed to be less concerned with U.S. naval activities in the Indian Ocean. The U.S.-U.K. agreement over the BIOT was by no means a secret in Sri Lankan politics. The left parties raised the issue and vehemently opposed it. The Sri Lankan government's remarkable silence was naturally interpreted as tacit support for U.S. naval policy in the Indian Ocean.

To sum up, the 1948-1968 period witnessed an important change in U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean. In 1945, the Indian Ocean did not fall within the primary strategic concerns of the United States. The American determination to extend its direct naval power into the Indian Ocean was indicated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff's recommendation for the establishment of a communications base on Diego Garcia. This period from 1948-1968 can be divided into two phases. During the first phase, from 1945-1960, the U.S. was content to protect its interests under the shade of the British umbrella in the Indian Ocean. In the early 1950s, as part of the containment policy against the Soviet Union, the U.S. engaged in alliance building in the Indian

[112]Press Communique, Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, 30 June 1966, quoted by Kodikara, op. cit., p. 128.

Ocean littoral. American policy up to 1960 was basically political and diplomatic rather than military. The Suez crisis brought home to the United States the limitations of relying on Britain to protect western interests in the Indian Ocean. After 1960, a new phase began in U.S. strategy and the U.S. increased its activities in the Indian Ocean. In the light of advances in military technology in the late 1950s and early 1960s the ocean acquired a greater importance in U.S. strategic calculations. After 1960 the U.S. started sending its naval task forces into the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the U.S. military strategists developed the Strategic Island Bases concept and pushed hard to get it approved by the policy markers. The approval of the construction of a base on Diego Garcia in 1968 marked a new stage in U.S. naval policy in the Indian Ocean. That year also marked the first entry of Soviet Naval Units into the region.

Chapter IV

## The Soviet Naval Entry into the Indian Ocean

The dispatch of a small naval flotilla consisting of a cruiser, a guided missile destroyer, and another destroyer into the Indian Ocean in March 1968 opened up a new phase in the evolution of Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean. Since then, the regular annual deployment of a Soviet naval squadron has become a permanent feature in the strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean. The Soviet entry set in motion a new phase in naval politics in the Indian Ocean by ending the monopoly of seapower enjoyed by the West for centuries.[1]

In the early years after the Second World War the Indian Ocean did not figure in Soviet strategic calculations. The move in March 1968 highlighted the fact that the Indian Ocean had come to occupy an important place in Soviet strategic thinking, as well as in the global reach of her navy. The reasons for such a change in Soviet naval strategy and for the Soviet entry into the Indian Ocean constitutes an important subject of investigation because of the impact these changes have had on power politics in the Indian Ocean and on the central strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. The paucity of information from Soviet sources makes this a difficult area of study and the work done so far has had a significant speculative component.

[1]Japan posed a serious challenge to western naval hegemony in the Indian Ocean during the Second World War. But after the war, the western powers re-established their position.

**'Legacy' of the Historical Russian Thrust to Warm Waters**

The widely prevalant explanation for the process of 'forward development' of the Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean is that it is a continuation of the historical Russian thrust to warm waters dating back to the days of the Tsars. Cottrell and Burrell, for example, write:

> Soviet interest in the Indian Ocean is the extension of an old Czarist thrust for an outlet to the south ... The drive for warm water ports and an outlet to the great waters of the world can be traced back to the days of Peter the Great and Catherine.2

Evidence, ranging from remarks made by Peter the Great on the need for warm water ports to the Molotov-Ribbentrop talks in 1940, is cited to establish the connection between present-day Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean and the Tsarist intentions vis-a-vis that area.

Viewed in its historical context, it is clear that Peter the Great did not intend to obtain an outlet to the Indian OCean when he stressed the necessity for a warm water port.[3] It is true that Russia under the Tsars repeatedly attempted to develop a route to the Indian Ocean to acquire her share in the Indian Ocean trade. However, Russia did not have the capability to gain access to the E1 Dorado in the Indian Ocean. After Britain established its naval supremacy there, Russian policy towards the Indian Ocean

[2]Alvin J. Cottrell and R.M. Burrell, "The Soviet Navy and the Indian Ocean," Strategic Review, 2:4 (Fall 1974), p. 25.

[3]During this time Russia'a only coastline was on the Baltic which was dominated by Sweden and Poland. Peter's intention was to obtain naval access to the Mediterranean through ports on the Black Sea which were then dominated by Turkey. For a vivid discussion of this point, see Geoffrey Jukes, The Indian Ocean in Soviet Naval Policy, Adelphi Paper 87, (London:IISS, May 1972), p. 1.

was closely linked to European politics particularly to British policy regarding the Balkans. Therefore, Russian plans to make inroads into the Indian Ocean in the 19th century should be viewed in the context of European power politics. For instance, after the Treaty of Berlin 1878, which annulled Russian gains from Turkey under the earlier San Stefano Treaty, certain elements in the Russian state, such as General Skobelev, advocated sending an army into India by land with the intention of setting off an uprising. Subsequently, in view of the rising threat from Germany, both Imperial Russia and Britain decided to resolve their differences and concluded the Petersburg Convention in 1907.

**Early Bolshevik Regime and the Indian Ocean Area**

It is claimed that "(T)he Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 did not affect the imperial legacy of the Tsars".[4] The Bolsheviks were in fact very concerned with the 'Colonial and semi-Colonial World of the East' but the context was different. No sooner was Bolshevik rule established in Russia, than the Soviet Government issued an 'Appeal to all Muslim workers of Russia and the East' on December 3, 1917. The statement embodied the basic principles proclaimed by the 'Decree on Peace and Declaration of Rights of the People of Russia' and requested 'Muslims of Russian Central Asia, Persians, Turks, Arabs and Hindus' for their support for the revolution.[5] The effectiveness of such an appeal in the pre-

[4]Rasul Bux Rais, The Indian Ocean in Superpower Strategies, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1981, University of California, Santa Barbara, p. 145.

[5]Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of (conti...to p. 135)

broadcasting era was negligible.

The strategy of revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was discussed in detail by the National and Colonial Commission of the Second Comintern Congress held in July 1920. In his draft thesis to the Congress on national and colonial questions, Lenin proposed that the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic movements in the backward countries in the national revolution to establish independence.[6]

After the Second Congress, the Comintern convened the Congress of the People of the East at Baku in September 1920. There Zinoviev called for "an uprising against British imperialism".[7] In its resolution, the Baku Congress urged the working masses of Africa and Asia to fight against colonialism: "We are now calling on you to fight the first genuine Holy War under the red banner of the Communist International".[8] Nevertheless, Soviet influence in the colonial world was almost non-existent.[9] As Jukes points out:

(conti...from p.134) Science, Lenin and National Liberation in the East (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 44.

[6]For the draft thesis, see. V.I. Lenin, Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970), pp. 20-29.

[7]Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs 1917-1929 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 283.

[8]Communist International, No. 15, 1920, p. 3148, Quoted in Institute of Oriental Studies of USSR Academy of Science, op.cit. p.79.

[9]Fischer writes: "Despite this oath of arms, the Holy War was conceived as a non-military offensive directed by the Council of Propaganda and Action created by the Congress to match the Council of Action of the British trade unions. The infantry of the East would reinforce the cavalry of the West".op. cit.,p.284.

> During the early years of the Soviet regime, the Bolsheviks attached some importance, as had General Skobelev before them, to the possibility of using rebellion in the East, especially in India, as a means of weakening the British-the moving spirit behind anti-Bolshevik forces ... as the British abandoned their support of the Russian 'whites', the urgency of the need to create an anti-British diversion diminished.10

Therefore, there is little evidence to support sustained Soviet interest in the Indian Ocean immediately after the Revolution.

**Molotov-Ribbentrop Secret Protocol**

Those who postulate a continuity between Russian intentions under the Tsars and the present Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean also highlight the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Secret Protocol to divide the British colonial empire -- a "gigantic world-wide estate in bankruptcy" -- between Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Japan. According to the Protocol, Germany and Italy were to build their empires in Africa. Japan would inherit British possessions in the Pacific basin. Article 4 of the Secret Protocol reveals that "the Soviet Union declares that its territorial aspirations center south of the national territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean".[11] Observing current Soviet naval strategy in the Indian Ocean, T.B. Millar observes that "recent Soviet activities do form a pattern consistent with the Secret Protocol to the Draft 1940 Four Power Pact ..."[12]

[10]Jukes, op. cit., p. 2.

[11]R.J. Sontag and J.S. Beddie, eds. Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941. The Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office (Wasington D.C.: Department of State, 1948).

[12]T.B. Millar, The Indian and Pacific Oceans: Some Strategic Considerations, Adelphi Papers, 57 (London: IISS, 1965), p.5

In examining the Secret Protocol of the Four Power Pact, it is necessary to point out, first of all, that the proposal came from Ribbentrop and not from the Soviet side.

> In the opinion of the Fuhrer ...' Ribbentrop wrote to 'my dear Herr Stalin' on 14 October 1940' ... the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan and Germany adopt a long range policy and to carry out a 'deliberation of their interests on a world wide scale'.13

The context in which the draft Protocol was presented is also very important. By October 1940, Germany was already planning the invasion of the Soviet Union. The first step in this direction was the establishment of the Nazi power in Eastern Europe. Hitler started taking steps in this direction by sending the Wehrmacht into Romania and Finland. Accordingly, the competition between the Soviet Union and Germany over the Balkans became open. The intention of Ribbentrop's draft protocol was that of diverting Soviet attention from the Balkan area. Molotov was well aware of the trap and he wrote to the Soviet Ambassador in London that "the Germans and Japanese would apparently very much like to push us in the direction of the Persian Gulf and India. We have declined discussion of this question because we believe such advice on Germany's part to be inappropriate".[14]

Molotov's behaviour while he was in Berlin in November 1940 to discuss the proposed Protocol reveals how Stalin briefed him for the mission: "Molotov was to listen attentively, with a friendly mien, to all suggestions, to accept no new commitments,

[13]Issac Deutscher, Stalin (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 440

[14]Quoted in H. Adomeit, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East: Problems of Analysis", Soviet Studies, XXXIII:2 (April 1975), p. 296.

and to bargain hard over the Balkan States".15 At the discussions in Berlin, Molotov's preoccupation was the problem of disentangling the Soviet and the German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. To Molotov, in Deutscher's words, "(O)ne Balkan bird in the hand was worth all the oriental birds in all the bushes of the British empire".[16]The Soviet response to the secret protocol was a clear demonstration of the Soviet intention of dealing with the Germans in the same currency. Stalin was not in principle opposed to Ribbentrop's suggestion but conditioned acceptance of it to (1) withdrawal of German forces from Finland; (2) recognition that Bulgaria belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence; (3) help in obtaining a long term lease of bases in the Black Sea straits. Hitler would accept such terms only if he abandoned his plans to attack the Soviet Union. Accordingly, Stalin's response to the Secret Protocol cannot be construed as an acceptance.

Soon after the Second World War, the Soviet Union did not withdraw its forces from North Iran and also made territorial claims over the Kars and Ardahan areas of Eastern Turkey.[17] "When Stalin was confronted with western opposition to claims beyond the Soviet Union's southern borders, he was prepared not to pursue them"[18] As Ghebhardt pointed out, from 1940 until 1968

[15]Deutscher, Stalin, p. 440

[16]Ibid., p. 441.

[17]For Soviet territoral claims to the Kars and Aradahan areas of Eastern Turkey, see Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1976, pp. 7737-8 and 8076.

[18]Kim C. Beazley and Ian Clark, The Politics of Intrusion. The Super Powers and the Indian Ocean (Sydney: Alternative Publishing Corporation, 1979), p. 71.

the Soviet Union did not make any claims to the Indian Ocean and military writing does not give a single hint of potential interest or concern with the area in question.[19]

Therefore, it is misleading to draw a connection between the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean in 1968 and past Russian and Soviet initiatives towards that Ocean. The context of the Soviet decision to send her naval forces into the Indian Ocean in 1968 is different from that of the past. Instead of viewing it as an implementation of her historical desire to have an outlet to the warm waters, it is proposed to view the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean in the context of contemporary politics. It is important to note that the Soviet decision to send their naval forces into the Indian Ocean was by no means a sudden or haphazard move. In order to construe the political and strategic context of the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean it is necessary to analyse it on two planes. First, it should be examined in the context of the evolution of Soviet policy towards the Indian Ocean littoral countries because the Soviet decision was an outcome of the development of Soviet relations with those countries. Second, on the naval strategic plane, it should be viewed in the context of the evolution of Soviet naval strategy, Soviet initiatives, as well as responses to American moves, since World War II.

**The Emerging Third World and the Soviet Strategy**

Prior to the Second World War Soviet strategy with respect to the Indian Ocean area was twofold. First, the Soviets had to

[19]Alexander O. Ghebhardt, "Soviet and U.S. Interests in the Indian Ocean", Asian Survey, XV:8 (August 1975), p. 673.

grapple with the basic problem of formulating a policy towards the nationalist movements in Asia. Secondly, they had to develop a strategy for revolutionary advancement of socialism in the colonial world. The pre-World War II Soviet policy towards Asia should be viewed in the theoretical framework of national democratic revolution. The context changed after 1945.

The emergence of the new states as autonomous actors in the international political arena as a result of the transfer of power to former colonies added a new dimension to world politics. Stalin failed to recognize the importance of this process and was reluctant to accept these states as truly independent. Thus, Stalin believed that the transfer of power amounted to a false independence intended to deceive the people. The Soviet Representative at the United Nations, J. Malik, stated in the Security Council in 1948 that:

> The United Nations and the Security Council must distinguish between real sovereignty and independence and sham independence. The real meaning of the latter would be that a colonial people would continue in its former state of dependence, with the single difference that this condition would be sanctioned and legalized by the United Nations which by closing its eyes to the real facts of the cases, would merely help to give an illusion of independence to the nation concerned.20

In this context the Soviet attitude during the early post-war years towards newly independent states was somewhat hostile.[21] The Cold War tension after 1947 also caused Stalin to down play the importance of the 'neutral third bloc'. As was the case with the United States, the Soviet attitude was also that "he who is

[20]U.N. Security Council, Official Records, 315 meeting, 18 August 1948, p. 14.

[21]See Jansen, op. cit., p. 230-231.

not with us is against us". At the inaugural meeting of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), Andrei Zhadanov, the head of the Foreign Department of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., divided the world into only two camps, an anti-imperialist camp comprising the Soviet Union and her allies, and the imperialist camp which included western capitalist countries as well as the newly independent states.[22] In this analysis, there could be no room for a neutral third force. Accordingly, the attitude of the newly independent countries towards the Soviet Union in the early post-war years was also far from friendly. An examination of Sri Lankan-Soviet relations in the period 1948 - 1956 clearly reveals this.

**Sri Lankan Attitude towards the Soviet Union; 1948-1956**

As in many aspects of Sri Lankan foreign policy, the period between 1948 and 1956 can be regarded as one phase in the history of Sri Lanka-Soviet relations. Broadly speaking, Sri Lankan policy corresponds with the attitude of the Soviet Union towards newly independent states. While the Soviet leadership stuck with the dogmatic 'two-camps theory', the U.N.P. leadership in Sri Lanka pursued a highly articulated anti-Soviet policy.

The veto exercised by the Soviet Union over the application of Sri Lanka for membership of the United Nations in 1949 was often highlighted by the U.N.P. leadership to rationalize their anti-Soviet attitude. In exercising the veto the Soviet spokesman stated:

[22]_For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy_, 10 Nov., 1947, pp. 2-4.

> (W)e do not know enough about the national status or Constitution of Ceylon, and there is a total lack of evidence that Ceylon is a sovereign and independent state; on the contrary, we are informed in particular by the press that Ceylon is not a sovereign state but remains to all intents and purposes a British colony.23

The Sri Lankan application for admission to the United Nations was entangled in Cold War politics at the U.N. In 1949 the Soviet Union opposed exclusive consideration of Sri Lanka's application and used the veto power to block it. Later on, however, when a package of thirteen countries was presented to the Security Council which included Soviet bloc countries such as Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria along with Sri Lanka, it was blocked by the West. Frequently the U.N.P. leadership made use of the original Soviet veto in U.N. to rationalize their inherent antipathy to the Soviet Union. The U.N.P. government repeatedly refused to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on the argument - "how could we send an Ambassador to Russia when she does not accept the fact that we are an independent country?"[24]

However, there were several factors and conditions that contributed to the anti-Soviet policy of U.N.P. governments. Among them the social composition and political ideology of the ruling U.N.P. were important. The U.N.P. leadership represented mainly the upper crust of the propertied class of Sri Lanka who were committed to private property and free enterprise. They identified the Soviet union with the socialist system which was the antithesis of their value system.

[23]U.N. Security Council, Official Records, 351st Meeting, 18 August 1948, p. 11.

[24]Ceylon, House of Representatives, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 8, 7 July 1950, c. 462.

The anti-Sovietism of the U.N.P. government was further strengthened by their close intimacy with the West in general and Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake's loyalty to Britain in particular. It is well-known that D.S. Senanayake depended on the United Kingdom for guidelines for his foreign policy. British naval and air bases in Trincomalee and Katunayake linked Sri Lanka with the global defence network of the West. Sri Lanka's economic relations were overwhelmingly with the West. In the bi-polar world situation, the zero-sum game mentality of the early cold war years influenced the thinking of the U.N.P. leadership. The exception was the China-Sri Lanka Rice-for-Rubber Pact signed in 1952. Sri Lanka entered into the pact under serious economic compulsion and the U.N.P. leadership clearly stated that what they wanted was trade and that was all.[25]

Furthermore, the main political opposition the U.N.P. confronted domestically in 1948 was the Marxist left. Thus, the U.N.P. was compelled to launch an ideological struggle against it. This propaganda war invariably took an anti-Soviet form. The U.N.P. claimed to be the guardian of national values and heritage, liberty, and democracy from the threat of Communism. Therefore, it is unlikely that the U.N.P. would have developed friendly relations with the international allies of their internal enemies. The government often alleged that the Communist Party received funds from the Soviet Union. Kotelawela stated that

[25]For a discussion of factors that contributed to the signing of China-Sri Lanka Rice-Rubber Pact, see, Kodikara, op. cit., pp. 60-64.

> (I)f we allow our enemy No. 1, Russia, who has been against us all the time, to use the COMINFORM tactics to send bundles of currency notes to our friend, the head of the Communist party, then we would automatically become Russian stooges.26

Though the U.N.P. carried out ideological and propaganda wars against Communism there is little evidence that it considered the Marxist opposition in Sri Lanka as posing a severe threat to its existence. However, the U.N.P. was extremely sensitive to the growing tide of armed Communist uprisings in India and South-East Asia. The Communist Parties in South-East Asia adopted a militant strategy after the declaration of the 'two-camps theory' by Zhadanov at the COMINFORM meeting in September 1947 and also with the South-East Asia Youth Conference in Calcutta in February 1948. In India, Communist-led uprisings broke out in Telengana, and in West Bengal and Travancore-Cochin. In Burma, also, Communist armed revolts followed independence. Communist resistance took the form of guerilla warfare in Malaya. The U.N.P. government readily supported not only the Burmese nationalist government but also the British military campaign to suppress the Malayan insurgency. As D.S. Senanayake admitted in Parliament, British Beaufighters used air fields in Sri Lanka in connection with their military campaign against Malayan guerillas.[27] The U.N.P. viewed these uprisings as manifestations of a centrally planned world-wide Communist conspiracy. The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, declared at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference in Colombo in 1950, that the Soviet Union turned her attention to the East after her designs

[26]Ceylon, Hansard's, op. cit., Vol. 21, 21 June 1955, c. 162.

[27]Ibid., Vol. 4, 2 September 1948, c. 2008.

in Europe had been frustrated by the policy of the West. He further stated that Soviet policy "was not simply Communist but a nineteenth century expansionism".[28] The U.N.P. government appeared to have taken the warning seriously.

In addition, the fact that the Soviet Union as yet was not economically attractive as an aid-giver also contributed to keep Sri Lanka away from the Soviet Union. As had been pointed out earlier, the Soviet Union entered the aid diplomacy only after Stalin's demise.

The anti-Soviet policy during the U.N.P. rule from 1948-1956 manifested itself in many ways. Throughout the period, Sri Lanka refused to have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. The U.N.P. government wanted to keep these countries at a distance as far as possible. Therefore, Sri Lanka refused to grant visa facilities to people from the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. Even a Soviet football team (Spartak) was refused visas to enter Sri Lanka because, in Kotelawela's words, "government's desire to keep to the least as far as possible contact between Ceylon and Communist countries".[29] Further, in 1955, Sri Lanka refused to allow Soviet scientists to enter the country to watch a solar eclipse whereas permission was granted to scientists from the United States and Britain.

The other aspect of this policy was banning the importation of books, magazines, films and other political literature from

[28]Commonwealth Meeting on Foreign Affairs, Jan.1950, Minutes of Meeetings and Memoranda, Colombo, Government Press,1950.

[29]Ceylon, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 20, 1 February 1955, c. 1887.

the Soviet Union.[30] But the U.S. embassy in Colombo was allowed to distribute anti-Soviet literature to the public through goverment Kachcheries, Divisional Revenue Offices, and Village Headmen. The Government admitted that this was done with the approbation of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development.[31]

The crusade against Communism was also an important aspect of anti-Soviet policy. The U.N.P. spokesmen were very loud in denouncing Soviet colonialism. The Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, explained in 1953 that "(J)ust as we would like to support the liberation movement of the colonial countries we would like to support the liberation of the Iron Curtain countries too".[32] According to V. Nalliah, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs, "(C)olonialism [Western] is a dying force while Communism is a developing one. Between the two we do not want to make any differentiation, we are opposed to both".[33] Another leading member of the Cabinet explained "(I)f the act of aggression is not in Korea, it will be in Indo-China. There is a person by the name of Ho Chi-Minh who has taken lessons in Soviet Russia and is attempting to over-run the government of Bao Dai"[34] It is in this context that the U.S. Globemaster aircraft carrying French

[30]Kodikara, op. cit., p. 58

[31]Ceylon, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 10, 1 August 1951, c. 1713.

[32]Ibid., Vol. 14, 16 July 1953, c. 553.

[33]Ibid., Vol. 17, 4 May 1954, c. 5187.

[34]Ibid., Senate, Vol. 4, 1950, c. 430-38.

paratroopers to Vietnam war-fronts were permitted to use facilities at Katunayake airport in April 1954.[35]

The crusade against Communism reached its peak under Kotelawala's premiership. He pushed the issue of the threat of international Communism very hard at the conference of Colombo Powers in Colombo in April 1954 and at Bogor in December 1954. At the Colombo Conference, Kotelawela presented a strongly worded draft resolution on the menace of international Communism. But he failed to obtain endorsement from India and Indonesia.[36] Kotelawela raised the issue once again at the Bandung Conference in April 1955. It is important to note that Sri Lanka was one of the convenors of the conference and China (PRC) was also invited. Chou En-Lai utilized the Conference fully to alleviate the fears of China and Kotelawela himself described Chou as a pleasant and affable neighbour.[37] But Kotelawela was a more determined crusader against Soviet colonialism. In his address to the political committee he stated:

> (T)here is another from of colonialism, however, about which many of us represented here are perhaps less clear in our minds and to which some of us would perhaps not agree to apply the term colonialism at all. Think, for example, these satellite states under Communist domination of Central and Eastern Europe ... Are not these colonies as much as any of the colonial territories in Africa and Asia? And if we are united in our opposition to colonialism, should it not be our duty openly to declare our opposition

[35]Ibid., House of Representatives, Vol.17, 4 May 1954, c.172.

[36]J.H. Jansen, Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 158-59.

[37]J.L. Kotelawela, An Asian Prime Minister's Story (London, George & Harper, 1956), p. 176.

> to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western imperialism.38

Further, at the Press Conference on 21st April 1955 at Bandung, Kotelawela demanded that the COMINFORM be disbanded because peaceful co-existence and COMINFORM could not exist together.[39] According to Nissanka, Kotelawela prepared speeches on these issues in Colombo and took enough copies with him. As he did not get the opportunity at the Conference, "he busied himself outside the Conference at such private occasions as luncheons and dinners and public ones such as press interviews to discuss these issues."[40]

Kotelawela's behaviour at Bandung was immediately praised by the West as candid and bold. His talk received world-wide publicity. Time magazine reported that "(O)ther proven friends of the West (Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines) spoke effectively for the West at Bandung. The significance of Sir John Kotelawela's speech was that it came from a neutralist, who, perceiving the bogus neutrality of Nehru's anti-colonialism, clearly defined the issue".[41]

The role of Kotelawela at Bandung was subjected to severe criticism by the opposition in Sri Lanka. He had to face a no confidence motion in Parliament tabled by the opposition parties jointly. Bandaranaike criticized the Prime Minister for his lack

[38]J.L. Kotelawela, Bandung 1955 (Colombo, Department of Information, 1955), p. 18.

[39]J.L. Kotelawela, An Asian Prime Minister's Story (George & Harper, 1956), p. 176.

[40]H.S.S. Nissanka, Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984), p. 43.

[41]Time, 2 May 1955.

of diplomatic courtesy. Since Sri Lanka was a host country she should have followed other Colombo powers, and avoided controversial issues such as Soviet colonialism because "we do not have actual fact". He further stated:

> I say of the hero of Bandung, that his courage is nothing more than the courage of the fool who rushed in where even angels such as the Philippines, feared to tread.42

Kotelawela's well-publicized tour to the West four months before the Conference and his talks with President Eisenhower, Dulles, and Harold Stassen, provided room for suspicion that "there was a 'hand of Jacob' behind the 'voice of Esau'".[43]

The foreign policy positions of both countries, the Soviet Union and Sri Lanka, began to change in the mid-fifties. In the Soviet Union, the Twentieth CPSU Congress in 1956 marked the break from the past though the traces of change could be discerned by the end of Stalin's rule. In Sri Lanka, the M.E.P. victory in 1956 marked the change.

**Changing Soviet Attitude Vis-a-vis the Third World**

The limitations of the Soviet policy of non-recognition of the neutrality of the newly independent states and the dogmatic 'two camps' theory became clearly evident by the end of the Stalin era. It was apparent by the mid-1950s that Cold War tension would persist for some time without leading to a direct military clash between the two superpowers. It is important that the Soviet Union had successfully broken the nuclear monopoly of

[42]Ceylon, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 20, 27 April 1955, c. 4315.

[43]Prasad, op. cit., p. 177.

the United States by that time. In the context of the stabilization of the Cold War, the Soviet Union as a superpower was contending with the United States to enhance her influence in world politics. The newly independent states provided enormous opportunities to the Soviet Union in this struggle against the western powers burdened with the legacy of a colonial past. The Soviet Union, however, had to act within the existing system of nation states, recognize the new entrants to the system, and make alliances with some of them.

The Soviet Union had severe doubts about the genuineness of the professed neutrality of the newly independent states. However, the stand taken by them on the Indonesian question in 1949, and more importantly, India's positive role during the Korean War, brought home to the Soviets the importance and utility of the neutrality of these states in international politics. Furthermore, the broadening of the membership of the United Nations by the entry of the newly independent states had the result of curtailing U.S. hegemony in the organization.

Military-strategic necessities also forced the Soviet Union to abandon her earlier policy and come to terms with some of the Indian Ocean littoral states. From a military-strategic point of view, better relations with the littoral states were necessary to break down the cordon sanitaire imposed by the U.S. on the Soviet Union's soft under-belly on her southern flank. The principal reason for the initial Soviet involvement in the Indian Ocean, according to Dieter Braun, was "the need for reciprocal arrangements which would assist its attempts to break through the

western containment policy of its long southern flank".[44] Alvin, Z. Rubinstein states:

> At the time of Stalin's death in March 1953, Soviet strategists had been uneasy over the U.S. policy of seeking to establish a network of military alliances with nations located in the general region to the south of the U.S.S.R's underbelly in order to exploit its vulnerability to penetration by nuclear-armed long-range bombers. This threat was reason enough in the pre-missile age to discard Stalin's deleterious legacy of hostility towards newly independent bourgeois-nationalist regimes in the Middle East and South Asia.45

Even before Stalin's death, the pre-eminence of the two-camps theory and the conception of the inevitability of war began to erode.[46] However, the opportunity came after Stalin's death. The behaviour of the Malenkov-Khrushchev leadership reflected this change. For the first time, the Soviet Union extended the hand of friendship to the states that refused to join the U.S. sponsored military alliances in the area. In this respect, India, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Burma attracted Soviet attention. The new Soviet Prime Minister, Malenkov, in his speech to the Supreme Soviet in August 1953 highly appreciated India's role in bringing

[44]Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean - Region of Conflict or 'Peace Zone'? (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1983), p. 23.

[45]Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Soviet Policy Towards South and Southeast Asia: Strategies and Political Aspects," in The Great Game: Rivalry in the Persian Gulf and South Asia, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), p.82.

[46]In Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., published by the Foreign Language Publishing House in Moscow shortly before his death, Stalin revealed a gradual move from the earlier stand. Before that, in April 1952, for the first time the departing Indian Ambassador, V.P. Radhakrishnan and his successor K.P.S. Menon, were received by Stalin. This was a rare occurrence in his last years.

the Korean War to an end.[47] Further, the Soviet Union strove hard to seat India at the Conference on Indo-China, the Korean Peace Conference, and the Disarmament Sub-Commission of the United Nations. Western opposition to these moves pushed India closer to the Soviet Union.

Regional rivalries in the Indian Ocean littoral provided a conducive climate for the Soviet effort. The Indo-Pakistan rivalry and the Afghan-Pakistani dispute over the North-West Frontier Pathans played an important role. The fact that Pakistan became a recipient of large scale military aid as a result of her adherence to U.S.- sponsored military alliances -- SEATO and the Baghdad Pact - made India and Afghanistan amenable to Soviet advances.

The year 1955 marked a turning point in Indo-Soviet relations. In February, the Soviet Union entered into an agreement with India to build a steel plant in Bhilai. In June, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made a 16-day visit to the Soviet Union and addressed public meetings in a number of Soviet cities including Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. The Indian Prime Minister's visit "was given more play in the Soviet press than that of any foreign leader, Communist or non-Communist, ever to visit the U.S.S.R."[48]

After 1955, the Soviet Union stepped-up diplomatic-military relations with some Indian Ocean states. The expansion of Soviet effort in the Indian Ocean littoral necessitated the

[47]For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Demoracy, 14 August 1953, p. 3.

[48]Charles B. McLane, Soviet-Asian Relations (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1973), p. 55.

formulation of a theoretical justification. The international situation, and the current stage of development of the Indian Ocean littoral in particular, had to be analysed anew. In his Report to the 20th Congress of the CPSU held in February 1956, Khrushchev presented the theory. He rejected the 'two camps' theory and the inevitability of war with the imperialist West. Khrushchev divided the world into a 'zone of war', composed of advanced capitalist countries and members of U.S. military alliances, and a 'zone of peace', formed by the Soviet Union, her allies, as well as neutral countries.[49] Further, he claimed that war between socialism and imperialism was no longer inevitable because socialism was very strong.[50] A nuclear war would be extremely harmful to the Soviet Union and that should be avoided. Rejecting the inevitability of war between the two systems, he believed that peaceful co-existence of different social systems was a policy that could be pursued permanently.[51]

The significance of the neutrality of the Afro-Asian nations was recognized with appreciation. In his speech at the Ninth Session of the Supreme Soviet held in December 1957, Khrushchev

[49] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 10-17 March 1956, p. 14745.

[50] In March 1957 the editorial board of the U.S. newspaper Grand Rapids Herald asked Khrushchev (taking into consideration the idelogical contradiction between the Soviet Union and the United States) whether he regarded war as inevitable. Khrushchev replied: "No, certainly not, we believe that war is not a fatalistic inevitability. The recent events in Egypt have reaffirmed that the forces standing for maintenance of peace can curb the aggressors and avert war". N.S. Khrushchev, Speeches and Interviews on World Problems, 1957 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1958), p. 28.

[51] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 10-17, March 1956, p. 14746.

stated that "we salute such outstanding statesmen as Prime Minister Nehru of India, President Sukarno of Indonesia, Prime Minister U Nu of Burma, President Nasser of Egypt, President Kuwatly of Syria and others who are working hard for peace".[52]

In order to provide doctrinal rationalization for the Soviet aid programme and political-military relations with the non-Communist littoral states, Soviet theorists developed the concept of 'national democracy'. The state that would qualify for the term 'national democratic state' was the one that upheld its political and economic independence, struggled against penetration of imperialist capitalism, rejected dictatorial and despotic forms of government, and broadened the democratic rights of the people.[53] Sekou Toure's Guinea, Kwame N'Krumah's Ghana, Modido Keita's Mali, Abdel Nasser's Egypt, Ben Bella's Algeria, Ne Win's Burma, and Achmed Sukarno's Indonesia were included in this category. It was considered that the national democratic state was an intermediate stage leading to the people's democratic state along the path of non-capitalist development. The non-capitalist path of development for the national democracies was facilitated by the existence of the powerful socialist camp.

The post-1956 period witnessed a sharp expansion of Soviet economic and military relations with the so-called progressive

[52]N.S. Khrushchov, Speeches and Interviews on World Problems - 1957 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1958), p. 364.

[53]For a discussion of the concept of National Democracy, see, W.T. Shinn, "The National Democratic State: Communist Programme for Less developed Areas", World Politics (April 1963).

regimes in the Indian Ocean littoral.[54] The Khrushchevian overtures to non-aligned Indian Ocean states were well received in Sri Lanka after the political change in 1956. It opened up a new era in Sri Lanka-Soviet relations.

**Sri Lanka-Soviet Relations after 1956**

The attitude of the new Prime Minister, Bandaranaike, towards the Soviet Union was sharply different from that of his predecessors. Bandaranaike rejected the notion of international Communist conspiracy to which the previous regime had eagerly subscribed. He was perhaps sharp enough to differentiate Communism, a political doctrine, from the Soviet Union, a member of the system of nation states. Because of this differentiation he was able to maintain cordial relations with the Soviet Union without accepting the political doctrine of Communism. At the meeting to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution Bandaranaike raised the issue sharply: "(S)hould not we admire the Russian System whether we like to or not? Since Ceylon has so many lessons to learn from Russia, cannot we follow Russia without going Communist?".[55] Bandaranaike believed that "it is possible to come to reasonably honourable terms with the Communist world by way of peaceful co-existence on the basis of

[54]The Soviet Union concluded economic aid agreements with India (1956-$125 million credit agreement on steel plant, 1959-$25 million credit agreement for Baruni Oil Refinery, 1960-$125 million supplementary credit agreement for Third Five Year Plan); Indonesia (1960-$100 million credit agreement); Burma (1966-credit agreement for tractor plant); Sri Lanka (1958-$40 million credit agreement for steel and tyre plants, and flour mill); and arms agreements with Afghanistan (1956), Yemen (1956), Indonesia (1956), Iraq (1968), India (1960 and 1962), and Somalia (1963) -- Charles B. McLane, Soviet Asian Relations (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1973), pp. 145-147.

[55]Ceylon Daily News, 7 November 1957.

'Panchasila'".[56]

The relationship between the government and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka also changed after 1956. The M.E.P. coalition concluded a no-contest pact with the Communist Party prior to the election. The Communist Party occupied the opposition benches after the election but they rendered critical support to the government which they categorized as progressive. In this context the government did not have to carry out an ideological war with Communism.

The defeat of the pro-West U.N.P. was a matter for rejoicing for the Soviet Union.[57] It implied that the M.E.P. regime had the character of a "national democratic state". The removal of British air and naval bases by the M.E.P. regime, its nationalization policy, and the increased state intervention in economic affairs were cited in this respect.

In its very first policy statement, the M.E.P. government declared its intention to exchange diplomatic representation with countries where Sri Lanka was not represented so far.[58] One of the first steps in this direction was to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China in early 1957.

After 1956 Sri Lanka's economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union grew rapidly. In February 1958 a Credit Agreement was signed in which Sri Lanka received a long-term credit of

[56]Prasad, op. cit., p. 173.

[57]See, Izvestia, 12 April 1956, article by V. Vasilyeu was reproduced in News and Views from the Soviet Union, No. 14, 17 April 1956, p. 4.

[58]Ceylon, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 24, 20 April 1956, c. 25.

$30 million repayable in 12 years at 2 per cent interest for a Tyre and Tube Factory (Kelaniya), an Iron and Steel Plant (Oruwela), and a Flour Mill (Colombo).

In June 1956, Sri Lanka lifted the ban imposed on the importation of literature from the Soviet Union.[59] Free exchange of delegates, scholars, and students between the two countries commenced. In January 1958, they signed a cultural agreement.

However, the Hungarian question in 1956 posed a serious challenge to Bandaranaike's non-aligned policy. As Kodikara pointed out, three distinct stages can be discerned in the evolution of Sri Lankan policy.[60] In the first stage, Sri Lanka was rather reluctant to condemn the Soviet military action and abstained from voting in the U.N. on the resolution sponsored by the United States, and also did not vote on two other similar resolutions. In the second stage, after mid-November, Sri Lanka came forward to criticize the Soviet action and served as Chairman of a Special Commission on the problem of Hungary which was established to report on the question to the United Nations. The Sri Lankan representative to the United Nations stated at the General Assembly that

> We cannot sit idle when a situation of such a grave nature has taken place in a small country with a historic past, a proud tradition of culture and a fine people.61

However, finally Sri Lanka went back to the previous policy of passive neutralism. When the United Nations discussed the problem

[59]Kodikara, op. cit., p. 67.

[60]Ibid., p. 68.

[61]U.N. General Assembly, Official Records, 11th Sess., 633 Plenary Meeting, 9 January 1957, p. 827.

based on the findings of the Committee, Sri Lanka resorted to a passive stand and abstained from voting on the resolution condemning Soviet action. "This was rather odd behaviour for a country which had been represented in the five- nation special committee and which had signed its unanimous report on Hungary."[62]

Bandaranaike's vacillation on the Hungarian issue was subjected to criticisms in many quarters. During the first stage, his lukewarm policy was critized by sections of the U.N.P. as evidence of double standards in his non-aligned policy as applied to the East and the West. Bandaranaike's quick condemnation of Britain and France over their Suez intervention was compared with the delayed and passive response on the Hungarian issue. During the second stage, Sri Lankan policy was critized by the Communist Party as well as some elements in the government parliamentary group itself. Keuneman charged that Sri Lanka played wilfully into the hands of the U.S.A.[63]

Bandaranaike was bound by many constraints in dealing with the situation. He did not want to jeopardize newly established relations with the Soviet Union. He had to silence some elements within his parliamentary group and to answer the criticisms directed from a wider range of opposition. Bandaranaike decided to take a positive role only after the issue was discussed by the Colombo powers at their meeting in New Delhi in November 1956. At first, he thought that the problem could be resolved by the

[62]Kodikara, op. cit., p. 70-71.

[63]Ceylon, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 29, 30 July 1957, cc. 155-162.

mediation of the U.N.. Later his attitude was that "the Soviet Union should be dealt with on this issue in a friendly manner rather than antagonizing her".[64]

After Bandaranaike's assassination Soviet analysts praised his regime.[65] Sirimavo Bandaranaike's election victory in July 1960 was also highly approved by Moscow. For example, D. Volsky, political commentator of the New Times (Moscow), wrote that "the victory scored by the Ceylonese patriotic forces is of vast importance, and not only for this island country".[66]

The S.L.F.P. government under Sirimavo Bandaranaike vowed to follow the policy of non-alignment with power blocs and of neutralism and co-existence - policies laid down by her late husband. It also strengthened diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with the Soviet Union. In March 1961, Felix Dias Bandaranaike, the Finance Minister, visited the Soviet Union and was received by Khrushchev and Kosygin. During his stay, he had talks with the Soviet authorities on further expansion of economic and technical co-operation and the utilization of earlier Soviet credit to Sri Lanka.[67]

The Prime Minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, visited Moscow in October 1963. During her ten-day visit she conducted discussions with Khrushchev and Brezhnev on various issues ranging from matters pertaining to world peace and general disarmament to

[64]Nissanka, op. cit., p. 136.

[65]See, New Times (Moscow), No. 52, December 1959, pp. 12-13.

[66]Ibid., No. 31, July 1960, p. 13.

[67]Tass, "Report on Felix Dias Bandaranaike's visit to the U.S.S.R. as reproduced in News and Views from the Soviet Union, 4 April 1961, p. 5.

bilateral economic relations. Among other points discussed was the need to establish denuclearized zones in various parts of the world. This was given explicit expression in the final communique.[68]

Soviet-Sri Lankan economic relations also witnessed a rapid growth at this time. After the establishment of the State Petroleum Corporation, a five-year contract for import of $1.25 million worth of petroleum products from the U.S.S.R. was signed in January 1962. In November, an agreement was signed to establish a regular shipping service between Sri Lankan ports and the Soviet ports of Odessa and Novorossijsk.[69] By 1964, the Soviet Union was the second largest contributor of foreign aid to Sri Lanka, with a commitment of Rs.45,250,000.[70]

Sirimavo Bandaranaike's active participation in regional and world affairs was appreciated by Moscow. Her avowed support for the national liberation movements, most of them led by either Communists or progressives, and her anti-colonialsim gave her a progressive image internationally. Her anti-colonial slogans were against the Western powers who either had had or still had colonial pockets in Africa and Asia. The government was not convinced of Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe. As Prasad pointed out, Sri Lanka was ready to give the benefit of the doubt to the Soviet Union.[71] On the other hand, the Soviet Union had favou-

[68]Joint Communique by the Prime Ministers of the Soviet Union and Ceylon, reproduced in Jain, op. cit., pp. 315-317.

[69]Jain, op. cit., p. 438

[70]Prasad, op. cit., p. 144.

[71]Ibid., p. 112.

rable comments on Mrs. Bandaranaike's rule. Izvestia reported:

> Ceylon was to accomplish the difficult task of liquidating the vestiges of colonialism, eliminating its economic consequences and creating national industry. The new government embarked upon the independent political and economic development of the country.72

The return of the U.N.P.-led coalition government in 1965, however, did not result in a return to the anti-communist policy of the pre-1956 U.N.P. regime. Compared with pre-1956 policy, certain difference were discernible in the policy of the 1965 U.N.P. regime. During the period 1948-56 the anti-Communist crusade was mainly directed at the Soviet Union and the attitude towards China was somewhat soft. This time contradictions were with China and relations with the Soviet Union were comparatively smooth. It is true that there were certain set-backs in diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Sri Lanka, but economic relations proceeded smoothly.

Some traces of the anti-Communism of the previous U.N.P. regime lingered after 1965. They reimposed the ban on the importation of Communist literature. Soon after the assumption of office, Dudley Senanayake asked the Soviet and Chinese Embassies to reduce their staffs to the bare minimum. Otherwise, relations between the Soviet Union and Sri Lanka remained normal.

The Sri Lankan government's attitude towards the Czechoslovak crisis in 1968 clearly illustrated the foreign policy priorities of the government. It did not rush to condemn the Soviet Union. In a press statement issued later, the government formally disapproved the intervention of the U.S.S.R.

[72] Izvestia, 2 February 1962, reproduced in Jain, op. cit., p. 311.

and other Warsaw Pact members in Czechoslovakia.[73]

> (T)he guarded nature of the Government pronouncement may perhaps be explained by the fact that the Government was at this time negotiating aid for several industrial projects from the Soviet Union and East European countries.74

In sum, the policy of the 1965-70 U.N.P. government exhibited some pro-Western flirtations; but they were more concerned with practical economic benefits rather than maintaining a consistent political line.

**Pragmatic Adjustments under Brezhnev**

At the end of the Khrushchev era, the extravagant expectations of a socialist orientation by the national democratic regimes reached its height. The Soviet interpretation of the course of the Cuban revolution partly contributed to this euphoria. With the fall of Khrushchev in 1964, the inflated expectations placed upon national democratic regimes began to be questioned and more orthodox formulations regarding socialist construction came to the fore.

After 1965, the Soviet Union reassessed her relations with the Third World.[75] The earlier optimistic view of the progressive course of the national democracies gave way to more cautious formulations. The overthrow of Sukarno in Indonesia and the toppling of Nkrumah of Ghana coincided with this reassessment of theory and practice.

Under the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership, the Soviet Union re-

[73]Ceylon Daily News, 25 August 1968

[74]Kodikara, op. cit., p. 133.

[75]For a detailed discussion of these changes, see, Clark and Beazeley, op. cit., p. 75-81.

arranged her foreign policy priorities in relation to the Third World. Khrushchev was willing to accept economic costs for expected political gains. In the new regime, the importance given to outright economic aid diminished and the principle of cost effectiveness began to play a significant role.[76] As such, concepts such as "co-ordinated planning, joint ventures, gearing Third World production to the specific needs of the Soviet Union and vice versa, effective use of raw materials, balanced industrial, agricultural developments ... were introduced".[77] In order to provide fora for regular consultations and to work out long-term plans, bilateral economic commissions were set-up with countries such as India, Iran, Egypt, Algeria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Furthermore, the optimistic political expectations held by the Soviet Union regarding the historical progression of national democratic states began to diminish. The term "non-capitalist path of development" was used more cautiously. It was no longer a prescription programme for rapid short-cuts to socialism but a description of a longer transitional period.

The above reassessment yielded a more pragmatic policy towards the Third World. As a result, Soviet diplomatic activities in the Indian Ocean littoral gave primacy to the need for good relations with a greater number of states, de-emphasizing considerations pertaining to the internal complexions of the

[76]For the changed attitude of the new Soviet leadership regarding economic aid, see. Pravda, editorial 27 October 1965, titled "The Supreme International Duty of a Socialist Country".

[77]U.S., Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed in Great Power Rivalry - Report prepared by the Senior Specialist Division, Congressional Research Services, Library of Congress (Washington: G.P.O. 1977), p. 31.

regimes. The military-strategic requirements of the Soviet Union warranted attempts to normalize relations with 'strategically critical' but reactionary regimes such as Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. The diminished value of land-based strategic deterrence to the United States in light of the new Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles - (SLBM) weapons system enabled the Soviet Union to normalize relations with the 'northern tier' states.[78] The impact of the Sino-Soviet rift on Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean area should also be taken into account. With the growing Sino-Soviet conflict, the Soviet Union had to compete not only with the United States but also with China. China resolutely strove to identify herself with the Third World. The Chinese leadership advocated the theory of the three worlds which postulated that the two super-powers intended to jointly dominate the Third World. Because of this development, the Soviet Union's political and strategic manoeuvring became more complicated.

In this context, power considerations assumed a greater role in Soviet policy towards the Indian Ocean area. As Dieter Braun points out, "it was in this framework, in which ideology and power politics stand in relation to each other, that Soviet policy on the Indian Ocean must be analysed". He further states:

> Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean region exhibits in typical fashion this mixture of ideology and power politics as it developed in the 1970s out of the Soviet twin claims to a say in global affairs and to its role of unrestricted leadership in the Socialist camp. In any assessment of Soviet conduct both these factors must be viewed together.[79]

[78]K.R. Singh, The Indian Ocean : Big Power Presence and Local Response (New Delhi: Manohar, 1977), p. 63.

[79]Braun, op. cit., p. 50

The Soviet decision to carry out 'forward deployment' of her naval forces regularly in the Indian Ocean after 1968 came in this context. To be a political power in the Indian Ocean it was essential to be a naval power in the region. As Admiral Elmo Zumwalt (U.S.N. Retired) pointed out, naval presence could be effective as "a gesture of friendship, a note of assurance, implication of threat, glimpse of power ..."[80] This is equally applicable to the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. The relationship between political power and military-strategic benefits is reciprocal: political power brings military-strategic benefits and military power influences political benefits.

For a proper historical and analytical perspective, the Soviet decision to send her naval forces into the Indian Ocean needs to be located in the context of the evolution of Soviet policy towards the Third World in general and the Indian Ocean littoral states in particular. At the same time, the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean should be viewed in the context of the evolution of Soviet naval construction programmes and her responses to the U.S. naval strategy.

**The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy**

At the close of the Second World War the military strength of the Soviet Union was based on her conventional land forces. In view of the naval strength of her adversaries and the weak state of her naval capabilities, the Soviet Union gave high priority to naval development. In 1948 an ambitious 20-year naval construction programme was launched. It was planned to construct

[80]Quoted in Bezboruah, US Strategy in the Indian Ocean, p. 36.

diesel attack submarines, frigates, destroyers and cruisers. What was remarkable was the sheer size of the proposed fleet. Not less than 1,200 submarines, 200 escorts, 200 destroyers, 30 cruisers, 4 battleships, and 4 aircraft carriers were to be built.[81] This naval construction programme appeared offensive because of its immense size, especially the size of the submarine fleet, but careful examination of the actual composition of the proposed fleet reveals the defensive nature of the programme. The submarines were medium-range W-class vessels and their task was to mount an anti-carrier screen to counter the U.S. strike force "before they were close enough to Soviet territory to launch their aircraft against city targets".[82] The lack of aircraft carriers (only 4) and inadequacy of anti-aircraft armament on surface ships forced them to count on shore-based air coverage. As such, the blue-water naval capability of the navy was very limited. The fact that the operational area of the navy was confined to the Baltic and Black seas is another indication of its defensive nature.

After the death of Stalin, this naval construction programme was reviewed in the context of the general debate over the defence posture of the Soviet Union under the new leadership. The debate over the future shape and the proper role of the Soviet Navy continued throughout the 1950s, within Soviet defence circles and the political leadership in the context of continuous advances in naval technology. At the same time, certain changes

[81]Michael MccGwire, "The Rationale for the Developments of Soviet Seapower", U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 106:5 (May 1980), p. 157.

[82]Jukes, The Indian Ocean in Soviet Naval Policy, p. 4.

occurred in the Soviet threat perception. In the early post-war years the belief was that the possible threat from the West would be in the form of an amphibious invasion aimed at the Soviet heartland. In the mid-1950s the threat from the West was perceived as a surprise nuclear attack by carrier-borne long-range bombers on strategically located critical points. It should be noted that western military strategy was by now heavily based on nuclear deterrence and the Strategicic Air Command (SAC). The changes in the Soviet threat perception also necessitated a review of the existing strategy of the Navy.

After 1954, the 20-year naval construction programme initiated by Stalin was scaled down drastically.

> The building of cruisers was checked in mid-course; mass production of medium-type submarines, then building at 72 units a year was sharply tapered to a halt; and while the destroyer, escort, and subchaser programmes ran their full course, their successor classes were put back four years.83

The reduction and scaling down of the mass naval production programme fitted into another aspect of the thinking of the joint leadership - Khrushchev and Malenkov. Prime Minister Malenkov claimed to be committed to the improvement of living standards of the Soviet people. The reduction of the naval construction programme released substantial resources to the domestic economy.

After the naval review in 1954 the Soviet Union planned to replace the vast fleet, which provided tactical mobility, with long range cruise missiles (which were yet to be developed) carried by surface ships and diesel submarines with the

[83]See MccGwire, "Rational for the Development", p. 157.

associated operational concepts of reach, payload, and accuracy.[84]

Sergei Gorshkov, who was the architect of the Soviet Navy in the nuclear age, came to the forefront with the naval review. Khrushchev brought in the then 45-year-old Gorshkov, who had worked with him on the Southern Front during the war to replace Nikolai Kuznetzov as Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy. Gorshkov was assigned the task of implementing the decisions taken by the naval review.

In order to understand the post-1953 Soviet naval debate and repeated cancellations and redesigns of Soviet naval procurement programmes in their proper context, it is necessary to trace how the Soviet Union responded to the technological advances of the U.S. Navy and the resulting changes in U.S. naval initiatives. In 1952, the U.S. Navy launched a programme of new large attack carriers. In the 1952-58 period, 7 new carriers were introduced and three older carriers were heavily modernized.[85] Two new carriers were deployed in the Mediterranean with the U.S. 6th fleet. By 1954, the U.S. Navy introduced the Terrier and Tarter class surface-to-air guided missiles and surface-to-surface cruise missiles - the Regulus.

The operational concept of the Soviet Navy after 1954 was based on the design of countering enemy carriers within the range of shore-based air coverage. However, introduction of supersonic fighters and further advances in the range of carrier-borne aircraft at the end of the 1950s frustrated the plan of

[84]Ibid.

[85]Jane's Fighting Ships 1968-69 (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1969), pp. 352-60.

countering U.S. carriers with shore-based air-coverage. The introduction of long-range aircraft - the Skywarrior and the Vigilante - by the U.S. Navy[86] enabled them to strike Soviet targets coming from beyond the reach of Soviet air cover. This was the context within which the debate over the navy was resumed in 1958 in the Soviet Union. The Soviet navy decided to count on nuclear submarines to meet the U.S. threat. Accordingly, the diesel submarine construction programme was cancelled and the Hotel and November class nuclear submarine programmes were accelerated to 10 boats a year. Though the diesel submarines were cancelled, their long-range missile systems "were used to reconfigure nuclear submarines as SSGN: the Echo classes. Meanwhile, the development of a horizon-range submarine missile with its own target location capability was put in hand".[87]

**Emergence of the Polaris Threat**

The introduction of the SLBM system by the U.S. Navy in the early 1960s opened up a new stage in missile delivery systems. The first version of the SLBM system, Polaris A-1, which had a range of 1200 nautical miles became operational in 1961.[88] In order to hit Moscow and Leningrad, the Polaris A-1 missile had to be fired from positions in the Baltic, the Black Sea or the Barents Sea. This operation was feasible only from the Barents Sea. The establishment of the Holy Loch Polaris base in Scotland in 1961 enabled the U.S. Navy to target Moscow and Leningrad from

[86]Ibid., 529-30.

[87]MccGwire, "The Rationale for Development", p. 158.

[88]Janes Fighting Ships, 1968-1969, pp. 344-45.

the northern coast of the Soviet Union. The Kennedy administration, which assumed office in 1961, accelerated the Polaris programme. The second version, the Polaris A-2, which had a range of 1,600 nautical miles, became operational in June 1962.[89] The Polaris A-2 could cover major industrial centers in Ukraine, the Baku oil fields and a fair portion of Soviet Central Asia from the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the United States entered into an agreement with Spain to establish a base at Rota to monitor Polaris submarines deployed in the Eastern Mediterranean. The final version of the Polaris family, A-3, came into operation in September 1964.[90] Since the A-3 had a range of 2,500 nautical miles the Indian Ocean became a possible deployment area. Furthermore it was planned to develop another class of SLBMs, the Poseidon.

TABLE-I

**U.S. Strategic SLMBs**

| Name | Launch Platform (Tubes/Launchers | Range Nautical Miles(Km) | Year of initial deployment | character |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Polaris A-2 | Lafayette (16) submarines | 1,500 (2,775) | 1962 | Thermonuclear; being replaced by Poseidon |
| Polaris A-3 | Ethan Allen George Washington | 2,500 (5,652) | 1964 | Thermonuclear; MRV warhead. |
| Poseidon C-3 | Lafayette | Approx. 2,500 (4,625) | 1971 | Thermonuclear; MIRV warhead |

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1976-77 (New York, Frankling Watts, (1976), pp. 522-38

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid

At the same time, the U.S. Navy introduced nuclear propulsion to surface vessels and developed strike carriers. Two Kitty Hawk class carriers and the nuclear powered Enterprise entered service in 1961. Thus, the U.S. was able to maintain her lead in nuclear propulsion, guided missiles, and SLBMs in the early 1960s.[91]

The development of the Polaris class SLBM missiles by the U.S. Navy posed a severe challenge to the Soviet Union. The SLBM system gave the U.S. Navy a considerable lead over the Soviet Navy. Quite obviously, Soviet naval strategists had to take the threat very seriously. This threat manifested itself in many forms. One of the prominent characteristics of the Polaris system was its invulnerability or, in military terms, its 'assured response'. Furthermore, the new system presented a severe challenge to Soviet nuclear deterrence theory because the Polaris could be used as a 'strategic reserve' which invested the U.S. Navy with a 'Second Strike Capability '(SSC). Apart from the extended coverage, Polaris missiles could be launched from submerged submarines. This characteristic represented a serious challenge to the Soviets in terms of detection, location, and continuous tracking.

> Theoretically, the submarines could be detected by various forms of fixed systems such as bottom mounted or moored arrays; by different forms of airborne surveillance systems carried by satellites or aircraft and including the use of large mid-ocean fields of drifting or floating sensors; by various types of trapping barriers established at natural choke points or outside

[91]Singh, The Indian Ocean: Big Power Presence and Local Response, p. 21.

Polaris bases; and by continuous tracking by submarine, surface ship or aircraft.92

However, the Soviet Navy was not capable of mobilizing these technical resources. The debate over the future shape of the Navy in 1957/58 further disrupted the naval construction programme. Naval construction resumed only in 1961. The ships constructed after 1961 were innovative but built in smaller numbers. The long production runs of unsophisticated ships were replaced by shorter runs of larger destroyer-type ships. The emphasis shifted from guns to missiles. Surface-to-air (SAM) (the Kotlin, the Kanin and the Kashin class) and surface (SSM) (the Kildin and the Krupny class) missiles were introduced.[93] However, at the time the U.S. Navy launched its Polaris programme in 1961, the Soviet nuclear submarine fleet was in its formative stage.

The U.S. Navy's SLBM challenge strengthened the hand of Gorshkov enormously in the inter-service competition.[94] In the context of the Polaris challenge, the nuclear submarine fleet figured large in Soviet calculations. Gorshkov, a long-time proponent of a missile-carrying nuclear submarine fleet, seized the opportunity to further his cause.

[92]MccGwire, "The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy: 1960-74", in Soviet Naval Policy Objectives and Constraints, Michael MccGwire, Ken Booth, John McDonnell, eds. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975) p. 512.

[93]Jane's Fighting Ships 1967/68, p. 616-19.

[94]For a good discussion of interservice rivalry, see Oles M. Smolansky, in "Soviet Entry into the Indian Ocean : An Analysis" Michael MccGwire, ed., Soviet Naval Developments, op. cit., pp. 289-403.

**The Polaris Threat and the Indian Ocean**

The introduction of the Polaris A-3 class SLBMs increased the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean because the north-west part of the Ocean became a possible deployment site for the U.S. Navy. Certain U.S. initiatives in the Indian Ocean in the early 1960s corroborated Soviet fears. In 1963, the Americans entered into an agreement with Australia to establish a base on the North West Cape of Australia. The establishment of this base was interpreted as being in line with those in Holy Loch in Scotland and Rota in Spain. After 1963, the low frequency communication station at the North West Cape of Australia became an important link in the U.S. global defence network. One of its functions is the maintenance of communications with U.S. submarines in the area. According to Rear Admiral La Rocque (U.S.N. retd.) "the recent addition of an Omega Station at North West Cape allows submarines with missiles not only to locate their stations at sea but also to perform the valuable task of in-flight course correction for missiles".[95] The Soviet Union interpreted the Omega Station as the forerunner of U.S. Polaris submarines in the Indian Ocean.[96]

The survey of islands in the Indian Ocean by a joint U.K.-U.S. team in connection with the strategic island bases concept in 1964 further highlighted the fact that the Indian Ocean was looming large in U.S. strategic claculations.[97] The islands surveyed, namely the Seychelles, Aldebra, and Diego Garcia,

[95]Quoted in Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy, p. 154.

[96]New Times (Moscow), 22 May 1963, p. 23.

[97]New York Times, 30 August 1964, p. 16.

revealed that American attention was mainly centered on the north west part of the Indian Ocean that was considered most appropriate for the deployment of Polaris submarines. The U.K.-U.S. plans to establish a new colony, the British Indian Ocean Territory, was considered a matter of grave concern by the Soviet Union. The entry of the U.S. naval task force, Concord Squadron, to the Indian Ocean in April 1964 was interpreted by Moscow as an acclimatization exercise. According to Soviet analysts:

> The deployment of American naval forces in the Indian Ocean assumed a planned character in 1964 when the new Polaris A-3 strategic missile was introduced. This missile was intended for the new atomic submarines then under construction and simultaneously was to replace the smaller range Polaris A-1 and Polaris A-2 missiles installed on existing submarines.98

There is a considerable doubt as to whether the Polaris A-3 submarines were deployed or not in the Indian Ocean.[99] "For strategic reasons, the U.S. policy regarding all nuclear deployment is neither to confirm nor deny".[100] According to the map attached to the Report on Military Posture 1976 of the U.S. Congress House Committee on Armed Services, a part of the Indian Ocean was used by the U.S. SLBMs. Proponents of the deployment view note that the U.S. Navy League magazine Sea Power acknowledged in February 1974 that the North West Cape station sends classified messages to Polaris submarines deployed in the

[98]I. Redko and N. Shaskolsky, The Indian Ocean : A Sphere of Tensions or a Zone of Peace (Moscow: Nauks Publishers, 1983, p.30

[99]Rodney W. Jones, "Ballistic Submarines and Arms Control in the Indian Ocean," Asian Survey, XX:3 (March 1980), pp. 269-279.

[100]India, The United States and the Indian Ocean -Report of the Indo-American Task Force in the Indian Ocean (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1985), p. 13.

Indian Ocean.[101]

These factors alone do not substantiate the view that the U.S. Navy has deployed Polaris/Poseidon submarines regularly in the Indian Ocean. There is no doubt that "in a transit stage one has crossed the Indian Ocean at one point or other".[102] But regular deployment is a different matter. It is clear that it is difficult to deploy submarines on a regular basis without submarine tenders. There is no evidence that the U.S. Navy maintains submarine tenders in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. member of the Indo-American Task Force on the Indian Ocean states:

> When the United States deploys ballistic missile submarines to an area there are certain signs which go with that ... Take the case of the U.S. missile facilities at Rota, or Guam, any place where missile submarines operate on patrol on a regular basis. These cannot be concealed. They are quite well known. There is no such facility in the Indian Ocean. Contrary to a great deal of rhetoric about Diego Garcia performing that function, it does not.103

Whether the U.S. Polaris submarines have been deployed or not, the Soviet Union has sufficient cause to be concerned. As Bezboruah correctly points out "non-deployment cannot be used as a relevant argument against Soviet concern".[104] Even if Polaris submarines are not deployed in the Indian Ocean at present, there is no assurance that they would not come to the Indian Ocean in the near future. From the Soviet point of view

[101]U.S. Congress House, Sub-Committee on the Near East and South Asia, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Proposed Expansion of U.S. Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, testimony of La Rocque, 23rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1974.

[102]India, The United States and the Indian Ocean, p. 15.

[103]Ibid., p. 14.

[104]Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy, p. 138.

> Another thing that made the Indian Ocean attractive to American strategists was that the Soviet Union would find it most difficult to deploy anti-submarine forces that could reduce the American threat of attack from the sea. While in the Atlantic and the Pacific the Soviet Navy can attend to the country's defence needs by relying on the systems of bases on its coast. In the Indian Ocean, it has no such bases.105

In this context, the Soviet Union had two options. In the realm of diplomacy, it could reach a mutual agreement to refrain from employing nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean. The other option was to send naval forces into the Indian Ocean in order to establish a countervailing screen, as was done in the Mediterranean in 1963. The Soviet Union first pursued the former option.

The advantages of this course of action were enormous, even though the prospect of success was remote. In the first place, the denuclearization of the Indian Ocean in this context would be detrimental to the United States "as the Ocean [Indian] did not offer a range of targets for Soviet missile submarines comparable to those it offered the Polaris Force".[106] Secondly, the proposal to denuclearize the Indian Ocean would bring the issue of super-power naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean to the forefront and would mobilize the opinion of the Indian Ocean littoral countries who were sensitive to such developments.

In December 1964, the Soviet Union presented a memorandum to the United Nations, 'On measures for further easing international

[105]Redko and Shaskolsky, The Indian Ocean, p. 30.

[106]Geoffrey Jukes, "Soviet Policy in the Indian Ocean," in Soviet-Naval Policy: Objectives and Constraints, M.MccGwire, Ken Booth and John McDonnell, eds. (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 312.

tension and restricting the arms race'.[107] Paragraph 6 of the memorandum titled 'Establishment of nuclear free zones' suggested that the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean be denuclearized. It is important to note that the memorandum commended the Sri Lankan government for banning foreign ships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons from Sri Lankan ports and airfields. Thers is no doubt that the Soviet memorandum had some propaganda content but, as Jukes poits out, "it contained a number of ideas which have subsequently formed the basis of serious negotiations".[108] Not unexpectedly, the United States did not agree to the proposal.

The Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean in March 1968 was the implementation of the second option: sending naval forces to the area where the potential threat had emerged. The Soviet naval response in the Mediterranean in 1963 was very swift; in the Indian Ocean it lagged four years. The Polaris threat in the Mediterranean became concrete with the U.S. Navy moving from pilot project to regular development with the establishment of Rota Polaris base. Such urgency was not there in the Indian Ocean as the threat was still a potential one. The Soviet Navy had to become acclimatized to the Indian Ocean which was an entirely new area. In contrast, the Soviet Navy had access to base facilities in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea Fleet was not totally unprepared for such a role.

[107] Soviet News (London), 15 December 1964, pp. 145-47.

[108] For example, section 4 of the memorandum titled 'Prevention of the Further Spread of Nuclear Weapons paved the way for the Non-Proliferation Treaty', see, Jukes, The Indian Ocean in Soviet Naval Policy, p. 8.

It is possible that developments in British policy East of Suez after 1964 also contributed towards the Soviet Union's taking a different course of action. After the Labour victory in October 1964, the British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean became a subject of debate in British politics. After 1964, the ranks of the critics of Britain's role East of Suez began to swell very rapidly within the Labour Party. The British Defence White Paper of 1965 highlighted the imbalance between commitments and resources.[109] The question of British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean had been raised and discussed in newspapers and in academic circles by 1965. The Soviet Union feared that any precipitate action on her part would strengthen the proponents of an East of Suez role.

In March 1968, a flotilla detached from the Soviet Pacific Fleet entered the Indian Ocean in order to pay a goodwill visit to India. The Fleet consisted of the Krupny class guided missile destroyer Gordyy, the Sverdlov-class cruiser Dimitry Posharsky and the Kasshin -class destroyer Sterguishchiny. After visiting Madras and Bombay, Gordyy returned to Vladivostok. Dimitry Posharsky and Sterguishchiny went on to visit ports in Somalia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This was the beginning of regular deployments of Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean.

Because of the time sequence, some tend to draw a connection between the British decision to withdraw from East of Suez and the Soviet decision to deploy naval forces in the Indian Ocean on the basis of a post hoc ergo propter hoc rationale. According to

[109]United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, Statement on Defence Estimates 1965 (Cmnd 2592), paragraph 21.

this explanation, which is derived from the power vacuum theory, British withdrawal created a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean and the Soviet intention was to fill this vacuum utilizing the opportunity. The power vaccum theory is in vogue especially in U.S. service circles. Rear Admiral Robert J. Hanks (U.S.N.) writes:

> (T)hat decision taken in 1968 - withdrawal should be completed by the end of 1971 - created a military and political power vacuum, particularly in the Persian Gulf. Because of its failure to recognize rapidly increasing American reliance on oil flowing from the Middle East-particularly from the Persian Gulf-Washington did not immediately perceive the necessity to fill this power vaccum before it could be exploited by an unfriendly state.110

William F. Hickman (U.S.N.) very plainly states that "(T)he Soviet rapid responses to the announcement gave a strong indication of their intention to step into the shoes of the vacating Royal Navy".[111] The power vaccum theory ignores the process of U.S. naval entry into the Indain Ocean begun in the early 1960s. An examination of the Soviet decision reveals that the action that prompted the Soviets to send their naval forces into the Indian Ocean was the perceived Polaris threat, and not the British withdrawal. The power vaccum theory reflects 'the zero-sum game' mentality of the cold-war warriors.[112]

[110]Robert J. Hanks, The U.S. Military Presence in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects (Massachusetts: Institute for Foreign Policy Studies, 1982), p.2.

[111]William F. Hickman, "Soviet Naval Policy in the Indian Ocean," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 105:8 August 1979), p.43.

[112]J.K. Holloway. "The Post-Vietnam Navy: The Rhetoric and the Realitities,"U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 98:8 (August 1982), p. 58.

The Soviet threat to the westbound sea lanes in general and to the oil routes in particular is another issue in the debate over the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean. The concern over the security of the sea lanes across the Indian Ocean is understandable because they are the life line of the Western economies. According to the realist perspective, sea power means the ability to deprive the use of the sea lanes to the opponent.[113] It is argued that one of the intentions (if not the major one) of Soviet entry into the Indian Ocean was to acquire the ability to disrupt trade lanes either by interdiction, blockade, or sinking vessels.[114] Ronald T. Spiers, Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs of the Department of State stated in 1971 to a congressional committee:

> (T)his [the U.S.S.R.] naval presence in the Indian Ocean calls attention to the growing Soviet naval capability in reference to the so-called choke-points which control ingress and egress to and from the ocean ... The practical effect of the Soviet presence athwart lines of communication would, of course, be actually felt in the case of all-out hostilities. A Soviet attempt to bloc maritimie routes in peace time could, of course, lead to a major world crisis. Nevertheless, with appropriate basing and/or establishment of political prominence in these funnel areas, Soviet domination of the most critical of these choke-points falls within the realm of possibility.115

The Congressional Research Service of the Library of the U.S. Congress observed in 1981 that "Soviet interests in this region

[113]See John P. Cranwell, The Destiny of Sea Power and the Influence on Land Power and Air Power (New York: Norton, 1941).

[114]Anders, C. Sjaastad, "The Indian Ocean and the Soviet Union,"Norsk Militant Tidskrift (Oslo), October 1971. Translated in Congressional Record, March 30, 1972, p.E 3145.

[115]Ronald I. Spiers, "U.S. National Security Policy in the Indian Ocean Area," Department of State Bulletin, August 23, 1971, p. 201-202.

have been closely watched as a potential threat to Western oil supplies".[116]

Prior to the examination of the Soviet threat to sea lanes, some points should be clarified. What does the threat to sea lanes mean? As Bezboruah points out "one has to keep in mind that sea lanes are an abstract concept. It is the passage of the ships that is actually at stake".[117] Accordingly, Soviet disruption of sea lanes could be in the form of either the ability to shut off ingress and egress to the Indian Ocean or the ability to physically attack ships. In order to block ingress and egress to the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union has to control the choke-points and straits. In this respect, Bab el Mandeb at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Straits of Malacca and Sunda are important. It is practically impossible to control the Cape route as there is no need to touch the Cape and no one could block the high seas between the Cape and the southern ice cap. It is important to remember that the base of Simonstown is firmly in the hands of the West. As for Bal el Mandeb, it became plain after the prolonged closure of the Suez Canal from 1967 to 1975 that the Suez route is not critical for the economic survival of the West. Blockade of Bal el Mandeb would cause only an inconvenience as the Cape alternative is available. With regard to oil flows from the Persian Gulf, the

[116]U.S. COngressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, Soviet Policy and United States Response in the Third World, Report prepared for the Committee on Foreign Affairs (Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 49.

[117]Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy in the Indian Ocean, p.38.

most critical point is the Strait of Hormuz. It is about 21 miles wide and only 19 miles at the narrowest point. The depth is between 120-210 feet.[118] According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) observations, the Strait of Hormuz is "too deep and wide to be blocked by sunken ships and too wide to be effectively controlled by coast artillery".[119] In order to block the Strait, at least "100 super tankers would have to be sunk in a line, probably with a second line on top in the deepest points, and the barrier would then have to be defended for several months until Western oil stocks run out".[120]

The second option, attacks on ships, is techinally possible. There is no doubt that an attack on a ship in the open sea would be tantamount to a declaration of war with the West. If the Soviet Union decides to attack shipping the Indian Ocean is not the best place for it. Such a course of action can be more effectively carried out either close to Western destinations or where Soviet naval power is stronger.

It should be remembered that the assurance of unhindered passage for ships in the Indian Ocean is in the interests of both the West and the Soviet Union. U.S. and Soviet trade activities in the Indian Ocean do not constitute a zero-sum game. The free passage of merchant marine benefits both superpowers. The Indian

[118]See Rouhollah K. Ramazani, "The Strait of Hormuz : The Global Choke-point," in The Indian Ocean in Global Politics, Larry W. Bowman and Ian Clark, eds., (Boulder: West View Press, 1981), pp. 7-20.

[119]U.S., Central Intelligence Agency, Atlas: Issues in the Middle East (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973), p.39.

[120]Jeoffrey Jukes, "Soviet naval policy in the Indian Ocean," in The Indian Ocean in Global Politics, op. cit., p.182.

Ocean provides an all-weather supply route between the Soviet West and East. The only inland supply line, the Trans- Siberian Railway, is overburdened and runs close to the border. The Baikal-Amur Main Line is intended to overcome the problems associated with the Trans-Siberian Line. Still, the Indian Ocean acquires increased importance as an alternative all-weather route that connects the Black Sea with Vladivostok. The Soviet Union has extensive trade relations with the Indian Ocean littoral states. In 1971, about 21 percent of the merchant ships transiting the Indian Ocean were Soviet.[121] The Soviet merchant marine uses the Indian Oean extensively. In addition, a huge Soviet fishing fleet operates there. It should be noted that fish provides 70 per cent of the protein requirement of the Soviet diet and the Soviet catch is the third largest in the world.[122]

The focal point of the discussion of the Soviet threat is the Persian Gulf. A staff study mission of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (U.S.) to the Persian Gulf, Middle East, and the Horn of Africa reported that

> Soviet designs on Persian Gulf oil focus on two possibilities: (1) curtailing supply to the West by blocking the Strait of Hormuz or interdicting tankers; (2) gaining physical control of oil-producing areas, a more serious threat substantiated by reports indicating increased need and decreasing hard currency. The latter contingency could permit the Soviets to act as "guarantor" of the region's oil, selling it to the West in ways that increased Soviet political interests world wide.123

[121]Spiers, op. cit., p. 202.

[122]U.N. Statistical Yearbook 1968, pp. 157-58.

[123]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Security Interests in the Persian Gulf, Report of a Study Mission, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Offie, 1981), p. 8.

The rationale given for the perceived Soviet action is the oil shortage that the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would face in the near future, in addition to the Soviet intention to cut off Western oil supplies. As pointed out earlier, sinking of oilers and blocking out the Straits are not possible short of a war situation. Even in an all-out war situation oil cannot be used as a weapon due to the fact that the West has oil stocks (the Strategic Petroleum Reserve-SPR), for several months. By that time, the outcome of the nuclear war would be clearly decided and, in other non-nuclear war scenarios, counteractions would be contemplated and be executed.

Whether the Soviet Union would face an acute oil shortage in the near future has not been established. It is true that the Baku oil fields are dying out and that the Soviets import oil and natural gas from Iraq and Iran for the Baku oil refineries. However, it should not be forgotten that the Soviet Union has considerable oil resources in Siberia. The assumption that the Soviet Union would seize oil-producing countries to ensure continuing oil suplies is not a plausible one. As Jukes points out vividly, "most states have no oil, and their normal recourse is to buy it, not seize it".[124] Considering the political and military costs of seizing oil resources and also the costs of defence against inevitable resistance, it is both economically and politically advantageous for the Soviet Union to buy oil in the open market.

Although it is technically difficult to shut off the Indian

[124]Jukes, "Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean," in The Indian Ocean Global Politics, Bowmen and Clark, eds. op. cit., p. 180.

Ocean trade lanes completely, attacking vessels at random could make the casualty rate of the Indian Ocean passage very high and paralyse a considerable portion of the trade in that region. In view of the political, military, and economic costs involved, it is rather difficult to believe the Soviets would do such a thing. However, its actual execution and the Soviet capability for doing it are two different things. The acquisition of such a capability strengthens Soviet bargaining power vis-a-vis the West. Such a capability is important for the Soviet Union in her manoeuvring on the chess-board of world politics.

In the examination of the political motives of Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean it is necessary to take into account the political benefits gained by the Soviets from their presence in the Indian Ocean as a naval power. As a result of the rapid growth of relations with the littoral states in the post-Stalin era, the Soviet Union had become a diplomatic principal in the Indian Ocean area by the middle of the 1960s. The Soviet Union is engaged in a competition with the United States for influence in the Indian Ocean area. In such a competition there are many advantages secured by a naval presence. In peace time, 'showing the flag' and visits to the littoral ports by the Soviet Navy enhance her political influence and strengthen her friendly relations in the area. In a crisis situation, the naval forces can be used to signal Soviet support to her regional allies and also to counter-balance the naval forces of the power which is backing the regional adversary. The dispatch of Soviet naval forces to the Bay of Bengal during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 to counter balance U.S. naval forces in the area, and the visit by the

Soviet navy to Iraq during the Iraq-Kuwaiti border dispute, can be cited as examples.

The Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean further strenthened the Soviet position in dealings with the United States. In order to make an equal bargain with the United States, the Soviet Union as a superpower had to develop her military capabilities in areas where they were relatively weak. Admiral of the Fleet Sergei Gorshkov, emphasized very forcefully the value of a navy for a world power. He stated that "(T)he need to have a powerful navy corresponding both to the geographical position of our country and to its political importance as a great world power has already long been understood."[126] This line of thinking motivated the Soviet Union to strive to become a naval power in the Indian Ocean.

To recapitulate, the entry of Soviet naval forces into the Indian Ocean cannot be attributed to a single objective or to a single factor. Rather, it was caused by a number of factors, situations, and forces operating within the Soviet system and their interrelationships. On the political plane, it should be viewed in the context of the evolution of Soviet policy towards the Indian Ocean littoral and her competition with the United States for political influence in the Indian Ocean world. On the naval-strategic plane, it should be located in the context of the Soviet naval procurement programme and her responses to the U.S. naval strategy.

[126]S.G. Gorshkov, "Navies in war and in peace," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 100:11 (November 1974), p. 60

Chapter V

## The Beginning of Superpower Naval Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, 1968-1973

The widening of the political, economic, and military-strategic interests of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean, as well as the political and strategic developments in the Indian Ocean area, dealt with in the previous chapters, brought the Indian Ocean to the forefront of the strategic calculations of the superpowers at the end of the 1960s. The naval strategic initiatives they took in the Indian Ocean in the period 1968-69 made it clear that a new era of naval history had begun in the region. The British decision to withdraw from the Indian Ocean in January 1968, the entry of the Soviet naval forces in March 1968, the presentation of the revised Diego Garcia plan by the U.S. Navy in 1969, and the new emphasis by the Nixon administration on naval mobility in the Indian Ocean set the stage for new naval strategic developments there after 1968.

The period between 1968 and 1973 was marked by increasing activity by the superpowers in the Indian Ocean and, consequently, the commencement of naval rivalry between them in that area. During this period, for the first time in history, the United States attempted to define and evaluate her interests in the Indian Ocean. This attempt was expressed in the Nixon Doctrine of 1969. Disenchanted with land-based political involvements, American strategy began increasingly to be based on naval power and strategic mobility. In this context, the U.S. Navy came

forward to play a prominent role in influencing policy in the Indian Ocean. The development of superpower activities in the region during this period, however, was restrained. Congressional opposition to the United States becoming involved in another ocean successfully blocked the Navy's plan for a naval base on Diego Garcia. On the Soviet side, the naval deployment begun in 1968 became established during this period. However, Soviet diplomatic initiatives for the Asian Collective Security Plan received a very disappointing response from the region. The other important development in the period was the growth of a regional consensus against superpower activities in the region. The organized opposition of the Indian Ocean littoral countries to the superpower naval build up led to the 'Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace' (IOPZ) at the United Nations in 1971.

**New Directions in US Foreign Policy**

With the beginning of the Nixon administration in January 1969, US foreign policy took a new turn. Nixon believed that "America needed to change the philosophy and practice of its foreign policy in January 1969".[1] Such a reappraisal was necessitated by the changes in the power constellation of the post-war international system and also by the changed mood of the US public regarding the US role in world leadership. Consequently, Nixon remarked, "the post-war period in

[1]Richard M. Nixon, United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s : Shaping a Durable Peace - A Report to the Congress, May 3, 1973. (Washington: GPO, 1973), p. 1.

international relations has ended",[2] and a new era that demanded a fresh approach to international relations was unfolding.

A number of developments marked 'the end of the post-war era' in international relations. First of all, the context of US national security policy was fundamentally altered by developments in the technology of war by her adversary. The president stated that "(F)rom the mid 1940s to the late 1960s [the U.S.] has moved from nuclear monopoly and superiority to rough strategic balance with the Soviet Union".[3] In view of the rapid advances in the technology of nuclear war, the US - Soviet nuclear parity created fresh challenges to U.S. security and demanded new calculations in US diplomacy.

Secondly, more complex, multi-polar power relations were emerging and replacing the simple bi-polar alignments that epitomised power relations in the 'post-war era'. The new pattern of multi-polarity was a result of three developments; namely, the economic recovery and political stability of Western Europe and Japan, the break down of the unity of the Communist bloc, and the increasing self-reliance of the new states emerging from the dissolution of the colonial empires.[4] In the bi-polar world situation of the 1950s, in Nixon's words, "(O)ur nations had looked to America for ideas and resources, and they found us

[2]Richad M. Nixon, United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s : A New Strategy for Peace, A Report to the Congress, Feb., 18, 1970 (Washington: GPO, 1970), p. 2.

[3]Nixon, Shaping a Durable Peace, p. 2.

[4]Richard M. Nixon, United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s : The Emerging Structure of Peace, A Report to the Congress Feb. 9, 1972 (Washington: GPO, 1972), p. 3.

[U.S.] a willing provider of both". By 1969, others were ready for a greater role in shaping their own security. Finally, the changed mood of the American people reflected the end of the post-war era in international relations. At the beginning of that period the American public had supported the 'burden' of global leadership with enthusiasm. Nixon remarked "but after almost three decades our enthusiasm was waning and results of our generosity were being questioned. Our policies need change, not only to match new realities in the world but also to meet a new mood in America".[5]

Soon after the Nixon administration assumed office, it initiated a major review of US policy in the Indian Ocean area. The context in which the review was conducted was important. The impact of the Vietnam War was felt not only by the public but also by US defence planners. During the period 1965-70, Vietnam caused a wave of intensified protest movement in the United States. 'No more Vietnams' started to spread throughout the country.[6] In this context, the reassessment of US policy in order to avoid future Vietnams received high priority in the foreign policy agenda of the new administration. Further, the Vietnam experiences were reported to have taught the US defence-planners that "it is better to fight potential Asian adversaries on the sea and in the air, where they are visibly weaker than on

[5]Nixon, Shaping a Durable Peace, p. 3.

[6]When a 1969 Gallup Poll asked subjects to list the two or three important problems facing the nation, 63 per cent mentioned Vietnam and 2 per cent the danger of nuclear war. See Paul Boyer, "From activities to apathy : America and the nuclear issue 1963-1980," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, No. 40:7 (Aug. - Sept. 1984), p. 20.

the land where they seem to be stronger'.[7] This gave an impetus to an ocean strategy in US defence calculations in the Indian Ocean.

The Vietnam war brought to the forefront the problem associated with land-based involvements in the Indian Ocean littoral. In order to obtain base facilities, the Pentagon had to come to some agreement with the crisis-ridden states of the littoral. As Stuart B. Barber reported to the Congress, "for these agreements, we [U.S.] will pay under the table through costly arms supply deals, and more important, they [friendly littoral states] could involve us in local quarrels, and obligate us to support a new crop of ineffective dictatorial regimes in the Saigon style".[8] In order to avoid such problems, the need to turn towards the ocean and to rely on the navy and strategic mobility became a major theme in the discussion of U.S. priorities in the Indian Ocean after 1968. The review of American priorities in the Indian Ocean and the Nixon Doctrine came at this juncture.

**The Nixon Doctrine and the Indian Ocean**

At the end of an Asian tour, the American President first outlined what came to be called the Nixon Doctrine at Guam on 25th July 1969. It is important to note that Nixon's statement at Guam was not a blueprint for policy but a set of broad principles. Though the Guam statement was heralded as a first

[7]Monoranjan Bezboruah, U.S. Strategy in the Indian Ocean : The International Response (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 50.

[8]Proposed expansion of U.S. Military Facilities, p. 178.

step in the reassessment of U.S. policy, "understanding of the doctrine was complicated by the manner in which the President has presented it: reporters were forbidden to quote him directly".[9] However, formal enunciation of the Nixon Doctrine could be seen in his first foreign policy message to the Congress in February 1970. The Nixon Doctrine remained the recurring theme of his later foreign policy statements.

Nixon restated in 1970 the main elements of the U.S. approach outlined at Guam in 1969:

> First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments. We will adjust the manner of our support for our actions on a realistic assessment of our interests,
>
> Second, we will provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us, or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.
>
> Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume primary responsibility for their defence and development.10

The Nixon Doctrine emphasised the need to recast U.S. security arrangements with its allies to secure more equitable sharing of the material and personnel costs. The American relationship with allies in the region would change from one of 'predominance' to one of 'partnership'. The key note of the Nixon Doctrine was the balanced U.S. role in order to avoid future

[9]Congress and the Nation, Vol. III, 1969-72, A Review of Government and Politics during Nixon's First Term (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service 1973), p. 869.

[10]Nixon, U.S.Foreign Policy for the 1970s:A New Strategy for Peace - A Report to the Congress (Washington:G.P.O.,1970) p. 2.

Vietnams: "the U.S. would maintain its treaty commitments but would not assume a primary responsibility as a world policeman".[11] Nixon asserted that "America cannot - and will not - conceive all the plans, design all the programmes, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world".[12]

Another aspect of the Nixon Doctrine was to remove ideology from foreign policy. He stated that the key role of the new U.S. policy was accommodation of the diversity of the world community. U.S. policy towards a state would be determined by that state's foreign rather than its domestic policy. The rules of Realpolitik were brought to the forefront of U.S. strategy more directly by Nixon. In the President's foreign policy message to the Congress, the three principles guiding U.S. foreign policy were identified: partnership with allies, strength with regard to potential enemies, and a willingness to negotiate with the Communist Powers. In this context, diplomacy acquired increasing importance. In terms of realpolitik, diplomacy is the language of power and also "the art of restraining the exercise of power".[13] It was intended to launch new diplomatic ventures at three levels. At the Soviet-American level, restraining the exercise of power became a major focus of diplomatic dealings. Peace could

[11]Congress and the Nation, Vol. III, 1969-1972, (A Review of Government and Politics during Nixon's First Term), (Washington: Congressional Quartely Service, 1973), p. 865.

[12]Ibid., p. 869.

[13]Henry A. Kissinger, A World Restored : Metternich, Castlereath and the Problems of Peace 1812-22 (Boston: Houghton Miffin, 1957), P. 2, quoted in Walter F. Hahn, "The Nixon Doctrine, Design and Dilemmas," Orbis, XVI:2 (Summer, 1972), p. 367.

not depend solely on an uneasy equilibrium between two nuclear powers. With respect to China, it was a diplomacy of dialogue. The emphasis of the third level of diplomacy, addressed to U.S. allies, was on consultation.

Under the Nixon Doctrine the United States had to rearrange her foreign policy priorities and involvements in the Indian Ocean according to a realistic assessment of her interests. First of all, it was considered that the Indian Ocean was not critically important to the national security of the United States or to the strategic balance between the superpowers. The Indian Ocean was still a low priority area. This view of the United States was presented by Ronald Spiers as,

> We do consider that over the next 5 years our interests there [Indian Ocean] will be of a substantially lower order than those in either of the greater ocean basins, the Atlantic and the Pacific ... the states of these areas are for the most part economically, politically, and militarily more important to us than those on the Indian Ocean. Therefore, there appears to be no requirement at this time for us to feel impelled to control, or even decisively influence, any part of the Indian Ocean or its littoral.14

It was believed, however, that the Indian Ocean merited close attention. U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean was intended to grapple with three concerns. The first was how to respond to the increased Soviet naval presence there and to maintain the ability to exert military influence without stimulating a competitive build up of forces. The second was how to encourage maintaining in the countries around the Indian Ocean economic policies and

[14]Ronald Spiers, "US National Security Policy and the Indian Ocean," Department of State Bulletin, 23 August, 1971, p. 203.

political set-ups desirable to the United States and to limit the development of forces hostile to the United States. The third concern was the maintenance of free naval passage in the Indian Ocean.

In the redefinition of the U.S. role in the Indian Ocean, the containment of Communism was no longer the main preoccupation of U.S strategy. Alternatively, Nixon proposed a model of a regional multi-balance of power - a balance of Soviet, Chinese and Western influence based on peaceful competition. He stated that the Soviet Union still desired to limit U.S. influence and increase her own in the Indian Ocean area but that there was no irreconcilable conflict between Soviet interests in Asia and those of the United States.[15] As long as a new system was based on distributive balance of power of the major power centers, all would work to preserve it because all recognized their stake in its preservation. The aim was to avoid conflict between the major powers in areas of lesser importance. It is believed, however, that in some cases where Western interests were poorly represented, the U.S. had to project its power in order to balance Soviet influence.

Closely associated with the concept of balance was partnership. More emphasis was placed on military cooperation with friendly states. The middle powers of the area and other outside powers with interests in the area were expected to assume more responsibilities for the security and well-being of the region. Because of too much diversity and its size, the Indian Ocean

[15]Department of State Bulletin, LXVI, 20 March 1972, p. 436.

could not be regarded as a single unit, and three sub-systems were identified, i.e. Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Persian Gulf / Western Indian Ocean. In Southeast Asia, the U.S. would be able to balance Soviet and Chinese influence even after U.S. ground forces were withdrawn from Vietnam. It was expected that Japan, Indonesia, and Australia would shoulder more responsibility in the region. The Five-Power Defence Agreement reached in 1971 by Britain, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, was viewed as an impressive example of Asians looking to their own security needs and their own measures. It also demonstrated dramaticaly how important a vigorous Australian and New Zealand role would be to the future stability of the region.[16] Indonesia was also to be assigned the role of a middle power in the area. After 1965, Indonesia became the recipient of huge American aid. Regional economic organizations namely, ASEAN, comprised of pro-Western regimes in the region, received high approbation from the Nixon administration. South Asia was a relatively low priority area. According to Palmer, "South Asia, for all its size and importance, has been relatively neglected by the Nixon administration".[17] The increased Soviet influence in the Indian sub-continent was accepted with equanimity and Soviet power was viewed as a stabilizing factor. The review of U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean initiated by the Nixon administration focused mainly on the Persian Gulf. The review was completed in late 1970. In contrast to common parlance

[16]Department of State Bulletin, LXIV, 22 March 1972, p. 380.

[17]Norman D. Palmer, "Alternative Futures for South Asia and United States Policy," Orbis, XV:1 (Spring 1971), p. 352.

the review concluded that there was not much of a power vacuum in the Persian Gulf because of the British intention of retaining much of their political presence in the region. The problems confronting the Gulf were political rather than military. As such, U.S. military power was not responsive to the problems arising out of internal political instability in the Gulf states. The main U.S. concern in the Gulf was oil. As U.S. oil imports from the Gulf were just 10 per cent of total oil imports and amounted to only 3 per cent of total U.S. oil consumption, it was believed that Persian Gulf oil should mainly be the concern of U.S. allies who were more dependent on Persian Gulf oil than on the U.S. itself.[18]

The Persian Gulf was the area where the Nixon Doctrine was put into practice most clearly. The gist of the U.S. strategy was security co-operation with conservative regional states, mainly with Iran and Saudi Arabia. U.S. strategy in the Gulf was so heavily relied on by these two states that U.S. policy in the Gulf was referred to as a "two pillar" policy.[19]

Cooperation with Iran became a cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Gulf. The Nixon administration found an exemplary pro-Western middle power in Iran, with whom it envisaged security co-

[18]See Gary Sick, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

[19]According to Sick the two pillar pollicy had four key elements: promotion of co-operation between Iran and Saudi Arabia as a desirable basis for stability in the Gulf,while recognizing Iran as the predominant power; the maintenance of a tiny U.S. naval presence without change; expansion of U.S. diplomatic representation in the Gulf to promote U.S. technical assistance; and restrained U.S. sales to lower Gulf states who would be encouraged to look primarily to the British for their security security needs. See Sick, op. cit. p. 58.

operation. Nixon visited Iran in May 1972 and informed the Shah of his willingness to sell Iran F-14 and F-15 aircraft. In July, Nixon was prepared to offer Iran the liberty of determining what weapons system she could purchase at her discretion. As a staff report for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee pointed out, "the President's decision to sell Iran virtually any weapon system it wanted was unprecedented for a non-industrial country".[20] The normal practice of reviewing the impact of arms sales to one country on the security concerns of the recipient's neighbours prior to such an arms sale was not followed in dealing with Iran. Concomitantly, Iran came forward to play a bigger role in the Gulf. As early as March 1971 the Shah hinted at the possibility of establishing a joint naval defence of the region.[21] Iran's willingness to cooperate in regional defence was shown by the increase of naval expenditure from $5.5 million for 1963-68 to $55 million for the 1968-73 period.[22] Further, Iran commenced construction of $600 million air and naval bases at Chah Bahr on the Arabian Sea close to the Pakistan border.[23]

In sum, the Nixon doctrine presented a rather relaxed view of the Indian Ocean. The U.S. had a relatively low level of interest and they hoped to maintain a low profile in the Indian Ocean based on general deterrence, partnership, and balance.

[20]U.S. Congress, Senate, Sub-Committee on Foreign Assistance of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Military Sales to Iran - Staff Report (Washington, D.C., G.P.O. 1976), p. 41.

[21]New Middle East, April 1971, p. 21-23, Quoted in Singh, op.cit., p. 136

[22]U.S. Military Sales to Iran, p. 20.

[23]Singh, op. cit., p. 136.

Parallell to the proposed reduction of land-based security involvements and a balanced U.S. profile under the Nixon Doctrine, the U.S. Navy and strategic mobility acquired increased significance in U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean. In practice, what the Nixon Doctrine advocated was basically a "blue water strategy". However, turning towards the Indian Ocean and greater reliance on the navy in U.S. strategy was by no means a sudden move. In a sense, the Nixon doctrine marked the official acceptance of the blue water strategy which was gaining recognition in American strategic thinking from the early 1960s. The Nixon administration did not set about any new military initiatives except the Diego Garcia construction project. It was also by no means a new initiative, being a continuation of a plan inherited from the past.

**Diego Garcia Project**

The U.S. navy's proposal for building a base on Diego Garcia was approved by the Pentagon despite objections from the systems analysts of the State Department in 1969. Nevertheless, the navy had to limit the proposal to a modest plan for a logistic facility. The navy requested in 1969, for the fiscal year 1970, new obligations authority of $9,556,000 for the first increment of a naval facility on Diego Garcia. This submission was approved by both Armed Services Committees of the Congress and also by the House Appropriations Committee. However, the Military Appropriations Committee of the Senate was very much opposed to the United States becoming committed to another naval base in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the Military Construction Sub-Committee and the full committee deleted the navy's proposal from the

military construction appropriations for the fiscal year 1970. The navy's submission was taken to conference with the House and the Senate's position prevailed. Consequently, the Diego Garcia Project was struck off the Appropriation Bill. Nevertheless, an oral agreement was reached wherein the navy was instructed to come back in the fiscal year 1971 for a new appropriation for a communications station on Diego Garcia.[24]

It is important to note that the Congress came forward to play an active role in the formulation of U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean and acted as a restraining force on the navy's plan regarding Diego Garcia. Some influential members of both Houses of Congress, such as Lee Hamilton and Claiborne Pell, believed that a U.S. naval build-up in the Indian Ocean would escalate naval competition with the Soviet Union in an area which was of modest strategic importance to the United States. The concern of the U.S. Congress with strategy in the Indian Ocean is reflected by the fact that Congress examined issues relating to the Indian Ocean three times during the period 1971-1973.[25]

As instructed by the Congress, in 1970 the navy requested, for the ensuing fiscal year, $5.4 million as the first installment for an austere communications facility at Diego Garcia. The need to have such a facility was rationalized by

[24]U.S. Congress, Senate, Sub-Committee on Military Construction, Committee on Appropriations, Second Supplementary Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1974, 23rd Cong., 2nd Sem. 1974, p. 214.

[25]In 1971 the Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development had a series of hearings entitled 'The Indian Ocean Political and Strategic Future' and in 1972 and 1973 the Sub-Committee on Near East and South Asia held several hearings.

claiming that the United States would probably have to withdraw from the main continent of Africa, the large communications facility that it maintained at Asmara, Ethiopia [Kagnew Station].[26] The Congress supported the Navy's request as "an appropriate extension of the U.S. presence" in the area in November 1971. It approved a second increment of $8.95 million toward the completion of the communication facility for the fiscal year 1972. In October 1972, Congress approved the $6.1 million requested as the third increment for the communication facility. In three appropriations, the Congress voted $20.45 million for the communications station on Diego Garcia.

In January 1971, an advance party from the Naval Mobility Construction Battalion (Seabees) landed on Diego Garcia to confirm plan information and to survey beach landing areas. Less than six months after the arrival of the Seabees, the interim airfield was completed and in July 1971 the first C-130 flight landed on a 3,500 foot airstrip.[27] In view of these developments, the United States concluded a new agreement with Britain to supplement the earlier one on the B.I.O.T. The new agreement, signed in London on 24 October 1972, gave the United States the right to construct, maintain, and operate a limited communications facility on Diego Garcia. "The facility shall consist of transmitting and receiving services, an anchorage, airfield, associated logistic support and supply and personal

[26]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Second Supplemental Appropriations for FY 1974 : Hearing on H.R. 14013, 93rd Congress, 2nd Sess., 1974, p. 2114.

[27]Kirby Harrison, "Diego Garcia : The Seabees at Work," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 105:8 (August 1979), p. 54.

accommodation".[28] The declared purposes of the Diego Garcia station were:

1. to fill the U.S. naval communication gap in the central and northwestern region of the Indian Ocean,
2. to link the U.S. communication base in Ethiopia with that on the North Western Coast of Australia and thus,
3. to link up the Indian Ocean with the global U.S. military command and control system.29

The Indian Ocean was still considered a low-priority area of modest strategic importance to the United States. The U.S. navy was very eager to play an active role in the Indian Ocean. But there were many restraining forces. Among them, the Congress was important. Clement Zablocki, Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development, remarked in 1971 that what was required was diplomatic finesse rather than military power in dealing with the problems of the Indian Ocean.[30] The White House and the Department of State more or less shared this view. The U.S. navy often highlighted the Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean but the Congress was more cautious. Some influential figures in Congress were reluctant to go with the navy. For example, Senator Russell, the Chairman of the

[28]U.S. Department of State, "Naval Communications Facility on Diego Garcia," Treaties and other International Acts, Series, 7481, (1972), p. 2.

[29]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Considerations of H.R. 12565, 93 Cong., 2nd Sess., 1974, p. 107.

[30]U.S. Congress, House, Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Indian Ocean : Political and Strategic Future, 92nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1971, p. IV.

Appropriations Committee, was very much opposed to the United States committing the Navy to sustained operations within the Indian Ocean. The Department of Defense had to assure the Congress about the limited nature of naval involvement in the Indian Ocean. This political-strategic climate radically changed only after 1973. The Yom Kippur War in October 1973 and the subsequent oil crisis unleashed forces held in check by the Congress so far. Before proceeding with developments after the oil crisis, it is necessary to examine two other elements of the situation in the Indian Ocean scenario - Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean from 1968-73 and the growing opposition on the part of the Indian Ocean states to superpower naval activities.

**Soviet Strategy after 1968**

The year 1968 also marked the beginning of a new phase in Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean. As it evolved after 1968, three elements were clearly visible.

First, the Soviet naval deployment in the Indian Ocean begun in 1968 acquired a regular pattern. Second, the Soviet desire to enter effectively into the politics of diplomacy was marked by the presentation of the collective security system for Asia by Brezhnev in 1969 and the diplomatic campaign associated with it. Finally, the Soviet Union entered into bilateral defence and friendship treaties with some of the non-Communist littoral countries in the region. Consequently, the Soviet Union came forward to play a more prominent role in the Indian Ocean after 1968.

Out of the three warships that sailed into the Indian Ocean

in late March 1968, the guided missile destroyer Gorddy returned home in April soon after its port-calling in India; the other two, the cruiser and the destroyer, remained in the Indian Ocean till mid-July, visiting ports in Somalia, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf. The second Soviet naval detachment entered the Indian Ocean in November 1968 and remained there till April 1969. This became an established pattern in which Soviet ships were deployed for 6 months on a rotation basis. The major force, consisting of a cruiser and one or two destroyers, arrived in the Indian Ocean in December-January and remained in the area till April-July. The minor force consisting of one or two destroyers arrived just before the departure of the earlier force. By 1970

Table II

**Reported Soviet Naval Presence by Months 1968-71**

| | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Jun. | July | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1968 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| 1969 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 1970 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| 1971 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

Source: Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Report on the Indian Ocean Region, Australian Federal Parliament.

the level of Soviet naval deployment appeared to be stabililzed at four to six surface ships and two to three submarines. These numbers, however, doubled during periods of crisis such as the Middle East War in 1973.

It is better to analyse the composition and mode of operation of naval vessels rather than rush into sweeping assumptions based on mere numbers in order to have a realistic

assessment of Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean. The backbone of the Soviet naval fleet was the aged Sverdlov class cruiser and Kotlin class destroyers. These bulky vessels, built in 1960, were nearing the end of their lives and their armaments were obsolete. However, during periods of regional crisis, more powerful and modern Kynda and Kresta class cruisers were deployed. Another prominent feature of Soviet naval deployment, especially in the pre-1973 period, was the added presence of a large number of auxiliaries and support vessels. The Soviet practice of relying on its own auxiliaries for fuel, provisions, and repairs due to lack of reliable and secure shore-based support facilities explains the high number of support vessels. Major combatants were less than 50 per cent of the total naval presence, except in crisis situations. Furthermore, the submarine elements were not significant enough to suggest that Soviet deployment posed a real threat to sea lanes so far. The Soviet naval presence increased significantly, quantitatively and qualitatively, at times of regional crisis. This was largely in response to U.S. naval deployments.

The Soviet naval deployment in the Indian Ocean has been exaggerated from the very beginning. Elmo Zumwalt of the U.S. Navy, for example, stated in 1974 that Soviet support initiatives and the tempo of their naval activity in the Indian Ocean since 1968 had expanded at a deliberate pace which could not be related either in tune or in scope to any comparable expansion of U.S. activity. Statistics of shipdays and tonnage related to both navies in the Indian Ocean were presented to substantiate this view.

Table III

**Deployment of General Purpose Naval Ships in the Indian Ocean.**

| | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ship-days | | | | | | |
| Soviet Union | 1106 | 2022 | 3726 | 3149 | 7096 | 8262 |
| United States | 1150 | 1150 | 1150 | 1350 | 1150 | 2109 |
| Tonnage (in thousands) | | | | | | |
| Soviet Union | | | | 3200 | 4300 | 5000 |
| United States | | | | 1197 | 1145 | 1665 |

Source: U.S. Congress, Proposed Expansion, p. 30

The criteria of shipdays to measure naval activities is fraught with several shortcomings. Shipday-comparison ignores the actual nature of the ships; for example, auxiliaries are equated with aircraft carriers. The shipdays of the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean were very high but most of the Soviet ships were non-combatant auxiliaries. Furthermore, shipdays criterion does not take submarines into account.

Measurement of port-calls is comparatively satisfactory though it is not devoid of limitations. Port-calls are calculated by adding every entry of each naval ship into a foreign port but it does not reflect the duration of the visit which varies from one day to 18 months. In some cases, the same port might be frequently visited by the same group of ships adding numbers to the total port-calls. As such it is necessary to breakdown the port-calls under type of ships and ports visited to have a clear idea of the naval deployment of both navies.

Table IV
United States and Soviet Navy Presence in the Indian Ocean, 1968-73

| | 1968 | | 1969 | | 1970 | | 1971 | | 1972 | | 1973 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | U.S. | USSR | U.S. | USSR | U.S. | USSR | U.S. | USSR | U.S. | USSR | U.S. | USSR |
| Carriers | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 80 | 0 |
| Surface Combatants[1] | 1382 | 403 | 1006 | 644 | 867 | 787 | 669 | 1028 | 944 | 2381 | 1312 | 28 |
| Amphibious | 0 | 0 | 0 | 106 | 0 | 302 | 183 | 291 | 23 | 273 | 18 | 2 |
| Auxiliaries | 210 | 445 | 281 | 877 | 219 | 1070 | 329 | 1245 | 424 | 2784 | 672 | 43 |
| MSC Auxiliaries/USSR Naval Assoc.Merships | 190 | * | 28 | * | 155 | * | 146 | 404 | 423 | 780 | 72 | 4 |
| AGS/AGOR | 0 | 814 | 0 | 642 | 0 | 417 | 0 | 102 | 0 | 490 | 0 | 11 |
| AGL | 0 | 98 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 31 | 0 | - |
| Submarines | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Torpedo Attack | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 14 | ** | 8 | ** | 79 | ** |
| Cruise Missile Attack | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 0 | ** | 0 | ** |
| Total | 1788 | ** | 1315 | ** | 1246 | ** | 1357 | ** | 1445 | ** | 2153 1233 | ** |

[1] Cruiser, destroyers, destroyer escorts and minesweepers

* No record

** deleted

Source: Statement by Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval operations, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S., Senate. 93rd Congress 2nd Sess.

The notion that the sheer growth of Soviet naval deployment had outrun U.S. naval power in the Indian Ocean is not corroborated by Table IV. However, it clearly reveals that the Soviet navy in the Indian Ocean had now become a major element that had to be reckoned with in any analysis of the strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean.

While Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean acquired

a regular pattern after 1968, the Soviet leadership outlined new initiatives in the diplomatic field in presenting a proposal for Asian collective security. Soviet naval deployment and diplomatic initiatives were closely related to two aspects of the Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean region.

**The Soviet Proposal for a Collective Security System in Asia**

The manner in which the concept of Asian collective security was presented by the Soviet leadership is indicative of Soviet reading of the diplomatic atmosphere of the Indian Ocean region and also of the importance that the Soviets attributed to the proposal. In his speech to the world conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in June 1968, Brezhnev, after emphasising Soviet commitment to the creation of a system of collective security in those areas where the dangers of the another World War were concentrated, stated that "we are of the opinion that the course of events is also putting on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia".[31] Brezhnev's terse pronouncement of an Asian Collective Security System was limited only to the above sentence and no elaboration came afterwards. A month later, however, Gromyko, in his Report on Foreign Policy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., stated that the proposal for a Collective Security System in Asia "demands proper discussion and consultation among interested states in order to work out mutually acceptable solutions". The Soviet government would, in the course of such consultations, express its creative

[31]Dendra Kaushik and Satyendra Peerthum, Towards Collective Security in Asia (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1973), p. 67.

views. He further rebutted the notion that "the setting up of a Collective Security System in Asia would be aimed at a certain country or a group of countries and this is a question of the collective efforts of all Asian states of safe-guarding security in their common interests".[32] Gromyko once again raised the issue of the setting up of a Collective Security System in Asia in his address to the 24th session of the U.N. General Assembly in September 1969. These statements, however, did not provide any details about the shape, scope, and substance of the proposed Collective Security System for Asia. What is remarkable is the subsequent, prolonged silence on the part of the Soviet leadership. This deliberate inarticulation clearly points to the fact that the Soviet proposal was "a gigantic trial balloon testing the political climate for a Soviet initiative whose ultimate shape, scope and substance would depend entirely on events and reactions".[33]

In order to analyse Soviet intentions in proposing a Collective Security System, observers depend on the context in which it was presented because of lack of elaboration from the Soviet leadership. The three elements of the 'course of events' are identified. Most importantly, the intensification of the Sino-Soviet conflict to the proportion of an armed clash was in the background. In March 1969, fierce fighting flared up over a disputed island in the Ussuri river on the common border.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Arnold L. Horelick, "The Soviet Union's Asian Collective Security Proposal : A Club in Search of Members, Pacific Affairs, 47:3 (Fall 1974), p. 273.

Consequently, the political campaign against each other reached its height in 1969. The anti-Chinese slant at the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties was clearly visible and a major portion of Brezhnev's speech was devoted to an attack on China. Secondly, the British decision in 1968 to withdraw their forces from East of Suez was also in the background. The Nixon doctrine which envisaged a low profile for the United States in Asia came a month later, but the Nixon administration had made plain its intention to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam. Finally, it is also important to note that the Soviet Union's naval deployment in the Indian Ocean had begun on a regular basis in 1968. In analysing the proposal for a Collective Security System in Asia in the context of such a 'course of events', the United States and China interpreted it as one directed against them. American commentators viewed it as a political campaign to squeeze the western presence out of Asia and interpreted it as a rather transparent effort to play on the nationalistic sentiments of the regional states and to add a political dimension to the increased Soviet military presence. Overemphasis on the Soviet intention of containing China, reinforced by Beijing's loud self-identification as the target of the proposed Asian Collective Security System, is somewhat misleading too. The Soviets knew quite well that the prospects of forming a United Front directed against China were very remote. All the Communist-ruled states in Asia except Mongolia had taken neutral or non-commital stands in the Sino-Soviet conflict so far and it was difficult to expect that they would join hands in any anti-Chinese scheme. This was the case with China's non-

Communist neighbours, too. In fact, one of the main obstacles that the proposal faced was its alleged anti-Chinese slant. Being conscious of this obstacle, the Soviets endeavoured to rebut such accusations.[34] Brezhnev, in his report on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the U.S.S.R. in October 1972, stated that "it is being alleged in some capitals that our proposal is designed to 'contain' or 'encircle' China. Such allegations are totally groundless. As we conceive the idea, the People's Republic of China will become an equal partner in such a system".[35]

A careful examination of the Soviet statements regarding the Asian Collective Security System does not fail to reveal the Soviet Union striving to identify herself as an Asian power. Still, Asian capitals were reluctant to accept, wholeheartedly, the Soviet Union as an Asian power. The proposed Collective Security System in which the Soviet Union would also be a leading partner would provide sound qualifications for the Soviet Union to become an Asian power. That would give the Soviet Union a legitimate right to be active in Asian politics, something that she eagerly sought.

A close link between the forward deployment of Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean and Brezhnev's proposal of a Collective Security System in Asia is also not difficult to establish. The Soviet naval deployment caused concern in many

[34]For example, Moscow Radio broadcast in Chinese on 21 December 1970 emphasizing that China should be a partner in a Collective Security System in Asia and it was not directed against her. B.B.C. Summary of World Broadcasters, Pt. 1, Su/3567/A3/1, quoted in Jukes, Soviet Union in Asia, op. cit.,p.25

[35]Kaushik and Peerthum, Towards Collective Security, p. 70

countries in the littoral. Viewing the Soviet decision in 1968 along with the accent on the navy in U.S. strategy, it was clear that a new phase of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean was in the making and that the Soviet Union was also charged as being equally responsible for changing the Indian Ocean into a sphere of superpower naval conflict. The Asian Collective Security Proposal was intended to lessen the anger directed against the Soviet Union and it was often cited, though unsuccessfully, as proof of Soviet concern for the peace and security of the region.

In order to have a proper perspective on the proposed collective security system in Asia, it should be viewed in light of the new direction of Soviet relations with the newly-independent states after 1964. The Soviet Union showed more interest after 1964 in cultivating state-to-state relations, irrespective of the internal political complexion of the state. The levelling process of Soviet relations, begun under Brezhnev's leadership, shaped Soviet attitudes towards the Indian Ocean littoral in the late 1960s. The Tashkent Summit established the USSR'S reputation as a peacemaker in the Indian sub-continent. In his speech at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU in April 1966, Gromyko remarked that "recognition of the international authority of the Soviet Union, respect for its policy, resulted in the recent meeting in Tashkent where two great Asian states displayed trust in the impartiality of our country".[36] In this context, next in line was a proposal for a collective security system covering a vast majority of the Asian states.

[36]Soviet Review, No. 31 (23rd April 1966), p. 4.

The initial responses of the Asian states to the proposal were really disappointing. Even Communist states showed no interest at all. Simultaneously, China launched a virulent attack against the proposal. So frustrating were the responses of the Asian states that the Soviet leadership abandoned it without even mentioning it during the period 1970-71. In 1971, the Soviet Union entered into bilateral treaties of Peace and Friendship with a number of states including Egypt (April 1971) and India (August 1971). In the second half of 1971, the proposal for a collective security system again came to the forefront in Soviet statements. China-U.S. Rapprochement and Kissinger's visit to China in July 1971 to arrange the "Nixon-Mao hand shake" was the immediate background to the revival of the proposal for collective security in Asia. Bilateral treaties of Peace and Friendship were viewed as building blocks for the system of collective security. The outcome of the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971 strengthened the Soviet hand enormously. That demonstrated, in Horelick's words, "both the will and capacity of the Soviet Union to exert strong military and political leverage on the continent".[37]

After a long silence, both Kosygin and Brezhnev raised the issue of an Asian Collective Security System in March 1972. In contrast to the earlier laconic statements, both enunciated a set of principles as guidelines of the proposed system. Brezhnev stated:

[37]Arnold L. Horelick, "The Soviet Union's Asian Collective Security Proposal : A Club in Search of Members," Pacific Affairs, 47:3 (Fall 1974), p. 274.

> Collective Security in Asia must in our view be based on such foundations as the principles of renunciation of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and wide development of economic and other forms of co-operation on the basis of complete equality and mutual benefit.38

It is important to point out the close similarity between these guidelines and the five principles enunciated at the Bandung Conference - Panchasila. However, this elaboration, accompanied by diplomatic pressure, bore no fruit. The only countries that responded favourably to the Soviet proposal were Afghanistan, Iran, and the Mongolian Republic. Indian reluctance to endorse it was crucial.

The reasons for the failure of the Soviet effort were quite clear. China's virulent opposition and her self-identification as the target played an important part in keeping China's non-Communist neighbours and Asian Communist states away from the proposed scheme. Soviet reading of the Asian diplomatic climate was not quite accurate. Objective conditions in the Asian political theatre were not congenial to such a collective security system in a pan-Asian form. Since there were many points of conflict among Asian states, it is rather difficult to find the common denominator for a collective grouping. Though bilateral treaties were interpreted as a first step in the direction of forming a collective security system, each treaty should be viewed on its own merits. Most important among the bilateral treaties signed by the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean was the Indo-Soviet treaty. It should be viewed in the light of the

[38]Kanshik and Peerthum, Towards Collective Security, p. 69.

mutual interests [strategic, political and economic], of both parties rather than in the context of the proposed collective security system in Asia.

Though the Soviet campaign associated with the Collective Security System in Asia appeared to be an unsuccessful venture, it reflected the Soviet intention to play a prominent role in Indian Ocean politics. After 1968 a new phase in Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean commenced and came directly into Soviet strategic calculations. From hindsight, it is clear that the Soviet naval deployment in the Indian Ocean along with the new emphasis on naval power in U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean set in motion a new era of ocean politics. Superpower naval rivalry had become a major element in the new phase of ocean politics in the Indian Ocean.

**Superpower Naval Rivalry in the Indian Ocean**

The naval competition between the superpowers consisted of three inter-related elements, i.e. competitive naval deployment in the Indian Ocean, weapons deals, and defence agreements with the Indian Ocean littoral states, the latter two elements dating back to the early post-war years. The United States made arms deals under the Military Assistance Programme (MAP) and arranged bilateral and multi-lateral defence alliances in the context of the 'containment' policy. After 1956, the Soviet Union also came forward to compete with the United States in the diplomatic field. Until the 1960s, the Soviet-American competition was confined to the Asian mainland. At the end of the 1960s, in the new strategic atmosphere, superpower competition reached the

Indian Ocean. To be sure, the major element of the superpower naval rivalry was forward deployment of their naval forces in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, weapons deals and defence agreements between the superpowers and the Indian Ocean states conceived in the context of superpower naval rivalry, are an integral part of the same process. However, it is very common to define superpower naval rivalry very narrowly and to include only the naval deployment of the superpowers and to separate it from arms deals and military alliances.[39]

From the economic point of view, the arms deals of the superpowers with Indian Ocean states should be viewed within the broader framework of North-South trade. The United States and other Western powers are dependent on energy resources and other strategic minerals from the Indian Ocean region. Arms sales constitute an important part of the balance of payments of the superpowers in their trade with the littoral countries.[40] Though the Soviet Union was less dependent on strategic minerals coming from the Indian Ocean region, Soviet-Indian Ocean trade has become an important means of solving the hard currency problems that the Soviet Union faces in her trade with the West. In 1976 Soviet weapons sales amounted to 10 per cent of total Soviet exports and she would run a $1.2 billion trade deficit with the

[39]Particularly, the leaders of the littoral states who are very vociferous against superpower activities in the Indian Ocean tend to scale down the superpower naval rivalry only to naval deployment. This is clearly revealed in the deliberations in the U.N. ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal.

[40]For a vivid discussion, see Ali Mazrui, The Barrel of the Gun and the Barrel of Oil in the North South Equation (New York: Institute for World Order, 1978).

third world without her arms sales.[41]

The political and military aspects of the arms trade are very important. The arms deals provide a convenient device to the superpowers to extend their influence over the ruling elites in the third world. Arms sales have become a chief tool of diplomacy. The political influence engendered by arms sales is utilized to obtain bases and other logistic support for naval deployment. Such a link enhances the strategic posture of the superpowers, regionally as well as globally. For example, as Walter Isaacson reported, "the superpower struggle on the strategic Horn of Africa has led the U.S. to propose arms supplies, in return for the right to use naval and air facilities in Kenya and Somalia despite the fact that the two countries are bitter enemies".[42] George W. Shepherd used a political economy model called 'tribute system' to best explain arms deals between the superpowers and the Indian Ocean littorals. The tribute system is based on the ancient international principle that the strong protect the weak for a price. "These tribute systems consist of an arms transfer and strategic policy on the one hand and a trade and resources policy on the other".[43]

In order to analyse all aspects of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean, the role of the ruling elites of the

[41]Defense Monitor, January 1979. Quoted in Shepherd, G. W., "Demilitarization Proposals for the Indian Ocean," in The Indian Ocean in Global Politics, Larry Bowman and Ian Clark, eds. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), p. 244.

[42]Walter Isaacson, "Arming the World," Time, (26 October 1981), p. 32.

[43]Shepherd, "Demilitarization Proposals," p. 228.

littoral states in the militarization process should be taken into account. The reduction of superpower naval rivalry only to the competitive deployment of naval forces, isolating it from arms deals and military alliances, is deliberate. In such an analysis the blame for the escalating arms race and militarization of the Indian Ocean can solely be attributed to external powers. To be sure, arms deals and military alliances are not simply one-way processes, nor are littoral countries mere passive recipients of arms transfers by the superpowers. The arms deals and military alliances serve the political and security interests of the ruling elites of these countries who act as local agents of the exchange system of the arms/goods trade.

The fact that ruling elites in most countries of the region have to rely on support from the superpowers for their own existence provides a convenient climate for superpower manoeuvres. In many cases the ruling elites of the littoral countries lack the broad support of the people. They represent the interests of a small proportion of the population of the country and, hence, constantly face challenges from their own population. It is a fact that most states are nakedly repressive and maintain a widespread, repressive state machine. Because of the inherent wideness of the ruling elites, they tend to depend on outside powers for protection from their own population. They are ready to play the role of proxy for a superpower in exchange for arms and support which are necessary for them to stay in power.

Even states with an apparent democratic political set up are confronted with massive problems in providing the basic needs of the people. Because they are caught up in the barriers of under-

development, the rulers of these countries have little success in effectively addressing the socio-economic demands generated by rapid social change. The perpetuation of underdevelopment in the economy and the elitist nature of the political structure often frustrate the aspirations of the emerging social forces. As the existing system, by and large, identifies the interests of the ruling elites, they are not eager to take steps in the direction of structural changes in the socio-economic order so as to incorporate the interests of the masses. Therefore, the political system, though apparently democratic, lacks legitimacy or autonomy over the socio-political forces of the country. When the political system is incapable of accommodating emergent social forces, the vulnerability of the ruling classes to violent political protest is great. In such a situation, though they are vehemently opposed to the intervention of the superpowers in the affairs of the region in principle, the ruling elites themselves seek support and protection from superpowers. Sri Lanka, for instance, which first put forward the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal at the Non-Aligned Summit at Lusaka in September 1970, requested and sought military aid from both superpowers and other outside powers to suppress the uprising of youths in 1971 which was exclusively local in origin.

The relationship between arms deals and political corruption is very close. The rulers themselves or their close associates who act as local agents of the arms dealers benefit enormously from such deals in the form of kick-backs and commissions. As K. Subrahmanyam, Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, stated, "they (ruling elites) invest

heavily in armament purchase which results in close tie-ups with military establishments of the industrial powers, and also perhaps in sizeable kick-backs".[44] Most arms deals of military industrial complexes of the industrial world and the third world are more secret than normal commercial deals; they provide most lucrative channels for political corruption. Once involved in them, the attractiveness of murky deals is so great that it is difficult to get out of them.

It is not always true that the superpowers manipulate Indian Ocean states for their own advantage. In some cases the superpowers are caught up in the rivalries of their client states which are basically of local origin. The littoral states seek protection from the superpowers in situations of regional political conflict and the superpowers act as restraining forces. Furthermore, most Indian Ocean states are basically multi-ethnic societies and ethnic tension between different communities is very high. Indeed, the recent history of many Indian Ocean states is replete with records of violent communal clashes. Extra-territorial loyalties of the ethnic communities provide room for neighbouring states to meddle in the affairs of other countries. Again, Sri Lanka is an example. The separatist tendencies based on ethnic lines often flare up in prolonged violent armed struggles. They often get support and protection from another soil. In such circumstances weaker states tend to seek refuge in a superpower against the threat of a regional power.

[44]K. Subrahmanyam, Indian Security Perspectives, (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1982), p. 33.

As the term "superpower naval rivalry" is defined broadly to include all its bearings, it is necessary to analyse the role of the Indian Ocean states and the symmetry and asymmetry of interests between the superpowers and the ruling elites of these states. In the words, it is inaccurate to view superpower naval rivalry as just a thing imposed from above by the superpowers on the region. The equation of how a local conflict and regional superpower-link led to the introduction of naval diplomacy/ competitive naval deployment was dramatically illustrated during the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971.

**Indo-Pakistan War in 1971 and the Superpower Naval Deployment**

The superpower naval deployment in the Bay of Bengal during the Indo-Pakistan War revealed that a new era of naval politics had been reached in the Indian Ocean. In order to have a clear picture of the process, it is useful, firstly, to present the sequence of events. When war broke out there were three blue water navies operating in the Indian Ocean - British, Soviet, and American. British naval contingents were the largest, consisting of the attack carrier Eagle, the commando Carrier Albion, and at least six destroyers and escorts.[45] As the British took a neutral stand in the war and the British naval presence had nothing to do with the crisis in the sub-continent, they could not be considered a decisive factor in the power equation. The Soviet and American naval presence in the Indian Ocean was

[45]James M. McConnell and Anne M. Kelly, "Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the Indo-Pakistan Crisis" in Soviet Naval Developments: Capability and Context, Michael MccGwire, ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 443.

normal at the outbreak of the war. The United States had two destroyers and a seaplane tender at Bahrain. The Soviet Union had a destroyer, a conventional attack submarine, a minesweeper and a landing ship in the Bay of Bengal - the destroyer and the minesweeper had almost ended their six-month deployment rotation. As they were leaving the Indian Ocean, relief contingents, consisting of a destroyer equipped with SAM missiles and a minesweeper, crossed the Strait of Malacca to replace them on the 5th December. In view of the escalating crisis in the Indian sub-continent, the Soviet Union used routine rotation to reinforce her forces in the Indian Ocean "consisting of a variety of platforms for co-ordinated anti-carrier operations and self protection".[46] The U.S. reaction came on the 10th December in the form of Task Force 74, consisting of the nuclear-powered attack carrier Enterprise, the helicopter carrier Tripoli, three guided missile escorts, four destroyers and a nuclear attack submarine. These ships took position off Singapore. The Soviet Union responded quickly and sent another anti-carrier task force from the Pacific Fleet several days after Enterprise left Yankee Station to form Task Force 74.[47]

Though it was officially professed by the U.S. authorities, evacuation of foreigners was not the mission for which Task Force 74 was formed. It is highly unlikely that Soviet naval deployment was the main target. It is true that the U.S. move was prompted

[46]Ibid., p. 444

[47]The Soviet Naval Task Force, first observed in the Strait of Tsushima on the 15th, included a Kresta SSM cruiser, a Kashin SAM destroyer, and a pair of submarines, presumably one with and one without SSMs. Ibid.

by the reinforced Soviet naval presence and the Americans took care not to give the Soviet Union the privilege of an unchecked greenlight. As McConnell and Kelly have pointed out "the Task Force 74 was formed too late to be a reaction to the small Soviet relief force which fortuitously arrived on 5 December and it preceded all the other Soviet units in reaching the Indian Ocean".[48] The target seemed to be India. It is clear that the U.S. intended to show its naval muscle to limit Indian war aims. On the basis of C.I.A. reports, the United States opined that India intended to eliminate Pakistan's tank and airforce capability, and to dismember Pakistan. Pakistan had been the longstanding U.S. ally in the sub-continent. Nixon, especially, was an old friend of Pakistan's and his pro-Pakistani tilt was well documented. It became public that Kissinger warned in December 1971 at the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) meeting that he was "getting hell every half hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India".[49] The U.S. role during the crisis was very controversial and was subjected to severe criticisms. Christopher Van Hollen writes,

> The Nixon-Kissinger geo-political approach to South Asia was flawed both in conception and implementation. By attempting to resolve an essentially regional dispute through global geopolitics, the President and his National Security Advisor de-emphasized or misinterpretted the political dynamics in the sub- continent and exaggerated the role and influence of the major external powers.[50]

[48]Ibid., p. 445.

[49]Quoted in Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia," Asian Survey, XX:IV (April 1980), p. 229.

[50]Ibid., p.255.

The U.S. action in sending the Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal, was significant as the first major quasi-operational deployment of a major naval force to the area in a regional crisis scenario. Whether the U.S. Task Force had any significant impact on the war is highly doubtful but India viewed it as an application of gun-boat diplomacy by a superpower to a local crisis.

The large deployment of Soviet naval forces during the crisis illustrated clearly that Soviet naval power was a factor to be reckoned with in any strategic calculations in the Indain Ocean. The Soviets responded to the situation promptly by sending an additional naval force to shadow the U.S. naval forces. This Soviet counter-deployment force remained in the Indian Ocean until the U.S. Task Force departed the area, depriving one superpower of the monopoly of naval power.

The impact of superpower naval deployment on the littoral countries during the crisis is important. The perception that nuclear weapons were used to threaten India strengthened the hands of those who advocated the development of a military nuclear capability by India. The fact that the threat came from the sea was duly noted by Indian strategists. Henceforth, the development of Indian naval power received high priority. In general, the naval deployment of the superpowers brought home to the littoral countries more forcefully the dangers of naval competition in the Indian Ocean. Consequently, the Indian Ocean zone of peace idea put forward by Sri Lanka acquired momentum and strengthened regional support for the proposal.

**Sri Lankan Security Perceptions of Superpower Naval Rivalry**

Sri Lankan responses towards power politics in the Indian Ocean, particularly to superpower naval rivalry, took a more coherent form only after 1970 although Sri Lanka had been sensitive to the political and military-strategic developments that had taken place in the Indian Ocean since her independence and responded to them from time to time in an ad hoc manner. After 1970, Sri Lanka came forward to play a more prominent role in organizing and presenting littoral concerns and responses to superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

Developments in the early 1970s brought home to Sri Lankan policy-makers the importance of pursuing a well-defined Indian Ocean policy for the security interests of the country. First, the naval activities of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean increased at a rapid pace after 1970. Their competition and its diverse manifestations became a major element in the power politics of the region. Sri Lanka could not ignore the implications of these developments because of her strategic location. Second, the South Asian balance of power changed drastically in 1971 and India emerged as the preponderant power in South Asia as a result of the Indo-Pakistan War. The subjective factor that contributed to Sri Lanka's prominent role in Indian Ocean politics after 1970 was the formation of the United Front Government under the premiership of Mrs. Bandaranaike. In contrast to the low-profile policy of the previous governments, Mrs. Bandaranaike was more eager to play a prominent role in international affairs. Even during her first

term as premier from 1960-65, she had played a leading role at Non-Aligned Summit Meetings in Belgrade in 1961, and especially in Cairo in 1964, where she proposed a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean and registered her protest at the establishment of bases by extraneous powers there. More experienced in 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike was ready to play an even more prominent role in responding to the on-going developments in the Indian Ocean region.

In order to place Sri Lankan policy towards the naval competition of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean after 1970 in its proper perspective, it is necessary to trace the factors and conditions that influenced the foreign policy of Sri Lanka in the 1970s. Urmila Phadnis states that "as in the case of any other country, changing internal and external environment, as well as the character and personality of its decision-making have influenced Sri Lanka's foreign policy perspectives".[51] Two broad factors that shaped Sri Lankan foreign policy perspectives can be identified in this context: first, the general political orientation of the United Front Government and the balance of forces operating within the Government; next, the changing geo-political environment, particularly the South Asian geo-political framework, in which Sri Lanka perceived her national security interests.

[51]Urmila Phadnis, "Foreign Policy in Sri Lanka in the Seventies," The Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis Journal, VIII:1 (July-September, 1975), p. 93

**Internal Political Processes and their Impact on Foreign Policy Outputs after 1970 in Sri Lanka.**

In order to understand the internal inputs of foreign policy formation under Mrs. Bandaranaike we should pay attention, first of all, to the election campaign of the United Front in 1970. The United Front carried on a conspicuous left-oriented election campaign and won a resounding victory with a two-thirds majority. Very vociferous anti-colonial, anti-imperial rhetoric was heard very often from the election platforms of the United Front. The policy of the National Government was criticized as being pro-imperialist/pro-American, and, in contrast, the United Front pledged to follow a progressive foreign policy. Basic features of the progressive foreign policy enunciated by the United Front included a critical attitude towards U.S. foreign policy, an independent stand in dealing with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, opposition to the military activities and involvements of the superpowers in the region, support to the national liberation struggles, and an emphasis on 'South-South' economic relations and third world solidarity vis-a-vis economic domination by the West.

In an examination of the internal political environment that influenced the foreign policy perspectives of Sri Lanka, the impact of the Vietnam War should be mentioned. The Vietnam War was the international event that had the deepest impact on Sri Lanka's internal political environment in the late 1960s. It generated anti-American sentiment, especially among politically active youth and radical elements. Vietnam solidarity meetings and rallies were organized throughout the country and the leaders

of the United Front were invited to address them. They did not miss the opportunity and anti-American feeling figured largely at these meetings. The pledge by the United Front in its election manifesto to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam was a clear indication of the impact the Vietnam War had on Sri Lankan politics. This anti-Yankee sentiment strengthened further the opposition to the military involvements of the superpowers in the affairs of the region.

It is not easy to identify the competing forces operating within the United Front Government. In addition to the many forces operating within the government, constant realignments of forces and changes in the balance of power in the Coalition made the task more difficult. The three primary components of the United Front Coalition - the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), and the Communist Party (CP) - had their own soi-disant foreign policy perceptions though they were not invariably contradictory. The SLFP, the dominant partner, was a left-of-center party with strong populist leanings. Its foreign policy thinking was conditioned by classical non-alignment, anti-colonialism, and vaguely-defined third world solidarity. The LSSP, with its Trotskyite background, advocated an independent socialist foreign policy. By 1970 they were prepared to endorse non-alignment as the main principle of foreign policy rather than Trotskyite internationalism. The CP also accepted a non-aligned foreign policy but its pro-Soviet attitude was clearly apparent. Its non-alignment was directed mainly against the United States and the West; the Soviet Union was regarded as a friendly force. The decisive element in the

foreign policy decision-making process was the SLFP. A very strong pro-Chinese lobby was active within this party, especially after the United Front assumed office in 1970. This lobby was later centered around the party newspaper Janavegaya and consisted of many influential figures in the SLFP parliamentary group and the party.[52] Under the influence of Chinese propaganda, this group was critical of 'Soviet hegemonism and Soviet machination' in the third world. Because the pro-Chinese lobby was operating within the SLFP, and because some of its members were very close to the Prime Minister (who was in charge of the Ministry of External Affairs), their influence was effectively felt in the foreign policy decision-making process.

In addition to the political forces mentioned above, the indirect influence of the bureaucracy of the Ministry of External Affairs should also be taken into account. Though the general guidelines for position papers and reports were given by the political leadership, the influence of the bureaucrats who prepared these papers was considerable. There were many ways in which they could influence the political leadership. In many instances they acted as a 'balancing force' or brake to the political pressures. Since the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, was personally involved in the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal, most officers in the Ministry joined in the chorus supporting the

[52]The prominent figures of the Janavegaya group were Sunethra Bandaranaike and Kumar Rupasinghe. During the hey day of this group (1973-1975) it attracted many radical members of Parliament and party officials. In addition to the Janavegaya group, some veteran members of the party, such as Ratna Deshapriya Senanayake, Junior Minister for Plan and Plan Implementation, were noted for their pro-Chinese leanings.

proposal. However, some career officers in the Ministry advocated maintaining good relations with the West and stressed the possible effects of antagonizing the Western Powers. In the Ministry they were identified as the pro-Western lobby.[53]

All these forces affected the foreign policy-making process in a number of ways. In general, the anti-imperialist, anti-hegemonic stand was clearly visible. As varied forces were active, the mechanism of balancing each other was also apparent. For example, the pro-Soviet influence of the CP (S.L.) was balanced by the strong pro-Chinese lobby located within the SLFP and vice-versa. This helped Sri Lanka to maintain a kind of equidistance from both superpowers. Though anti-colonial rhetoric was loud at the time, it is wrong to think that Sri Lanka's non-alignment policy was directed against the West in favour of the Soviet Union. The term 'superpower hegemonism', which Sri Lanka opposed, included Soviet activities as well.

**Geo-Political Framework of Sri Lankan Security Perspectives**

The other important factors moulding Sri Lankan responses to the superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean is the geo-political context of Sri Lanka's security perspectives. In order to understand these perspectives, it is necessary to view Sri Lankan policy in the context of the South Asian sub-system.

Separated from India by a narrow strip of water, less than 20 miles in breadth, Sri Lanka is close enough to be influenced by India, but unlike the other small states in the region which

[53]In the first two years of the UF government their influence was weak. Later on, they gained strength and by 1975 their influence was very great.

are geographically linked to the Indian land mass, she is distant enough to maintain her own identity. The disparity of the two countries in size, population, and power is quite enormous. Geographically, India is about 50 times larger than Sri Lanka and her population is about 43 times larger. In addition, where industrial and naval power are concerned, India occupies the predominant place in South Asia. In 1970, the Indian Navy was equipped with an aircraft carrier, the Vikrant, two light cruisers, four submarines, sixteen destroyers and frigates, and six minesweepers. Naval aviation included 12 French-built Alize anti-submarine aircraft, 30 British-built Sea Hawk fighters, and an assortment of other small ship-based aircraft.[54] The Indian blue-water naval capability continued to grow in the 1970s and India became the only naval power of consequence in the region.

The location of Trincomalee, on the east coast of Sri Lanka facing the Bay of Bengal, one of the best natural harbours in the world, is another significant element in the geo-strategic landscape. As Kodikara points out, "although Trincomalee no longer plays a role as a naval base, its strategic location makes it a matter of much international concern, and India which has no comparable harbour on its East Coast, is most concerned about its potential status and uses".[55] The Indian interest in Trincomalee seems to be negative. Her concern is that Trincomalee should not be in the hands of an Indian adversary. What is important here is the fact that Sri Lanka's foreign policy thinking is influenced

[54]Captain A.P.S. Bindra (Indian Navy), "The Indian Ocean as seen by an Indian," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 96:3 (May, 1970) F.N., p. 193.

by the perception that Trincomalee is viewed by Indian strategists as important in Indian security calculations.

The emphasis on the concept of the 'strategic unity' of South Asia by Indian military strategists further contributes to Sri Lankan concerns. A former Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, Ravi Kaul, wrote in 1974 that

> Sri Lanka is as important strategically to India as Eire is to the United Kingdom or Taiwan to China ... As long as Sri Lanka is friendly or neutral, India has nothing to worry about but if there be any danger of the island falling under the domination of a power hostile to India, India cannot tolerate such a situation endangering her territorial integrity.56

The interaction between the big and the small in the same sub-system contains many 'soft bellies'. Indian strategists often complain that India gives unwanted consideration and undue importance to her small neighbours and that she never gets any gratitude for it.[57] It is natural that small countries, who live in the shade of big powers, have a psychological obsession about big-brother's expansionism. The Central American Republics can be

[55]S.U. Kodikara, Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka - A Third World Perspective, (New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1982), p. 22.

[56]Ravi Kaul, "The Indian Ocean : A Strategic Posture for India," in Indian Ocean Power Rivalry; ed. T.T. Poulouse, (New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, 1974), p. 66.

[57] On this, see the writings of K. Subrahmanyam. He asserts that India, "with its population, size, resources and industrial output, will be a dominant country of the region just as the U.S., Soviet Union and China happened to be in their respective areas". He further states that India's "neighbours will be prepared to grant it a big nation status to obtain what they want but in all other respects insist on treating it as an equal ... There is no reciprocity of commitment between India and its neighbours in regard to each other's security" K. Subrhamanyam, Indian Security Perspectives (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1982) pp. 211-214.

Bandaranaike and Mrs Gandhi, despite their common identity as two women Prime ministers, and despite perfunctory references to a shared heritage of Buddhism in their joint communiques, fear and suspicion loomed large in dealings between the two countries.

The uneasy marriage between India and Sri Lanka was further complicated by the existence of certain key issues in Sri Lankan politics regarding which India holds leverage. The most important among them is the question of citizenship of the Tamil estate workers of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.[59] Under the Sirimavo-Shastri Agreement, signed between India and Sri Lanka in 1964, Sri Lanka agreed to grant citizenship to 300,000 Indian Tamils and India agreed to take back 525,000 out of the estimated total of 975,000 such persons. Though it was a major step in resolving the wrangles between the two countries, the Agreement left many points of discord. First of all, 150,000 persons were not dealt with by the Agreement. Further, the process of implementation of the Agreement did not proceed smoothly due to numerous political and administrative difficulties. Even in 1970 the issue of citizenship and problems in implementing the Agreement had become a major subject in Indo-Sri Lankan negotiations.

The other important issue that emerged in Indo-Sri Lankan relations in the early 1970s was the demarcation of the maritime

[59]The Citizenship Act (No. 3) of 1949 defined the qualifications for citizenship of Sri Lanka and debarred the Tamil estate workers who came relatively recently to work on plantations from being citizens of Sri Lanka. But it left the question unresolved. In the early post-independence period, first Dudley Senanayake and then Sir John Kotelawela had a series of discussions with India to come to an agreement over this issue. Finally, Sirimavo Bandaranaike was able to reach an agreement with the then Indian Prime Minister ,Lal Bahadur Shastri, in 1964 to solve this problem.

adduced as a case in point. In some respects, however, the South Asian situation is different. Though India is a preponderant power in South Asia she is not a great power. Therefore, her position is not secure and she fears that the other states in the region will conduct their external relations so as to harm Indian security interests. Therefore, power relations between the medium power and the small powers in South Asia are governed by feelings of suspicion and fear. Suspicion and fear involve, firstly, suspicion on the part of the medium power that small states will bring extra-regional powers into the power balance of the area, and, secondly apprehension on the part of the small states of being dominated by the medium power. This creates an inevitable sense of insecurity among both medium and small states. Therefore, as Cohen has pointed out, the security system of South Asia is basically a system of insecurity.[58]

As has been shown earlier (chapter II), the fear of 'big-brother' was one of the main elements of the defence perspective of the first UNP regime of 1948-56. After S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike came to power in 1956, this fear psychosis appeared to have faded away. As India extended her defence perimeters concomitant with the growth of her military-industrial potential, especially in the 1970s, Sri Lanka again began to feel the 'Indian giant' was lying astride north of Sri Lanka. During the period of Mrs. Bandaranaike's second premiership, which began in 1970, the relationship between the two countries appeared very smooth. However, despite excellent personal relations between Mrs

[58]Cited in G.S. Bhargave, South Asian Security After Afghanistan, (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1983), p. 187.

boundary between the two countries in the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar. In view of the general tendency towards the extension of the territorial sea and contiguous zone after the UNCLOS II Convention in 1958, the demarcation of the maritime boundary between the two countries occupied a high priority in the agenda of Indo-Sri Lankan dealings. In 1967 both countries extended their territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, overlapping each other in the Palk Strait. In addition, the extension of contiguous zones demanded a mutually accepted boundary to avoid a clash of interests.[60]

The implications of the quite apparent ethnic relationship between Sri Lankan Tamils, who are concentrated mainly in the North and the East of the island, and their counterparts in South India, must be taken into account in any analysis of the broad geo-political canvas on which the pattern of behaviour of both countries is painted. The implications of this relationship should be viewed against the background of worsening relations between the two principal communities in Sri Lanka - the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The history of post-independent Sri Lanka was marred by sporadic, violent communal clashes. The failure of the post-independent state to integrate political forces representing the Sri Lankan Tamils into the mainstream of politics kept both communities suspicious of each other. "The Tamils feel that they may be swamped by the Sinhalese and the fact that the Tamils in South India and Sri Lanka grossly

[60]The actual issue was the ownership of an oval-shaped island with a circumference of three miles named Kachchativu island, situated 10.5 miles off Sri Lanka and 12.5 miles from India.

outnumber the Sinhalese is seen by the latter as a potential threat to their existence".[61] Sri Lanka fears that alleged extra-territorial loyalties of the Tamils in Sri Lanka provide leverage to India to meddle in Sri Lankan affairs and that the Tamil community in Sri Lanka would act as the Trojan horse.

There were many cross-currents beneath the tranquil surface of Indo-Sri Lankan relations in the 1970s. On the part of India the suspicion was that Sri Lanka would become or was prone to become a southern link of an anti-Indian network encircling India. Soon after Mrs.Indira Gandhi visited Sri Lanka in 1973, to discuss many unresolved issues existing between the two countries, Denzil Peiris reported the climate as follows:

> There was a ghostly Siamese twin at the Indo-Sri Lanka talks, one that has haunted all previous encounters at every level. This is the linked body of Sri Lanka's fear of domination and expansion by India and the Indian suspicion that Sri Lanka seeks alignments, as a countervailing force to its giant neighbour, with powers unfriendly to India.62

Broadly speaking, two general guidelines are visible in Sri Lankan behaviour with regard to India. First, there was the consideration that Sri Lanka cannot afford to antagonize India. Second, motivated by the fear syndrome, Sri Lanka tried to build safeguards in the form of countervailing force against the perceived threat from the 'big brother'. Thus the Colombo-Beijing axis, in addition to the Colombo-Karachi axis, acquired

[61]D.M. Prasad, "Indo-Sri Lanka Relations: Mutual Problems and Common Approaches," in Studies in India's Foreign Policy, Surendra Chopra, ed. (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983), p. 297.

[62]Far Eastern Economic Review, May 21, 1973, p. 26.

importance in Sri Lankan strategy. Sri Lanka's strong relations with China received high importance in this context.[63] Sri Lanka's response to the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war was a clear illustration of her attempt to maintain a balance of power in the South Asian political set-up.[64]

The Sri Lankan response to superpower naval rivalry should be viewed in the context of the South Asian geo-political framework. Accordingly, Sri Lankan policy with respect to superpower naval rivalry was intended to deal with two considerations. First, Sri Lanka considered that the escalation of this rivalry, especially competitive naval deployment, was a matter of grave concern for a strategically located country whose history was replete with the experience of falling prey to great power rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Second, Sri Lanka was concerned with how to deal with India, which was increasingly becoming a blue water naval power in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka's policy towards superpower naval rivalry was evolving while Sri Lanka was responding to developments in the Indian Ocean by balancing these two considerations. Generally speaking, Sri Lanka's main concern, at first, (roughly up to 1974) was the former. She wanted the Indian Ocean to be free from superpower naval rivalry and to be transformed into a zone of peace. From the very beginning,

[63]Vijay Kumar touches on this point, see India and Sri Lanka-China Relations (1948-84), (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1986), pp. 113-153.

[64]During the war Sri Lanka asserted a strictly neutral stand but some Indian writers alleged that despite professed neutrality, Sri Lanka leaned towards Pakistan, see Urmila Phadnis and S.D. Muni, "Emergence of Bangladesh - Responses of Ceylon and Nepal," South Asian Studies, 7:2 (July 1972), pp. 171-192.

however, Sri Lanka articulated a position subtly distinct from that of India. In view of Sri Lanka's limited power potential, she has been well aware of the fact that her ability to influence the superpowers and the major littorals by independent unilateral action would be severely limited. As such, Sri Lanka had to rely on the mechanisms of the established international organizations in order to present the small island perspective on superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. She effectively used international forums such as the Non-Aligned Summit Meetings, the Commonwealth gatherings and the United Nations to mobilize international opinion on the Indian Ocean issue.

**Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal**

The origin of the IOPZ can be traced back to the Cairo Summit of the Heads of Non-Aligned states in 1964. The three resolutions presented by Sri Lanka to the Conference marked an early manifestation of the peace zone concept. Again in 1970 Mrs. Bandaranaike took the initiative and developed the earlier proposal of a nuclear free zone to the broader concept of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone. In presenting the proposal to the Third Summit of the Heads of Non-Aligned states in Lusaka in 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike stated that:

> By the time of our second meeting in Cairo, a nuclear balance had been established between the great powers. But we found ourselves vulnerable to a variety of pressures upon our independence, particularly where great power interests were not in direct conflict. We were witnesses at that time to disputes which had been left over from colonial times being exploited by neo-colonial forces in their long term interests.65

[65]Ceylon Today, XIX:9-10 (Sept. -Oct., 1970) p. 4.

At the Lusaka Conference, Mrs. Bandaranaike did not elaborate on the Peace Zone Proposal. The intention was just to introduce the concept and mobilize the opinion of non-aligned states over the issue of the militarization of the Indian Ocean as a result of superpower naval rivalry. The Lusaka Summit endorsed the proposal and the Final Declaration on Peace, Independence, Development and Democratization of International Relations, called upon all states,

> to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace from which great power rivalry and competition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition, either army, navy or airforces bases are excluded. The area should also be free of nuclear weapons.66

After the Lusaka Summit, the Singapore Conference of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth countries, held in January 1971, provided a good opportunity to discuss the Indian Ocean issue, because the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland states constituted the bulk of the membership of the Commonwealth and also Britain was still among the major powers in the Indian Ocean. The militarization of the Indian Ocean in the face of increasing superpower naval rivalry in the area became a major issue of discussion at the Conference. Sri Lanka took the lead once again and presented to the Conference a 'Memorandum on the Indian Ocean Security' elaborating on the concept of a zone of peace. The Memorandum pointed out that, although the Indian Ocean forms a geographical and historical entity, links between countries in the region are weak. In effect a peace zone would

[66]Non-Aligned Conferences: Basic Documents 1961-1975. (Colombo: Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, 1976), pp. 50-51.

provide the transitional minimum conditions for the development of an 'Indian Ocean Community' in which problems of security would be dealt with by orderly and institutional means for promoting peaceful change. According to the memorandum,

> The ultimate object of the Peace Zone would be to establish the Indian Ocean as a power vacuum so that the abrasive conflicts of the 'cold war' do not enter it and the region could concentrate on the solution of its major problems of security, underdevelopment, etc.67

In her speech to the Conference, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister explained why Sri Lanka was interested in Indian Ocean issues. "We are a small country ... since the 16th century we have been invaded, occupied and colonized ... We know that the principal reason for the colonization of Ceylon was its geographically strategic situation". She explained that "The substance of our position is that weapons attract weapons, and bases whatever they may be called, will attract bases from the opposing parties. If either of the superpowers establishes a naval base in the Indian Ocean, it will only be a matter of time before the other follows suit".[68] The Memorandum found general acceptance at the Conference but Britain and Australia had some reservations. However, the final communique stated that Commonwealth countries "agreed on the desirability of ensuring that the Indian Ocean remains an area of peace and stability".[69] The Singapore

[67]Ceylon's Memorandum on Indian Ocean Security, reprinted in Devendra Kanshik, The Indian Ocean Towards a Peace Zone (New Delhi: Vikas Pub., 1972), App. II, p. 188.

[68]Text of Speech made by Mrs. Bandaranaike at the Meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Singapore on 21 January 1971, Ibid., App. III, p. 191.

[69]The Times, (London), 23 January 1971, p. 4.

Conference marked another step in the development of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Concept. The vague concept introduced at the Lusaka Summit obtained some substance at the Singapore Conference. The well-formulated concept of an Indian Ocean Peace Zone could be found when Sri Lanka presented the proposal to the United Nations.

In October 1971, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister appeared before the General Assembly of the United Nations to present the proposal for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. In her speech to the General Assembly, she elaborated on the concept, and on what steps should be taken to implement the proposal. The concept of a Zone of Peace is inherent in the idea of non-alignment which requires that the land territories, air space, and territorial waters of non-aligned states must be closed to great power conflicts and rivalries. In emphasizing the need for a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean, she stated that it was an integral part of the larger design of world peace and security and of general and complete disarmament. The proposal required universal acceptance because of its global implications. It is very important to note that the Sri Lankan Prime Minister stated that the situation of the Indian Ocean, as distinct from other regions of the world, was specially conducive to the application of a Zone of Peace to the area for two reasons:

1. There is no nuclear power or any major nation among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean;

2. The military and naval forces of the great powers in the Indian Ocean have not yet assumed significant proportions and the adoption of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal would not involve us in the necessity of making elaborate provisions for the

> dismantling of existing military bases and installations, as would be the case with other areas.70

At the United Nations she laid down for the first time what the Peace Zone would mean in detail:

> The essence of our proposal is that in the Indian Ocean a defined area shall be declared be a zone of peace and reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes under an appropriate regulatory system. Within the zone no armament of any kind, defensive and offensive, may be installed on or in the sea, on the subjacent sea bed or land areas. Ships of all nations may exercise the right of transit but warships and ships carrying warlike equipment including submarines, may not stop for other than emergency reasons of a technical, mechanical or humanitarian nature. No manoeuvres by warships of any kind shall be permitted. Naval intelligence operations shall be forbidden. No weapon test of any kind may be conducted. The regulatory system to be established will be under effective international control.71

After Mrs. Bandaranaike's appeal, the permanent representative of Sri Lanka at the UN, Shirley Amerasinghe, formally requested the Secretary-General on 1 Ocotober 1971 that the 'Declaration of the Indian OCean as a Zone of Peace' be included on the Agenda of the 26th Session. Tanzania joined later, on 6 October 1971, as a co-sponsor. The plenary meeting of the General Assembly included the agenda request and it was referred to the First Committee to consider and report back.

The original proposal made by Sri Lanka in the First Committee was very comprehensive and it related as much to the naval forces of the littoral states as to the forces of the outside powers. It envisaged the exclusion of armaments,

[70]Ceylon Today, XX: 9-10 (Sept. - Oct. 1971), p. 13.

[71]Ibid., p. 14.

defensive and ofensive, and military installations from the prescribed area. As Philip Towle pointed out, the strong Indian Ocean countries "brought pressure on the Sri Lankans behind the scenes to slant their resolution only against the Great powers".[72] Thus, Shirley Amerasinghe stated:

> In the course of our consultations it became apparent that members of the Committee were not ready for such a comprehensive scheme for the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean ... our proposal and our approach have therefore undergone a radical change in deference to the restrictions expressed by our critics.73

Consequently, the original Sri Lankan resolution had to be modified. The resolution called upon the great powers to enter into immediate consultation with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean with a view to

> eliminating from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestations of Great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of Great Power rivalry.74

The draft resolution was presented to the First Committee on December 1st and put to a vote on the 14th. Fifty members voted for the resolution, none against it, but forty-nine abstained. On 16th December the General Assembly passed the resolution without any changes with sixty-one members for the resolution,

[72]Philip Towle, Naval Power in the Indian Ocean: Threats, Bluff and Fantasies, (Canberra: The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1975), p. 57.

[73]UN, First Committee, 1834 Meeting, 23 November 1971.

[74]UN General Assembly, 26th Session. Resolution 2832 (XXVI), 16 December 1971.

none against and fifty-five abstainees.[75]

Though the UN declared the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace by virtue of the Third World majority, there was a long way to go in the direction of implementing it. Resolution 2832 (XXVI) requested "the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session on the progress that has been made with regard to the implementation of this Declaration".[76] The Secretary-General asked on 10th February 1972 to be informed of what measures needed to be taken regarding the implementation of the resolution. The response was not satisfactory.

The resolution on the IOPZ was once again included in the UN Agenda in 1972. Once it came up for discussion the Secretary-General reported that 'consultations' as envisaged in the Resolution 2832 (XXVI) had not taken place. The major issue at the deliberations on the resolution was how to operationalize it. Sri Lanka's representative, Shirley Amerasinghe, pointed out that three suggestions were made about the operationalization of the Peace Zone Resolution. They were

A. the matter should be referred to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

B. to ask states to enter into consultations, a point which had been made in the 1971 resolution.

[75]Both Western and Eastern bloc countries abstained and among Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland countries, Australia, Madagascar, New Zealand, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, and Thailand abstained.

[76]U.N. Resolution 2832 (XXVI).

C. littoral states of the I.O. should reach an agreement among themselves.

All the suggestions were not productive or feasible. The first suggestion was tantamount to the speedy demise of the proposal.[77] The resolution in 1972 just repeated the earlier one but, most important, it proposed the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of fifteen members. The task assigned to the Ad Hoc Committee was

> to study the implications of the proposal with special reference to the practical measures that may be taken in furtherance of the objectives of the resolution, having due regard to the security interests of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean and the interests of any other states consistent with the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.78

The Ad Hoc Committee was responsible for reporting to the General Assembly at its 20th Session. The Resolution did not specify the actual composition of the Committee. Sri Lanka's representative, Shirley Amerasinghe, suggested that, instead of the normal practice of equitable geographical distribution, principles of interests, anxiety, and involvement of the countries should be taken to determine the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee.[79] In

[77]U.N. General Assembly, 27th Session, Doc. A/C. 1/PV. 1904, 29 November 1972.

[78]U.N. General Assembly, 27th Session, Resolution 2992 (XXVII), 15 December 1972.

[79]The criterion of interest really concerns the littoral hinterland states; the criterion of anxiety concerns those littoral states and hinterland states which have certain problems with regard to the application of the concept, those which have military alliances or other arrangements or whose national security interests might in some way or other be jeopardized; and the criterion of involvement concerns the Great Powers because it is they which are involved in the area," U.N. General Assembly, Doc A//PV. 1904, 29 Nov. 1972, p. 17.

1972 the supporters of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposal proliferated, though the attitude of the maritime powers to the proposal did not change. As the General Assembly passed the Resolution by 72 voted to none with 35 abstentions, a 15-member Ad Hoc Committee was designated with Sri Lanka's representative, Shirley Amerasinghe, as the Chairman.

After the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee, it became the hub of the activities on the IOPZ at the U.N.. The Ad Hoc Committee held eleven meetings between 27th February and 4th October 1973. The Committee submitted a report, which included a working paper prepared by Sri Lanka. This working paper was a valuable contribution to the discussions. It discusses various aspects of practical problems relating to the IOPZ. One integrally related issue was denuclearization of the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka suggested a three-point proposal in the direction of denuclearization of the Indian Ocean. First, as far as the countries of the region are concerned, they had to commit themselves to a policy of denuclearization which would entail the permanent renunciation of the nuclear option; second, the Indian Ocean countries would be under an obligation to deny the use of territory, territorial waters, and air space to nuclear weapons belonging to other states. Third, the nuclear powers had to undertake an obligation not to deploy nuclear weapons in the peace zone area.[80] This scheme is important because it highlighted the obligations and responsibilities of the Indian Ocean states in the implementation of the IOPZ.

[80]U.N. General Assembly, 28th Session, Supplement No. 29, p. 10.

The establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee marked the beginning of a new stage in the evolution of IOPZ. It was the first concrete action taken in the direction of the implementation of the proposal. The Committee provided a convenient forum to present the different interpretations and options of the Indian Ocean littoral states themselves, conceived within the parameters of their own security contexts. The differences among the Indian Ocean states themselves came to the surface when it came to concrete action.

After the Middle East War in October 1973, the political strategic climate of the Indian Ocean changed radically. In addition, the acquisition of a nuclear capability by India in 1974 was an important development in the strategic environment in the Indian Ocean. After 1973 the Ad Hoc Committee had to grapple with the problems arising out of these developments.

Chapter VI

## The Stabilization of Superpower Naval Positions in the Indian Ocean : From the Oil Crisis to the NALT

The outbreak of the Middle East War (Yom Kippur) in October 1973 and the subsequent oil embargo and price-hike drastically changed the political and strategic climate of the Indian Ocean. The United States' response to the use of oil as a political weapon by the OPEC countries marked a distinct departure from the earlier rather restrained U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean. In restrospect, it is clear that not only the developments associated with the Yom Kippur war in October 1973 and oil embargo but also some other events in the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland in 1974 marked a new phase in power politics in the Indian Ocean. The explosion of a plutonium device in Pokharan, Rajasthan by Indian scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) in India on 18 May 1974 was crucially important.[1] The emergence of a nuclear power from the Indian Ocean littorals has radically changed the strategic landscape there. Consequently, the context of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal has also changed since 1974. Furthermore, the left wing military coup in Portugal in April 1974 expedited the dissolution of the Portuguese empire in Southern Africa which set the super

[1]For a good discussion of the background of the Indian attempt to acquire nuclear capability, see: Syhan Bhatia, India's Nuclear Bomb (Ghaziabad: Vikas Publishing House (Pvt) Ltd., 1979), p. 1-165.

power competition in motion in another area of the Indian Ocean littoral. The Soviet Union entered forcefully into the politics of Southern Africa with the process of violent birth of new states out of the antiquated Portuguese empire. The revolutionary military putsch and the collapse of the Haile Selassie regime in Ethiopia altered the strategic situation in the Horn of Africa. These developments on the Western flank of the Indian Ocean had a decisive impact on the politics of the entire region.

**Impact of the October War**

The Arab oil embargo against the United States and other pro-Israeli States during the October war was responsible for bringing about many changes in U.S. security perceptions in the Indian Ocean. It is important to note that the threat to U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean emerged not from any action of the Soviet Union but from the collective action of some of the littoral states which were hitherto considered conservative and pro-Western in their foreign policy outlook. The OPEC oil embargo and the OPEC price hike shattered the earlier confidence that the United States and other Western countries shared regarding the continuous oil supply mainly from the Persian Gulf. The West was quite aware of the importance of the oil, the lifeline of their industrial economies, but their confidence was based on the belief that oil-producing countries would not join hands to challenge the economic power of the industrial world. Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs, for instance, asserted before Congress in the summer of 1973 that

"the mutuality of commercial interests between (oil) producers and consumers was sufficient to insulate this essential commercial relationship from political effects of the Arab/Israel dispute".[2] This overconfidence proved baseless after October 1973.

The dire economic consequences and massive disruptions in domestic distribution systems brought on by the oil embargo and the price-hike revealed that western countries were more vulnerable to the Persian Gulf oil supply than previously supposed. It became evident that even in the United States, importing only a relatively small portion of her oil requirements from the Persian Gulf, let alone in totally dependent countries such as Japan, that a reduction of a "handful of percentage points made a big difference at the gas pumps".[3] As a result, a guaranteed continuous supply of oil became a very important security interest of the West, as the well-being of the industrialized economies was solely dependent on an uninterrupted supply. Accordingly, the war and the oil crisis transformed the earlier 'minimalist' view of the Indian Ocean and U.S naval strategists came forward to view it as an "area with potential to influence a major shift in the global power balance over the next decade".[4]

[2]Cited in Gary Sick, op. cit., p. 62.

[3]U.S., Congress, House, Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, p. 24.

[4]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Briefing on Diego Garcia and Patrol Frigate, Statement of Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, 93rd Congress, 2nd sess. (Washington: Government Printing Ofice, 1974), p. 2; and also Ibid., Second Supplemental Appropriations for FY 1974, op. cit., p. 2118.

Congressional hearings immediately following the oil crisis clearly reveal that policy-makers in the Department of Defense considered the October war as a watershed in the strategic thinking on the Indian Ocean. The Yom Kippur war has been highlighted as one that taught many strategic and political lessons. The war proved that the United States was not militarily sufficiently prepared to handle the situation in October 1973. Firstly, "the emergency despatch of the carrier-based naval power during the height of the 1973 war failed to influence events in favour of the United States".[5] Secondly, the problem of logistic constraints became a major problem that the United States faced in October 1973 as was the case with the British during the Suez crisis in 1956. The cut-off of fuel supply to U.S naval forces forced them to depend on improvised oil supplies from tankers 4,000 miles away at Subic Bay in the Philippines. Admiral Grojean, USN, explained the difficulties as:

> The reliance of a naval task group in the Indian Ocean on general support from present U.S bases (such as Subic) presents severe operational problems. Mobile Logistic Support Force (MLSF) support of a task group which operates continuously requires total dedication of all SEVENTHFLT MLFS assets due to the length of the logistics tail involved. During past operations in the Indian Ocean, the Navy has resorted to the use of Military Sealift Command (MSC) charter tankers, Royal Fleet Auxiliary oilers, civilian resources in the Indian Ocean littoral in order to maintain other naval commitments in the Western Pacific.6

[5]Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 69.

[6]U.S., Congress, House, Sub-Committee of the Committee on Appropriations, Second Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1974, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 63.

The war also brought home to the United States the precariousness of their existing logistic facilities in the Indian Ocean littoral. The Sultan of Bahrain demanded the termination of the use of Bahrain by Mid East For. It should be noted that, in response to U.S. naval deployment, the Soviet Union doubled the number of its warships in the Indian Ocean, which brought home to the United States once again and more forcefully the stark reality that the era of Western monopoly of seapower in the Indian Ocean had ended.

Political lessons of the war were equally important. The unwillingness of U.S allies to lend assistance during the crisis caused much concern. It was felt that basically oil was the interest of U.S. allies rather than the United States herself and the Nixon Doctrine advocated the need to share the responsibility of the defence of Western interests with the allies. The basic judgement after the war was that the United States would have to go it alone rather than rely on allied support. The refusal of U.S. allies, except Portugal, of overflight facilities in support of Israel is a clear reminder of how the Arab-Israeli conflict overwhelms the politics of the Middle East. The sudden outbreak of the war and the actions of hitherto pro-Western states in the region during the crisis revealed that the U.S. foot in the quick-sand of the Middle East had not been firm.

**U.S. Responses to the October War**

The immediate response of the United States to the crisis was the despatch of a carrier task force led by U.S.S. Hancock into the Arabian Sea in November 1973. This increased naval

presence was maintained until April 1974. In December the U.S.S. Hancock was replaced by Oriscany. Another task force led by Kitty Hawk entered the area in March 1974. The maintenance of the carrier task force even after the cease-fire was concluded, but while the oil embargo continued, suggests that the U.S. intention in sending a task force was gunboat diplomacy, i.e. to coerce the Gulf States to abandon the oil embargo.[7] It was lifted in March and the task force left the area in April 1974. However, the Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger, announced in December 1973 that the United States had decided to re-establish the pattern of regular visits of the U.S. Navy to the Indian Ocean.[8] In January 1974, he warned the Arabs that "the States in the Middle East are running too high a risk if they sought to use the oil weapon to cripple the larger mass of the industrial world".[9] Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared in December 1974 that

> We should have learned from Vietnam that it is easier to get into war than get out of it. I am not saying there is no circumstance where we would not use force. But it is one thing to use it in the case of a dispute over prices, it is another where there is some actual strangulation of the industrial world.10

[7]Clark and Beazley, The Politics of Intrusion, p. 30.

[8]U.S., Congress, Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit., p. 39.

[9]Television Interview of Secretary of Defense Schlesinger by Hugh Sidney, Washington Straight Talk, January 7, 1974.

[10]U.S., Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Oil Fields as Military Objectives - A Feasibility Study, prepared for the Special Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: G.P.O. 1975), p. 79.

Whether the projection of U.S. military power altered the course of action of the Arab countries or directly contributed to the cessation of hostilities between the main belligerents was very doubtful. U.S. officers of the Department of Defense asserted that "it played the traditional role which military power should play, that of supporting diplomatic initiatives".[11] However, it is obvious that, as Clark observes, Egypt agreed to a cease-fire because its political objectives in going to war had been achieved and were placed in jeopardy by the danger of defeat."[12] The lifting of the oil embargo was attributed partly to Kissinger's successful effort in bringing conservative Arab states into his peace negotiations[13] and partly to willingness on the part of conservative Arab rulers to come to terms with the United States. The most obvious consequence of the projection of military muscle was the generation of local hostility and it was viewed by the littoral states as a classic example of the use of gunboat diplomacy by a superpower to threaten a group of third world states in order to influence their actions in favour of that particular superpower.

By April 1974 the situation began to be normal and the initial dust seemed settled. Kissinger's intense diplomatic efforts resulted in the conclusion of disengagement agreements and in mending fences between the Unites States and Arab States.

[11]U.S. Congress, Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, op. cit., p. 24.

[12]Clark and Beazeley, Politics of Intrusion, p. 31.

[13]Department of State Bulletin, 71, 2 December 1975, (the Statement by Alfred Atherton).

It was now time to consider seriously the long term policy of the United States in the Persian Gulf in particular and in the Indian Ocean in general. It was generally recognised that an increased military presence should be a major element of U.S. policy with the recognition that uninterrupted oil supply from the Gulf was a crucial national security interest of the United States. U.S. policy-makers believed that American naval muscle enhanced the U.S. posture in the area and provided necessary weight to the diplomatic manoeuvres.[14] What was needed now was to institutionalize the contingency naval actions taken during the crisis. As Commander Gary Sick, USN, Rtd., recalled, those contingency actions

> had proved operationally feasible and much of the political cost had already been paid. Thus, it was decided to maintain a contingency naval presence in the form of periodic deployment from the Pacific Fleet. In practice, it took the form of three deployments per year, with every other task force to include an aircraft carrier.15

U.S. determination to maintain naval strength in the Western Indian Ocean was clearly illustrated by the CENTO Midlink exercise in November 1974. This was the largest CENTO exercise so far. The aircraft carrier USS Constellation which was participating in the naval exercise in the Arabian Sea "(S)uddenly broke off from the exercise and conducted air operations during

[14]See Testimonies of Owen Zurhellen, Deputy Director of U.S. Arms Control and Diasarmament Agency, Seymour Weiss, Director, Bureau of Politico Military Affairs of the State Department, James H. Noyes, Deputy Assistant Secratary of State for Near Eastern, African and South Asian Affairs, and Elmo Zumwalt, Admiral of the U.S. Navy in the House Hearings before the Sub-Committees, U.S., Congress in 1974 and 1975.

[15]Gary Sick, op. cit., p. 65.

the 36-hour circumnavigation of the Gulf".[16] Despite these developments the fundamental traits of the Nixon Doctrine remained with some modifications the framework of U.S. policy after 1974 with the success of the diplomatic efforts of the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. The conclusions of the major review of U.S. interests and policy options in the Persian Gulf conducted in 1972 under the framework of the Nixon Doctrine were still considered to be valid.[17] The principles enunciated in NSSM 238, according to Emile A Nakhleh, "have remained for the most part the basis of U.S. policy towards the Persian Gulf/Arabian Peninsula/Indian Ocean region for a decade".[18]

The accumulation of petro-dollar revenue on a phenomenal scale in the hands of the Persian Gulf states after the OPEC price-hike added a new dimension to the politics of the region. In view of this development, Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, pointed out that one of the U.S. objectives in the Gulf was "to assist and encourage the countries of the region to recycle the surplus revenue into the world economy in an orderly and uninterrupted manner".[19] This further required the United States

[16]Ibid., p. 64.

[17]This review was contained in a classified internal National Security Study Memorandum - NSSM 238. However, a summary of these broad principles was outlined by the Assistant Secratary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Joseph Sisco, before Congress in August 1972.

[18]Emile A. Nakhleh, The Persian Gulf and American Policy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 101.

[19]U.S. Congress, House, Sub-Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Persian Gulf, 1974 : Politics, Arms and Power, 23rd Congress, 2nd Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 73.

to come to a rapproachment with the Arab States. The process of Arab-U.S. rapproachement proceeded rapidly with the establishment of joint commissions in economic and security fields between the United States and Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Persian Gulf states offered an important arms market for the United States. As a result, the petro-dollar and arms sale cycle acquired full rhythm after 1973. American arms sales to the Gulf states amounted to $125 million in 1970; this rose to $492 million in 1971, $860 million in 1972, $2,193 million in 1973, $4,400 million in 1974 and $4,492 million in 1975.[20] As Table V indicates, Iran and Saudi Arabia became the major buyers of U.S. arms who launched major schemes of reorganizing their armed forces. Lesser Gulf States also initiated ambitious arms procurement programmes.

Table V

**Major Sources of Arms Purchases by the Gulf Countries, 1975-79** ($mn)

| Country | Total | U.S.S.R | U.S | France | W. Germany |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saudi Arabia | 3,600 | - | 1,800 | 290 | 900 |
| Iran | 8,700 | 650 | 6,600 | 200 | 310 |
| Iraq | 6,800 | 4,900 | - | 410 | 20 |
| Kuwait | 800 | 50 | 350 | 150 | 210 |
| Qatar | 70 | - | 5 | 50 | 10 |
| Oman | 370 | - | 10 | - | 330 |
| UAE | 410 | - | 10 | 350 | 30 |
| Bahrain | 20 | | | 10 | |
| Total | 20,770 | 5,600 | 8,775 | 1460 | 1810 |

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfers 1970-1979 (Washington D.C., 1979)

In addition to the economic aspects of the arms trade (illustrated in Chapter 4), the link between the arms sales and U.S. military strategic policy is very clear. For example, the Sultan of Oman visited Washington in January 1974, successfully mending fences between the two countries and laying the foundation for an Oman-U.S. security relationship. More important was the sale of two anti-tank missile systems to Oman, and the Sultan's willingness to permit U.S. aircraft to use Masirah Island.[21]

The American position and influence after the October War could not be established by the direct threat to use coercive military power. The U.S. even conducted a feasibility study on oil fields as military objectives. But the Gulf States were not totally unprepared to meet the challenge. In March 1975, OPEC countries declared "their readiness to counteract [U.S./Allied] threats with a unified response whenever the need arises, notably in the case of aggression".[22] It was the hand of economic co-operation and arms deals that brought the Persian Gulf states (except Iraq) under U.S. hegemony. Conservative rulers of the region were ready to buy the economic package and enter into the 'arms-goods' circle because it also served their political and

[20]op. cit., Special Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, The Persian Gulf, 1975 : the Continuing Debate on Arms Sales, Hearings, 24th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 19.

[21]Gary Sick, op. cit., p. 67.

[22]U.S. Congress, House, Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations, Congressional Research Service, Oil Fields as Military Objectives, A Feasibility Study, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1975), p. 16.

economic interests. However, the United States by no means abandoned the military option. It was believed that a "military presence can support diplomacy without it ever having to be used".[23] U.S. military preparedness in the Indian Ocean was expected to be enhanced by the regular deployment of naval forces and, more importantly, by expansion of the Diego Garcia base facilities.

**The Expansion of Diego Garcia Base Facilities**

The expansion of Diego Garcia from an austere communications station to a full-fledged base capable of providing facilities for forward deployment of a carrier task force was the major development from the military point of view on the part of the United States. In the period 1974-75, the debate over U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean centered mainly around the controversy over the expansion of Diego Garcia. The 'lessons' of the October war were employed by the U.S.Navy to neutralize opposition to the expansion of the Diego Garcia base. They alleged that the logistic constraints created by the lack of secure base facilities and unwillingness on the part of the U.S. allies to support U.S. efforts associated with the war highlighted the need for expanding the Diego Garcia Base facilities. The U.S. Defense Department exploited the changed atmosphere after the Yom Kippur war and presented the Diego Garcia expansion plan on a priority basis. It requested authorization under Military Procurement Supplemental for Financial Year 1974; it also requested a $29 million authorization for the construction of an

[23]Ibid., Proposed Expansion of Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean, p. 24.

expansion project. The purpose of this expansion was presented with the request as

> Mission and Project : the naval communications station provides fleet broadcasting, and is a critical link in the Defense Communication System. A new mission is being assigned to this Station to support periodic presence of an Indian Ocean Task Group. This project provides facilities to improve Diego Garcia for logistically supporting the task group.24

The request was approved by the House but was rejected by the Senate.[25] Later joint conferences decided to defer the matter for a complete consideration of the construction request under the 1975 Military Construction Bill without " prejudice to merits of the project."[26] Accordingly, the $29 million request of the Navy and an additional $3.3 million for the Air Force were included in the Military Construction Authorization Bill of fiscal year 1975. The House Armed Services Committee approved the amount but the Senate Armed Services Committee reduced the navy authorization to $14.8 million, though it left the Air force authorization at $3.3 million and inserted a qualification in its Committee Report. Some influential Senators, such as Clairborn Pell (D - Rhode Island),Edward M. Kennedy (D - Massachusetts), J.W. Fullbright (D - Arkansas) and George McGovern (D - South Dakota) were actively opposed to the approval of the $29 million

[24]U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, 2nd Supplemental Appropriations for FY 1974, 93rd Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington: G.P.O., 1974), p. 2115.

[25]U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Service, Selected Materials on Diego Garcia, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, G.P.O., 1975), p. 3.

[26]U.S., Congress, House, Committee of Conference, Department of Defense Report No. 94-1064, 93rd Cong., 2nd Sess., Washington, G.P.O., 1974), p. 9.

request. Senator Fullbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was reported to have said " we started off with $29 million. But it probably will be $2 billion before we are through. The State Department obviously is not interested in detente. We are determined to get a base in Diego Garcia and no doubt this will encourage the Soviets to do the same elsewhere."[27] The joint conference agreed only to authorize $14.8 million for the navy and $5.3 million for the Air Force with qualifying language which appears in Public Law 93-552.[28]

The joint Conference of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees came to this decision with the condition that if neither House adopted a resolution disapproving the construction of facilities in Diego Garcia, full construction funds available to the Navy and the Air Force for Diego Garcia in the Appropriation Act 1975 might be utilized for the expansion project.[29] On 12 May 1975 President Gerald Ford sent the certification for the expansion of Diego Garcia base to the

[27]Cited in K.S. Jawatkar, Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy, (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1983), p. 46.

[28]Sec. 613. (a) None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act with respect to any construction project with respect obligated unless - (1) the President has (A) advised the Congress in writing that all military and foreign policy implications regarding the need for United States facilities at Diego Garcia have been evaluated by him, and (B) certified to the Congress in writing that the construction of any such project is essential to the national interests of the United States; (2) 60 days of continuous session of the Congress have expired following the date on which certification with respect to such project is received by the Congress, and (3) Neither House of Congress has adopted, within such 60-days period, a resolution disapproving such projects. "Selected Materials on Diego Garcia". p. 4.

[29]Ibid., p. 5.

Congress. He certified that

> I have evaluated all the military and foreign policy implications regarding the need for United States facility at Diego Garcia. On the basis of this evaluation and in accordance with Section 613 (a) (1) (B), I hereby certify that the construction of such facilities is essential to the national interests of the United States.30

This note is important because, in Commander Sick's words, " this was the first high-level policy statement indicating that essential U.S. interests were at stake in the Indian Ocean region".[31]

Apprehension of the Congress over the U.S. naval expansion in the Indian Ocean was the major restraining force. Some liberal Democrats, who were concerned with the prospect of arms limitation in the Indian Ocean, wished to prevent a naval race in the region. They were ready to use every device at their disposal not to allow the Departments of Defense and the Navy an unchecked course in the Indian Ocean. The Congress looked at the issue from political and diplomatic angles. The trauma of Vietnam invariably conditioned their thinking. They were more receptive to political pressure from the electorate. In contrast, the perceptions of U.S. Service Departments were conditioned mainly by the science of war. As such they looked at the issue from the point of view of military logistics.

The tug-of-war between Congress and the Service Departments did not end with President Ford's certification. On 19 May 1975, Mike Mansfield, the Chairman of the Senate Military

[30]Ibid

[31]Gary Sick, op. cit., p. 66

Construction Sub-Committee, introduced a resolution disapproving the construction at Diego Garcia.

> S. Res. 160 - Resolved, that the Senate does not approve the proposed construction project on the island of Diego Garcia, the need for which was certified by the President and the certification with respect to which was received by the Senate on May 12, 1975.32

The Mansfield resolution led to an open hearing in the Senate Committee on Armed Services on 10 June 1975. The witnesses who testified in favour of the expansion of Diego Garcia base included James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense, General George S. Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and George S. Vest, Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs of the Department of State. The most important testimony was that of Schlesinger. The main thrust of his argument was the urgent need to counter the Soviet threat emanating from the base construction at Berbera, Somalia. In order to prove that the Soviet Union was expanding facilities at Berbera, he produced a number of photographs taken by reconnaissance missions from very high altitude at the end of April 1975.[33] This testimony and the presentation of aerial photographs were mainly responsible for neutralizing much of the Congressional opposition to the allocation of funds for the expansion of the Diego Garcia base. On 17 June 1975 the Committee voted against the Mansfield resolution The Committee emphasized that as the United States had vital

[32]U.S., Congress, Senate, Senate Resolution 160, Congressional Record, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., May 19, 1975, pp. 8651-652. Cited in Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 73.

[33]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, Disapprove Construction Projects on the Island of Diego Garcia, 94th Cong., 1st Sess.,(Washington: G.P.O, 1975, p. 7.

interests in the Indian Ocean area, the construction of logistical facilities at Diego Garcia was a prudent action which would contribute to both the protection of U.S. interests and the maintenance of stability.[34]

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense restructured the project to include $13.8 million in the Fiscal Year 1976 and $15.9 million in the Fiscal Year 1977, a total of $37.8 million altogether.[35] The Navy's request for $13.8 million for Fiscal Year 1976 was approved by the House as usual but in the Senate, Senator John Culver of Iowa tabled an amendment to the Appropriation Bill of 1976 deferring the spending of the additional amount allocated under Fiscal Year 1976 until July 1, 1976. He suggested that this period should be utilized to explore the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Soviet Union on limiting the arms race in the Indian Ocean.[36] The Culver amendment was approved and once again the issue went to the Joint Conference Committee. This time, the Conference agreed to modify the Senate amendment with the firm expectation that the administration would report to Congress before 15 April 1976 regarding negotiations with the Soviet Union on arms control in the Indian Ocean. The intention of the Conferees was "to

[34]U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Disapproving Construction Projects on the Island of Diego Garcia Report (to accompany S. Res. 160). 94th Cong., 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O. 1975), pp. 18-19.

[35]U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Selected Materials on Diego Garcia, p. 6.

[36]U.S., Congress, Senate, Congressional Record, 94th Cong., Vol. 121 : No. 164, 6 November 1975.

prohibit construction of projects on Diego Garcia using Fiscal Year 1975 funds before April 15, 1976 but not to delay planning the procurement of long lead time items".[37] The State Department submitted the report required under the modified Culver amendment on the Indian Ocean arms limitation on 15 April 1976. The report concluded that an initiative for an Indian Ocean arms limitations agreement on the part of the United States was not appropriate at that point especially in view of the Soviet involvement in Angola. Such an initiative, the report stated "might convey the mistaken impression to the Soviets and our friends and allies that we were willing to acquiesce in this type of Soviet behavior".[38] Finally, after a protracted battle with the Congressional opposition, the Department of Defense was able to obtain the necessary appropriations for the expansion of the Diego Garcia base facilities. Nevertheless, Section 407 (a) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976, Public Law 911-329, advised the President to undertake to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union regarding limiting arms forces in the Indian Ocean. It was the Carter administration, which assumed office in 1977, that moved according to the request.

When we look back from the vantage point of 1988 it is clear that the United States strengthened her naval strategic position

[37]U.S., Congress, House, Committee of Conference, Military Construction Appropriation for FY 1976, Conference Report No. 94-655 to accompany H.R. 10029, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, G.P.O., 1975), p. 7.

[38]U.S., Department of State, Report on Indian Ocean Arms Limitation,,Letter to Congress, Office of the Senator John Culver release, April 21, 1976, cited in Bezboruah, op. cit., p. 76.

in the Indian Ocean in the period between 1973 to 1978. The October war did not cause any fundamental change in the policy framework laid down by the Nixon Doctrine in 1969. All the developments in U.S. policy after 1973 were easily accommodated into the scheme developed earlier by the Nixon-Kissinger leadership. Indeed, emphasis on naval power in protecting U.S. interests in the region was the tempo of the Nixon Doctrine. The two-pillar policy in the Gulf, after a momentary disturbance following the October War, remained intact. From the military point of view, the major development on the part of the United States was the expansion of the Diego Garcia base to a full-fledged logistic support center. There were growing concerns about Soviet activities in the region. Soviet naval deployment during the crisis and Soviet naval facilities at Berbera attracted the attention of U.S. military planners. However, detente between the superpowers contributed to maintain an appropriate balance of power at sub-regional levels. In the period between 1973 and 1978 the test of the workability of the scheme based on the Nixon Doctrine seemed successful. Its culmination was the Naval Arms Limitation Talks (NALT) in the Indian Ocean between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1977-78. Before going on to examine these talks it is necessary to look at the evolution of Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean in the same period.

**The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy after 1973**

The post-1973 period witnessed the increasing influence of the navy as an instrument of Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean.

This development should be viewed against the backdrop of the rapid growth of Soviet naval power on the one hand and political strategic developments in the Indian Ocean and Soviet involvements in the affairs of the Indian Ocean region on the other. The full impact of the major decisions taken in 1961 to reorganize the navy and the naval programmes launched in 1963/64 became clearly visible by 1975. The rapid growth of Soviet naval power was illustrated by the entry into service of new classes of more sophisticated ships[39] and, most importantly, by Operation Okean 1975 - the most conspicuous and impressive display of Soviet naval power. Employing over 220 ships and submarines, Operation Okean 1975 involved naval exercises by Soviet naval groups stretched all over the world, including a convoy serial in the North Atlantic, a cruiser group in the western Mediterranean, 'in house' squadrons in the Black Sea, a force in the Arabian Sea, and four groups in the Western Pacific.[40] Writing on the significance of the Okean fleet exercise of 1975, Admiral Stansfield Turner, USN, Commander-in-Chief of the NATO fleet in Southern Europe, stated that, " (I)n less than 30 years the Soviet Navy had developed from an insignificant coastal defence force to one that aspired to: (1) strategic deterrence; (2) naval presence and (3) sea denial".[41]

[39]For a vivid discussion on this point see Michael MccGwire, "The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy", pp. 530-540.

[40]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, The Soviet Union and the Third World : A Watershed in Great Power Policy?. Report by the Senior Specialists Division of Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress (Washington: G.P.O., 1977), p. 95.

[41]Ibid.

By the mid-1970s the importance of countering the direct threat to the national security of the Soviet Union emanating from the potential deployment of U.S. Polaris submarines in the Indian Ocean - the alleged rationale for sending Soviet naval forces into the Indian Ocean for the first time in 1968 - reduced significantly. The continuous advances in missile technology, especially the introduction of the Poseidon missile (with a range of 2500 nautical miles with MIRV warheads) and the programming of Trident I and II missiles (with a range of 4000 and 6000 nautical miles respectively), decreased the exclusive importance of the Indian Ocean as the only area from which the Central Soviet Union could be targetted. As a result of the increased range of the SLBM systems, it was now possible to keep enemy targets under threat without even leaving territorial waters. As Jukes points out, "the option of keeping the submarines at home is undoubtedly cheaper, as well as more cost effective in the sense that submarines in home waters can be more extensively protected against enemy attack than if they are in distant areas".[42]

As one of the original compulsions receded into the background, the role of the Soviet navy as an instrument of extending the political, diplomatic, and strategic ends of Soviet foreign policy, warranted by her lately recognized status of parity as a superpower vis-a-vis the United States, came to the forefront. The wide ranging functions of the navy gained recognition. This was illustrated by the series of articles published by Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief of the

[42]"Soviet Naval Policy in the Indian Ocean", p. 178.

Soviet Navy, in the highly respected and widely read Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Digest) entitled " Navies in War and Peace" during the period February 1972 - February 1973. He stated:

> An analysis of the alignment of forces in the international arena today and the sharp increase in the capabilities of modern navies to have a decisive effect on all fronts of an armed struggle provide the basis to assert that the absolute and relative importance of naval warfare in the overall course of a war has indisputably grown . . . Today our armed forces have a fully modern Navy equipped with everything necessary for the successful performance of all missions laid upon it on the expanses of the World Oceans.43

According to Gorshkov, during peacetime, the Soviet navy has to fulfill important missions to further Soviet political objectives such as lending assistance to national liberation struggles and deterring imperialist powers from threatening progressive regimes. In order to maintain her influence and credibility as a diplomatic principal in the area, the Soviet Union needs to play the role that a superpower is expected to play. In this context, extending support for regional client states, especially when they are involved in clashes with their neighbours, and denying the privilege of monopoly of naval power to the western powers, became important in Soviet policy objectives. Hence, during this period, the Soviet Union pushed forward her interests in relation to U.S. strategic moves on the one hand and the political developments in the Indian Ocean littoral on the other.

The major instrument of Soviet naval strategy was the regular deployment of naval forces into the Indian Ocean. Though

[43]S.G. Gorshkov, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union, "Navies in War and Peace," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 100:11 (Nov. 1974), p. 66.

it was believed that the reopening of the Suez Canal would escalate Soviet deployment, the earlier pattern did not change. The Soviets did not use the advantage of the Suez Canal to shorten the route between the Indian Ocean and the Black Sea. Their deployment of naval forces in the Indian Ocean increased only during periods of crisis. This was mainly in response to U.S. naval deployments. The Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean fulfilled many functions. In addition to showing the flag, the Soviet forward units provided protection and navigational assistance for airlift and sealift operations in regional crises such as the Angolan civil war in 1974/75 and the Ogaden war in 1977/78. Compared with the period before 1973, a remarkable development in naval deployment after that date was the introduction of technologically more advanced vessels into the area. From the beginning of 1975 the bulk of the destroyer/frigates were those of the Petya and Kanin classes. Petyas are light ASW (anti-submarine warfare) ships. At the end of 1975 the Soviets deployed Krivak class destroyers to the region. Krivak class destoyers were the latest ASW ships of this size equipped with the latest SAM missiles.[44]

The other major development in Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean after 1973 was the attempt to obtain base facilities in the region. Hitherto the Soviet navy relied on permanent floating moorages in the open sea. Now the need for bases was acutely felt. This can be seen in the table VI which shows the steadily

[44]D.O. Verrale, "Soviet Naval Activity". Australian Outlook, No. 31 (August 1977), p. 208.

increasing naval presence in the Indian Ocean after 1973. Soviet endeavours to obtain base rights before 1973 had met with no success. According to Michael MccGwire, " Admiral Sergeev, Chief of Naval Staff, was asked recently what his greatest problem was with the Soviet navy's shift to forward deployment. He replied without hesitation: 'Bases'".[45] The Soviet Union renewed diplomatic efforts to obtain the necessary base facilities. Regional conflicts offered the opportunity to the Soviets as was the case with the United States. The Soviet Union missed no chance to obtain the benefits of coercive diplomacy. "Supplying arms and showing the flag on behalf of regimes confronted by domestic turmoil and foreign enemies might make them sufficiently dependent to acquiesce in Soviet requests for military facilities, [and] to support the U.S.S.R. diplomatically".[46]

The Soviet Union was able to acquire and/or develop base facilities at Berbera (Somalia), Aden (South Yemen), and Umm Qasr (Iraq). The most important and controversial among them was the construction of the base at Berbera, Somalia. When Secretary of Defense Schlesigner produced aerial photographs of Soviet naval construction at Berbera to Congress in order to overcome its opposition to the expansion of the U.S. base at Diego Garcia,

[45]MccGwire, op. cit., p. 533

[46]K. Andersen, "Soviets in the Indian Ocean: Much Ado About Something - But What?," Asian Survey, XXIV:9 (September 1984), p. 915.

Table VI

**Soviet Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean 1973-77**

| Type/Class | J. | F. | M. | A. | M. | J. | J. | A. | S. | O. | N. | D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1973 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crusiers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Destroyers/Frigate | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Submarines | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Minesweepers | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Landing Ships | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Others | 6 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| 1974 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crusiers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Destroyers/Frigate | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Submarines | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Minesweepers | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Landing Ships | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Others | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| 1975 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crusiers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Destroyers/Frigate | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Submarines | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Minesweepers | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Landing Ships | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Others | 10 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 12 |
| 1976 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crusiers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Destroyers/Frigate | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Submarines | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Minesweepers | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Landing Ships | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Others | 13 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 15 |
| 1977 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crusiers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Destroyers/Frigate | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Submarines | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Minesweepers | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Landing Ships | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Others | 15 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Source: prepared by the author using U.S. Congressional Records and Australian Federal Parliament Committee Reports.

the Somalian government denied the allegation and invited both the House and the Senate members to visit Somalia and check the accuracy of the charge. On behalf of the Armed Services or Committee, Senator Bartlett agreed to make the visit. Accompanied by some specialists, Bartlett visited Somalia in July 1975. After the visit he reported to Congress that "the Department of Defense was remarkably accurate in their assessment of Soviet facilities at Berbera. What we saw absolutely confirms that the Soviet Union is expanding Berbera into a major militarily capable air and naval port".[47] Some independent inquiries, such as the Expert Committee appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General in 1974, confirmed the existence of communications facilities at Berbera, Somalia.[48] However, the Soviet representative at the U.N. argued that "normal duty calls by naval ships at various ports for the purpose of replenishing their supplies need not be tendentiously depicted as the establishment of Soviet bases in the Indian Ocean region".[49] In the Fall of 1975 a floating dry-dock was also positioned to upgrade port facilities there.

After the Soviets' firm backing of Iraq during the border conflict with her neighbour, Kuwait, in March 1973, Soviet port calls at Umm Qasr increased rapidly. The sending of Soviet naval vessels to Umm Qasr during the crisis was a clear note of Soviet support for her regional ally. The Soviet Union was permitted

[47]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Soviet Military Capability in Berbera, Somalia -Report of Senator Bartlett (Washington: G.P.O., 1975), p. 1

[48]U.N., Doc. A/AC/159/1.

[49]U.N. Doc. A/AC. 159/1, 3 May 1974, p. 12-15.

exclusive use of the naval base of Umm Qasr which was upgraded with Soviet assistance.

The Soviet Union enjoyed very strong relations with South Yemen. The value of the strategically located former British naval base at Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea is well established. According to the C.I.A Director, W.E. Colby, until 1974, repair facilities at the naval base at Aden were not used by Soviet warships, although support ships, and occasionally, small warships stopped there for refuelling and replenishment.[50] However, later on the Soviets began to use Aden extensively especially during the Ogaden war in the Horn of Africa in 1978-79.

After the last unsuccessful attempt in 1973, the Soviets did not attempt to revive Brezhnev's Asian Collective Security System anymore. The Soviet Union seemed prepared to go with less comprehensive bilateral treaties with some selected countries in the Indian Ocean littoral. In addition to the Friendship treaties with India (1971), Egypt (1971), and Iraq (1972), the Soviet Union concluded Peace and Friendship Treaties with Somalia (1974), Angola (1976), Mozambique (1977), Vietnam (1978), Ethiopia (1978), Afghanistan (1978), and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1979). However, Egypt and Somalia later unilaterally abrogated their Treaties. It is now quite clear that those treaties were not the building blocks of an Asian Collective Security System. "These treaties were attractive to

[50]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Disapproving Construction Project on the Island of Diego Garcia, op. cit., p. 30.

the various signatories because of the possibility of Soviet assistance against some regional adversary - hardly a foundation for a multilateral agreement intended to usher in a period of peace in Asia."[51]

Other important instruments of Soviet diplomacy in the Indian Ocean were military assistance and arms deals (see Table VII). The Indian Ocean littoral states account for a substantial proportion of the total Soviet supplies to the Third World. Arms deals with the Soviet Union were attractive for many reasons. Soviet credit terms were generally considered easy. Soviet interest rates were as low as 2% and the repayment period was as long as 8 to 10 years. Another important feature of Soviet arms deals appealing to Third World purchasers was the Soviet practice of discounting. "Some sources estimated the discount factor on Soviet arms deliveries to Third World countries as large as 40 per cent of the listed price".[52]

It is important to note that during the period 1973-77 about 62 per cent of the total Soviet arms supplies were received by only four countries - Somalia ($260 mn), Ethiopia ($300 mn), Iraq ($2,600 mn), and India ($1,100 mn). The backbone of the Soviet-Indian military link is the MIG project. Until 1970, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) merely assembled entire kits imported from the Soviet Union. According to the agreement signed in 1972, which marked another stage in the MIG project, it was agreed that India could manufacture an improved version of the MIG 21 M with

[51]Andersen, op. cit., p. 917.

[52]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, The Soviet Union and the Third World, op. cit., p. 71.

indigenous components. This version became operational in 1974 and the three HAL factories located at Hyderabad, Korapur and Nasik took charge of the responsibility under the MIG licence.[53] This represented an important transfer of technology for India.

Table VII

**Arms Transfers to the Indian Ocean Region (1973-1977) ($ mm)**

| Region | USA | USSR | FRANCE | UK | FRG | PRC | OTHERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 123 | 650 | 470 | 45 | 20 | 70 | 325 |
| West Asia | 10,735 | 4,410 | 1,215 | 1,265 | 625 | 20 | 1,845 |
| South and South East Asia | 627 | 1,165 | 270 | 165 | 60 | 210 | 495 |
| Island States | 2 | 15 | - | - | - | 15 | 10 |
| Australia | 344 | - | 10 | 90 | 40 | - | 10 |
| Hinterland States | - | 410 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 55 |
| Total | 11,831 | 6,650 | 1,975 | 1,575 | ,755 | 335 | 2,740 |

Source: Namboodiri, P.K.S., Anand, J.P., Sreedhar- Intervention in the Indian Ocean, (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1982, p. 94.

However, the influence of the Soviet Union over the recipient states should not be overestimated.[54] The Egyptian and Somalian

[53]India, Ministry of Defence, Defence Report 1974-75 (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1975), p. 68.

[54]For a good analysis of the limitation of Soviet Arms Diplomacy, see Ian Clark, "Soviet Arms Supplies and Indian Ocean Diplomacy" in Larry W. Bowman and Ian Clark, eds. The Indian Ocean in Global Politics (Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 149-172. He argues that "the creation of (Conti....to p. 177)

break-away from the Soviet orbit showed the limitations of the relationship with Third World states. India was able to with stand and Soviet pressure for granting base facilities at Visagapatnam.

The three main inter-related elements of the superpowers' naval rivalry, namely, the forward deployment of naval forces, jockeying for base facilities and related diplomatic manoeuvering, and the arms deals constitute the major component of Soviet naval strategy in the Indian Ocean. Since 1973, the Soviet Union has increasingly used naval power to influence events in the Indian Ocean region and to intervene more forcefully on behalf of her regional allies. Soviet naval activities after 1968 provided the catalyst for the more assertive naval strategy since 1974. This signalled a new phase in the development of Soviet naval strategy in the Indian Ocean.

**The Littoral Diplomacy and the Indian Ocean Peace Zone**

The U.N. Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean became the major theatre of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone drama from its establishment at the end of 1972. After assiduous work under the Chairmanship of Shirley Amerasinghe, the Ad Hoc Committee submitted its report to the General Assembly at its XXVIII Session in 1973. The report was discussed in the First Committee and the Plenary Meeting and the General Assembly adopted

(Conti...from p. 276) important and long lasting military supply network has not ensured the political compliance of the recipient state with the USSR's general Indian Ocean policies . . and perhaps even more striking, in no case has the military supply nexus prevented the recipient from embarking on more or less ambitious polices of western diversification or even from undertaking major reorientation in its arms purchase policy". Ibid., p. 168.

resolution 3080 in December 1973. The Resolution noted "with satisfaction the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee in fulfilling its mandate" and requested it "to continue its work, to carry out consultations in accordance with its mandate and to report with recommendations to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session". Furthermore, the Resolution requested the Secretary-General "to prepare a factual statement of the great power' military presence, in all its aspects, in the Indian Ocean, with special reference to their naval deployments, conceived in the context of great power rivalry".[55] The statement should be based on available material and prepared with the assistance of qualified experts.

One of the main difficulties that the Ad Hoc Committee confronted was the virtual non co-operation of the maritime powers who maintained a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. In spite of repeated requests, the required consultations did not materialize. Under the terms of the Resolution, the Secretary-General appointed an Expert Committee to prepare a factual statement. The Committee consisted of Frank Barnaby, Director, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Shams Safavi, retired Admiral of the Royal Iranian Navy, and K. Subrahmaniam, Director, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi. They submitted their report on 3 May 1974.[56]

The controversy generated by the Experts' report was a clear indication of the problems associated even with the clarification

[55]U.N., Doc. A/Res/3080 (XXVIII).

[56]Ibid., A/AC/159/1.

of the issue. The United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, Tanzania, Somalia, Yemen, Madagascar, and Ethiopia, expressed their objections to the report in writing. The criticisms of the littoral countries were based on the fact that their relations with extra-regional powers were not interpreted correctly. In face of these criticisms, the Secretary-General asked the Experts to revise the report and appointed William Epstein, a former Director of the UN Disarmament Division, to do this. The revised report was more restrained and half the size of the original one.[57] It was discussed and accepted by the Ad Hoc Committee in September and October 1974.

There were many limitations in the report. In particular, it was based on limited sources of information. The mandate to the Experts included examination of the great power military presence "in all its aspects, conceived in the context of great power-rivalry." The report interpreted "military presence" in a narrow way and did not bring the military alliances of the Indian Ocean littoral states with the extra-regional powers into proper context. The desire of the concerned representatives of the littoral states to ignore this aspect is understandable, for such relationships fill their needs, too. Considering the difficulties of the task, the limitations of the report were unavoidable.

Once again the 29th Session of the General Assembly discussed 'the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a peace zone' and passed Resolution 3259 (XXIX) on 9th December 1974 with a sweeping Third World majority as usual. The resolution stated that the creation of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean requires:

[57] Ibid., A/AC/159/1/Rev i.

(a) The elimination of all manifestations of great power military presence in the region conceived in the context of great power rivalry.

(b) Co-operation among the regional states to ensure conditions of security within the region as envisaged in the Declaration.

Paragraph 4 of the Resolution 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".[58]

In the following year the Ad Hoc Committee was very active in preparing the background for convening the Conference on the Indian Ocean. The littoral and hinterland states held eight informal meetings at U.N. Headquarters, chaired by Shirley Amerasinghe, to work out a formula for the Conference. Shirley Amerasinghe, as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, sent letters not only to the littoral states but also to the maritime powers requesting their particpation in the preparatory work of the Conference. The superpowers and the other extra-regional users of the Indian Ocean, except China and Japan, did not accept the invitation and extended no cooperation. The responses of the littoral and hinterland states reflected their diverse points of view. Broadly speaking there were two points of view over the issues. According to the first position, the focus should be to mobilize opinion to eliminate military bases in order to transform the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. The major proponent of this view was India.[59] The second position envisaged that the

[58] Ibid., A/Res/3259 (XXXIX).

[59] See especially Y.B. Chavan's address to the U.N. General Assembly on 26 September 1975. (Conti...to p. 280)

Indian Ocean peace zone should assure the regional states against threats from both within and outside the region. For instance, the Pakistan representative stated in the First Committee that "the arrangement for security among the littoral and hinterland states could be established through a political regime and expressed in the form of a code of conduct to guide the relations among the Indian Ocean states."[60] The renunciation of the nuclear weapons option by the littoral states is a major element of this code of conduct. The Sri Lankan position was closer to the second one.

After seven meetings between 5th June and 7th October 1975 the Ad Hoc Committee recommended a draft resolution to the First Committee. After approval by the First Committee and the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly it was included in the Agenda of the General Assembly. The Resolution was approved by a hundred and six votes to nil with twenty-five abstentions.'[61] Paragraph 2 of the Resolution noted that "an agreement in principle on the convening of a Conference on the Indian Ocean has emerged among the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean". Further, paragraph 3 of the Resolution requested the Indian Ocean states to continue their consultation to this end with particular attention to the six-point purpose of a conference on the Indian Ocean; date and duration; venue; provisional agenda; participation; and level of participation. The mandate of the

(Conti...from p. 279) U.N. General Assembly, Official Records, A/PV/2364. 26 September 1975, p. 81.

[60]U.N. Doc A/C/1/PV/2098, 26 November 1975, pp. 48-50.

[61]Ibid., A/PV/2437, 11 December 1975, p. 23.

Ad Hoc Committee was extended to include a request to continue its work and consultations and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session a report on its work.[62]

With the adoption of Resolution 3468 (XXX) on 11 December 1975 one phase of the Indian Ocean peace proposal at the UN was complete. Until now the Indian Ocean Peace (IOPZ) proposal had progressed annually despite the existence of many obstacles. After 1975 the progress of the IOPZ proposal at the United Nations came to a halt. The problems and obstacles associated with it came to the forefront and began to obstruct progress with the deliberations of practical measures in the direction of convening the Conference.

The obstacles to the implementation of the IOPZ proposal are basically three-fold: non-cooperation of the superpowers; limitations of the definition of the peace zone concept; and division and differences among the Indian Ocean littoral states themselves. The major obstacle is the opposition and non-cooperation of the superpowers and other principal maritime powers. It is interesting to note that both the United States and the Soviet Union were united in not endorsing the peace zone concept. Both claimed that it violates established international law of 'Mare Liberum'. NATO as well as WARSAW Pact countries abstained from voting for the UN Resolution on the IOPZ until 1978. Commenting scornfully on this in 1972, Shirley Amerasinghe stated that the attitude of the great powers, except China, to the IOPZ was 'that of a bashful bride or reluctant

[62] Ibid., A/Res/3468 (XXX).

virgin'.[63] Therefore, at an early stage the polarization over the IOPZ issue more or less transmuted into the North-South division. The Indian Ocean could be termed as the Third World ocean because the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland states constitute the bulk of the Third World. The Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal took the form of a struggle of the Third World against the industrially and militarily powerful North.

Because of the 'one state one vote' system at the U.N., the declarations and resolutions of the IOPZ were approved with sweeping Third World majorities. However, without the cooperation of the superpowers and other maritime powers, it is impossible to implement them. If the superpowers decide to ignore the resolutions nothing could be done effectively to implement them. In effect what the IOPZ intends to do is to create an international regime for the Indian Ocean based on the peace zone principle. Oran Young, in explaining the rise and fall of international regimes, identifies three orders that provide the base of three types of regimes - spontaneous, negotiated and imposed.[64] Indian Ocean littoral states could not create an imposed regime because they do not have the power capabilities or unanimity to do so. The only possible alternative is a negotiated order. This invariably requires the cooperation and active participation of all states. It requires an extensive bargaining process. Adamant non-cooperation of the

[63]U.n. Doc. A/C/1/PV/1904, 29 November 1972, p. 11. Cited in Misra, op. cit., p. 75.

[64]Stephen D. Krasner, ed., International Regimes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 98.

great powers aborts the prospect for a negotiated regime alternative too.

Other major obstacles are the conceptual vagueness of the peace zone concept, lack of conformity on the part of the littoral states over the concept, and regional rivalry and inherent feeling of insecurity of the Indian Ocean littoral states. Although almost all of them support the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal in principle, there are acute differences of opinion when it comes to actual implementation. In order to form a uniform littoral consensus over the IOPZ it is necessary, first of all, to resolve the differences existing among littoral states themselves over the definition and the method of implementation of the IOPZ. In order to be a viable programme, IOPZ should be much more than a political cliche. Though no states in the region come forward to oppose the IOPZ, as this is considered tantamount to committing a political sin, the hard fact is that a large amount of ground work has to be done to form a uniform voice over the IOPZ. This was clearly revealed by the discord over the report of the experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the U.N. on the great power naval presence in the Indian Ocean in 1973.

The IOPZ proposal should be conceptually improved in order to make it a coherent and viable formula. Two main conceptual shortcomings are discernible. First, the IOPZ is presented only against the extra-regional naval presence and naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. It is implied that the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean could be attained when the great powers withdraw their naval installations and refrain from naval competition.

But Great Power rivalry was not the only source of tension and conflict in the Indian Ocean. Regional roots of conflict have not been addressed in the IOPZ. What the concept of "zone of peace" meant has not been defined precisely. Questions such as, whether it means a comprehensive demilitarization of the Indian Ocean or not, and whether demilitarization is applicable both to outsiders and littorals of the Indian Ocean or not is not adequately addressed. Secondly, even the superpower naval rivalry is defined very narrowly to include only competitive naval deployment and maintenance of bases. It has been pointed out earlier that superpower naval rivalry cannot be scaled down only to naval deployments. The military alliances of the superpowers with the littoral states as well as arms deals are ignored by the IOPZ. Because of the lack of clarity and the ambiguity of the IOPZ some littoral states maintain alliances with the superpowers that go against the IOPZ concept while at the same time these states vehemently advocate the very proposal.

Regional conflicts and the inherent feeling of insecurity of the littoral states offer conclusive circumstances for the superpowers to impose their rivalry on a regional basis. There are three levels of conflict and rivalry in the Indian Ocean of which the first level is the superpower naval rivalry in the area. Secondly, each sub-region in the Indian Ocean is marked with a regional conflict: Indo-Pakistan rivalry in South Asia, Iran-Iraq conflict in the Persian Gulf,[65] Ethiopian-Somalian rivalry in

[65]For internal and international dimensions of the regional rivalries see: For Iran-Iraq rivalry Raphael Danzigev, "The Naval Race in the Persian Gulf," (Conti...to p. 286)

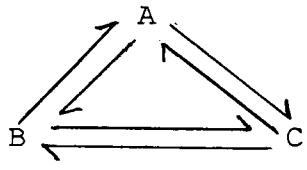
the Horn of Africa, Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, Vietnam-ASEAN hostility in South East Asia. Superpower involvement in these conflicts are vital and indispensable. However, regional roots of the conflicts should also be taken into account. They are of two types; the legacies of the colonial past and the post-independence strategies and processes of nation and state building.

The third level of conflict is between the small states and the medium powers of the same sub-system. The power relations among these states are governed by the perception of fear and suspicion. As is the case between Sri Lanka and India, fear and suspicion involve, firstly fear on the part of small states of being dominated and overawed by the medium power and secondly suspicions on the part of medium powers that small states would bring extra-regional powers into the power balance of the area as a counterpoise to the medium power. This creates an innate feeling of insecurity among all states.

There is a fourth level of conflict, that between the state and dissident groups within. This type of internal conflict, which often flares up in violent armed uprisings based on class, regional, or ethnic lines is very widespread in the Indian Ocean area. The base of these conflicts should be understood in the context of internal political formations but because of their international linkages, these bushfires have serious

(Conti...from p. 285) U.S. naval Institute Proceedings, March 1982, pp. 93-98' For Ethiopian-Somalian rivalry Mohamed Ayoob "The Horn of Africa" in Ayoob, ed., Conflict and Intervention in the Third World (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980), pp. 136-170; Indo-Pakistan rivalry, S.D. Muni, 'South Asia', Ibid., pp. 38-72.

repercussions on relations among the states in the Indian Ocean. These dissident movements are exploited by rival states in order to undermine the security and stability of other states. As such, chronic insecurity of states both small and medium constitutes a major aspect of the texture of international politics in the Indian Ocean. Stephen Cohen once stated that " the South Asian security system is an insecurity system."[66] The aphorism is aptly applicable to the entire Indian Ocean region. Because of this insecurity, states in the region seek refuge under the superpower umbrella. It is obvious that all peace and security problems in the Indian Ocean area cannot be attributed to superpower naval rivalry. In order to gauge the role of that rivalry in the destablilization of the Indian Ocean it is necessary to posit it in the proper equation of superpower naval rivalry, regional conflicts, and insecurity of the Indian Ocean. The relationship between one phenomenon and others is not a simple one-way process; it is invariably reciprocal. (See chart below).




A = Superpower naval rivalry

B = Regional conflicts

C = Insecurity of the Indian Ocean

Any comprehensive peace zone proposal should take account of sub-levels of conflicts and their linkages to the superpower naval rivalry. Considering the complexity of these linkages it is very difficult to find the least common denominator to rally the opinion of the littoral states. It is more convenient to

[66]Cited in G.S. Bhargava, South Asian Security After Afghanistan (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), p. 187.

attribute all the sins to outside influence.

Each state in the Indian Ocean perceives its security problems in the context of its own geo-political imperatives. Accordingly each one responds to the superpower naval rivalry in the context of its own geo-political set up and as it perceives its own security problems. The earlier ebulliency associated with the IOPZ began to fade away after 1975 when the strategic and security interests of the littoral states began to clash with each other and when concrete steps towards the implementation of IOPZ came to be discussed. Examination of the evolution of the Sri Lankan response to the superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean reveals how changes in the accent of policy occur according to developments in the regional geo-political context and threat perceptions.

**Sri Lanka Response to the Superpower Rivalry**

As in the earlier period, Sri Lanka continued to play a leading role at the U.N. and outside making provision for implementing the 1971 U.N. declaration on the IOPZ. As the Ad Hoc Committee became the major forum of discussions and consultation on the IOPZ, Sri Lanka occupied an important position at the centre of discussions on the Indian Ocean issue. Sri Lanka played a dual role at the U.N. On the one hand, she assumed responsibility as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to promote IOPZ in general. On the other hand, Sri Lanka had to represent her own national security interests and communicate the perspective of a small island in the discussions over the IOPZ issue. The wide experience and the recognition enjoyed by her

representative, Shirley Amerasinghe, was a real asset to Sri Lanka in this regard.

Sri Lanka was very concerned over the new surge of naval build up in the Indian Ocean despite repeated U.N. declarations on the IOPZ. She was especially disturbed when the U.S. Defense Department requested a $29 million authorization for FY 1974 to expand Diego Garcia to a full-fledged base facility. On 8 February 1974, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike despatched a personal message of protest to President Nixon and the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, requesting them to reconsider the decision to expand the Diego Garcia base. Sri Lanka exerted pressure not only on the United States but also on the Soviet Union. During her state visit to the Soviet Union in November 1974, Mrs. Bandranaike conducted talks with Prime Minister A.N. Kosygin, and Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko, on a variety of issues ranging from bilateral cooperation to regional security and world disarmament. One of the important issues of discussion was the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal.[67] The Sri Lankan intention was to persuade the Soviet leadership to change its position on the IOPZ proposal. But the Soviet leadership was not responsive, claiming that the proposal went contrary to established principles of international law pertaining to the freedom of navigation. In the Joint Soviet -Sri Lanka communique on 17 November 1974 both sides merely confirmed their "preparedness to participate together with all interested states on a basis of equality in search for a favourable solution to the

[67] Joint Soviet-Sri Lanka Communique, 17 November, 1974, News Release from the Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka.

question of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace in conformity with principles of international law".[68] In view of the importance attached by Sri Lanka to the IOPZ, inclusion of the above clause reflected nothing more than an expression of diplomatic courtesy.

After 1974, two subtle developments can be discerned in the Sri Lankan approach to the Indian Ocean problem. Firstly, the earlier, more critical attitude to the West began gradually to mellow. The critical language that Mrs. Bandaranaike had used towards the West at the Lusaka Conference of the non-aligned states in 1970 and at the Commonwealth Conference in 1971 in Singapore was absent from her speech at the Colombo Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned States in August 1976. Secondly, and more importantly, Sri Lanka gave greater prominence to her security concerns in South Asia. Accordingly, Sri Lanka carefully differentiated her position regarding the IOPZ from that of the dominant medium power in the Indian Ocean. For example, Shirley Amerasinghe stated in the First Committee that:

> We do not want any great powers there. By the same token, we do not intend that we should drive out Satan by Beelzebub and allow some other powers within the group of littoral and hinterland states to take the place of the superpowers.69

When Pakistan initiated the proposal for a Nuclear Free Zone for South Asia in 1974, Sri Lanka became a strong supporter. This invariably caused irritation and anxiety in India. In a sense, these changes are crystallizations of the trends that were

[68]Ibid.

[69]U.N. Doc A/C/PV.2096, November 1976, p. 36.

appearing from 1970.

Two factors are mainly responsible for these changes in the Sri Lankan response to superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. The first is the successful detonation of a 15 Kiloton plutonium device by India in May 1974. Though India repeatedly declared that she intended to use nuclear power only for peaceful purposes, her neighbours, including Sri Lanka, considered it a crucial development. In order to gauge the impact of this development on the security perceptions of Sri Lanka, it is necessary to locate it in the context of an historically conditioned 'love-hate' relationship between India and Sri Lanka. Fear of the 'big brother' has always been an element of the Sri Lankan psyche. In this context, India's nuclear explosion was considered by Sri Lanka as a matter of grave concern. After the attainment of nuclear capability by India, one of the two conditions that Mrs. Bandaranaike presented as a factor conducive to the application of IOPZ in 1971 was changed.

The second factor was the acutely felt need for economic assistance from the West to overcome the serious economic problems which confronted Sri Lanka after 1974. The economic strategy declared at the begining of the United Front Government in 1970 was based on inward-looking import substitution and tight state control. The United Front (UF) Government pledged to "restructure the economy through state control of the entire economy in such a way that the public sector should be considerably extended" and to "put an end to the policies of economic dependence and neo-colonialism which have characterized

the previous regime."[70] In this economic strategy, little reliance was placed on foreign and private investment. This "short term pain for long term gain" strategy encountered many structural and managerial problems from the very beginning. In the context of the world food crisis in 1973, the economic dislocation and pains attributed to the government's economic policy were so strong that the regime was on the verge of collapse. The goverment foresaw a more rugged path ahead with the OPEC oil price-hike in October 1973. Consequently, certain changes were made in economic strategy after 1974. The earlier confidence in self reliance and import substitution and public sector economic ventures began to wither away. This change in government economic strategy coincided with changes in the power balance of the UF Government. The right wing elements gained more strength and began to dominate the government. The changes in the power constellation developed into a crisis which resulted in the ouster of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), one of the socialist junior partners of the governing coalition. This further strengtherned the forces behind the changes in government strategy. The Budget Speech of 1975 marked a clear deviation from the earlier policy. New right wing Finance Minister, F.R. Dias Bandaranaike, stated that " I do not accept for a moment that out of the theoretical fear that subversion could arise from foreign companies to our economic development, we should therefore exclude foreign investment".[71] He emphasized the need "for the infusion of new external capital from private sources to

[70]Ceylon. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, Vol. 90, 14 June 1970, C. 110.

be used in the establishment of new enterprises". Measures were taken to attract foreign investment and an attempt was made to obtain foreign aid:

> Foreign investments were given guarantees under international law involving the right of appeal from Sri Lankan courts to the International Centre for Investment Disputes in Washington. A new law was announced in early January (1976) to remove obstacles to foreign investments by amending the Business Acquisition Act.72

The prospect of obtaining large-scale foreign investment and foreign aid from the Soviet bloc was believed to be remote. Western economic assistance began to figure on a large scale in the economic thinking of the Government. It is not difficult to discern linkage development in the changes in internal economic strategy and changes in the foreign policy field. This was shown by a mellowing of the criticism of the West and a conspicuously moderate stand on the non-aligned political stage. As P.V.J. Jayasekera pointed out:

> The central objective of this role as far as Sri Lanka is concerned is to maintain and enhance the flow of aid from the Western countries - an imperative need upon which the government's present economic strategy depends.73

The most important single event in the foreign policy field after 1974 was the Fifth Conference of Heads of States or Governments of Non-Aligned countries held in Colombo in August 1976, at which time Sri Lanka assumed leadership of the movement

[71]F.R. Dias Bandaranaike, M.P., Budget Speech 1976, (Colombo: Republic of Sri Lanka, 1975), p. 12.

[72]P.V.J. Jayasekera, "Sri Lanka in 1976: Changing Strategies and Confrontation," Asian Survey, XVII:2 (February 1977), p. 209.

[73]Ibid., p. 217

for the next three years. Mrs. Bandaranaike's more moderate role at the Conference was indicative of the changes in the earlier idelogically-oriented 'anti-Western' foreign policy. At the Conference, IOPZ was a major item of discussion. One session of the Conference discussed the IOPZ proposal and approved a Resolution in support of establishing such a zone. However, this did not go beyond a note of support and ceremonial approval as usual.

Sri Lankan policy towards superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean and IOPZ became a matter of discussion in the National State Assembly when warships attached to the US Seventh Fleet visited Colombo in October 1975. Two missile-carrying destroyers of the US Navy - the USS Warden, and the USS Turner Joy - and a US Fleet replacement vessel arrived in Colombo for a four-day routine visit.[74] The LSSP, now in opposition, attempted to make use of the event to discredit the Government and asked the Prime Minister how the granting of port visits to the naval vessels of the US Seventh Fleet could be reconciled with the Government's professed policy for the IOPZ. Mrs. Bandaranaike's reply was very interesting and marked a sharp break from her earlier perspective. She declared

> There is nothing incompatible with the IOPZ Declaration in a foreign warship, including that of the Great Powers, visiting Sri Lanka ports for any purpose not associated with a threat or use of force against any coastal or hinterland state of the Indian Ocean provided also that the visits are not associated with any base facilities for these vessels in Sri Lanka.75

[74]Sri Lanka, Jatika Rajya Saba Vivada, Debates of the National State Council) Vol. 15: No. 15, 4 November 1975, p. 2567.

[75]Ibid., p. 2571.

The explanation does not contradict the letter of the 1971 UN Declaration on the IOPZ but indicated clearly the back-pedalling on the earlier stand.

As Sri Lanka security concerns came to the forefront, Sri Lankan policy became more distinguishable from that of India. Sri Lanka linked IOPZ with the South Asian Nuclear Free Zone in contrast to the Indian stand which separated the two issues and concentrated mainly on external naval activities.

The denuclearization of the Indian Ocean is considered to be an inherent part of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone programme. The issue was discussed by the AD Hoc Committee in 1973. Some countries in the littoral, particularly Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Indonesia were of the opinion that one way of achieving the IOPZ was the establishment of nuclear free zones in the various sub-systems in the Indian Ocean. Accordingly, regional states should guarantee that they would not manufacture or bring nuclear weapons into the area. After the explosion of a nuclear device by India, the creation of a nuclear free zone in South Asia received new impetus. Pakistan took the lead, partly to discredit India, and introduced a proposal to the U.N. General Assembly in 1974 to declare South Asia a nuclear free zone. India strongly opposed the international agreement in this regard and introduced its own resolution which urged countries in South Asia to take their own initiatives towards a nuclear free zone. As such a South Asian nuclear free zone became an issue in the Cold War between India and Pakistan. The U.N. General Assembly approved both resolutions (Sri Lanka voted for both) and requested the Secretary-General to convene a meeting of the states of the South

Asian region, and other interested neighbouring non-nuclear states to initiate consulations with a view to establishing a nuclear free zone in South Asia. But differences among the states in the region, mainly between India and Pakistan, were so strong that the Secretary-General did not convene the meeting envisaged.

The Indian position regarding the South Asian nuclear free zone is that the states of the region must first agree among themselves about the basic conditions of a nuclear free zone before bringing the question to the United Nations. According to India, South Asia could not be treated in isolation and it is necessary to take into account the security environment of the region as a whole. The existence of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific and the presence of foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean complicated the security environment and made the situation inappropriate for the establishment of a nuclear free zone in the sub-region of South Asia.[76]

Pakistan agreed in principle to consultation as a condition for the creation of a South Asian nuclear free zone but pointed out that there was no bar to General Assembly consideration of the matter. Further, Pakistan stated that if the existence of nuclear weapons in the vicinity of South Asia threatened the security of South Asian states, arrangements could be made through the establishment of a denuclearized zone to obtain binding undertakings from the nuclear weapon states not to introduce such weapons into the region.[77]

[76]Yearbook of the United Nations, Vol. 29, 1975 (New York: Department of Public Information, 1978), p. 42.

[77]Ibid.

Sri Lanka linked the concept of a nuclear free zone with IOPZ as early as 1964. Looking at the problem from the point of view of a small island state, Sri Lanka's representative, Shirley Amerasinghe, stated on 11 November 1974 that "if a new nuclear-weapon power were to emerge in the Indian Ocean region, the denuclearization and also the demilitarization of the area would be seriously jeopardized".[78] Though Sri Lanka voted in favour of both resolutions, she was somewhat critical of the Indian draft for it did not have any operational paragraph for concrete action. On the other hand, she pointed out that the General Assembly had already endorsed in principle the establishment of nuclear-weapon free zones. Sri Lanka's position is clearly understandable; she had to maintain a delicate balance while pushing through her own attitude to the issue.

**Naval Arms Limitations Talks in the Indian Ocean**

At the beginning of 1977 superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean seemed to have reached a point of stalemate. Superpower strategic positions in the Indian Ocean had stabilized. The IOPZ proposal had bogged down in face of the divisions and conflicting interests of the superpowers. This climate in Indian Ocean politics suddenly changed with the commencement of the Naval Arms Limitation Talks (NALT) on the Indian Ocean between the United States and the Soviet Union in mid-1977.

The prospect for bilateral arms control in the Indian Ocean had been discussed from time to time by both powers since the early 1970s. In the spring of 1971 the Soviet Ambassador in

[78]U.N. Doc. A/C/PV 2015, p. 12

Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, raised the issue of mutual naval restraint in the Indian Ocean with the U.S. Secretary of State, William Rogers. Three months later, in June 1971 Brezhnev, in his Election Eve Speech, hinted that the Soviet Union would be prepared to discuss naval control in the Indian Ocean. He stated that the Soviet Union

> "do not think now that it is an ideal situation when the navies of great powers are sailing for a long time at the other end of the world - Indian Ocean -, away from their native coasts. We are ready to solve this problem but to make an equal bargain".79

In July, the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, Jacob Bean, informed the Soviet Foreign Minister that the United States accepted in principle an agreement to restrain naval competition in the Indian Ocean and would like to know "more about what the Soviets had in mind. Gromyko responded that he had not been briefed and suggested that he would look into it. The matter was never again raised by the Soviets."[80] Nor did the United States pursue the matter. Neither power wanted an agreement on mutual restraint in the Indian Ocean at that juncture.

The issue of Indian Ocean arms control was raised once again in the context of the congressional challenge to the Diego Garcia expansion plan in 1975. At the request of the Congress, the Department of State examined the possibility of mutual naval arms restraint in the Indian Ocean and reported that "approaching the Soviets on Indian Ocean arms control would be inappropriate since

[79] Washington Post, 12 June 1971.

[80] Sick, op. cit., p. 61.

it might serve to legitimize Soviet activities that were considered harmful to U.S. interests".[81] Finally, the authorization for the Diego Garcia expansion project was approved but section 407(a) stipulated that

> It is the sense of Congress that the President should undertake to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union intended to achieve an agreement limiting the deployment of naval, air and land forces of the Soviet Union and the United States in the Indian Ocean".82

The Ford administration did not take any action and it was the Carter administration that took the initiative. At first, President Carter stated that he favoured the complete demilitarization of the Indian Ocean. Later he modified this to refer to "arms limitations". In his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in March 1977 President Carter declared, "We will seek to establish Soviet willingness to reach agreement with us on mutual military restraint in the Indian Ocean".[83] The Soviet Union responded to the U.S. initiatives positively.

This time both sides were ready to carry out meaningful negotiations regarding mutual arms restraint in the Indian Ocean. There were several reasons. In the current political climate both powers were content with their strategic positions in the

[81]A. Best, Jr, "Indian Ocean Arms Control," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 106:2 (Feb., 1980), p. 44.

[82]U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Indian Ocean Forces Limitation and Conventional Arms Transfer Limitations - Report, 95th Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1979), p. 13

[83]Rear Admiral Robert J. Hanks, USN, discusses evolution of President Carters position in "The Indian Ocean Negotiations: Rocks and Shoals," Strategic Review, VI:1 (Winter 1978), pp. 18-27.

Indian Ocean. The United States hoped that their interests could be adequately protected by the Diego Garcia base and close co-operation with Iran and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the Soviet Union "by building up Berbera and other military installations in Somalia created a counter-weight to Diego Garcia, along with a bargaining counter for use in bilateral mutual limitation talks".[84] Thus, both parties were interested in maintaining the status quo. In addition, the Indian Ocean area was still not a major area with regard to force presence. As Dr. Leslie H. Gelb, Director, Politico-Military Affairs of the U.S. Department of State put it:

> Given the importance and growing U.S. and Soviet interests in the Indian Ocean there is clearly a potential for a major increase in military presence. Any increase in the military presence of one side could lead to a reactive increase by the other. Stabilizing and perhaps eventually retrieving military levels would pre-empt the development of an arms race.85

Against this backdrop, four rounds of negotiations were held between the two governments from June 1977 to February 1978. The first took place in Moscow in July 1977 where the basic framework of the negotiations was concluded. Significant progress was made at the second round of negotiations held in Washington in September 1977. A draft was prepared aiming at stabilizing existing naval force levels as a first step with the intention of

[84] Indian Ocean: Region of Conflict or 'Peace Zone' P.69

[85] U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Intelligence and Military Application of Nuclear Energy, Committee on Armed Services, Indian Ocean Arms Limitations and Multilateral Cooperation on Restraining Conventional Arms Transfers, Hearings, 95th Cong., 2ns Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1979), p. 6.

subsequent reduction. "Under a stablization agreement neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could increase the size of its military presence in the Indian Ocean or significanatly alter its patttern of deployments".[86] The Soviet Union was prepared to accept Diego Garcia. This optimism did not last long. Due to developments in the Horn of Africa, negotiating positions began to change. For the third round of negotiations, both parties met in Berne in December 1977. By that time the Soviet Union had been forced to give up Berbera. "Moscow now demanded drastic reductions in American activities in Diego Garcia to restore the lost balance."[87] On the other hand, the United States concentrated mainly on stabilization rather than reduction. Though there were differences, both parties agreed to meet again in February 1978 in Berne. Meantime, the Soviet Union [and Cuba] were militarily involved in politics in the Horn Africa giving massive support to Ethiopia (sea lift and air lift). When both parties met in Berne in February 1978 the problem of Indian Ocean bases and widespread U.S. opposition to Soviet military activities in the Horn of Africa loomed large. As a result, U.S. Chief Negotiator Paul Warneke broke off negotiations. The U.S. Secretary of State, Vance, later stated that the talks had only been postponed and would be resumed to stabilize the military presence of both sides at the levels which prevailed until recent months, and then to consider possible reduction".[88] Later, in June 1979, President

[86] Indian Ocean Arms Limitation and Multilateral Cooperation; op. cit., p. 6.

[87] Ibid.

[88] U.S. Wireless Bulletin, 11 April 1978, p. 4.

Carter assured the Soviet side that the talks would be resumed in the near future. This, however, did not materialize. In the changed political context, neither side wanted to pursue an agreement on restraining naval forces in the Indian Ocean. On the contrary, both started strengthening their naval power in the Indian Ocean.

## Chapter VII

## The New Wave of Superpower Naval Rivalry and Increased Militarization in the Indian Ocean

The breakdown of the Naval Arms Limitation Talks (NALT) set in motion a new stage of superpower naval competition in the Indian Ocean. In the period between the suspension of NALT and the declaration of the Carter Doctrine in January 1980, the political and naval-strategic situation in the Indian Ocean changed drastically. With the convulsive political developments in the Horn and southern Africa, the Soviet Union entered more assertively into the politics of the region. The explosion of the Iranian revolution in January 1979 and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 provided catalysts to change the strategic situation in the Indian Ocean. The political and military responses of the United States to these developments ushered in a new phase in the evolution of American policy in the Indian Ocean. The collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran marked the end of the twin pillar policy in the Gulf, and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan shattered the remaining hope of having mutual balance and restraint of naval activities in the region. The breakdown of NALT and the deterioration of superpower relations were closely related to the political upheavals and ensuing volatility in the strategic positions of the superpowers in the 'arc of crisis' as the area from Ethiopia through Yemen and Iran to Afghanistan was dubbed by Zbigniev Brzezinski.

In the second half of the 1970s, the Horn and southern Africa came increasingly under superpower competition. During this period these two regions were subjected to radical political transformation. National liberation forces began to overwhelm the area resulting in a state of flux which threatened Western positions in the region. At the same time, the Soviet Union entered rapidly into the politics of this region.

The weakening of the grasp of colonialism in Africa, after the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal was overthrown in 1974, expedited the decolonization process and strengthened national liberation movements. In the later part of 1970s, national liberation movements in these countries had greater success in achieving political power. At the same time, fratricidal struggles erupted among the liberation groups themselves, especially in Angola and Zimbabwe. In the Horn of Africa, the Ethiopian revolution and the collapse of the Haile Selassi regime, a long-standing and staunch western ally, eroded the traditional western position considerably. The spread of Soviet influence in this strategically and economically important area was viewed by the United States as an alarming threat to its own position. These changes in the political landscape brought the area, which had hitherto been less affected, directly within the purview of superpower competition.

Superpower competition in the Horn and southern Africa had many aspects. Broadly speaking, as Larry W. Bowman observed, three levels of concern shaped the parameters of superpower

rivalry in the area.[1] First was the competition for political, economic and strategic influence in the region, which was itself experiencing a period of crucial political and social transformation. The second level of concern related to the strategic stake in the Indian Ocean per se. Obviously, the western flank of the Indian Ocean littoral is important for control of the strategic points and sea lines of communication across the Ocean. These concerns involve, to quote Bowman, "the interplay among naval strategies, land-based policies, the quest for bases (or facilities), and general question of armament on and under the Indian Ocean."[2] Finally, both superpowers viewed the rivalries and each other's policy in the area in the context of global superpower competition. Therefore, at the third level, every move of one superpower in the western Indian Ocean was interpreted by the other on the broad chessboard of global strategic balance. The linkages between the three levels are quite obvious.

The Soviet entry into the politics of southern Africa is indeed a recent phenomenon. It had until recently been given a low priority in Soviet policy. However, Soviet interests and involvements increased rapidly in the 1970s. Several factors contributed to the Soviet Union's forward policy. At first, the Soviet involvement arose from their support to national liberation movements. In Mozambique, the Soviets cultivated

[1]Larry W. Bowman, "African Conflict and Superpower Involvement in the Western Indian Ocean," in Indian Ocean in Global Politics, Larry W. Bowman and Ian Clark, eds. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), p. 88.

[2]Ibid.

relations with the most powerful liberation organization, Frente de Liberacca de Mozambique (Frelimo), and rendered material and political support for the struggle against Portuguese rule. In Angola, the Soviet Union supported MPLA over the other rival groups, the FLNA and UNITA. Soviet military assistance and Soviet-backed Cuban troops were crucial for the MPLA in their rise to power. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was backed by the Soviet Union in its fractricidal struggle with the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU). It is important to note that the Soviet Union was able to intervene in the affairs of the region because of its enhanced military capability over the past decade. The rapid growth of Soviet naval and airlift capability gave them the ability to ship troops and material further from their borders than they could before.

In this situation the Soviet Union had many advantages over the United States. Once the Soviet-backed national liberation groups gained state power they were generally sympathetic to the USSR. The Soviet Union was eager to use its earlier connections to obtain a favoured position compared with the United States. There were many limitations, too. These newly-independent states, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Angola, were careful not to succumb completely to the Soviet influence, though they claimed to follow socialism.[3] The major advantage that the United States could muster was its economic strength. These states were in urgent need of economic assistance in their struggle against

[3]For a good discussion of the problems faced by these states see Angre Astrow, Zimbabwe : A Revolution that Lost Its Way? (London : Zed Press, 1983).

chronic underdevelopment. However, the United States confronted major problems. Western multi-national corporations played a dominant role in the economic life of the region and when the new regimes attempted to get economic resources under their control they clashed with these multi-national corporations. Earlier American indifference to the liberation movements and continuing relations with the South African regime hindered cultivation of close relations with the newly independent southern African states. As such, the United States had to compete with the Soviet Union to retain her position and influence in the politically vibrant region under unfavourable circumstances.

Soviet activities in sub-Saharan Africa have been concentrated on three areas viz., Angola, Mozambique, and the Horn of Africa. The Soviet and Cuban involvement in the Angolan civil war on behalf of the MPLA was the first major Soviet military offensive in Africa. In October 1976, the USSR signed a friendship and cooperation treaty with Angola. According to C.I.A estimates, "as of 1978, Moscow had around 1000 advisers in Angola who were participating in the operations of Angolan military. Cuba has maintained a force of approximately 20,000 men in Angola".[4] As far as Indian Ocean strategic developments are concerned Soviet relations with Mozambique were more important. From 1976 massive Soviet military aid to the Samora Machal regime brought the two countries closer. In 1977 the

[4]C.I.A., "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist L.D.C.'s," 1978, p. 4. quoted in U.S., Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Soviet Policy and United States Response in the Third World - Report prepared by the Congressional Research Services, Library of Congress, 97 Congress, 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1981), p. 60.

Soviet Union concluded a friendship and cooperation treaty. This Soviet-Mozambique link made the harbours of Maputo, Beira and Nacala available to the Soviet Navy. In the Horn of Africa, the second half of the 1970s witnessed a reversal of the pattern of alliances. After the Ethiopian revolution, the Soviet Union got the opportunity to have close relations with the Marian Mengistu regime in addition to the Said Barre government of Somalia. In December 1976, the Soviet Union agreed, for the first time, to extend $100 million in military assistance to Ethiopia. Parallel to the development of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, American-Ethiopian relations deteriorated rapidly. Ethiopia terminated its military relationship with the United States in April 1977. When Somalia using Soviet arms invaded Ogaden, a region in Ethiopia inhabited largely by ethnic Somalis, in July 1977, the Soviets readily came forward to assist Ethiopia, resulting in the breakdown of Soviet-Somalian relations. In September 1977, Ethiopia made into another military agreement with the Soviet Union involving the delivery of 48 MIG-21 fighters, tanks, SAM 3 and SAM 7 missiles, together valued at $385 million.[5] It should be noted that the Soviet Union used her naval forces in the Indian Ocean to airlift armaments to Ethiopia during the Ogaden war. Amphibious assault ships, which brought materials in, operated just outside the harbour of Massawa. The Soviet Union concluded a friendship and cooperation treaty with Ethiopia in November 1977.

The United States viewed the growth of Soviet influence as tantamount to a decline of her own position and feared that it

[5]Ibid., p. 58.

would result in future loss of access to strategic minerals and resources.[6] According to a Congressional Research Service (Library of Congress) report:

> the countries on the Horn have been a prime Soviet target. Militarily, a foothold on this region: (1) offers a greater ability to disrupt ongoing western military and commercial traffic; (2) affords greater protection for the Soviet Union's own access to the Indian Ocean; and (3) enables the Soviet Union to establish a forward logistic base for Soviet naval squadrons operating in the Indian Ocean.7

The massive airlift of materials by the Soviet Union to Ethiopia and the Soviet-backed Cuban military involvement in Angola were interpreted by the United States as a deliberate attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to upset the balance in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, some American policy makers, such as the ambassador to the U.N., Andrew Young, tried to insulate developments in Africa from general East-West relations. However, the general tendency was to view them through the mirror of Soviet-American global competition. Therefore, Soviet-American relations in the Indian Ocean deteriorated markedly after 1977, breaking down naval detente in the Indian Ocean.

When the Carter administration assumed office in 1977, the President reiterated his commitment to naval detente in the Indian Ocean. In its first year the Carter administration retained the basic policy framework of the Nixon and Ford administrations regarding the Indian Ocean without any substantial change. This involved the continuation of the "construction of Diego Garcia naval base, modus operandi of the Middle East

[6]Bowman, "African Conflict," p. 90.

[7]Soviet Policy and United States Response, p. 58

Command, triannual task force deployment from the 7th Fleet and the two pillar policy in the Persian Gulf".[8] Before long, the violent collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran in the face of Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeni radically changed the political climate in the Indian Ocean leading to a crisis in American policy in the region.

**Iranian Revolution and Its Impact on U.S. Policy**

For a long period, the Shah had been considered by the Americans as a bastion of stability and western interest in the strategically and economically important Persian Gulf area. Hence, one of the cornerstones of U.S policy was close security cooperation with Iran. The sudden and cataclysmic collapse of this major pillar of American policy in the Gulf was the final blow to the Nixon-Kissinger defence schema, which had already been shaken by the developments in the Horn and Southern Africa. In view of the fact that American policy in the region had relied heavily on Iran, to quote Sick, "when the Shah's regime collapsed, the United States was left strategically naked, with no safety net".[9]

The causes of the political upheaval were basically internal. Massive U.S. support, material and otherwise, was unable to prevent the regime from collapse. The anti-Shah movement gained momentum within a short period of time. Even at the beginning of 1978 it was limited to the urban middle class but within the period of a year it acquired huge momentum to the point

[8]Gary Sick, "Evolution of U.S. Strategy," p. 68.

[9]op. cit., p. 70.

of being a massive social movement.[10]

The manner in which the Shah's regime collapsed highlighted the problems that the United States faced in its policy of collaboration with pro-U.S. but overtly authoritarian, repressive and unpopular regimes in the region. The United States perceived the Shah's role as that of protecting the stability of the region in the regional context of Iran-American relations and global East-West strategic balance. This relationship gave the impression that the United States had given a blank cheque to the Shah. The reality was, however, that the Shah evaded American pressure to restrain his ambitious military build up in many instances. In the eyes of ordinary Iranians, the Shah was an American puppet who faithfully executed orders given by his "Yankee Masters" at the expense of Iranian national interests. In the long run, the U.S. link maintained by the Shah undermined his legitimacy instead of providing strength to his regime.

At first, the United States was not prepared to respond positively to the type of challenge manifested by the Iranian revolution. It became evident that the existing defense arrangements were not adequate to deal with the situation. Thus, the United States had to be nothing but a spectator of events. Further, the capture of the U.S. Embassy and the taking of

[10]Fred Halliday identifies the three types of revolts embodied in the Iranian revolution: first, a political revolt against twenty-five years of monarchical dictatorship; second, a social revolt against the increasing inequities and material problems associated with the pattern of capitalist development in Iran; and third, a nationalist and Islamic revolt against the imposition of western advisers and culture upon Iran, coupled with Iran's subservience to Washington in regional affairs". Fred Halliday, Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis (Washington: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981), p. 80.

hostages, and also the failure of the rescue mission, considerably eroded American credibility in the region.

The strategic implications of the Iranian revolution were far more important than the political ones. It marked the demise of the Nixon Doctrine, both as an operational scheme and a geo-political doctrine. One of the major premises of the Nixon Doctrine was security collaboration with the pro-western medium powers to safeguard western security interests. As the former National Security Council member, William Quandt, stated in 1980 to the Congressional Committee: "(T)he Iranian revolution has brought home the futility of trying to depend on surrogates to look after vital interests of the United States. These interests are vital, including as they do oil and the ability to contain the expansion of Soviet power".[11]

The year 1979 began with the fall of the Shah in January and ended with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December. The period in between these two events was crowded with incidents that kindled American concern that their position and influence were fast eroding. In February, border clashes between Marxist South Yemen and Saudi-backed North Yemen erupted. In face of the rising tide of revolutionary fervor in Iran, the United States and conservative regimes in the region such as Saudi Arabia feared that the Soviet Union would capitalize on the situation for its own advantage. Though later information cast considerable doubt on the actual fighting along the border,

[11]U.S., Congress, House, Sub-Committee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Interests in and Policy towards the Persian Gulf, Hearings, 96th Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1980), p. 135.

the Saudis took it seriously. The United States responded hurriedly: a carrier task force was dispatched to the Arabian Sea; a package of military assistance ($390 m) including 12 F-5E fighter aircraft was granted to Yemen; AWAC aircraft were employed in Saudi Arabia. At the same time developments in Iran were fast moving in a direction adverse to American interests. At the height of the hostage crisis, the Grand Mosque in Mecca was attacked, adding considerably to the general confusion. Iran radio accused the United States of being responsible for this attack. This triggered a series of assaults on U.S. citizens and property throughout the region, forcing a partial evacuation of U.S. diplomatic personnel. The Grand Mosque assault brought to the forefront the issue of the security and stability of the Saudi regime in the face of a Muslim fundamentalist tide.

Initiatives to devise a new strategy for the Indian Ocean appeared simultaneously. As Commander Gary Sick recalls, the National Security adviser, Brzezinski "initiated a series of studies within the National Security Council to begin to identify the elements of a strategic approach as it became evident that the Shah regime was disintegrating".[12] As such, he commissioned a review of the overall U.S. military posture vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. It was this study, conducted by Samuel P. Huntington, that led to the Presidential Review Memorandum - 10, and subsequently, to the Presidential Directive - 18. As the political climate in West Asia was constantly changing various aspects of U.S. strategy in the region were intensively debated within U.S. official circles.

[12]Sick, "Evolution of U.S. Policy," p. 71.

As far as American policy in the Indian Ocean was concerned two lines of thinking were present in the early years of the Carter administration. The first strategic thinking, represented by the Secretary of state, Brzezinski, the Secretary of Defense, Brown, and NSC member, Komer, emphasized the necessity of upgrading the U.S. capability to intervene with military muscle to check Soviet expansionism and attempts to fish in troubled waters. Their main strongholds were the Department of Defense and the National Security Council. However, Cyrus Vance and David Newsom, who represented the second line of thinking, were not convinced by these arguments and advocated a more cautious policy. The debate between the two factions continued in 1979 but the growing West Asian crisis strengthened the hands of those advocating a militant posture.[13]

In February Brown visited Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern States. According to some Pentagon sources, during his visit, "Brown broached the sensitive subject of regional basing facilities should American forces have to react to a Soviet threat in the area".[14] On 28 February 1979 the National Security Council met and discussed the strategic implications of the growing political crisis in the Gulf and proposed a new strategic

[13]Those who represented the first line of thinking were active even before the fall of the Shah. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Charles Duncan, submitted a report on 'U.S. power in the Gulf' after he visited the Persian Gulf in November 1978. As a result of this submission, the Secretary of Defense, Brown, requested the Chiefs of Staff to prepare a position paper on military options to protect U.S. interests in the Gulf.

[14]Maxwell Orme Johnson, The Military as an Instrument of U.S. Policy in Southwest Asia - the Rapid Deployment Joint task Force, 1979-1982, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 13.

policy. In this policy memorandum concrete plans for the creation of a rapid response force for use in this region were included'.[15] In April 1979, the cabinet-level Special Coordinating Committee in the White House examined U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf and "set in motion the inter-agency process to assemble the political, diplomatic, economic and military elements of a new Security framework".[16] Sick explains:

> By the end of 1979, well before the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the outlines of a strategy had been sketched in, including initial identification of U.S. forces for a rapid deployment force, operational planning for an increased U.S. military presence, and preliminary discussions with Oman, Kenya, and Somalia about possible use of some facilities in these nations.[17]

The examination of the sequence of policy decisions clearly reveals that, by the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, the new direction of U.S. strategy in the Indian Ocean had been laid down. The Soviet military action in Afghanistan provided the catalyst for the new policy rather than a cause. This does not underestimate the strategic implications of the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan. For the first time since World War II, the Soviet Union extended its military force beyond the Soviet bloc in Afghanistan.

The circumstances that set the stage for the Soviet occupation need to be understood in the context of political developments in Afghanistan after the Marxist putsch in April

[15]Johnson, op. cit., p. 15

[16]Sick, op. cit., p. 72.

[17]Ibid.

1978. After the Saur Revolution, the new revolutionary regime maintained very close relations with the Soviet Union and entered into a 20 year treaty of friendship in December 1978. Historically, Afghanistan had been on the border of Russian/ Soviet-West confrontation. The fall of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of influence inevitably caused concern in the United States but it was not in a position to intervene effectively at the time. The new revolutionary regime, however, was beset with internecine feuds and power struggles based on more parochial loyalties inherent in Afghan politics. From the very beginning, contradictions between the Khalq faction and the Parcham faction of communists within the revolutionary regime were apparent. Therefore, the Afghan revolutionary regime had a stormy existence from its inception. They attributed their problems to external, mainly western, intrigues. By the beginning of 1979, Afghanistan was beset by a rebellion led by the mullahs who were inspired by the fundamentalist revival in Iran. In this context, the completion of the Karakoram highway in 1979 that linked China with Pakistan and provided Beijing with access to the South-Eastern border of Afghanistan, added a new dimension to the picture. The immediate conditions that prompted Soviet military action are not clear. Because of a number of contradictory reports and the rapid sequence of events in the misty political climate of the Afghan hills, it is rather difficult to get a clear picture. Available evidence suggests that the Soviets received an invitation from Hafizullah Amin, whose regime was under pressure from rival factions angered by his radical policies on land reform, education for women, and so on. Hence,

Amin invoked Article 4 of the Afghan-Soviet Friendship Treaty. But one of the first functions of the Soviet troops was to displace Amin and install Babrak Karmal in power.

Interpretations of Soviet intentions in occupying Afghanistan are very divergent.[18] According to one line of thought, the Soviet action was basically defensive. This interpretation emphasizes the reactive aspects of the Soviet move and its limitation to Afghanistan. In contrast, the other line views the Soviet occupation as an offensive action which marked a qualitative change in Soviet policy and the opening up of a new era of Soviet aggression.[19] To Brzezinski, it represented "a qualitative new step in Soviet foreign policy with disturbing implications that reach far beyond the Soviet effort to crush a rebellion of Islamic tribesmen".[20]

The main thrust of argument of the defensive school is the assumption that the Soviets moved their military forces mainly to protect the strategic integrity of their southern border. In view of the strong possibility of military action by the United

[18]The Soviet explanation was given by Brezhnev. He stated "unceasing armed intervention and far-reaching implications of the conspiracy of the external forces of reaction created a real danger to Afghanistan losing its independence and being turned in to an imperialist military bridgehead on our country's southern borders. . . Acting otherwise would have meant passively watching the creation on our southern border of a source of serious danger to the security of the Soviet State". See "Leonid Brezhnev's answers to questions put by Pravda," New Times, 3, January, 1980, p. 5-7. And also Moscow Tass International Service in Rusian, 1549, GMT, Dec. 28, 1979, FBIS Daily Report: Soviet Union, Vol. 3, Dec. 31, 1979, p.D5.

[19]U.S., Congress, House, Foreign Affairs Committee, Soviet Policy and United States Response in the Third World, Report, 97th Cong. 1st Sess., (Washington: G.P.O., 1981), p. 94.

[20]Soviet Policy and United States Response, op. cit, p. 90.

States in the Persian Gulf, the challenge of Afghan rebels to the 'Socialist regime' was taken seriously. The question of the existence of the socialist regime in the face of Mujahadeen guerrillas was only one aspect of the issue. More important was the internal crisis of the revolutionary regime itself. According to Bhargava, "Amin's success in the internal struggle opened a prospect of another Yugoslavia, if not China, in Afghanistan-loss of Afghanistan in such circumstances would have caused more than a ripple in Soviet Central Asian Republics".[21]

Whatever the reasons for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, as a U.S. Congressional Research team pointed out, "the reality is that the Soviets are in Afghanistan, and given the tenacity of the Islamic resistance, they will probably be there for sometime".[22] Indeed, the division between defence and offence is not rigid. An originally defensive stance could be changed to an offensive one with the passage of time under changed circumstances. In retrospect it is clear now that the Soviet Union has paid a dear price for their military intervention in Afghanistan. However, they were prepared to pay that price when their security interests were or seemed to be in danger.

Even if the Soviet occupation was not a constituent part of a larger Soviet design of military offensive in the Indian Ocean the strategic impact of this move on the Indian Ocean cannot be underestimated. Soviet ground forces have never been closer to

[21]G.S. Bharagava, South Asian Security after Afghanistan, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), p. 170.

[22]Ibid., p. 95.

the Indian Ocean. In view of the fact that the Soviet Union was maintaining annual naval deployments in the Indian Ocean, the stationing of Soviet ground forces at arm's length of the Indian Ocean waters strengthened the Soviet military posture there.

In order to understand the political and strategic repercussions of the Soviet occupation it is necessary to pay attention to the reactions to the Soviet move. The widespread condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan by the Indian Ocean littoral states stunned the Soviets. Most non-aligned, except India, and Islamic states joined hands to condemn the Soviet action as one directed against a non-aligned country. At the Islamabad Conference, convened in 1980, to discuss the Afghan question, even hitherto pro-Soviet states like Iraq condemned the Soviet Union. The widespread condemnation of the Soviet action by Indian Ocean littorals was a severe blow to the carefully cultivated image of the Soviet Union as a supporter of national self-determination. Now, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan became a major issue in the discussions on the Indian Ocean Peace Zone. Issues such as demilitarization and mutual reduction of naval forces in the Indian Ocean became conditional on the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The Carter administration responded immediately with a number of actions including shelving the SALT II treaty, halting the sale of high technology and strategic items to the Soviet Union, and refusing to participate in the Summer Olympics in Moscow in 1980. It is important to note that the Soviet move had a huge impact on American public opinion, which, "sharply critical of Soviet policy and reflecting disillusionment about

the future course of relations, took a decided downward turn as the nation (U.S.) seemed to be swept up in a new spirit of bellicosity".[23] It was in this context that President Carter delivered his famous State of the Union Address on 23 January 1980 which is commonly known as the declaration of the Carter Doctrine. He stated:

> an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.24

It appears that the Carter Doctrine was a hurried response to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. However, when the Carter Doctrine is located in its proper context it is not difficult to discern that it did not grow out of last minute pressure for a presidential speech. Instead,

> (I)t was a measured response, a coordinated policy conceived over a period of several months at the highest levels of government. Moreover it had evolved in several studies conducted within the National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency, State Department and the Pentagon during two years preceding its proclamation.25

Accordingly, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan did not make a fundamental change in the American defence policy in the Indian Ocean simply because the foundation for a new militaristic turn had already been laid down prior to the Soviet move. Nevertheless, the United States still needed the requisite

[23]Ibid., p. 98.

[24]President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address," Congressional Weekly Report, 38:4 (WAshington: Congressional Quarterly Press) 26 January 1981, p. 201.

[25]Johnson, Military as an Instrument of U.S. Policy, p. 8.

military capability to enforce the Carter Doctrine. The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) came to the forefront in this context. The establishment of the RDJTF ushered in a new phase in the militarization of the Indian Ocean.

**The RDJTF and the new wave of militarization in the Indian Ocean**

The plans for the establishment of a Rapid Deployment Force had been in the air from the time the National Security Council introduced the Presidential Review memorandum - 10 in July 1977.[26] The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force became officially operational at the MacDill airforce base, Tampa, Florida from 1 March 1980. As the RDJTF is basically a planning and command organization no new forces were created. However, the establishment of the RDJTF required two things: first, a strategically mobile military force equipped for desert warfare; second, logistic support.

The problems associated with logistic support were discussed at the National Security Council meeting held on 4 December 1979 and it was decided to conduct a study to locate potential military base facilities.[27] Consequently, the Secretary of State directed a group headed by Reginald Bartholomew, Asst. Secretary

[26]The conceptual history of Rapid Deployment Force goes back to the early 1960s. The Secretary of Defense of the Kennedy administration, Robert McNamara, proposed a brush fire brigade positioned in the western Pacific. This Forward Floating Depot, the term used in official records, was tested in 1964 in the exercise Quick Release. It was believed to be successful. In the face of congressional opposition and lukewarm suport from the Pentagon the idea was abandoned.

[27]Washington Post, 24 January 1980.

of State for Political Military Affairs, to visit Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Somalia, and Kenya to discuss the possibility of obtaining access to logistic facilities for the forthcoming RDJTF. After the declaration of the Carter Doctrine, Bartholomew made a second trip to these countries in February 1980 with specific proposals for due consideration of quid pro quos expected by each country.

The first agreement concluded in this context was with Kenya, signed on 26 July 1980. According to the agreement, Kenya offered airfields at Nairobi and Nanyuki and the port of Mombasa. This port has an airfield capable of taking C-141 strategic transport aircraft and a harbour of 17 pier-sized berths and anchorages. In return, the United States agreed to provide a total of $50 million in economic and food aid and $27 million in military sales credit over the next 2 years.[28] The distance to the Persian Gulf prevented Kenyan bases being used as jumping-off points for the forward assault echelons of the RDJTF, but they could be used for rear staging and reinforcement purposes. Kenya's good field training areas constructed by the RAF and Royal Marines and her developed infra-structural assets such as modern medical facilities were among the considerations for the selection of Kenya. One of the main objectives in Kenya was to provide Rest and Recreation (R & R) for ship's crews deployed in the Indian Ocean. Though Kenya entered into this agreement, she was sensitive to the implications of military involvement with

[28]U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Security Interests in the Persian Gulf - Report of a Staff Study mission to the Persian Gulf, Middle East and Horn of Africa, 97th Cong., 1st Sess., 16 March 1981, p. 44.

the United States. In keeping with its desire to preserve its non-aligned status "Kenya is determined that the agreement be implemented in a low-profile manner and with limited permanent U.S. military presence".[29]

The Kenyan agreement was followed by the Somalian - U.S. agreement signed on 22 August 1980. Because of Somalian irredentist claims over Ogaden as well as her dispute with Kenya, Congress was not in favour of the agreement with Somalia.[30] It gave the United States the right to use facilities in Mogadishu and Berbera. Though Berbera is relatively close to the Persian Gulf and strategically located, its infra-structural facilities were not well developed. Under the agreement the United States agreed to provide Somalia with a total of $53 million in economic aid and $40 million in military sales credit over a two-year period. However, the arms credit was approved with the caveat that these arms would not be used against the territories of any neighbouring state.[31]

Agreement with Oman was crucially important because of its strategic location close to the Persian Gulf. However, Oman proved to be a difficult customer. After seven months of protracted negotiations an agreement was reached on 4 June 1980

[29]Ibid.

[30]The House Appropriations Sub-committee on Foreign Operations refused to approve any military aid for Somalia until all Somali troops had been withdrawn from Ogaden. The Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs assured the Congress that Somali forces were not in the Ogaden before Congress approved the military aid package to Somalia. See Washington Post, 3 Sept. 1980.

[31]Quarterly Weekly Report, 39/4, 24 January 1981, p. 171.

which permitted the United States access to Omani military bases, including Seeb airport, Masirah and Thumrit airfields, Salalah airfield and port, Khasab airfield, and Qaboos port. From the U.S. point of view the Oman agreement was the linchpin of the RDJTF.[32] These facilities provided staging posts for forward assault echelons. In particular, facilties in Muscat and Salalah were ideal for forward deployment of naval forces.

In addition to these logistical facilities in the region, the Egyptian port of Ras Banas on the Red Sea provided rear staging facilities for the RDJTF though there was no formal agreement with Egypt. The U.S. Congress allocated $187 million in funds for construction at Ras Banas in FY-1981.

The case with Saudi Arabia was different. The Saudis were more sensitive to the political implications of involvement with the RDJTF in a formal way. Therefore, the United States was not successful in getting the Saudis into a military agreement. Nevertheless, the Saudi-U.S. military relationship was very close. As part of the AWACS plans, the United States undertook a huge project to modernize facilities for the Saudi air force and army. It is clear that "these facilities appear to be far in excess of what the Saudi military would ever use in the future. This suggests that these facilities might one day be used by the RDJTF".[33].

With the establishment of the RDJTF, Pakistan-U.S. relations acquired a new strategic dimension. The Reagan administration

[32]Johnson, Military as an Instrument, p. 43.

[33]Ibid., p. 26.

was especially keen to have a military link with Pakistan In June 1981 a package of $3.2 billion in economic and military aid to Pakistan, in addition to the sale of 40 F-16 aircraft, was announced by the Reagan administration. Alexander Haig was reported to have discussed the possibility of home porting a carrier in Karachi and acquiring an airforce staging base in Baluchistan.[34]

It should be noted that some notable pro-American states, such as Saudi Arabia, refused to accede to any formal agreement because of internal and regional political implications. The agreement with Oman was delayed because of its disapproval by the Gulf Co-operation Council. Even those countries that signed access agreements wanted the U.S. to implement them in a low profile manner. The major instrument that the United States used to prompt those states to grant RDJTF the access facilities was arms sales. Hence, the United States dispensed arms packages and military aid to the countries of the region. Maxwell Orme Johnson writes:

> a basic agreement for access to a port facility would be made in return for sale of an advanced weapons system. This weapons system would necessitate the added presence of a significant number of American support personnel, technicians, trainees, administrators in the host nation. Once the host nation became accustomed to this presence, modest expansion could take place, perhaps concurrent with additional weapons purchases in return for expanded facilities usage agreements.35

The inevitable outcome of this policy was the increased

[34]"Navy May Homeport Carrier in Karachi, Pakistan," Armed Forces Journal International (April 1981), p. 75.

[35]Johnson, Military as an Instrument, p. 24.

militarization of the region.

**Upgrading of the Diego Garcia Base Facilities**

The agreements that the United States entered into with Oman, Kenya and Somalia and the understandings with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan that offered naval and air facilities apparently solved to a considerable degree the problem of logistics associated with the RDJTF. However, access to these facilities, especially in a crisis situation, might depend on the consent of the ruler of the country. In this respect the only secured base that the U.S. forces could count on was Diego Garcia. Therefore, Diego Garcia continued as the major pillar of U.S. military strategy in the region.

Once the hurdle of congressional opposition to transform Diego Garcia to a full-fledged base was overcome in 1976, Diego Garcia underwent a considerable development of its military facilities. After 1977 appropriations, the airstrip was doubled in length up to nearly 12,000 ft. and hard-standing ramps were completed in 1980 to accomodate B-52 Strategic Air Command bombers. A new stage in the upgrading of facilities on Diego Garcia began in 1980 with the launching of a number of projects. The first and the largest was the dredging project for which $13 million in 1981 and another $12 million in 1982 was allocated. Areas of the lagoon were dredged to a depth of 45 ft.[36] Secondly air base facilities were upgraded with the allocation of $30 million and $16 million for the construction of an AC parking apron and parallel taxiway respectively (See Table VIII).

[36]Military Construction Appropriations for FY 1981, p.564

Finally, the communications system on the island was electronically upgraded and locked into the global Defence Communications Network (DCN) system so that it was capable of carrying out intensified ocean surveillance and satellite tracking. The POL storage capacity was nearly doubled by adding 4 new tanks. The FY 85 request for Diego Garcia MILCON, a total of $22.9 million, was for construction of conventional munition storage and maintanance facilities as well as provision for 58

Table VIII

**FY 81-84 Milcon expansion of Diego Garcia**

| Project Description and Score | | Execution FY($000,000) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 |
| Dredging | 2.5 mil CY | 13 | | | |
| Dredging | 3.5 mil Cy | | 12 | | |
| AC Parking Apron | 220,000 SY | | 33 | | |
| Taxiway 75x10500 | 87,500 SY | | 16 | | |
| HI Capacity Refusal Hydrant | 8 each | | 6 | | |
| AC Hzardous Cargo Area | 8600 SY | | 2 | | |
| Pier-Earth Fill | 200,000 SY | | | 24.2 | |
| POL Storage (4 Tanks) | 400,000 BBL | | | 16.5 | |
| Upgrade Water System | LS | | | | 10.9 |
| Planning/Design | | 5 | 2.5 | | |
| | Total(140.1) | 18 | 71.5 | 40.7 | 10.9 |

Source U.S. Congress, Senate, Sub-Committee on military construction and Stockpiles of the Committee on Armed Service, Military Construction Authorization FY 1981, hearing, 5 March 1980, p. 223.

GEODSS (Ground-Based Electro Optical Deep Space Surveillance System) personnel.[37]

As a consequence of these facility construction programs the mission of Diego Garcia changed from a communications center and modest supply station to a major base capable of handling almost every need of the naval task force in the Indian Ocean. Observing the future potential of Diego Garcia, Rear-Adm, A.S. Morean, Director, Strategy, Plans and Policy Division of the office of Deputy-Chief of Naval Operations, remarked that "with its strategic location and present state of development, Diego Garcia will be an advantageous support facility, for the navy for many years to come".[38]

Concurrent with the surge of arms sales, logistic access agreements, and the upgrading of the Diego Garcia base facilities, a rapid increase in the deployment of U.S. Naval forces in the Indian Ocean was clearly visible in the 1980s. In February 1979, in the wake of the Yemen crisis, the aircraft carrier USS Constellation was despatched to the Western Indian Ocean from the Pacific, establishing a new baseline of U.S. naval presence.[39] Almost a year later, in February 1980, the United States again despatched a marine task force to the Arabian Sea. This task group consisted of a helicopter carrier, an amphibious assault ship, and a tank landing ship, escorted by the guided

[37]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Military Construction Appropriations for 1985 - Persian Gulf and Pacific Construction Programme, p. 579.

[38]Military Construction Appropriations for FY 81, p. 564.

[39]Washington Post, 7 March 1979, P.A1 and also Sick, op.cit., p. 71.

missile Cruiser Gridley and the frigate Berbey. It joined the two naval task groups already in operation in the area in March 1980.[40] It remained in the Arabian Sea for three months and in June was replaced by another task group led by the helicopter carrier Guadalcanal. This became a normal pattern in the 1980s when an amphibious task group with about 1800 marines was stationed in the Arabian Sea on a rotational basis alongside the two naval groups.[41]

An examination of the evolution of American policy after 1977 reveals that the Iranian revolution and the Soviet advances, especially the Afghan occupation were not the sole reasons for the new military thrust in American policy in the region. The resort to a more militant policy was also a reaction to some other developments which threatened established western positions in the region. After the withdrawal of formal colonial rule from the western Indian Ocean islands, radical and left political currents began to sweep the region. Internal political developments in Madagascar, the Seychelles, and Mauritius are important. Madagascar, under President Didier Ratsiraka, began to take a radical left turn after 1976. Internal administration was reorganized and largely self-governing local collectives known as the fokonolona were made the unit of administration. Far-reaching social measures were initiated in order to put into practice the

[40]U.S. Asst. Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Memorandum for Correspondents, 17 March 1980, cited in E. Asa Bates, "The Rapid Deployment Force - Fact or Fiction?," RUSI - Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, 126:2 (June 1981), p. 29.

[41]Ibid.

principles of Malagasy socialism outlined in the Charter of the Malagasy Socialist Revolution.[42] The Ratsiraka regime declared it would follow an 'anti-imperialist' and 'anti-capitalist' foreign policy. As a result, France lost influence over her former colony and also the naval base at Diego Suarez. The Seychelles, after the leftist 'revolution' in 1977 under the leadership of Franc Albert Rene, took a decidely left turn in internal affairs and foreign policy. After independence in 1968, Mauritian politics was dominated by the pro-western Labour Party and its leader, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. At the end of the 1970s, a radical left-wing organization, Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), gained momentum. In the 1982 elections MMM, led by Paul Berenger, won a spectacular election victory. The new Berenger government renewed the campaign to get back sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. Internally these island states in the western Indian Ocean vowed to follow socialist policies while their declared foreign policy orientation was non-alignment. These three governments vehemently opposed any external naval presence in the region, hence, became ardent supporters of the IOPZ. These developments no doubt also acted as catalysts for the new militaristic approach of the United States in the region.

It is clear that a new phase in superpower naval rivalry emerged after 1978 with the new militaristic accent in American policy in the Indian Ocean and the more aggressive role of the

[42]For the internal developments of these island states see Frederica M. Bunge, ed., Indian Ocean: Five Island Countries, (Washington: American University Foreign Area Studies, 1983). Chapter 6, Strategic Considerations (251-285), by Milind W. Cooke is very useful.

Soviet Union in the Horn and the Indian Ocean. This new phase of naval rivalry occurred in the context of grave deterioration of relations between the two superpowers, which has been referred to as the 'New Cold War'. In this political atmosphere such terms as detente, disarmament, and arms control sounded out of place and more and more militant expressions of confronting and containing 'misbehaving' Russians characterized U.S. official utterings.[43]

**Stalemate at the United Nations**

Parallel to the advent of a new phase in superpower naval rivalry and the attendant militarization in the Indian Ocean, the prospect for the creation of a Peace Zone became more and more remote. The effort of the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland states to arrest the naval build up by external powers seemed to fail.

After 1977 all the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean were directed to the one goal of convening the conference requested by the UN Resolution 31/88 of 14 December 1976 to implement the 1971 Declaration of IOPZ. However, the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee were constantly hindered by two obstacles. First and most conspicuous was the lack of cooperation from the superpowers. The second was the differences existing among littoral states themselves over the key aspects relating to the peace zone concept.

As a first step towards convening the conference, the UN General Assembly decided in November 1978, on the recommendation

[43] Halliday, Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis, pp.7-10.

of the Ad Hoc Committee, to convene a meeting of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean with a view to harmonizing the positions of the states in the region. At the meeting convened at UN Headquarters from 2 to 13 July 1979 it was obvious that there were wide differences of opinion among those states. The meeting recommended in its final document that, first, the General Assembly at its 1979 session fix the date and venue for the proposed conference, second, to invite the permanent members and other major maritime powers to serve on the expanded Committee, and third, the Ad Hoc Committee to undertake the preparatory work for the conference. Accordingly, Resolution 34/80 B of 11 December 1979 recommended the convening of the International Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1981 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

From the beginning of 1980 the superpowers and other major maritime powers accepted the invitation on serve on the Ad Hoc Committee. The expanded committee met between 4 February and 30 October, 1980 and discussed various aspects of the IOPZ within the framework of an informal list of issues which included geographical limits, foreign military presence, nuclear weapons, security, peaceful settlement of disputes, and use of the Indian Ocean by foreign vessels and aircraft.[44] On 12 December 1980, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (Res. 35/150) proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee without a vote for the first time in its history.[45]

[44]Yearbook of the United Nations 1980, Vol. 34 (New York: Dept. of Public Information (UN), 1983), p. 81.

[45]The United States emphasized (cont....to page 333)

Despite the fact that the superpowers and other major maritime powers began to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee and acquiesced in the resolutions on the IOPZ, the prospect for the establishment of a peace zone seemed further remote with the progress of the 1980s. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the establishment of the RDJTF, and the failure on the part of the littoral states to resolve their differences on the peace zone concept and related issues were responsible for the state of stagnation of the Peace Zone process.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan added a new dimension to the whole debate over the IOPZ by providing conditions to bring land power versus sea power logic to the discussions. The Afghanistan issue created a huge gulf not only between the superpowers but also among the littorals themselves.[46]

After 1980 the Ad Hoc Committee itself became an instrument of superpower politics and, to quote an American strategist, "one

[45] .....(Conti. from p. 332) that she was able to join the consensus for the first time by her placing her own interpretation on some of the resolution's provisions. They were 1, the reference to a 1981 conference was a description of the content of the Assembly's 1972 resolution on the topic and not a call to convene the Conference; 2, the Ad Hoc Committee was not specifically bound to set a date for the conference; 3, the Committee would continue to take its decisions by consensus; 4, forces deployed in the Indian Ocean in accordance with the U.N. Charter's purposes and principles did not undermine the intent of the zone of peace, and finally it was recognized that the threat to regional security did not emanate solely from the presence of the great powers. Ibid., p. 82.

[46] Luxembourg, speaking on behalf of the European Community, made the point that a reference to other recent relevant resolutions in a preambular paragraph as including res. ES-6/2 of 14 January 1980, calling for withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghansitan.

a long polemical circus".[47] The Ad Hoc Committee as a preparatory committee for the projected conference held two sessions in 1981. These deliberations proved the impossibility of harmonizing the views on issues relating to the convening the conference. It was even difficult to come to a consensus over the date of the conference. The majority of the Ad Hoc Committee, most of them Indian Ocean littoral states, emphasized the urgent need for convening the conference in 1981, as scheduled, in view of the grave deterioration of the political and security climate in the region. They felt that complete harmonization of views was not essential because the conference itself would be a stage in this process. In contrast, the maritime powers considered it premature to set the date. In these circumstances the Ad Hoc Committee decided to postpone the date for the conference. This was the beginning of repeated postponements. The First Committee debate on Resolution A 36/29, which postponed the date of the conference to not later than the first half of 1983, was very reflective of the divergence of opinion of the Indian Ocean states and major maritime powers.[48]

[47] India, The United States and the Indian Ocean, p. 74.

[48] India stated that 'setting preconditions with regard to harmonization of views or the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area were merely pretexts to kill the proposal for a Conference'. The Seychelles was of the view that the Conference should be held during the first half of 1982. According to Madagascar, a complete agreement need not be achieved before the conference and its joining the consensus on the resolution did not signify its acceptance of the argument that the Afghan situation justified the postponement. The United States, the European Community, Canada, and Japan questioned the validity of the existing concept of IOPZ and called for a change in the Ad Hoc committee's mandate to enable it to explore elements for a zone of peace and facilitate (Conti...to p. 335)

In these circumstances it was not realistic to expect that the projected conference would produce positive results even if the prospect of convening appeared very slim. The United States made it very plain that she would not participate in the conference unless the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan and also called for a harmonization of views on the agenda within the committee as a precondition for holding the conference. The Afghan issue expedited the division of the Non-Aligned movement, which was the vehicle of the peace zone concept, into three groupings - pro-Soviet, moderate, and conservative. The pro-Soviet states in the region, notably India, were reluctant to include the Afghan issue on the agenda of the conference on the Indian Ocean. Their main concern was the U.S. military build up, particularly the Diego Garcia base and the RDJTF. The conservative and pro-US states who had concluded access agreements with the Americans maintained that the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan was a major problem that must be discussed at the conference. They criticized India for its failure to condemn the Soviet action directed against a fellow Non-Aligned member. Moderates like Mauritius wanted to include both the Afghan and Diego Garcia issues on the agenda of the conference.

**Small States versus Medium powers on the Peace Zone**

In addition to the pro-western, pro-Soviet and moderate divisions, differences between the medium powers and the small

Conti....from p. 334) co-operation with the region as well as with outside powers. The Soviet Union asserted that states should refrain from imposing preconditions for convening the conference. See Yearbook of the United Nations, 1981, Vol 35, (New York: Department of Public Information(U.N.), 1985), p.94-5.

states in the Indian Ocean are also apparent. The clash of interests between the medium and small states centered around three main issues: the definition of the concept; the reciprocal responsibilities of the regional states in the implementation of the peace zone; and, finally, the scope of the IOPZ. Security interests and defence perceptions of the medium powers are lucidly manifested in the Indian approach to the IOPZ. India defines the IOPZ as an attempt on the part of Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland states to prevent the Indian Ocean becoming an arena for superpower naval rivalry. Accordingly, going narrowly with the 1971 declaration, India wants to direct the IOPZ only against superpowers. Secondly, India is against the assigning of any reciprocal responsibility in the course of implemeting the IOPZ. Thirdly, the IOPZ covers only the water column but not the littorals.

In contrast, the small states are concerned not only with the naval activities of the superpowers but also with the naval build up of the regional powers. Small states do not want to see the superpowers in the Indian Ocean replaced by the regional middle powers. Representing the peace and security perspective of the small powers, Sri Lanka stated in the First Committee of the UN in 1977 that "we are no less concerned with preventing military competition within the region on the part of the powers of the region itself".[49] There is no doubt that the roots of political instability and chronic insecurity in the region cannot solely be attributed to superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. The

[49]UN Disarmament Yearbook, Vol. 2, 1977 (New York; Dept. of Public Information, 1978), p. 259.

Iran-Iraq war provides a case in point. The involvement of external powers in the war has been very peripheral if not negligible. If the regional powers are also accountable for lack of peace in the region, the question of responsibility of the regional powers in the establishment of a peace zone comes naturally. According to K.R. Singh, a leading Indian strategic analyst, acceptance of some responsibility by the regional powers is tantamount to equating these with the great powers and "accepting the equation of responsibility of Great Powers and regional powers was bad diplomacy".[50] In contrast, the small states demand that there should be some abiding responsibility by the regional powers in order to guarantee peace and security in the region. Therefore, small states eagerly put forward proposals such as those of nuclear free zones, mutual and balanced arms reduction at a regional level, code of conduct and norms of conflict resolution, along with the IOPZ, that bind regional powers as well. From the Indian point of view "they were neither necessary in the context of the great power rivalry nor envisaged earlier by the NAM in its concept of IOPZ".[51] However, Sri Lanka always advocated the linkage between regional and global disarmament. She suggested, for instance, at the meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland states in 1979 held in New York, that the Indian Ocean states should adopt a code of conduct

[50]K.R. Singh, "Emerging Issues in the Indian Ocean: The Political Dimension," IDSA Journal, XVII:4 (April-June 1985), p. 396

[51]Ibid., p. 392.

which could include a commitment to the basic principles of the U.N. charter.[52]

Finally comes the issue of geographical scope of the Indian Ocean Peace zone Proposal.India and Australia want to adhere strictly to the narrow definition of the 1971 resolution - the Ocean and its natural extensions only. The issue of the geographical limits of the IOPZ comes up repeatedly in the UN debates and at the NAM conferences. It is important to note that because of the linkages between superpower naval strategies and policies of the littoral states, conflicts on land eventually slip into the ocean, unless the IOPZ covers the land mass. This issue was discussed at the Colombo Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and the subsequent ministerial-level NAM meetings which came to the conclusion that the concept of the peace zone includes the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions to the littoral and hinterland states.

The dominating attitude of India as a medium power in the region became more apparent with the growth of her naval capability. While advocating the Indian Ocean Peace Zone, India has been striving to achieve blue water naval capability.[53] The perceived role of the Indian Navy has been enlarged enormously in

[52]UN Disarmament Yearbook, Vol. 4, 1979. (New York: Dept. of Public Information, 1980), p. 304-5.

[53]For a good discussion on debate within the Indian Naval hierarchy over the size and composition of the naval forces required to meet the country's strategic objectives, See, Jerrold F. Elkin and W. Andrew Ritezel, "Indo-Pakistan Military Balance," Asian Survey XXVI:5 (May 1986), p. 518-538.

the past two decades. [54] The supercilious attitude of India as a medium power towards the small states in the region is clearly reflected when India's top strategic thinker, K. Subrahmanyam, Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, states that "(W)hile no doubt in the international community all states are equal it is also necessary to bear in mind that the interests of one-seventh of humanity which constitute the Indian population cannot be equated objectively with those of a fraction of this population".[55] In this context, as Kodikara observes, "the Indian Ocean came to be looked upon as a 'Mare Nostrum' by Indian spokespersons."[56] In the dialogue between U.S. and Indian 'Task Forces' conducted in New Delhi from 25 November to 1 December 1984 the issue of the apprehension on the part of small states over possible medium power domination came up. The Indian answer was quite self-explanatory; "they [small states] will live with us and they will learn to live with us like your [United States] neighbours have learnt to live with you'".[57] It is in this climate that the small states need some sort of safeguards in the form of norms of conflict resolution that bind littorals alike.

[54]As Salmat Ali remarked "(T)he Indian brass's strategic perceptions are rooted in the precepts of their seniors, who were trained at the old Imperial Defence College in London. They believe India cannot be defended in the northeastern Indo-Gangetic plains against a major military adversary, that the Subcontinent is a strategically indivisible unit and that it must be defended at the Hindu Kush, the Himalayas, the Malacca Straits and Bad-el Mandab, if not Suez". Far Eastern Economic Review, 31 May 1984, p. 27.

[55]Subrahmanyam, Indian Security Perspectives, p. 222.

[56]Kodikara, Foreign Policy in Sri Lanka, pp. 22-26.

[57]India, The United States and the Indian Ocean, p. 78.

In restrospect it is clear that the concept of IOPZ has undergone a contextual transformation in relation to its political framework. In 1971 the IOPZ was proposed to the U.N. in the context of non-alignment and directed purely against superpower naval rivalry. The main thrust of the proposal intended to eliminate the ingredients of superpower naval presence, mainly, bases and deployment of naval forces, conceived in the context of great power rivalry. Since then, a number of issues integrally related to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean came to the forefront and the parameters of the IOPZ expanded widely. It is true that a number of issues are in one basket. Nevertheless, all issues are organically related and it is not possible to dissociate them in a meaningful manner. As a consequence of a decade of evolution the context of the IOPZ has changed from non-alignment to disarmament. Once the context of the IOPZ changed to that of disarmament, its establishment became inevitably linked to the global strategic balance between the superpowers on the one hand and regional-level disarmament on the other. As so much water has flowed under the bridge since 1971, it is rather difficult to go back to the original NAM framework.

**Changing Priorities Under Jayewardena's Leadership**

Concurrently with the changes in the political and strategic climate in the Indian Ocean at the end of 1970s and the advent of a new stage in superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka also rearranged her foreign policy priorities and deviated from some of the earlier policy positions. This change came about after the massive and unprecedented election victory of the

U.N.P. led by J.R. Jayewardena in the general election in 1977 which, in many respects , marked a turning point in Sri Lankan politics. As far as foreign policy is concerned there are some continuities determined by the country's geo-political context and other constant variables of foreign policy-making. However, in relation to the changes of priorities assigned by the U.N.P. regime to foreign policy goals, some notable changes in Sri Lanka's policy postures can be seen since 1977. In order to understand these changes it is necessary to trace the factors and situations that decided Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1977.

It is a fact that the U.N.P. historically had a pro-western orientation in its foreign policy. J.R. Jayewardena especially had been noted for his pro-U.S. leanings. After the reorganization of the U.N.P. following the death of Dudley Senanayake in 1972, J.R. Jayewardena emerged as the dominant and undisputed leader of the party. His dominance and authoritarian imprint were visible in every aspect of party organization and policy formation. By this time, in the changed domestic and international environment, the U.N.P. had come forward to endorse non-alignment in principle as the foreign policy orientation of the country. They criticised Sirimavo Bandaranaike's policy as having had a pro-Soviet and anti-Western bias. The main criticism was that Sri Lanka under Mrs. Bandaranaike was extravagantly hyper-active in a way that a small country could not afford. At the general election in 1977 the UNP wanted to put the then government on the defensive not on foreign policy issues but on its economic policy, corruption, and mismanagement of

state affairs. After it came to power, the UNP government established a separate Ministry of Foreign Affairs in place of the previous arrangements which had foreign affairs under the Prime Minister. Although Shaul Hameed was appointed Minister, in reality, it was from J.R. Jayewardena that all the important policy initiatives emanated.

Prior to coming to power, J.R. Jayewardena was not enthusiastic about the IOPZ. He considered it idealistic and impractical. When the IOPZ was discussed at the twentieth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Colombo in September 1974, J.R. Jayewardena as Leader of the Opposition, expressed his grave reservations on two grounds. Firstly, he stated that a peace zone in the Ocean would not be sufficient to guarantee peace in the area. He asked:

> Are we thinking only in terms of naval bases or armed ships? Are there not other methods whereby war is dealt as, for instance, armies? It was through Khyber Pass that Alexander the Great came to India. Centuries after that Nadir Shah of Persia captured New Delhi. We know that Japan too invaded territories of India through Assam and centuries ago the Southern Indians, the Cholas, the Pandians and the Tamils invaded Sri Lanka.58

Secondly, he raised the issue of the security of small states which live in the shade of dominant medium powers. India was a peaceful country, said Jayewardena, and her great Prime Minister deserved respect and honour. He further asked:

> (B)ut can we say that everyday India will have a peaceful ruler? There may be a dictator like

[58]Report of Proceedings of the Twentieth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Colombo, September 1974 (London: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, n.d.), p. 43.

> Tipu Sultan of Mysore or there may be some dictator like Yahya Khan of Pakistan. And how are the people who live in the small countries around the Indian Ocean to defend themselves against a huge and mighty nation of five hundred million people led by a dictator of that nature?59

It is important to note, however, that after coming to power Jayewardena did not express any reservations about the IOPZ. A more important factor that determined the foreign policy orientation of the post-1977 U.N.P. regime was its economic strategy which marked a sweeping departure from the strategy of "self-reliant development" of the previous government. The open economic package' introduced by the U.N.P. regime after 1977 had many elements. According to J.R. Jayewardena, fundamental to the new economy was the adoption of a realistic rate for the Sri Lankan rupee.[60] The rupee was allowed to float. Consumer food subsidies and rationing were withdrawn. Trade and payment controls were dismantled. Most state trading monopolies were abolished. Investment promotion zones (Free Trade Zones) to attract private foreign capital for manufacturing industry for the export market were established. An accelerated Mahaveli development programme to expedite the development project was initiated. In the new economic strategy, heavy reliance was placed on foreign aid and foreign capital investment,mainly from Western industrial countries, Japan, and other East Asian countries. As. W.D. Lakshman pointed out:

> the Post-1977 regime does not even claim to be following a strategy for self-reliance and

[59]Ibid., p. 44.

[60]Sri Lanka Foreign Affairs Record, 2:1, July-September 1979, pp. 19-22.

> autonomous development. Its approach seems to be, deliberate or otherwise, to widen and deepen the country's dependence on the rest of the world and pursue a clearly dependent capitalist strategy, with the apparent pious hope of getting out of that dependence in an unspecified future date.61

In this economic policy, foreign aid and loans became crucial in two respects. As a total consequence of the new economic policy Sri Lanka started to run large current account deficits after 1979. Its terms of trade deteriorated by more than 30 percent between 1977 and 1981.[62] The government relied overwhelmingly on foreign aid to meet balance of payment problems. In the period between August 1977 and July 1981, IMF grants to finance balance of payment deficits created by liberalization of imports amounted to Rs.8657.4 million.[63] In addition, the success of the governments's main development projects, namely Accelerated Mahaveli Development Programme, Greater Colombo Development Scheme, and Integrated Rural Development projects, solely depended on the inflow of foreign capital in the form of loans and grants. It was believed that obtaining that type of foreign aid in such a proportion was possible only from the western industrialized countries. As an obvious outcome of this economic strategy, U.S.-dominated international financial institutions

[61]W.D. Lakhsman, "State Policy in Sri Lanka and its Economic Impact 1970-1985: Selected Themes with Special Reference to Distributive Implications of Policy," Upanathi (1) January 1986), p. 19.

[62]World Bank, World Development Report 1983 (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 66.

[63]Ceylon Daily News, 1 December 1981, and also see Terrence Savundranayagam "Balance of Payments," in Facets of Developments in Independent Sri Lanka, W. Rasaputra, W.M. Tilekaratna, S.T.G. Fernando, L.E.N. Fernando, eds., (Colombo: Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1986), pp. 83-108.

such as the IMF and the World Bank came to exert decisive influence on the economic life of the country. In this context, attracting foreign capital become a major foreign policy goal. The post-1977 regime was prepared to give high priority to this goal at the expense of more political objectives which were of anti-western complexion. In sum, the Jayewardena regime hoped to give Sri Lankan foreign policy a new orientation, to quote Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaul Hameed, "with strong economic undertones".[64]

In order to understand the new direction of post-1977 Sri Lankan foreign policy and its attitude towards superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean in its proper context, it is also necessary to locate it against the backdrop of the changed international environment, because, in addition to the internal determinants, changes in the external environment conditioned Sri Lankan policy towards the superpowers. Three elements in the changed political scenarios in the Indian Ocean theatre should be noted in this connection. First, in contrast to the situation in the early 1970s, superpower naval presence and the three elements of the naval competition had become stabilized by the end of the decade. The detente era of superpower relations was virtually over and a new wave of naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean began after 1978, despite repeated U.N. resolutions calling for the IOPZ. At the same time, the possibility of implementing the IOPZ appeared further remote in view of the stalemate at the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. Secondly, changes that appeared within the non-aligned movement are also important. On the one hand,the non-aligned movement expanded rapidly with the joining

of a host of newly independent states. The membership of the Movement increased from 53 to 93 in the period 1970 - 1983. On the other hand, sharp divisions developed within the movement on key international events. Over the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Kampuchean issue, the Camp David Agreement between Egypt and Israel, the division of the non-aligned movement was intense. Its initial vigour and enthusiasm stared to wither away at the time the UNP assumed power in Sri Lanka in 1977. The third important element of the changed political and strategic situations in the Indian Ocean is the rapid emergence of India as a blue-water naval power.

It is also worth noting that the UNP government of 1977 could not completely get rid of the legacy of responsibilities undertaken by the previous government. Thus Sri Lanka retained the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement for the period 1976-79 and also that of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. These two responsibilities more or less conditioned, at least at the beginning, the foreign policy behaviour of the Jayewardane regime. When the UNP was in opposition they were critical, though it was not clearly spelled out, of having the Fifth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Colombo, which, as Nissanka pointed out "was described by them contemptuously as 'Kaberi Magula' which means "a festival of Niggers"[65] However, J.R. Jayewardene, as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, had to assume the leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement bestowed upon

[64]Sri Lanka, National State Assembly, Hansard's Parlimentary Debates, Vol. 25(1):2, 6 December 1977, c. 418.

[65]Nissanka, Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy, p. 322.

Sri Lanka at that very summit. As the Chairman of the movement, J.R. Jayewardene was expected to behave in the international arena within the policy framework of non-alignment. His intention was to be less controversial, as far as possible, until the chairmanship was handed over in 1979. At the UN, Shirley Amarasinghe, a well-respected and widely recognized spokesman of the interests of the Third World, was replaced by B.J. Fernando, an unknown lawyer, as the permanent Sri Lankan representative to the U.N. soon after the U.N.P. assumed office in 1977. The arduous role played by Shirley Amerasinghe as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee has been noted. The absence of the experienced diplomat was deeply felt.

As far as the IOPZ is concerned, Sri Lanka continued to support the proposal in principle but the earlier enthusiasm declined sharply after 1977. Some elements of U.N.P. defence perceptions in regard to the peace zone were also responsible for the declining interest. Firstly, the U.N.P. believed that the IOPZ proposal was unrealistic and idealistic. Harindra Corea, the Junior Minister For Public Administration, put into words the widely held opinion of the government:

> When we said the Indian Ocean must be clear of foreign navies, we forget that as long as trade goes on between East and West we can not have a zone of peace. It is nonsense to dream of a zone of peace unless the world's struggles clear up.66

Secondly, the government was apparently of the opinion that withdrawal of foreign powers from the Indian Ocean would give a green light to the medium powers to dominate the region. The

[66]Sri Lanka, National State Assembly, Hansard's Parlimentary Debates, Vol. 25(1): No. 2, 6 December 1977, p. 375.

Foreign Minister, Shaul Hameed, is very explicit on this point:

> If the Indian Ocean is to be made a zone of peace we want to make it quite clear that all the bordering states must pledge themselves to act with a sense of restraint in the interest of peace and tranquility. I do not want to see a stage where the bordering states will be taking advantage of the vacuum.67

In this context, Sri Lanka under Jayewardena's leadership believed that it would be more appropriate and realistic to have a 'balanced presence' in the Indian Ocean. This would create a situation for mutual restraint between the superpowers, between the regional powers and the superpowers, and among the regional powers themselves. The thesis of 'balanced presence' received approbation from Singapore and Australia.[68] At the same time, Sri Lanka began to place more emphasis on disarmament and arms control. Jayewardena made an appeal to establish a World Disarmament Authority, first at the regional meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Governments held in Sydney in February 1978,[69] and later at the United Nations.

An examination of Sri Lankan responses to the naval/military initiatives of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean after 1977 does not fail to reveal a pro-western tilt. Sri Lanka did not make any formal protest to the United States for its enhanced naval deployment in the Indian Ocean and establishment of the RDJTF. This inarticulation of the U.N.P. Government is striking when compared with Sri Lankan reactions under Mrs. Bandaranaike

[67]Ibid., p. 420.

[68]P.K.S. Namboodiri, J.P. Anand, Sreedhar, Intervention in the Indian Ocean, (New Delhi:ABC Publishing House, 1982), p. 238.

[69]Ceylon Daily News, 15 February, 1978.

in 1974 when the United States sent a carrier task force into the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka was vociferous against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and equally condemned the Soviet Union in its communique of 3 January 1980.[70]

In view of the general pro-western tilt of the U.N.P. government, there were speculations that Sri Lanka was moving towards an alliance with the U.S. In 1981, a debate over the direction of the U.N.P. foreign policy centered on four issues: Sri Lanka's alleged offer of base facilities to the U.S. Navy at Trincomalee; the grant of an oil farm contract to the U.S. Coastal Corporation; the attempt of Sri Lanka to join the ASEAN; and the Voice of America [VOA] Agreement.

There was speculation in 1980 that Sri Lanka had offered base facilities to the American Navy at Trincomalee. The issue was debated in the National State Assembly and both governments categorically denied the truth of such reports. The U.S. Navy constantly had port-calls and received R & R facilities at Trincomalee. President Jayawardena explained this position: "we are doing nothing of that kind (base facilities). Of course, we are allowing warships of all countries, not necessarily the United States, to call at our ports".[71] Sri Lanka's flirtation with ASEAN was visible from the very beginning of the Jayewardena regime. Prime Minister Premadasa was keenly interested in joining ASEAN and expressed it many times. This attempt to join ASEAN could be explained in terms of economics. Tyronne Fernando, the

[70]Ibid., 15 January, 1980.

[71]Sun, 1 June 1980.

Deputy Foreign Minister, declared that "the U.N.P. Government's commitment to private enterprise and its success so far had drawn us closer to systems prevailing in ASEAN countries".[72] Sri Lanka's formal application to join ASEAN in May 1981 was, however, not successful. Geographical factors, ASEAN's reluctance to get involved in South Asian politics, and SLFP opposition contributed to the rejection of Sri Lanka's application. The VOA agreement, which granted a site of 180 acres in the Puttalam area for the installation of a VOA transmiter of 600 kilowatts, and the selection of the tender submitted by U.S. Coastal Corporation to lease 99 oil tanks abandoned by the British in Trincomalee, aroused internal debate and regional concerns. India also filed a tender for the lease of the oil tanks and she was naturally concerned over the state of the Trincomalee base and, especially, the VOA transmitting station. India was closely watching its impact on her military communications system. In particular, at the time India was looking ahead to modernize her military communications system beyond the AREN (Army Radio Engineering Network) and ADGES (Air Defence Ground Environment Systems) plans. India was planning to have wireless communication frequency in order to give greater security to communication links with a view to achieving strategic naval mobility. Indeed, Narasimha Rao, the Minister of External Affairs of India, expressed India's concern over these issues and Lalith Athulathmudali, a senior Cabinet Member of the Jayewardena government, told the press that he was able to allay Indian apprehensions. However, Narasimha Rao

[72]Cited in Kodikara, Foreign Policy in Sri Lanak, p. 190.

remarked that "India hopes that these facilities given by Sri Lanka will not be used for 'other purposes'".[73] In this context, the Lanka Guardian, a leading news magazine in Sri Lanka, commented:

> It is obvious that Sri Lanka will not grant anybody a base in Trinco. It is also clear that we will not join any pact. But there is a large grey area between formal membership of some organization of military character and genuine non-alignment.74

It seems that the Jayawardena government was slow in learning the geo-strategic fundamentals of Sri Lanka's location close to India. Because of this failure, if not mismanagement, India came to loom large in Sri Lanka's foreign policy decision-making. India's protest eventually made Sri Lanka cancel the lease of the Trincomalee oil tanks to the U.S. company.

At the beginning of the Jayawardena regime Sri Lanka's relations with India were very cordial. The Janata Government of India welcomed Jayawardena's election victory. As Kodikara, the authority on Indo-Sri Lankan relations, observes "awareness of the common experience of the U.N.P. and Janata Parties in having forged spectacular electoral victories provided a new bond between the governments of Morarji Desai and J.R. Jayewardena".[75] Jayewerdena's first state visit was to India, in October-November 1978, and Morarji Desai visited Sri Lanka in 1979. These personal relations between the rulers of the two countries cooled after Mrs. Gandhi returned to power in 1980. The main factor that

[73]Lanka Guardian, 4:5, 15 December, 1981, p. 3.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Kodikara, Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka, p. 47.

determined the texture of Indo-Sri Lanka relations after 1980 was the intensification of the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. After 1980 the relationship between the political system and the political forces representing the Tamil people deteriorated to the point where open warfare flared up between government forces and the Tamil guerilla groups who demanded a separate Tamil State-Ealam. The demand for Tamil Ealam first began as an internal dispute in Sri Lanka. Because of its multiple linkages, it soon grew beyond the boundaries of Sri Lanka and became an issue of sub-continental politics. When the Sri Lankan government desperately looked for allies who could be a counterweight to India, from whom separatist guerillas obtained material and political support, and placed heavy reliance on military aid, the international arms trade and foreign expertise, the Sri Lanka crisis became internationalized and got linked with Indian Ocean strategic issues.

The intensification of the armed conflict between the government forces and the Tamil guerrilla groups in the north and east of the island brought to the forefront the multi-dimensional international implications of the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis. After August 1983, Indo-Sri Lanka relations entered into a new stage. On the part of Sri Lanka, the major accusation was India's blind eye to the maintenance of guerrilla training camps in Tamil Nadu, and their use as surrogates to destabilize Sri Lanka. India's declared causus belli was the exodus of Sri Lankan Tamils as refugees to India because of atrocities committed by Sri Lanka's armed forces. It is true that the Sri Lankan problem has some bearing on Tamil Nadu politics, but de facto determinants of Indian concerns are strategic and security factors. In view of

Jayewardena's pro-western tilt, whether Sri Lanka would become a southern link of an anti-Indian alliance is a concern of Indian strategic thinking. India feared that Sri Lanka would use Trincomalee as a bait to bring extra-regional military strings detrimental to Indian security interests while seeking military assistance to carry out the anti-guerilla warfare in the north and the east.

With the grave deterioration of the ethnic crisis after 1982, Sri Lankan defence thinking became preoccupied overwhelmingly with the issue of how to grapple with the external implications of the ethnic crisis, basically within the South Asian context. The main concern was how to tackle the Indian factor. All other foreign policy concerns became secondary to this prime concern. What is striking in Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1982 is its lack of orientation and perspective. Accordingly, without a proper analysis of objective conditions, Sri Lanka merely reacts to events and problems as they emerge. Because of this character of Sri Lankan behaviour, her foreign policy has begun to take a zig-zag form. At the same time, the highest level of the decision-making process appears to be disorganized and in disarray. Statements relating to Sri Lankan foreign policy are issued by a number of leading personalities of the government: the President, the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, National Security, and even of Mahaweli Development. Indeed, they contradict each other very often. Therefore, it is not clear from where the foreign policy decisions originate. This means that there is no proper evaluation of foreign policy positions before taking decisions.

As far as superpower naval rivalry is concerned, it is very clear that Sri Lanka is soft-pedalling articulated opposition taken earlier. The undeclared perception seems to be that the U.S. naval build-up in the Indian Ocean should not be opposed because it could be used as a counter-poise to the growing Indian bluewater naval capability.

After 1983, while the Sri Lankan government got more and more bogged down in the quagmire of the ethnic crisis and desperately sought external assistance to handle the ethnic problem, India increasingly entered into the Sri Lanka's decision-making orbit with decisive force. Further deterioration of the ethnic crisis, coupled with apparent failure of the government strategy, strengthened the hands of India in its dealings with Sri Lanka. In the anti-guerrilla military offensive, the Sri Lankan government brought notorious counter-insurgency agencies such as Mosard and Keeny Meeny to the island as military advisors. However, India's backing of the Tamil guerrilla groups curtailed, to a larger extent, Sri Lanka's capacity of military manoeuvrability. In reality, however, India did not have real love for the Tamil groups. She was just playing a game of real-politik and using them as surrogates for Indian foreign policy goals. India was marking time until the both parties were weary so that she could come forward to play the role of conflict manager of the region and get both parties under her thumb. The later developments in Indo-Sri Lanka relations, particularly the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 1987, can be understood against this political and strategic background. In

view of the apparent military success of the Vadamarachchi offensive (Operation Liberation) India tightened its diplomatic and military pressure. This culminated in the violation of Sri Lanka's airspace by five Indian Airforce AN-32 transport aircraft escorted by four Mirage 2000 fighter planes on 4 June 1987. In the meantime, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, southern protest movement of Sinhalese rural youths, carried out a series of attacks against government strongholds including the Katunayake airforce base and the Ratmalana Defence Academy on 7 June. It was in this context that the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed on 29 July 1987. The Annexure to the Accord clearly reveals that India has been motivated by strategic factors. In view of the fact that the Annexure to the Peace Accord brought Sri Lanka within the Indian security orbit, its impact on superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean and its implications for the security problems of Sri Lanka is an area which needs further research.

Chapter VIII

## CONCLUSION

This survey of the growth of superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean leads to the conclusion that it was essentially changes in power configurations in world politics that brought about changes in the political and strategic map of the Indian Ocean in the period 1947-1982. These changes have been explained as occurring at four levels - global, Indian Ocean, sub-regional sub systems, and national. As a cumulative outcome of these developments, the Indian Ocean first experienced the decline of the prevailing oceanic regime based on British naval hegemony. Following this, the superpowers gradually entered the Indian Ocean. Their rivalry grew along with the development of multi-polarity in world politics. Because of this multi- polarity, neither superpower was capable of imposing a regime founded on the hegemony of one of them. The superpower naval rivalry became a main element in Indian Ocean politics only after 1968 but it was an outcome of the evolution of their interests since World War II.

The changes that took place in the configurations of power in world politics after World War II did not have an immediate impact on the Indian Ocean because British naval superiority there was not at once challenged. The Soviet Union was not technically in a position to challenge British naval power after

the war and the United States pursued a policy of acting under the British umbrella. The newly independent states in the region, which still maintained close political, economic, and military links with their former colonial masters, were prepared to accept the continuation of British naval supremacy as a historical fact.

Despite the re-establishment of her position in the Indian Ocean following the War, Britain's role underwent a qualitative change after 1947. However, Britain did not address the basic question of how to adjust the defence system designed in the colonial era to suit the requirements of the post-colonial order. British defence planners retained their imperial frame of mind and were preoccupied more with day-to- day practical concerns than with the structural problems of Indian Ocean defence. After 1947, with the deterioration of East-West relations, global war themes dominated British strategic thinking. Every move in the Indian Ocean was viewed against the background of the global chessboard of politics. Therefore, Britain maintained the previous defence system with only the limited adjustments made technically necessary by the post-War developments.

The discussions on British defence policy in chapter II and the process of superpower entry into the Indian Ocean in chapters III and IV lead to the conclusion that 1956 marked a turning point in Indian Ocean politics. The Suez crisis highlighted Britain's inability to maintain a prolonged presence in the Indian Ocean as the 'guardian of the Indian Ocean'. Following this, the United States gradually started to project its naval power directly into the Indian Ocean. After 1956, the Soviet

Union also changed its political strategy with respect to the Indian Ocean region and came to compete with the United States for power and influence there.

The post-Suez changes in U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean became clear in the early 1960s through two developments: firstly, the introduction of the American Strategic Island Bases concept, and secondly, the deployment by the United States of its naval forces in the Indian Ocean as was symbolized by the entry of the aircraft carrier Bonhomme Richard in 1960. In the examination of the factors contributing to the change of U.S. policy, apart from the political and strategic lessons of the Suez crisis, the impact of new developments in weapons technology must also be taken into account. In this respect the introduction of the Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile System(SLBM) was important. As a result, the importance of Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases was considerably reduced and oceans in general entered into strategic calculations with new significance. Consequently, the gradual shift of U.S. interests, from the military point of view, from the Asian mainland to the Indian Ocean proper occurred in the 1960s.

The change of Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean after 1956 must be understood in relation to the political, economic, and military-strategic interests of the Soviet Union. In the context of the stabilization of the cold war, the Soviet Union as a superpower engaged in the power game to enhance her influence by making regional friends in the Indian Ocean region. The Soviets found that the non-alignment of the newly-independent

states could be utilised against the West. Economically, the Indian Ocean littorals provided valuable trading partners and also the means of breaking out of the economic cordon that the West was trying to impose on her. Strategically, the Soviet need to break the containment ring on her southern flank pushed the USSR towards the littoral states in the region. As a result, the Soviet Union abandoned the dogmatic two camp theory and presented new theoretical formulations such as the peace camp, national democratic state, and non-capitalist path of development concepts to rationalize Soviet actions in the existing state system in the third world.

The naval strategic dimension of the Soviet naval entry should be understood in relation to the evolution of Soviet threat perceptions. In the early years following World War II, the possible threat from the West was believed to be in the form of an amphibious invasion of the Soviet heartland. Therefore, the main task of the proposed submarine fleet of Stalin's naval construction programme, begun in 1948, was the mounting of an anti-carrier screen to counter the U.S. strike force. However, in view of developments in American naval-military technology, namely, the introduction of surface-to-air guided missiles and surface-to- surface cruise missiles, the threat from the West was now seen by the Soviets as a surprise nuclear attack by carrier-borne bombers. The Soviet naval review of 1954 took these factors into consideration and planned to substitute the mass naval fleet with long-range missiles carried by surface ships in order to counter enemy carriers within the range of shore-based air coverage. But further advances in the range of carrier-borne

aircraft at the end of the 1950s frustrated the plan of countering U.S. carriers with shore-based air coverage. Consequently, the Soviet Navy decided to count on nuclear submarines to meet the U.S. threat.

The introduction of SLBM systems by the U.S. Navy posed a new threat. The Indian Ocean came directly into naval strategic calculations with the introduction of the Polaris A-3 version of the SLBMs. Whether the U.S. actually deployed the Polaris in the Indian Ocean was not the question; the Soviet Union had sufficient reasons to be concerned with the possibility that they might be so deployed.

The historical survey of the Soviet naval entry into the Indian Ocean in chapter IV leads to conclusion that the Soviet naval deployment in 1968 cannot be explained, as warm water theoreticians have attempted, simply as an outgrowth of a supposed historical Russian urge to obtain a warm water outlet on the Indian Ocean. The historical context of earlier Russian moves was completely different from the one in 1968 and no possible relationship can be established. Early Soviet designs vis-a-vis the Indian Ocean soon after the revolution and the Ribbentrop-Molotov talks of 1940 should be viewed in their proper historical contexts, with due consideration to the problems that the Soviet Union faced at the time.

The evolution of superpower naval policies clearly indicates that each superpower took its policy initiatives independently of the other but concurrently under its own peculiar political, economic, and strategic compulsions. These initiatives were by no

means sudden moves precipitated by the actions of the other side. The superpower naval rivalry as it evolved had three main interrelated elements, viz, competitive naval deployments, weapons deals, and jockeying for bases and other forms of logistic support facilities from the littoral states.

Examination of the superpowers' naval rivalry in its broader sense, taking all the elements and linkages into consideration, leads to the conclusion that their naval rivalry was not imposed on the region by the superpowers unilaterally. A remarkable community of interests between the ruling elites of the littoral countries and those of the superpowers is discernible. Arms deals and military alliances with the superpowers served the political, economic, and strategic interests of the ruling elites of these countries.

The ruling elites of most countries in the region derive much of their strength from alliances with the superpowers. Being undemocratic and repressive, most regimes lack legitimacy, so that they constantly face violent resistance from their own populations. Because of the inherent weakness of these regimes, the ruling elites are eager to play the role of proxy for the superpowers.

The fact that the ruling elites themselves or their close relatives benefit enormously by acting as local agents of the arms deals should be taken into account in explaining why they are so eager to enter into arms contracts. Political corruption and arms contracts are closely related. The attractiveness of the kick-backs and commissions associated with them are so great that once the circle is entered, it is difficult to get out of

it.

In order to understand the linkage of superpower naval rivalry with the regional security dynamics, this study traced the relationship between the superpower rivalry and the conflict patterns at the sub-systemic and national levels. In addition to the superpower competition, three levels of conflict have been identified which have organic linkages to the superpower rivalry. Firstly, each sub-system is marked with regional conflict among the medium powers. The rivalries of India and Pakistan in South Asia, Iran and Iraq in the Persian Gulf, or Ethiopia and Somalia in the Horn of Africa, are examples. The casus belli of these conflicts are deep-rooted and historically-conditioned political, religious, ethnic, and strategic rivalries. While superpowers manipulate these conflicts for their own advantage, the medium powers try to bring superpower links to regional theatres to enhance their own political and strategic stature. Accordingly, a military alliance of one regional power with one superpower precipitates the rival regional power to enter into the orbit of the other superpower.

At the second level, many sub-systems are marked by conflict between the small states and a medium power(s). The power relations among these states are governed by feelings of suspicion and fear. Further, the behaviour of these states ideally manifests the two closely linked elements of conflict and cooperation. Interdependence and mutuality of interest on the one hand, intense conflicts of interests on the other, complicate the relations between these states. The communal divisions that cut

across state boundaries provide leverage to neighbours to meddle in the affairs of others by using the extra-territorial loyalties of ethnic minorities. Problems in Indo-Lankan relations provide a good example in this regard. Perceiving their defence and security concerns in the context of the sub-systemic geo-politics, small states seek extra-regional protection in order to check the advances of the dominant medium power. Pan-Asianism on the part of the medium powers does not convince the small powers that their security is assured under the shade of medium powers. Therefore, small states tend to endorse the superpower naval presence, hoping that it will provide balance.

The third pattern of conflict is at the national level between various dissident groups, based on class, region, or ethnicity, and the state. Because of the linkages of issues and the exploitation of conflict situations and manipulation of these dissident groups by neighbours, conflicts at the national level can transform into issues with subregional implications. Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and the war between the Tamil guerrilla groups and the state is a case in point. The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 1987 which marked another stage in the assertion of Indian preponderance revealed how an internal conflict can develop into a subregional issue. Further, the fact that the Annexure to the Peace Accord brings Sri Lanka within the purview of the Indian security umbrella has an impact on superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

Superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean commences in 1968 and evolves in three phases: from 1968 to the 1973 oil crisis; from the oil crisis to 1978; and after 1978. In the

period from 1968 to 1973, superpower naval rivalry was restrained. But this period also marked the increasing entry of the two superpowers into the region. On the part of the Americans, the inauguration of the Nixon administration in 1969 heralded the beginning of a new era in U.S. foreign policy. The Nixon administration took steps to reappraise U.S. foreign policy according to its analysis of the changes that had taken place in the power configuration of the post-war international system. Nixon believed that the bi-polar alignments that epitomised power relations in the post-war era had been replaced by a more complex multi-polar world. Nixon considered that these developments, and the changing mood of American public opinion regarding the U.S. role in world leadership, necessitated a fresh approach to international relations. Implications of the Vietnam war also prompted Nixon to reappraise American foreign policy. It was as part of this general reappraisal of American foreign policy orientation that the U.S. attempted to define and evaluate her interests in the Indian Ocean under the Nixon doctrine.

In practice, what the Nixon doctrine advocated was a 'blue water strategy'. While the Nixon doctrine proposed reduction of land-based security commitments, it advocated greater reliance on the navy and naval strategic mobility. In this context, the Diego Garcia base project acquired increasing importance.

As it developed after 1968, Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean comprised three elements. First, the forward deployment of naval forces begun in 1968 became a regular practice with an identifiable pattern. Second, the Soviet Union attempted to play

a leading role in the politics of diplomacy by presenting a collective security system for Asia. Third, she entered into bilateral defence agreements with a number of states in the Indian Ocean - India, Iraq, Somalia.

The U.S. Navy often exaggerated Soviet naval deployment, using the criterion of shipdays to compare the naval deployment of both powers. This study finds that simple criteria such as shipdays and port-calls are unsatisfactory and do not portray the real picture of the Soviet naval presence. In order to get a realistic picture it is necessary to break down port-calls under the types of ships and the ports visited. In such a comparison, the study does not corroborate the notion that the sheer growth of Soviet naval deployment had outrun U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

The second phase of superpower naval rivalry began after the Yom Kippur war and the subsequent oil embargo in 1973. The U.S. responses to the oil crisis marked a distinct departure from the earlier restrained policy in the Indian Ocean. Similarly, Soviet naval activities after 1968 provided the foundation for a more assertive role after 1974. In the period between 1973 and 1979 both superpowers stabilized their naval positions in the Indian Ocean, thereby consolidating the naval rivalry.

The consequences of the oil crisis transformed the earlier minimalist U.S. view of the Indian Ocean. American strategists now viewed the Indian Ocean as an area with potential to influence a major shift in the global balance of power. The immediate response of the United States was the dispatch of a carrier task force to the Arabian Sea in November 1973. The event reveals,

however, that the projection of U.S. naval power failed to alter the course of action of the Arab countries. The United States claimed that its military power played the traditional role of supporting diplomatic initiatives. But in reality America's position and influence after the October War in the region could not be established by the direct threat to use coercive power. It was economic cooperation and arms sales that brought the Persian Gulf states back under U.S. hegemony. It is important to note that the enhanced Soviet naval presence during the crisis once again brought home to the United States that the days of western naval monopoly in the Indian Ocean were over.

By the mid-1970s, the relative importance of the alleged Soviet rationale for sending its forces into the Indian Ocean for the first time in 1968, namely, countering the Polaris threat, diminished significantly. The continuous advances in missile technology, especially the introduction of Poseidon and the programming of Trident I and II, reduced the exclusive importance of the Indian Ocean from which the central Soviet Union could be targetted. Now it was possible to keep enemy targets under threat even without leaving territorial waters. As original compulsions receded to the background, the new role of the Soviet navy as an instrument of extending the political, diplomatic, and strategic goals of Soviet foreign policy, warranted by her lately-recognized status of parity with the United States, came to the forefront.

In sum, there are four broad aspects of Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean during the period 1973-79. First, the routine naval

deployment continued without much change. Compared to the earlier period, however, the technical sophistication of the naval vessels and the armament on board were enhanced remarkably. The second aspect was the Soviet attempt to obtain base facilities in the Indian Ocean littoral. As the need for more secure base facilities was acutely felt, the Soviet Union renewed its diplomatic efforts to obtain them. Third, the Soviet Union increased her arms deals with the Indian Ocean littoral. Accordingly, after the mid- 1970s the Soviet Union became increasingly involved in local conflicts, especially in the Horn and Southern Africa, and used her naval power to support her diplomatic moves.

Looking from the vantage point of 1978 both superpowers had reasons to be content with their positions in the Indian Ocean. For the Americans, the oil crisis did not cause a fundamental change in the policy framework laid down in the Nixon doctrine. Developments in U.S. policy after 1973 were accommodated into the scheme. As for the Soviets, the continuous growth of Soviet naval strength in the Indian Ocean meant that they could deal with the United States in that region more or less on an equal footing. Both superpowers kept deploying naval forces in the Indian Ocean on a regular basis. As far as bases and other forms of logistic facilities are concerned, the Soviet Union developed base facilities at Berbera in Somalia, and at Aden and Umm Qasr to a lesser extent. Both powers successfully engaged in the petro-dollar/arms sales circle which acquired momentum after the oil price hike. Accordingly, their interests converged in preserving the status quo in the Indian Ocean.

Thus, by the end of 1977, both superpowers wanted to stabilize their positions and avoid escalation of their rivalry. This was shown in the Naval Arms Limitation Talks (NALT) the main thrust of which was the stabilization of superpower positions and not the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean. The Soviet Union was prepared to accept Diego Garcia as an American base because Berbera gave her a counterweight. Therefore, the NALT could not be regarded as an attempt to demilitarize the Indian Ocean.

In the period between the suspension of NALT in February 1978 and the declaration of the Carter Doctrine in January 1980, the political-strategic situation in the Indian Ocean changed drastically. The explosion of the Iranian revolution in January and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 provided catalysts for a change in the political-strategic situation. The political and military responses of the United States to these developments ushered in a new wave of militarization in the Indian Ocean.

In contrast to the common perception, this analysis of these developments leads to the conclusion that the new militancy in U.S. policy, manifested in the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), was not a reaction to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, because steps in this direction were taken prior to the Soviet occupation. In this connection, the Iranian revolution was crucially important because the psychological, political, and strategic blows of the Iranian revolution were more severe than those of any other single event. The Iranian revolution brought home to the United States the

futility of depending on surrogates to look after 'vital' U.S. interests once again more forcefully..

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has been interpreted as a turning-point in Soviet policy in the Third World. The factors that led to the Soviet occupation reveal that it cannot be considered as a first step in a long-term grand Soviet design of military offensive vis-a-vis the Indian Ocean world. However, the impact of the Afghan occupation on the Indian Ocean strategic map was substantial. At the same time, the diplomatic cost to the Soviets was more substantial than the relative strategic gain of stationing Soviet land forces at arm's length to the Indian Ocean itself.

The Carter doctrine was not a hurried response to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Indeed, it was a declaration of the coordinated policy line of the President's principal advisors, Brzezinski, Brown, and Komer who laid down this course of action two years prior to its enunciation. Though the RDJTF came into existence after the Carter doctrine, its origin can be seen in the National Security Council's policy memorandum of February 1979. The establishment of the RDJTF has had a direct impact on the militarization process of the Indian Ocean because the United States used arms sales and military aid to prompt the littoral states to enter into the orbit of the RDJTF.

The Soviet Union also increased its power quantitatively in the Indian Ocean in keeping with these new developments. It is important to note that every time the United States increased its naval presence the Soviet Union did the same to counterbalance U.S. forces. This was clearly visible during the Iranian crisis.

This analysis of the growth of superpower naval rivalry helps to identify certain features of the competition. The evolution of superpower naval rivalry can be understood primarily in relation to regional challenges. The two phases of escalation of this rivalry correspond to regional developments rather than to the activities of the other superpower. For example, the superpower responses to the oil crisis in 1978 and the Iranian revolution and other social and political upheavals in 1979 escalated their rivalry in the region much more than mutual fears and suspicion between them. This takes us to the other point, that superpower activities in the Indian Ocean cut across two axes - East-West and North-South.

There is a remarkable similarity of interests and actions of the superpowers. Both are motivated by similar political, economic, and strategic interests. These interests can be identified at four levels. First, at the global level, the strategic requirements of the central military balance are more important. In this respect the Indian Ocean is an integral part of their global strategic planning. This explains why each superpower views every move of the other in the context of global strategic balance. At the second level, i.e., the Indian Ocean subsystemic level, political, economic, and strategic interests motivate superpower behaviour and strategy. Politically, each superpower wants to enhance its influence because they advocate opposing political ideologies. In this respect they play a zero-sum-game. In contrast, economically there is a clearly visible congruence between superpower interests. Economic interests are

involved with trade and both desire to keep vital sea lanes open, emphasizing the importance of preserving freedom of the sea. At the third or sub-regional level, both powers have specific political interests - supporting regional allies. These subsystemic sub-regional level linkages enhance the global strategic postures of the superpowers. At the fourth level, superpower interests are involved with the upholding of surrogate ruling elites and protecting them from internal and external threats.

There were three attempts during this period in the direction of the formation of an international regime in the Indian Ocean representing American, Soviet, and Indian Ocean littoral positions. The American attempt was presented in the Nixon doctrine in 1969. The essence of the Nixon-Kissinger scheme was the attempt to maintain a "regional multi-balance of power", i.e., the balance of American, Soviet, Chinese, and regional medium power influence at regional sub-systemic levels. As long as the new scheme was based on a "distributive balance of power" of the major power centers, Nixon thought all would work together to preserve it because all would recognize their stake in its preservation. The purpose was to avoid conflicts between the superpowers in areas of lesser importance. The entire scheme was based on three assumptions. First, the Indian Ocean was not critically important as far as superpower interests and the central strategic balance were concerned. Second, there was no irreconcilable conflict between Soviet and American interests in the region. Third, the middle powers in the regional sub-systems and other extra-regional powers would come forward to bear

defence responsibilities in the region.

In the general context of detente, the Nixon-Kissinger scheme was able to preserve balance in the Indian Ocean, as the superpowers perceived it, for nearly a decade. The culmination of the Nixon-Kissinger scheme was the NALT, which the Carter administration carried out with the Soviets.

There were many shortcomings in the Nixon-Kissinger scheme. It is important to note, first, that it did not take into account security problems of the small states at the sub-systemic levels. The medium powers of the regional sub-systems were assigned the role of regional crisis managers. It was, in essence, the super-imposition of the balance of power concept on sub-systemic levels without due consideration to the regional security problems.

The assumption that the superpowers were prepared to show restraint was shattered at the end of 1977 with the Soviet and Cuban military involvement in the Horn and in Southern Africa. The Iranian revolution marked the end of the two pillar policy - the strategy of security alliances with middle powers. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the new militaristic accent in U.S. policy were the final blows to the Nixon-Kissinger scheme in the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet alternative was manifested in the proposal for a collective security system for Asia. When it was first presented in 1969 the Soviet leadership did not provide any details about the shape, scope, and substance of the security system. Later, in 1972, Brezhnev enunciated a set of principles as guidelines for

the proposed security system. There was a close similarity between these guidelines and the principles of Panchasila endorsed by the Bandung Conference as far back as 1954.

The reasons for the failure of the Soviet attempt were clear. All the major elements in the Indian Ocean political arena failed to endorse it. The West viewed it as a transparent attempt to play on the nationalist sentiment of the regional states. China interpreted it as an attempt to encircle her with a Soviet version of containment and launched a virulent attack on it. The littoral states did not want to enter into such a plan because it did not address itself to the roots of the security problems of the region. In view of the divisions and conflicts at regional and sub-regional levels, objective conditions were not congenial for such a collective security system in a pan-Asian form.

The third and most important attempt was the one taken by the Indian Ocean littoral states, and especially Sri Lanka - the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal (IOPZ). Examination of the evolution of the IOPZ reveals that it underwent a transformation in relation to its political framework. The main thrust of the original proposal, in the context of non-alignment, was directed to eliminate any manifestation of great power naval presence in the Indian Ocean associated with great power rivalry. After 1975, the emergence of nuclear powers from the Indian Ocean littorals radically changed the strategic landscape. As a result, a number of issues related to regional disarmament came to the forefront and overwhelmed the discussion of IOPZ. Consequently, the original non-aligned framework of the IOPZ changed to that of disarmament, widening its perimeters extensively. In accordance

with this change the establishment of IOPZ become inevitably linked to global and regional disarmament.

The problems and difficulties confronted by the IOPZ in its implementation were three-fold. The first were the problems involved in the lack of cooperation of the superpowers. At first, neither of the superpowers acceded to the IOPZ proposal on the pretext that it would contradict the freedom of passage, even though the sponsors of the proposal repeatedly assured the right of 'innocent passage'.

Secondly, the ineffectiveness of the IOPZ proposal cannot be solely attributed to the non-cooperation of the superpowers. The lack of conceptual clarity of the peace zone proposal was also responsible. Superpower naval rivalry was not the only source of tension and conflict in the Indian Ocean. Besides, it is difficult to de-link superpower naval rivalry from other forms of regional conflict. Thus , in order to be viable it was imperative for the IOPZ proposal to tackle local sources of conflict. In this context, the three levels of conflict mentioned earlier and their linkages to the superpower naval rivalry should be taken into account. The relationship between superpower naval rivalry, regional conflicts, and insecurity in the Indian Ocean are reciprocal. The IOPZ proposal did not sufficiently capture the totality of the security problems.

This takes us to the third point, namely, divisions within the littoral states themselves over the major issues in the IOPZ. These differences surfaced at two levels. First, at the political level, pro-Western, pro-Soviet, and uncommitted groupings took different policy stands on issues such as the Camp David Peace

Accord, the Afghanistan issue, Vietnam's military occupation of Kampuchea, etc. At the second level there were clashes of interest on many issues among medium and small states irrespective of their political character. These clashes of interest can properly be understood in the regional sub-systemic framework.

The survey of the intricate web of relationships among the states in the same sub-system illustrates the persistent phenomenon of conflict and co-operation in the struggle for maximization of power. These states are compelled to cooperate with each other because of linkages of affairs and mutuality of interests and of the ability of one state to intervene in another's political and economic issues. Fluctuations in Indo-Sri Lankan relations provide a good example of this type of behaviour. As far as the IOPZ proposal is concerned, a clash of interests between medium and small states centered around three main issues viz., definition of the IOPZ concept; the nature of reciprocal responsibility that the regional states were to fulfil in the implementation of IOPZ; and its geographical scope.

Sri Lanka, as a strategically located small island in the Indian Ocean, had been well aware of the impact of power politics in the Indian Ocean from the time of independence. The evolution of Sri Lankan responses to the superpower naval presence in the Indian Ocean can be explained in relation to several factors: Sri Lanka's defence and security perceptions conceived in her geo-political context, developments in the political and strategic landscape of the Indian Ocean, changes of the power balance in the South Asian sub-system, and Sri Lanka's internal political

and economic processes.

The cornerstone of Sri Lankan defence policy vis-a-vis the Indian Ocean in the first eight years after independence was close security cooperation with the United Kingdom. The major factor that conditioned defence and security perceptions of the United National Party (UNP) was the fear that India would dominate South Asia after the withdrawal of the British Raj from the region. But, as long as the Indian Ocean was dominated by the Royal Navy, the UNP had nothing to worry about. In addition to the defence and security perceptions, the general political outlook of the UNP regime, their economic strategy, and the influence of the bureaucracy of the Department of External Affairs who were eager to maintain the colonial tradition, explain the pro-British tilt of UNP foreign policy in the period 1948-1956.

As an unavoidable outcome of the defence relationship with the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka was linked indirectly with western Cold War strategy. During this period Sri Lanka provided logistic support facilities to some military moves associated with the western Cold War strategy. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka refused to enter into alliances in the early 1950s despite its close intimacy with the West because of internal opposition and the influence of India.

The MEP election victory in 1956 marked the beginning of a new phase in Sri Lanka's foreign policy. This study identified three striking changes that took place in foreign policy orientation could be seen after 1956. First, there was a changed

attitude towards India. The new regime did not subscribe to its predecessor's perception of threat from India. Therefore, the strategy of the MEP regime was to maintain close and amicable relations with India and to strengthen Sri Lankan security by going along with India. Secondly, the new regime re-structured Sri Lanka's relations with the United Kingdom and terminated the base facilites that the British enjoyed at Katunayake air base and Trincomalee naval base. Thirdly, the MEP regime edged away from the anti-Soviet policy of the previous government and cultivated cordial relations with the Communist countries. These developments in Sri Lanka's foreign policy coincided with some corresponding developments in the Indian Ocean region at large. First, changes in Sri Lanka-Britain defence relations were contemporaneous with post-Suez adjustments of British defence policy in the Indian Ocean. Second, the change in Sri Lanka's attitude towards the Soviet Union corresponded with the changes in post-Stalin Soviet foreign policy towards the Third World. It was with the changes introduced by the MEP regime in Sri Lanka's foreign policy that the foundation of Sri Lanka's non-alignment could be seen.

Though the MEP regime of 1956 was sensitive to developments in the Indian Ocean region, the superpower naval entry became an issue only after 1960. Therefore, Mrs. Bandaranaike was the person who had to grapple with those problems. The policy of non-alignment required more elaboration during her period because of new developments. On the one hand the projection of U.S. naval power directly into the Indian Ocean added a new dimension to the naval strategic map of the Indian Ocean. On the other the non-

aligned movement gained more strength organizationally and conceptually and recognition in international politics. Sri Lanka under Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership played an active role in international politics in presenting the responses to the Indian Ocean naval build-up in more coherent form. Two conspicuous features of her foreign policy orientation should be noted. First, Sri Lanka increasingly identified herself with the Third World and its political movement - non-alignment. Second, Sri Lanka began to take note of her security requirements at two levels - at the South Asian sub-systemic level as well as the broader Indian Ocean level.

At the sub-regional level, the main features of Mrs. Bandaranaike's policy were to maintain very close relations with China while having good relations with Sri Lanka's giant neighbour - India. She very shrewdly played this balancing game and emphasized the China link as a countervailing device to India in the South Asian context. At the Indian Ocean level she joined hands with the non-aligned movement, including India, to oppose extra-regional military build-up in the Indian Ocean.

After returning to power once again in 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike further elaborated the basic elements of her foreign policy orientation with respect to the Indian Ocean which she had laid down in a rather rudimentary form in 1960-64. After 1970, Sri Lanka took the lead in organizing and presenting littoral concerns and responses to superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Her forward role in Indian Ocean diplomacy should be viewed against two developments. First, the naval activities of

the superpowers in the Indian Ocean increased at a rapid pace after 1968. Second, the South Asian balance of power changed drastically as a result of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. These two developments brought home to Sri Lanka the importance of pursuing a well-defined and coherent policy towards Indian Ocean politics.

Sri Lanka's response to superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean after 1970 manifested itself in the Sri Lankan version of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal. The original Sri Lankan proposal presented to the United Nations in 1971 was a comprehensive one applicable to both regional and outside powers. However, because of pressure from some medium powers of the region, it had to be modified to include only activities of great powers conceived in the context of naval rivalry. Sri Lanka agreed to this modification as a transitional first stage.

On the whole, Sri Lankan policy vis-a-vis superpower naval rivalry was intended to deal with two basic considerations. First, as a strategically located country whose history is replete with instances of falling prey to great power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka considered the escalation of superpower naval rivalry a matter of concern. Second, Sri Lanka was also very concerned about how to deal with India which was increasingly becoming a blue water naval power in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lankan policy towards superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean evolved as she responded to the military strategic developments. It is important to note that Sri Lanka has been well aware of the fact that her ability to influence the superpowers and the major littorals by her unilateral action is

severely limited due to her meager power capabitity. That is why she relied on mechanisms of established international organisation to present the small state perspective on the super-power naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

At the end of Mrs. Bandaranaike's regime two subtle developments took place in Sri Lankan foreign policy. First, the more critical attitude towards the West began to mellow after 1975. Second, the security concerns conceived in the South Asian sub-system began to exert their influence more heavily in dealings on Indian Ocean issues. These changes in Sri Lankan policy can be explained in relation to two developments - domestically in relation to the changes in political balance and in economic strategy of the United Front government; and regionally in relation to the emergence of nuclear power in South Asia after the explosion of the nuclear device by India in 1974.

However, a clearly visible change in Sri Lanka's foreign policy outlook occurred only after the unprecedented electoral victory of the UNP led by J.R. Jayawardena in 1977. In order to understand the new policy orientation of Sri Lanka towards superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean after 1977 it is necessary to view it in the context of the changes initiated by the UNP regime in the domestic political and economic sphere and also of the changed regional and sub-regional political and strategic milieu. In the open economic package introduced by the Jayewardena regime, foreign aid and loans became a crucial element. First, the government relied heavily on foreign aid to meet the country's balance of payments problem generated by the import

liberalization policy, and second, the success of the government's development projects depended upon the inflow of foreign capital in the form of loans and grants. Thus, obtaining foreign capital became a major foreign policy goal and it received high priority at the expense of more political objectives which were of anti-Western complexion.

At the regional level, three elements in the changed political patterns in the Indian Ocean theatre should be taken into account to understand the changes in Sri Lankan foreign policy after 1977. First, the UNP assumed office towards the end of the detente era of superpower relations. It was the UNP regime that witnessed the new wave of superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Second , the initial vigour and enthusiasm of the non-aligned movement movement started to wither after 1977. Divisions developed within the movement on a number of key issues of the day. Third, at the South Asian sub-system level, the major factor that determined the Sri Lankan response was the deterioration of Sri Lanka's relations with her big neighbour - India.

Sri Lanka continued to support the IOPZ proposal, at least in principle, even after 1977 but her earlier enthusiasm declined sharply. The perception was that IOPZ was the ideal solution but not practicable. Therefore, it would be appropriate to have a 'balanced presence' in the Indian Ocean. Thus, the government's emphasis was mainly on disarmament and the Indian Ocean question was viewed as a part of it.

With the passage of time, the pro-American leaning of the UNP government became clearer though it officially claimed to follow a non-aligned foreign policy. After 1981 the debate over

the direction of UNP foreign policy centered on four issues: the offer of R & R facilities to the U.S. Navy at Trincomalee, the grant of the oilfarm contract to a U.S. firm, Sri Lanka's attempt to join the ASEAN, and the Voice of America agreement. The Government's stand on these issues gave India the impression that Sri Lanka was gradually moving away from non-alignment towards military alliance with the West.

This change of Sri Lanka's foreign policy orientation caused concern in India. The handling of sensitive issues such as the oilfarm project in Trincomalee and the agreement with VOA, showed that the Jayewardena government failed to understand the geo-political fundamentals of Sri Lanka's location. Because of this failure, if not mismanagement, India was given the opportunity to meddle in Sri Lanka's foreign policy decision- making. The culmination of this process was the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 1987.

To sum up, Sri Lankan responses to the superpower naval rivalry can only be understood in relation to the geo- political framework of its strategic thinking, and its internal political and economic processes. The geographic location of Sri Lanka should be emphasized at two levels - the Indian Ocean and South Asian sub-systemic levels. At the broader Indian Ocean level, the major factor is Sri Lanka's strategic location at the center of the Indian Ocean and at the sub-systemic level, it is only a small island situated in the shade of a medium power.

Sri Lanka's problem of security as a small nation illustrates many facets of the chronic insecurity of the newly-independent small states in international politics today. Their

search for security vitally influences both internal political developments as well as external relations, as Sri Lanka's recent experiences clearly reveal. On the other hand, internal political developments also influence security vis-a-vis external threats and threat perceptions. In this respect, Sri Lanka's security dilemma and its national and international dimensions illustrate the complexity of the problem faced by most small states.

Today, Sri Lanka has reached a crossroads in its foreign policy. The defence and security problems she confronts are complex and serious. The repercussions of taking wrong steps at this critical juncture will be far-reaching. There is a danger of over-emphasising South Asian concerns at the expense of the issues relating to the broader Indian Ocean strategic developments. Superpower naval rivalry gives new vigour to the arms race at the regional level and at the same time influences the defence priorities of the regional states and compels them to act according to an agenda set by these powers. As a result, the real problems and issues of the regional states are pushed to the background and those of marginal importance imposed from outside acquire high prominence. This invariably hinders the processes of social and political development of the countries of the region in keeping with their own requirements and priorities. While the superpowers use the ruling elites of these countries as their surrogates, these elites use their superpower linkages to freeze social and political developments in their own societies. The superpowers themselves tend to view every internal political development and tendency in the regional states primarily in the

context of their strategic requirements. The invariable outcome is a chain reaction resulting in military pacts, puppet governments, political suppression, economic dependence and proxy war, which form the main elements in the texture of international politics of the Indian Ocean region.

Examination of linkages between superpower naval rivalry and the three levels of conflict patterns leads to the conclusion that it is inaccurate, however, to attribute every problem of peace and security in the Indian Ocean singularly to superpower naval rivalry. It is obvious that absence of superpower naval rivalry does not necessarily guarantee the peace and security of the region. In order to capture the totality of the dilemma of insecurity, as pointed out in chapter VI, it is imperative to take national and regional roots into account. Therefore, any viable scheme of peace and security for the region must deal with the local and regional roots of the problem. Such a scheme should include initiatives at two levels. First, at the national level, the reorganization of internal political orders towards establishing more viable democracies is necessary in order to ensure internal stability. Second, it is also necessary to develop mechanisms for confidence building and conflict resolution at the regional level. The regional level organizations should not be used by the medium powers as instruments to exert their dominance over their small neighbours.

In the analysis of the future strategic scenarios in the Indian Ocean, it should be noted that the importance of the naval factor in superpower strategy has declined considerably in the mid-1980s. First, the role of the naval factor in the Indian

Ocean in relation the central strategic balance between the superpowers declined due to the rapid advances in missile delivery systems and renewed importance of air power. Second, at the regional level, coercive naval power as such is found to be ineffective in bringing about desired outcomes. The experiences in the region in the 1970s and 1980s has taught the superpowers that other policy instruments at their disposal such as economic and military assistance are more effective. Thus, at the present juncture the superpowers are not keen to escalate their rivalry but rather they are interested in maintaining a stable naval power relationship. This development also conforms to the current trend in American-Soviet relations. This does not mean, however, that the Americans will dismantle the CENTCOM and Diego Garcia base or that the Soviets will stop deploying naval forces in the Indian Ocean in the near future.

The new element in the emerging power pattern in the Indian Ocean is the increasing blue water naval capability of India. The three recent acquisitions, namely TU 142M anti-submarine and naval reconnaissance turbo-prop long-range aircraft, a nuclear submarine which was rented from the Soviet Union but renamed the Chakra, and another aircraft carrier, highlighted India's capability for an effective naval punch and deeper reach. This has led to the emergence of a three-tier power pattern in the Indian Ocean. The superpowers are now acting on the supposition that the Indian naval power will be a 'stabilising' factor, and are prepared to accomodate it. It still remains to be seen whether this three-tier power pattern will in fact bring peace

and security to the Indian Ocean in general, and to South Asia in particular. Will India use this newly acquired naval power merely to extend its dominance in the region or merely to play the role of a genuine conflict manager? In this context it should be pointed out that the outcome of India's current military action in Sri Lanka will have significant repercussions on India's future role in the region.

Future Sri Lankan strategy towards the Indian Ocean, and her security interests, in general has to take this emerging three-tier power pattern into account. With the extension of India's defence parameters and capabilities Sri Lanka became strategically more crucial to India as a staging post on her widely open southern flank. Recent experiences have clearly shown that Sri Lanka cannot challenge India on her own and that no one will come forward to defend Sri Lanka against India. In these circumstances Sri Lanka's goal should be to widen her area of manoeuvrability within the parameters defined by these strategic developments. India should not have been given the opportunity to interfere in Sri Lanka's foreign policy decisions through a perceived threat to India's security interests. This does not mean that India has a legitimate right to interfere in Sri Lanka's internal affairs and undermine her sovereignty; but we have to accept the stark reality that it is the game of realpolitik that governs the behavior of states towards each other. Therefore, the viable strategy to obtain a wider area of manoeuvrability in foreign policy and also to protect Sri Lanka's sovereignty and independence is the firm establishment of Sri Lanka's non-aligned status which would guarantee India that Sri

Lanka will not become a southern link of an anti-Indian military scheme.

The future of the strategic situation in the Indian Ocean in the 1990s, therefore, appears to be ambiguous. On the one hand, the intensity and the pace of direct superpower naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean is likely decrease. On the other hand, problems of regional conflicts would seem likely to increase, thus, threatening the future stability, peace and security of the region. In this situation, the prospect for the successful implementation of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal as was discussed during the 1970s seems to be more remote. What is now required is a new formulation of this far-reaching and imaginative scheme which will take into account both the dynamics and changing nature of the power relationship of the superpowers as well of the states around the Indian Ocean littoral, and hence be capable of modifying, or at least seeking to modify, the uncontrolled strategic designs and ambitions of the respective powers. The future of the Indian Ocean is likely to be even more affected by political and economic tensions of the littoral states from Mozambique to Singapore. The necessity of achieving some form of preventive diplomatic arrangement remains a foremost priority.

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Christian Science Monitor
Current Digest of Soviet Press
Department of State Bulletin
Far Eastern Economic Review
For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy
Hindu
India Today
Guardian
News and Views from the Soviet Union
New York Times
Times of India
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9.3 Almanacs and Year Books.

Strategic Balance
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