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INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS: THE IMPLICATIONS OF  
SOVIET-UNITED STATES RIVALRY IN THE  
INDIAN OCEAN, 1968-1976

THESIS

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This study presents an overview of Indo-Soviet relations in light of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. competition for a favorable position in relations with India. Both superpowers consider better relations with India to be crucial to the furtherance of their interests in the Indian Ocean region.

The study provides background information on Indo-Soviet diplomacy, with emphasis on the period 1968-1976m during which the Soviets gained their greatest influence in the region. This period also represents the nadir of Indo-American relations, although India formally maintained a policy of non-alignment with either of the two superpowers.

Conclusions are drawn about India's role as a non-aligned nation, its relations with the superpowers, and its quest for regional influence.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Soviet-Indian relations that have developed since 1947 attest to the mutual recognition of the significance the two powers have for each other. The history of economic and cultural contacts between these two countries starts earlier than the October Revolution in Russia or the British conquest of India, although diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union are of recent origin. Diplomatic relations, which are the object of this study, may be seen as the logical outgrowth of their earlier contact.

In 1968, when Great Britain began withdrawing from the "East of Suez," especially from the Indian Ocean where British power was dominant for centuries, a setting for dramatic change was created. The Soviet Union and the United States began to expand their naval power to the Indian Ocean area.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Soviet Union and India, for reasons which will be discussed later, became still closer allies, signing a

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<sup>1</sup>Centre d'Etude du Sud-Est. Asiatique et de l'Extrême Orient, Bruxelles, The Politics of the Great Powers in the Indian Ocean (Gent, 1971), p. 1.

Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation in August of 1971. During his official visit to the Soviet Union, Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh characterized this treaty as an important factor in strengthening international peace, security and cooperation, cementing the traditional friendship between the Soviet and Indian peoples. Indeed, this treaty had opened up new horizons for widening and deepening comprehensive Soviet-Indian cooperation, an important characteristic of India's foreign policy under Indira Gandhi's leadership.<sup>2</sup>

India, concerned about the implications for its position due to the involvement of the superpowers, became actively interested in forging its own policy for the Indian Ocean. The strategically important Indian Ocean had become a theater for the competing United States, Soviet, Chinese, Japanese, and Western European interests. The Indian government was concerned particularly about the two superpowers attempting to explore the opportunities created by the British departure from this area. India's main objective was--and still is--to keep the Indian Ocean as an open sea, free from great power conflicts and tensions. Indeed, when Indira Gandhi made an official visit to the Soviet Union in September 1972, she

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<sup>2</sup>Satish Kuman, editor, Documents on India's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1975), p. 38.

reaffirmed her belief that the Indian Ocean region should be a "zone of peace." At that time, Soviet leaders expressed their readiness to examine and solve this problem together with other powers on an equal basis.<sup>3</sup>

In order to decrease the military and economic influence of the superpowers in the area in the 1970s, the government of India concluded that the problem of keeping the Indian Ocean as an area of peace could be addressed to India's advantage only at the United Nations level. In accord with this decision, the Indian delegate to the United Nations helped support a resolution calling for the neutrality of the Indian Ocean. On December 16, 1971, the United Nations passed "General Assembly Resolution 2832 (XXVI), seeking to make the Indian Ocean the zone of peace free from military contest."<sup>4</sup> Three years later, on November 14, 1974, the United Nations, supported by India and the non-aligned countries, again adopted a resolution calling for the preservation of the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace." The resolution urged the big powers to refrain from increasing and strengthening their

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<sup>3</sup>"Indira Gandhi Visits the U.S.S.R.," The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, XXIII, 39, 9-11.

<sup>4</sup>Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, General Assembly Official Records, 29th Session Supplement, No. 29 (New York, 1973), p. 1.

military presence in the region of the Indian Ocean as an essential first step toward the relaxation of tension and the promotion of peace and security in the area. India had pursued three objectives in this effort: defense of India's territorial integrity, defense of the freedom of navigation, and maintenance of the ocean as an area of peace, free from nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> India perceives a competitive superpowers' naval race in the Indian Ocean as reducing India's role as a significant regional power. With its regional role partly circumscribed by big power politics, India believes that its failure to play a significant role in the region creates serious problems for its position as an independent, non-aligned state in world politics. Furthermore, India fears that America's strategic dependence on its regional partners, notably Iran and Pakistan, might involve the United States in local conflicts to the detriment of Indian security and political interests. India's fears are based on the belief that the United States' Indian Ocean strategy and its military aid to regional countries inevitably make the United States

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<sup>5</sup>Satish Kumar, "Major Developments in India's Foreign Policy and Relations July-December, 1974," International Studies, XIV (July-September, 1975), 427.

an ally of some of India's regional neighbors which are not well-disposed toward New Delhi.<sup>6</sup>

The superpowers are interested in the Indian Ocean because it is an important pathway from the Soviet Far East to European Russia. It is a vital route for the United States and other western nations in their traffic with Asia and Australia. The ocean has been used for commercial and cultural traffic since the Roman era and today is vital to the world's major suppliers of raw materials, fuel oils, and minerals. It should be noted that world demand for energy is on the rise, with world consumption doubling every decade, and that the United States uses approximately one-third of the world's energy. In addition, the United States is no longer a net exporter of oil but has, in a period of just over two decades, been required to import nearly 35 per cent of its oil. Much of this import requirement is shipped via the Indian Ocean. The strategic significance of the channels of communication leading into the Indian Ocean--the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and the Bab-el Mandeb at the southern terminus of the Red Sea to the Malacca Straits and the Cape Route--is another reason for the intense rivalry between

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<sup>6</sup>S. P. Seth, "The Indian Ocean and Indo-American Relations," Asian Survey, XV (August, 1975), 654.



the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

### Statement of the Problem

The interaction to be considered in this study is separable into three interrelated components. These are (1) the relationship between India and the Soviet Union during the period of 1968 to 1976, (2) the Soviet-United States rivalry in the Indian ocean, (3) an examination of India's emerging policy toward the great power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, given the importance of Indo-Soviet relations.

To accomplish such a study, it will be necessary to examine the historical background of Indo-Soviet relations from the Stalin years (1947-1953) to the post-Khrushchev period (1965-1970) in order to explicate the new power relations in the Indian Ocean and the rivalry between the two superpowers.

Indo-Soviet relations and the implications of the Soviet-United States rivalry in the Indian Ocean have been studied by many Western and Indian scholars. However, India's evolving policy toward the Indian Ocean in the context of the Indo-Soviet friendship has not been considered in detail. This study will detail India's role in the new alignment of

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<sup>7</sup>Alexander O. Ghebhardt, "Soviet and U.S. Interests in the Indian Ocean," Asian Survey, XV (August, 1975), 672.

power, which shifted focus during this period from Southeast Asia to the Indian Ocean.

Although enjoying special ties for many years, during the period from 1968 to 1976 the Soviet Union forged ahead of the United States in the competition to win India's favor. Indira Gandhi bestowed high praise on Soviet foreign policy in the joint Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation which India signed on August 9, 1971. She referred to the Soviet policy as one that consistently worked at consolidating world peace, strengthening peaceful cooperation among states, supporting the people struggling against colonialism, and as striving to consolidate the political and economic independence of the Third World countries. The apparent warmth with which Indira Gandhi viewed Soviet policy must be considered in light of the decline in Indo-American relations during the Nixon presidency. Indeed, the growing friendship of India and the U.S.S.R. is partly a function of the coldness that developed between the United States and India during the first half of the 1970s. This study is limited to an analysis of international relations, with domestic politics being beyond the scope of such an analysis. The study seeks to clarify the role of India in world politics and her struggle for increased regional influence.

Previous studies of the rivalry of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean include W. A. C. Adie's Oil, Politics and Seapower: The Indian Ocean Vortex.<sup>8</sup> This study focuses on Soviet and Chinese ambitions in the Indian Ocean area during the years 1968 to 1976 and also surveys the main political and economic problems confronting the various countries of the region.

Alvin J. Cottrell and R. M. Burrell have provided the researchers of strategic developments in the Indian Ocean region with a collection of twenty-three articles in The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Importance.<sup>9</sup> The assumption that ties the volume together is that during the last decade, the Indian Ocean took on a new strategic role which became increasingly important during the 1970s. The growing significance of the region was caused by two developments: the withdrawal of the British navy, and the appearance of the Soviet navy in this area. The "power vacuum," the Arab oil boycott, the emergence of Iran as a regional military power, the Indian detonation of a nuclear device, and the

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<sup>8</sup>W. A. C. Adie, Oil, Politics and Seapower: The Indian Ocean Vortex (New York, 1975).

<sup>9</sup>Alvin J. Cottrell and R. M. Burrell, editors, The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Importance (New York, 1972).

threatened build-up of United States naval power in this region are the recent developments that have made Indian Ocean politics more complicated than a few years ago. The contributors to this collection discuss the 1971 war with Pakistan, India's possession of local naval superiority, and her desire to be a regional power as contributing factors in Indian Ocean politics.

Indo-Soviet relations have been studied by many scholars, including Richard B. Remnek in Soviet Scholars and Soviet Foreign Policy.<sup>10</sup> Remnek analyzes the role of Soviet scholars and Soviet literature in Soviet foreign policy toward India. In an epilogue that briefly traces post-1971 big power rivalry and Soviet policy vis-a-vis India, Remnek concludes that the Soviets now realize no big power can alleviate India's economic distress and consequently have chosen a low-risk policy of economic aid.

Norma Corigliano Noonan's dissertation, Soviet-Indian Relations 1953-1963,<sup>11</sup> analyzes Soviet-Indian relations in the decade 1953-1963 as an example of post-Stalinist Soviet

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<sup>10</sup>Richard B. Remnek, Soviet Scholars and Soviet Foreign Policy (Durham, N. C., 1975).

<sup>11</sup>Norma Corigliano Noonan, Soviet-Indian Relations 1953-1963 (Indiana, 1965), p. 19.

policy toward neutral countries. The emphasis is on Soviet policy, but there is some attention given to Indian policy and Indian reactions to Soviet policy. This dissertation focuses on diplomatic relations and economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and India. Noonan argues that the effect of post-1953 Soviet policy has been to reinforce India's commitment to neutrality, to win India's good will, and to induce India to conduct a policy of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet bloc. Economic, political, and psychological factors all played a role in the improvement of Soviet-Indian relations.

Chapter II will provide the historical background of Indo-Soviet relations, with emphasis on the Stalinist years 1947-1953, the Khrushchev years 1953-1964, and the post-Khrushchev period of 1965-1971. Chapter III will discuss the rivalry of the Soviet Union and the United States for supremacy in the Indian Ocean. Chapter IV will discuss the consequence of the rivalry in the Indian Ocean. The role of India in establishing peace and security in the Indian Ocean and the friendly foreign policy of the Soviet Union toward India will also be analyzed in this chapter. A conclusion will be presented in Chapter V.

The materials used to execute this study are gathered from Indian, United States, and Soviet publications.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

The history of Indo-Russian ties may be divided into three major periods. The first period is the relations between Czarist Russia and India. The second period is the relations from the October Revolution in 1917 to August 1947, when India gained independence from British rule. The third period is the relationship between independent India and the Soviet Union today. Although twelfth and thirteenth century Russian accounts described India as a rich country,<sup>1</sup> the initial effort to establish political links between India and Russia was not until September 1532.<sup>2</sup> The Russian government, however, had no interest in having a political and economic relationship with India at that time. Trade links between Russia and the Mogul Empire began in the Seventeenth Century.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup>Devendra Kaushik, Soviet Relations with India and Pakistan (New York, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>David N. Druhe, Soviet Russia and Indian Communism (New York, 1959), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Geoffrey Jukes, The Soviet Union in Asia (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 98-99.

1801, the Czar of Russia reached an accord with the French to expel the British from India, but French troops for the undertaking were unavailable because of Napoleon's failure in Egypt. The plan ultimately collapsed with the breakdown of the Franco-Russian alliance. Thereafter, the Russians never seriously contemplated annexation of India, but desired to safeguard their interests in India from the British even after the October Revolution.<sup>4</sup>

During the Czarist period, Russian travellers, Indologists, and rulers showed some interest in India. This interest became more meaningful only after establishment of the communist regime in the Soviet Union. Although Lenin presented the Comintern with a policy designed to promote Soviet interests in colonial countries such as India, this policy was changed to one of coldness toward colonies, in 1928. Lenin, however, showed great interest in India until his death. Civil strife and World War II occupied Stalin's attention until 1945, and post-war reparations inhibited the growth of Soviet-Indian relations until after India's independence.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>5</sup>Devendra Kaushik, Soviet Relations with India and Pakistan (New York, 1971), pp. 12-17.



### The Stalinist Years 1947-1953

India became independent on August 15, 1947, but her diplomatic relations with the major powers were established by the Interim Government, which was formed a year earlier. A press communique issued in New Delhi on April 13, 1947, stated that the governments of India and the Soviet Union had agreed to exchange diplomatic missions at the ambassador's level when India became independent.<sup>6</sup> The Stalin government did not consider India a truly independent state. The Soviet Union concluded that the Congress Party, which represented the national bourgeoisie, had not led and could not lead the country to real independence; only the Communist Party of India, which was founded in 1919 and 1920 and had followed the Leninist line of collaboration with the Indian National Congress Party, could achieve that goal.<sup>7</sup> India's decision to remain within the British Commonwealth only heightened suspicions that her independence was only a sham. Even the achievement of republican status in 1950 was hardly noted by the Russians.

India's foreign policy was based theoretically on neutrality and non-alignment with either the American or

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.

<sup>7</sup>Jukes, The Soviet Union in Asia, p. 100.

Soviet side. This policy was maintained "as a strategy for the protection of national security from the encroachments of the cold war."<sup>8</sup> In practice, on the other hand, India, through the 1950s, had closer economic relations with the United States and Great Britain. Within domestic politics, some groups wanted better relations with the Soviet Union, but others distrusted the Soviet Union and the world communist movement. The Indian Communist Party held its second congress in February 1948, in which it changed its old rightist leadership and policy of cooperation with the Indian government. The party adopted a policy which sought to overthrow the Congress government at the center and in the states by violent means. In response to communist agitation and violence in India, the government conducted an anti-communist campaign in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Stalin, on the other hand, suspected that the Congress Party leaders were reactionaries and tools of the British.<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, India considered relations with the Soviet Union important because of the increasingly significant role of the Soviet Union in the world and because they were

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<sup>8</sup>A. P. Rana, The Imperatives of Non-Alignment (Delhi, 1976), p. 280.

<sup>9</sup>Vijay Sen Budhraj, Soviet Russia and the Hindustan Subcontinent (Bombay, 1973), pp. 41-43.

neighbors. The Soviet Union also appeared to be the most logical check on possible Chinese encroachments on the Sino-Indian border. China's growing militarism, including its entry into the Korean conflict, was a matter of very real concern to Indian leaders. Thus, India desired to improve relations with the Soviet Union. There was some increase in relations during the Stalin period, as exemplified by Soviet aid to India during the famine of 1951 and 1952. The Soviet Union sent to the victims of the famine in Andhra one thousand tons of wheat, five thousand tons of rice, and 500,000 tons of condensed milk.<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union also signed trade pacts with India in 1948, 1949, and 1951, agreeing to supply wheat in exchange for tea, tobacco, jute, and other primary products. The trade between the two countries, however, was insignificant.<sup>11</sup>

There was some cooperation and mutual understanding between the Soviet Union and India in the United Nations. In September 1946, India raised the question of racial discrimination in South Africa in the United Nations General Assembly. The United States and Britain opposed India on

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<sup>10</sup>Noonan, Soviet-Indian Relations, pp. 15-16.

<sup>11</sup>Kaushik, Soviet Relations with India and Pakistan, p. 35.

the ground that it was an internal matter within South Africa and that the United Nations had no jurisdiction. The Soviet delegate supported the Indian proposal and opposed the suggestion of some Western powers that the question be settled through bilateral negotiations between the parties concerned, as no such negotiations, in the Soviet's view, were likely to succeed.<sup>12</sup>

During Stalin's lifetime there were some probing efforts on the part of the Soviets to improve Soviet-Indian relations. By 1953, the Soviet Union had moderated its suspicions of India and had partially opened the way to further cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Soviet distrust of India had been allayed by India's efforts to secure China's admission to the United Nations and the Soviet Union's return to the Security Council. India's attitude during the Korean War seems to have impressed Stalin favorably. Jawaharlal Nehru used his influence to stop the Korean War and to have a general conference for easing the situation in the Far East. The Russians understood and recognized the policy of non-alignment as a factor for peace. They also showed an increasing awareness of the possibility of recruiting allies from the neutral camp. Moreover, India's position in

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>13</sup>Noonan, pp. 16-17.

the British Commonwealth had tantalizing possibilities for exploitation by the Soviets to the detriment of the West. India represented a potential source of internal friction in the Commonwealth, and thus could present problems for the United States as well by weakening the unified Western stance. Before Stalin's death he granted an interview to departing Indian Ambassador Radhakrishnan and later to K. P. S. Menon, his replacement. The interviews had considerable significance because they indicated that Stalin personally was getting interested in India and its place in the world. The death of Stalin in March 1953 introduced a new period into Soviet foreign policy.

#### The Krushchev Years 1953-1964

After Stalin died, the Soviet policy-makers increasingly realized that avowedly neutral countries like India were independent states, not tools of the West, an idea that had only begun to gain acceptance under Stalin.<sup>14</sup> Nehru's foreign policy and leadership began to receive favorable comment in the Soviet press. For the Soviet Union, India became important for several reasons. India was large, and it was not only a non-aligned country, but also a main center for

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<sup>14</sup>Marshall D. Shulman, Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised (New York, 1965), pp. 151-152.

the development of the non-alignment philosophy, making it a potential medium for influencing other Afro-Asian countries. Its success in helping to arrange the Korean Armistice, which was approved in July 1953, had given it an international status. India was attracted by the idea of peaceful coexistence and was resistant to the United States' efforts at drawing it into a formal alliance.<sup>15</sup>

The shift in Soviet-Indian relationships came in September 1953, when the two countries signed the extensive Indo-Soviet Trade Pact covering trade, payments, navigation, and technical assistance. The cultural relations developed rapidly between the two countries in 1954, as 199 Indians went to the Soviet Union and eighty-two Russians went to India in the initial cultural exchange. By the end of 1953, it became clear that Soviet-Indian relations were improving. A very important factor was the deterioration of the Indo-American relations, which for several years had been intermittently strained, partly because of the primary interest of the United States in Western Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean under the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. Relations between India and the United States during the Eisenhower administration took a significant turn for the worse with

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<sup>15</sup>Jukes, p. 106.

the conclusion of an American military aid agreement with Pakistan in February 1954.<sup>16</sup> The military agreement between the United States and Pakistan was of great concern to India, which had had long disputes with Pakistan over Kashmir. Kashmir had become the center of dispute between Pakistan and India because the area is pivotal to the security of India, due to its geographical position and its frontiers with the Soviet Union, China, and Afghanistan. Pakistan had insisted on controlling all of Kashmir on the grounds that the rivers of Kashmir were essential to Pakistan's economy. Pakistan's position was the principal factor in India's response to the offer of American arms to Pakistan, for these arms might be used against India in the event of a war between the two countries over Kashmir. On the other hand, America's foreign policy of containment against communism strengthened India's policy of neutrality and non-alignment. However, the Indian government refused to cooperate with the U.S. proposal of a military alliance and enunciated the policy of non-alignment.

The Soviet Union was favorable to the policy of the neutrality of India and welcomed the decision of the Afro-Asian

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<sup>16</sup>Robert H. Donaldson, Soviet Policy toward India: Ideology and Strategy (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), p. 112.

countries, headed by India and China, to hold a ground-breaking conference at Bandung in April 1955. The Soviet press gave extensive coverage to China's debut in an international meeting, while recognizing India's contribution as well, although the U.S.S.R. was not invited to attend. Soviet praise of Nehru's position was due largely to Nehru's attack on the newly-formed Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The Soviet Union gave support to India on the issue of Goa, a Portuguese colony on the west coast of India. Symbolizing the turn of events, Nehru made a ten-day visit to Moscow in June 1955, and Bulganin and Khrushchev made the return visit to India five months later.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, India continued her policy of neutrality, based on the Panch-sheel, the Five Principles: (1) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual nonaggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, (5) peaceful co-existence. This system of relationships was designed to strengthen peace in Asia and benefit all parties.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Fulcrum of Asia (New York, 1970), pp. 75-76.

<sup>18</sup>Kaurnakar Gupta, Indian Foreign Policy: In Defense of National Interest (Calcutta, 1956), p. 101.



The new friendship with the Soviet Union became a key support for India in her struggle to remain non-aligned. It was a form of defense and a weapon against the West.<sup>19</sup> The Suez crisis in July 1956 saw Nehru viewing the situation with sympathy for the Egyptians. At the London Conference in August 1956, India's representatives put forth several proposals purported to meet all requirements of the users of the Suez Canal and the international community without prejudice or derogation to the sovereignty of Egypt. The Indian resolutions were supported by the Soviet Union, Ceylon, and Indonesia, but were not acceptable to the Western powers.<sup>20</sup>

Later in the year during the Hungarian crisis of November 1956, India took a softer attitude toward the Soviet actions in Hungary. It co-sponsored an amendment to the American draft resolution on Hungary in the United Nations General Assembly which sought to remove all words of condemnation of the Soviet Union. When this amendment was defeated, it abstained when the vote on the resolution was taken. However, as the details of the Hungarian crisis became clearer, public opinion in India demanded a stronger stand against the Soviet

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<sup>19</sup>Noonan, pp. 30-31.

<sup>20</sup>Arthur Benjamin Stein, India and the Soviet Union (Chicago, 1969), p. 86.

Union.<sup>21</sup> Nehru, in a joint statement with the Prime Ministers of Burma and Indonesia, expressed regret for the reentry of Soviet troops into Budapest and called for their speedy withdrawal from Hungary, arguing that the Hungarian people should then be allowed to determine their own form of government, without any external interference.<sup>22</sup>

As far as Indo-Soviet relations were concerned, the Hungarian crisis clearly showed that even though the Russians were unhappy about what had happened in this connection, including the mild criticism from the Indian side, the Soviet rulers did not allow such gathering clouds to overshadow the warming Indo-Soviet relations in the post-Stalin period.

#### The Sino-Soviet-Indian Triangle 1959-1961

Khrushchev supported Peking's suppression of the Tibetan rebels in March 1959. But India's hospitality to the refugees who poured across the border prompted increasingly strident Chinese accusations that India had had a hand in the

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<sup>21</sup>Norman D. Palmer, South Asia and United States Policy (New York, 1966), p. 282.

<sup>22</sup>Budhraj, Soviet Russia and the Hindustan Subcontinent, p. 253.

uprising.<sup>23</sup> During Khrushchev's second visit to India in January 1960, he made no mention of the removal of the elected communist government from power in Kerala by the Indian central government in July 1959. But Khrushchev urged Nehru to enter into negotiations with Chou En-lai on the border question.<sup>24</sup>

During the Sino-Indian border war in 1962, India was provided with assistance by the United States and Britain. The Soviet Union expressed its concern over the fighting and called for a cease-fire to be followed by Sino-Indian negotiations.<sup>25</sup> The Cuban crisis distracted the Soviets from the Sino-Indian dispute, but after the Cuban crisis passed, a Soviet editorial virtually ordered the Chinese to stop fighting.<sup>26</sup>

On the whole, Soviet foreign relations with India during Khrushchev's years were built upon strong political, economic, and mutually-shared strategic considerations. The Soviet Union supported India's non-alignment posture--on the Kashmir issue, Bandung Conference, and so forth--all resulting in bringing the two countries closer.

<sup>23</sup>Kurt London, editor, The Soviet Impact on World Politics (New York, 1974), p. 163.

<sup>24</sup>Stein, India and the Soviet Union, pp. 123-124.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 149-152.

<sup>26</sup>Kaushik, p. 73.

### The Post-Khrushchev Period 1965-1972

In the post-Nehru and the post-Khrushchev periods, the leaders of India and the Soviet Union continued to minimize the differences and emphasize the similarities in their respective positions on international political issues. This was especially true of the Vietnam conflict. On his visit to Moscow in 1965, Prime Minister Shastri stood alongside Kosygin to denounce imperialism, calling upon the non-aligned nations to help end the Western aggressions in Vietnam, the Congo, and the Dominican Republic. In July 1966, Indira Gandhi, Shastri's successor, visited the Soviet Union and called for a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam and a cease-fire in the South.<sup>27</sup>

During the Bangladesh crisis in 1971, the Soviet Union gave support to the Indian side. The U.S.S.R.'s blocking action in the Security Council until India had conquered East Pakistan indicated that the Soviet Union was willing to deter China, which was supplying aid to Pakistan, on India's behalf. The Soviet ambassador to India also assured his host country that the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean would not

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<sup>27</sup>Stein, pp. 260-261.

allow the United States' Seventh Fleet to intervene on Pakistan's side.<sup>28</sup>

Indian foreign policy developed to avoid conflict with the superpowers and to provide an alternate role for India, in which its flexibility would be maintained and its friendship with the Soviet Union worth courting. The Bandung Conference, the Korean prisoners repatriation mission, the Laos Neutrality Commission, and the peace-keeping operations in which the Indian army was involved, reflected India's initiative and its international acceptance. The role of India in providing opportunities for diplomats of the Soviet and Western camps to meet and talk was not created by any other countries at all. India's foreign policy also had as its objectives to secure India from external military threat in order to protect its own independence, to maintain non-alignment and avoid undue dependence on any one outside power, to promote the maintenance of friendly government, and to be free of outside domination in neighboring states. Not surprisingly, stability in the region of South Asia and the Indian Ocean constitutes India's main interest.

The apogee in Indian-Soviet relations came in developments which culminated on August 9, 1971, when the two signed a

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<sup>28</sup>S. M. Burke, India and Pakistan Foreign Policies (Minneapolis, 1974), p. 214.

Treaty of Friendship, Peace, and Cooperation for a period of twenty years. The treaty emphasized anew that both sides considered that all international problems including border disputes, must be settled by peaceful negotiations, and that the use of force or the threat of force is not valid for their settlement.<sup>29</sup> For India, the 1971 Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty represented significant benefits derived from the Soviet Union. In contrast, Indira Gandhi's government criticized the United States on many issues, including the Diego Garcia plan. India viewed the proposed U.S. naval base on Diego Garcia as a threat to the stability of the area.

Diego Garcia represented a possibly severe conflict between the U.S. and India. The vulnerability of U.S. bases in the Red Sea area necessitates the use of Diego Garcia as a facility for communications with U.S. submarines in the Indian Ocean. The Indians continue to oppose the construction of such a facility. At a Commonwealth Conference in Singapore in January 1971, Gandhi stated her views that the Diego Garcia plans would attract bases from the opposing parties. India's attempt to build a system of security in the subcontinent, seeking to exclude outside security managers from the process

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<sup>29</sup>Ashok Kapur, "India-Soviet Treaty and the Emerging Asian Balance," Asian Survey, XII (June, 1972), 465.

of conflict management, seems to be the central thrust of India's post-Bangladesh diplomacy.<sup>30</sup>

### The Indian Ocean Crisis

Since the shift in the 1960s in the superpower strategic emphasis on a land-based to a sea-based deterrence (SLBM), India, which commands the central arc of the Indian Ocean, became important to both superpowers in the context of the new naval strategy. This new strategy became even more important with the development of the Polaris submarine. British withdrawal from the area has opened up for both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. the possibility of using the Indian Ocean as a base of military operations. American submarines could use the Indian Ocean to strike at Soviet bases in Siberia. The U.S. could also strike at China from the Indian Ocean. The U.S.S.R. could use the Indian Ocean to strike at American bases in the area and as an area of safe transit for submarines on their way to strike at targets in the U.S. after an initial exchange in the event of war with the United States. Consequently, both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. consider the Indian Ocean to be of prime strategic importance.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union are concerned with Indian waters as part of their submarine strategy, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 472.

Americans to cover Russia, and the Russians to deny the opportunity for such use. Indian foreign policy accepts the Soviet Union as being as much an Asian as a European power. Soviet policy is to insure that the countries of the Indian Ocean develop adequate naval facilities in their ports and naval forces with which the Soviets can cooperate. Russia was helping India to build up her naval forces, particularly in submarines, and sought to give India's non-alignment at least the appearance of a pro-Russian inclination.<sup>31</sup> India could be threatened from the sea by the Western powers, and if she is threatened from the landward side by the Soviet Union or China, it is only from the sea that assistance can come. India's tension with Pakistan is also reflected on the sea. Although India's navy has been primarily defensive, she acquired her first submarine in 1968. Subsequently, India had acquired three more submarines by 1970, which could be used offensively as well.

Thus, the Indian Ocean became the stage for increased tension generated by rival outside powers. The establishment of a communications facility on Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean, primarily by the United States, the movement

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<sup>31</sup>George G. Thomson, Problems of Strategy in the Pacific and Indian Oceans (New York, 1970), p. 37.



of the Soviet navy into the Indian Ocean, the supply of arms by the British to the South African government under the Simontown Agreement, all contributed to the increased tension. Also, in the 1960s, Soviet naval ships, including a helicopter carrier, were interested in the Mauritian-owned island of Saint Brandon, 250 miles to the north, and the Chagos Archipelago, the British islands in the central Indian Ocean which were available for use by the United States. Further north, Soviet technicians had expanded and modernized the port of Mogadishu, in Somalia. The Soviet Union has given military aid to Tanzania, Uganada, and militant African nationalist groups.<sup>32</sup> Most of this aid, it should be noted, was in the form of World War II and Korean conflict surplus armor and aircraft. These were the high points of the escalation. The non-aligned countries passed a formal resolution on the subject in 1970, pledging to work for the adoption of a U.N. declaration "calling upon all states to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries and competition, either Army, Navy, or Air Force

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<sup>32</sup>T. B. Millar, "Soviet Policies South and East of Suez," Foreign Affairs, XLIX (October, 1970), 77.

based, are excluded. The area should be free also of nuclear weapons."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>K. P. Misra, "International Politics in the Indian Ocean," Orbis, XVIII (Winter, 1975), 1091.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EAST-WEST RIVALRIES IN

### THE INDIAN OCEAN

This chapter attempts to explicate the Soviet-United States rivalries in the Indian Ocean during the years 1968 to 1976. In order to do so, it is necessary to briefly explore the geopolitical background of the Indian Ocean. The implications for Indo-Soviet relations of the United States foreign policy toward the Soviet navy's activity in the Indian Ocean, and the attitudes of the littoral states toward the Soviet-United States rivalries in this area are central to this task.

#### Geopolitical Background of the

#### Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean encompasses a vast region, from the African shore to the Asian shore, extending to the East Indies, including the islands scattered over the ocean's expanse.<sup>1</sup> The main countries of the Indian Ocean today are such diverse entities as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, Sri

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<sup>1</sup>Auguste Toussaint, History of the Indian Ocean (Chicago, 1966), p. 8.

Lanka, Burma, Indonesia, and Australia; the countries of the East Africa coast are Socotra, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Mozambique. The total area of the waters of the ocean is roughly twenty-seven million square miles.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the Nineteenth Century and in the Twentieth Century until the withdrawal of the British navy, Russian influence was exerted in the Indian Ocean only on a minor scale. Likewise, American influence was subordinate to the British presence in the Indian Ocean. The withdrawal of the British as the main foreign influence in the Indian Ocean in 1968 has encouraged both the Soviet Union and the United States to seek a more active role in the area.

The closing of the Suez Canal in 1967 had international implications that extended well beyond the confines of the Indian Ocean. The United States and the Soviet Union both came to consider the Indian Ocean as a viable area of expansion for political, economic, and military influence. Accordingly, the regional politics in the Indian Ocean have undergone important changes: (1) the Soviet Union has greatly increased its naval activity in the Indian Ocean, (2) the United States is building military bases, the most important

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<sup>2</sup>Alan John Villiers, Monsoon Seas (New York, 1952), p. 5.

of them being at Diego Garcia, (3) reacting to the move of the two superpowers, and resolved to maintain the peace and security of the area, the countries in the Indian Ocean area have made a determined effort at the United Nations to get this area declared as a zone of peace.<sup>3</sup>

The reopening of the Suez Canal on June 5, 1975, has benefited the Soviet Union greatly in economic terms because the canal provides a shorter sea route around the South. Since the canal's reopening, the activities of the Soviet merchant fleet have substantially increased and the prospect of competition for western shipping lanes is becoming even more acute.

#### Soviet Policy toward the Indian Ocean

Russian interest in this region dates back to the time of Czar Paul and the attempt made in 1801 by the Russian Empire to eliminate British influence in India. These attempts were never very serious, either because the Russians did not have the military capability to challenge the British or because their army was involved in other conflicts in Europe: against the Turks, or in the Crimean War, or in the Russo-

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<sup>3</sup>Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Proposed Expansion of U.S. Military Facilities in the Indian Ocean (Washington, 1974), VI, 170.

Japanese War. Nevertheless, interest lingered on throughout the nineteenth century. More significant perhaps was the reported Soviet claim to a sphere of influence "extending in the general direction of the Indian Ocean" agreed to in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact signed in October 1940. Ribbentrop, the German diplomat, proposed the division of the British empire between Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union. Germany was to divide Africa with Italy, Japan was to inherit the British possessions in the Pacific Basin, and the Soviet Union would get the area in between, including the Indian Ocean.<sup>4</sup>

It would be reasonable to assume that the Soviet Union attempted to seek to replace American and British influence whenever this could be done at reasonable cost and with expectation of profit, or at least to take advantage of the almost total British withdrawal and the substantial American disengagement.<sup>5</sup>

After the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union changed its naval strategy by abandoning big ship construction and developed a sophisticated naval strategy. As in the United States,

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<sup>4</sup>Ghebhardt, "Soviet and U.S. Interests in the Indian Ocean," p. 672.

<sup>5</sup>T. B. Millar, Soviet Policies in the Indian Ocean Area (Australia, 1970), p. 6.

the hidden flexibility of the missile-firing submarine made it the main strategic deterrent and this upgraded the navy in the defense system. A large submarine fleet was built, including nuclear propelled vessels and one firing missiles with nuclear warheads, capable of attacking an enemy homeland, his lines of communication, his surface ships, and submarines. Surface-to-surface missiles were installed in a range of ships, including large motor boats.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviet fleet first emerged from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean in 1964 and was established as a regional naval power by 1967.<sup>7</sup> This fleet considerably increased the sphere of Soviet influence, particularly in the Arab world. The Soviet Union now uses the Suez Canal to switch her main fleet from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.<sup>8</sup>

The new linkage between the Middle East and South Asia makes the Indian Ocean of greater importance to the Soviet

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>7</sup>The Soviet rationale for the introduction of a Soviet fleet into the Mediterranean is that it is necessary for the protection of the Black Sea. The fleet also provides strike capacity against the Turkish Straits and the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

<sup>8</sup>Lawrence Griswold, "From Simontown to Singapore," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, XCVII (November, 1971), 57-58.

Union, as to other major powers. Consequently, the Soviet Union increased its naval strength in the area. In any case, it seems improbable that the Soviet Union will accept the Indian Ocean as a "nuclear-free zone" even though it is not sympathetic to the emergence of India as a nuclear power. The Russians would prefer that they control nuclear weapons in this region.<sup>9</sup> Soviet foreign policy goals that could be advanced by the peacetime presence of naval forces might include:

(1) countering Chinese influences among littoral nations by using an instrument that underlines China's vast inferiority; (2) reducing Western influence among littoral states by offering things that the West will not offer and providing support for causes the West will not support; (3) increasing Soviet access to local elites as well as littoral resources and strategic facilities.<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet Union is itself the world's second largest oil producer, with extensive published proven reserves, and is even an oil exporter. However, by 1980, Soviet domestic demand may well exceed production by about a hundred million

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<sup>9</sup>Robert A. Scalapino, Asia and the Road Ahead (Los Angeles, 1975), pp. 189-190.

<sup>10</sup>Chester A. Crocker, "Africa and the Indian Ocean," Orbis, XX (Fall, 1976), 651-652.



tons a year. Further, there is economic and political advantage in exporting oil to eastern and western Europe while importing it from the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> Politically, the Soviet Union is able to curry favor among the Warsaw Pact and Third World countries, while at the same time stimulating the Soviet economy and maintaining a favorable balance of trade. The Soviet Union link with the Indian Ocean area, as with the outside world in general, has been increasing at a rapid rate, although since 1960 slightly behind the growth of world trade as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

In one estimate, the Soviet objectives in the Indian Ocean were said to be to step into the vacuum created by the departure of British power and establish hegemony over the entire area; in pursuance of this ultimate objective, to foster the emergence of client states (Iraq, Syria, etc.); to frustrate Chinese penetration; and to remove or reduce American influence; to gain control over some or all the major oil sources; and to keep the Suez Canal open. This enables the Soviet Mediterranean fleet to join forces with the U.S.S.R.'s navy in the Indian Ocean and increases Soviet strategic ability

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<sup>11</sup>Millar, Soviet Policies in the Indian Ocean Area, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

to interfere with the Cape oil route.<sup>13</sup>

As noted earlier, after Stalin's death, changes in Communist doctrine permitted a greater degree of flexibility in the Soviet approach to the third world. The policy of peaceful coexistence called for cooperation with the non-aligned world. At the same time, the United States' efforts to enlist allies against Soviet expansion and to establish at least cordial relations with a number of Asian countries was succeeding. The Soviet Union had to counter U.S. inroads if it wished to increase its own influence and draw the Asian powers closer to the Soviet orbit. With this objective, India and countries in the Indian Ocean became major targets of Soviet policy. Moscow tried to court Indian leaders in the hope that they, as major spokesmen for non-aligned Asia, would provide the Soviets access to other members of the Indian Ocean.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1960s, the significance of South Asia with regard to the security interests of the Soviet Union has increased due to the Soviet leadership's concern about the possibility

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<sup>13</sup>Lawrence Griswold, "From Simontown to Singapore," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, XCVII (November, 1971), 77-78.

<sup>14</sup>Wynfred Joshua and Stephen P. Gilbert, Arms for the Third World (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 54-55.

of expanded Chinese influence or even domination in the area. In addition, the Soviets are wary of possible military uses of the Indian Ocean by the United States, especially for launching missiles against the Soviet Union, and have been expanding their naval activity in that area during the past few years.

It cannot be assumed that Soviet interests in the area are inevitably in conflict or incompatible with Western interests. Much of the economic aid going to the littoral countries is complementary to that from Western countries, not competitive with it. The Soviet initiative at Tashkent was a real contribution to the stability and security of the sub-continent, at least in the short term.<sup>15</sup> Kosygin's success at securing approval from both India and Pakistan for a peaceful, compromise solution to the highly emotional dispute over Kashmir, which had been claimed territorially by both of the warring parties, greatly enhanced the Soviet Union's standing politically in the area. Although no final solution was reached at the time, Kosygin prevented the issue from disrupting the conference and impressed both India and Pakistan with the Soviet Union's impartiality in the matter of Kashmir.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Millar, Soviet Policies in the Indian Ocean Area, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup>Kaushik, pp. 95-99.

Soviet military aid is invariably accompanied by or is conditional upon Soviet economic and technical assistance, training for students at Soviet institutions, cultural exchanges, and so forth. The Soviets, however, encountered the same kinds of problems as other aid-giving states--lack of aid-receiving facilities in undeveloped countries, red tape, and neighborhood disputes which led, at times, as in the case of Iraq, to a cooling of relations. They do not always find the recipients particularly appreciative. They have no magic formula for translating aid into influence.

#### The United States Policy toward the Indian Ocean

The major policy of the United States during the 1950s and 1960s was substantial economic assistance to the region principally because the oil resources in the Persian Gulf are of vital interest to the United States. The United States oil industry has large capital investments in the Persian Gulf region, valued at approximately \$3.5 billion by 1970. It has steadily increased since.

The other interest was the importance of commercial trade with Iran and the Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms, with India and Pakistan, and with Saudi Arabia and African littoral states. The magnitude of trade opportunities and mineral

exploitation has been growing steadily, and increased revenues will continue to make the area an important market for U.S. goods.

The Indian Ocean region comprises nearly one-fourth of the members of the United Nations and represents about one-third of the world's population. Thus, a considerable influence in the area was deemed essential to American interests. The United States has played an active diplomatic role in the area since World War II, utilizing such varied tools of diplomacy as development assistance, military assistance, political mediation, and United Nations initiatives in an effort to discourage and contain conflict when it occurs.

In the early sixties, the United States Department of State and Department of Defense began thinking of the longer term strategic requirements of the United States in the Indian Ocean area. By an exchange of notes on December 30, 1966, the United States and the United Kingdom agreed that the British Indian Ocean islands would be available for the defense purposes of both governments for an initial period of fifty years. In December of 1970, both governments agreed to the establishment of a communications facility on Diego Garcia.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Committee on Foreign Affairs, Proposed Expansion of U.S. Military Facilities, VI, 24-25.

According to the Defense Department Annual Report in 1973, the U.S. naval forces are divided into two wings: strategic and general purpose. The strategic forces consist of forty-one atomic submarines with 656 Polaris and Poseidon ballistic missiles. The general purpose forces include fifteen aircraft carriers (including the nuclear-powered Enterprise), 242 escort ships, sixty nuclear and twenty-seven diesel-powered multi-purpose submarines, and sixty-six landing ships. The total strength of the navy is 594 warships and 58 naval reserved force ships. The Seventh Fleet, which operates in the Indian Ocean, has more than one hundred warships, including five to seven attack aircraft carriers, three to four cruisers, a large number of destroyers and submarines (including missile-carrying nuclear submarines). In all, it has 70,000 men and marine units for sea-borne landing operations.<sup>18</sup>

The construction of the naval and air base on Diego Garcia has been justified by the need for a permanent U.S. naval and air presence in the area.<sup>19</sup> The special significance of Diego Garcia lies in the fact that it is situated close to the areas

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<sup>18</sup>Jagdish Vibhakar, Afro-Asian Security and the Indian Ocean (New Delhi, 1974), p. 56.

<sup>19</sup>Ghebhardt, "Soviet and U.S. Interests in the Indian Ocean," p. 680.

of the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and Aden, the regions which are called "the backdoor" to rich oil fields in the near and Middle East. The United States has long maintained its armed forces and military bases in these regions.<sup>20</sup>

America's attitude to the Soviet naval deployment in the Indian Ocean is that the Soviet Union sought to respond to United States efforts to increase the size of its Polaris submarine forces and extend the areas where they are deployed.<sup>21</sup> Both the United States and the Soviet Union are concerned with the Indian Ocean as parts of their submarine strategy. The Americans wish to use its waters as a possible strike zone against Russia and the Russians wish to deny the opportunity for such use.<sup>22</sup>

The United States has also established a defense space communication station at Woomers in South Australia. This station monitors military satellites circling the earth. The United States will have, in addition, service and refuelling facilities in Cockburn Sound, Australia. The commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet said in Canberra on July 21, 1969, that

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<sup>20</sup>Jagdish Vibhakar, Afro-Asian Security and the Indian Ocean, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup>Ghebhardt, "Soviet and U.S. Interests," p. 677.

<sup>22</sup>Thomson, Problems of Strategy, p. 37.

the development of a naval base in West Australia would be very valuable for the Western world. The facility has since been constructed.

The goals of American Indian Ocean policy have been defined as maintenance of sufficient military forces, capabilities, base rights, and facilities to support the United States' foreign policy, as well as its strategic and economic interests.<sup>23</sup> The other goal is one of regional stabilities as a contribution to world peace. Because of the nature of the emerging nations and their generally weak political and social characteristics, their vulnerability to revolutionary and external pressure is high. The United States wanted such nations to develop through an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process, without interference by any superpower.<sup>24</sup>

With the threat to the United States' interests in the Indian Ocean, the United States is confronted with three policy dilemmas: first, how can the United States effectively react to the increased Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean area and the extension of Soviet influence? How can

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>24</sup>"A Committee Report of the Strategic Planning Study on U.S. Alternatives for an Indian Ocean Area Policy," Naval War College Review, XXI (January, 1969), 164-165.



the United States maintain its own ability to exert military influence in that area in an emergency without provoking a competitive build-up of forces? Second, how can the United States encourage economic development, international political responsibilities, and domestic political stability in the nations around the Indian Ocean and maintain friendly relations with them as a means of limiting the development of Communist influence hostile to America in those countries? Third, how can the United States insure free transit through the key access ports to the Indian Ocean?<sup>25</sup>

The United States will have to find answers to these questions within the constraints provided by the United States' desire to avoid a great power competitive build-up in the Indian Ocean. There are factors which favor the United States' objectives. Among them are efforts of some Indian Ocean countries to restrain Soviet military activity. Nonetheless, the United States must decide whether or not it will maintain the option to counter an enlarged Soviet military build-up.<sup>26</sup>

In the eyes of the Indians, the main motive of the U.S. military, strategic, and economic policy in the Indian Ocean

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<sup>25</sup>Ronald I. Spiers, "U.S. National Security Policy and the Indian Ocean Area," Department of State Bulletin (Washington, August 23, 1971), p. 165.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

basin was to make available Asian raw materials and trade facilities to the United States and to other industrial countries of the West. The United States strategy in this period was to produce major shifts in the global power balance over the next decade. It follows that the United States must have the ability to influence events in the Indian Ocean area, and the capability to deploy the United States military power in the area is an essential element of such influence. <sup>27</sup>

Indian Foreign Policy in  
the Indian Ocean

Before India's independence from the British, who controlled most of the Indian subcontinent, British strategy and defense were directed at the land frontiers as well as the ocean. The leaders of India, after independence, concentrated on land and not on the oceanic frontiers. The main defense concern lay within the subcontinent and, indeed, no political leader showed much interest in the Indian Ocean. <sup>28</sup>

In early 1964, the neglect of the Indian Ocean gave way to a growing interest and concern. India's concern was

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<sup>27</sup>Vibhakar, Afro-Asian Security and the Indian Ocean, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup>Norman D. Palmer, "South Asia and the Indian Ocean," The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Importance, edited by Alvin J. Cottrell and R. M. Burrell (New York, 1972), pp. 236-237.

generated largely by the enormous American military build-up in the area following the Gulf of Tonkin incident. A five-year plan for the expansion of the Indian navy was announced in 1964. India became aware of the changing power situation in the Indian Ocean; she became concerned about British withdrawal east of Suez, the growing Soviet maritime presence, including a naval presence since 1958, and the forthcoming United States disengagement, but not withdrawal, from the area in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine. The Indians were also afraid of the future roles of China and Japan. Neither China nor Japan has at present the capability to interpose any significant naval presence in the Indian Ocean, but each may develop such capability in the near future.<sup>29</sup>

In recent years, the Soviet Union has established closer and more varied ties to India; almost all of the foreign military aid to India is now extended by the Soviet Union.<sup>30</sup> When the Soviet Union and India signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971, Indira Gandhi began a major naval build-up to protect India's extensive coastline because the rapidly expanding commerce and merchant shipping forced

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

India to have an efficient, versatile, and alert naval force.<sup>31</sup>

India opposed the United States Indian Ocean strategy. India pointed out that any further escalation of the United States presence in the Indian Ocean would only invite Soviet retaliation in competitive naval deployment and the search for bases, to the detriment of peace in the region. India also rejected the Western report alleging that the Soviet navy enjoys base facilities in Indian ports. But the Soviet Union was formerly believed to have set up some communications facilities at Berbera in Somalia and for a time had privileged access to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr and to Aden.<sup>32</sup>

India opposed the extension of the big power naval competition in the Indian Ocean and the establishment of foreign bases there. Mrs. Indira Gandhi expressed the hope that the ocean would always remain an area of peace and a bridge of understanding between the littoral nations. She declared in January 1969 that India wanted the Indian Ocean area to remain an ocean of peace and hoped that any country

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<sup>31</sup>Sheldon W. Simon, "Security in the Indian Ocean Arc," Orbis, XIX (Summer, 1970), 431-432.

<sup>32</sup>S. P. Seth, "The Indian Ocean and Indo-American Relations," pp. 646-647.

which entered it would keep that in mind. However, the pro-Soviet attitude, which Western powers believed that Indira Gandhi exhibited, hampered widespread acceptance of India's professed neutrality. Partly to offset this Western suspicion, on March 19, 1969, India's Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh told the Parliament that India had made it known to all countries, including the Soviet Union, that India wanted the Indian Ocean area to be safe from conflict and free from any nuclear weapons. He also opposed the construction of the United States bases at Diego Garcia, which would only bring in other big powers. India has been a supporter of the Asian-African effort at the United Nations to turn the Indian Ocean area into a "peace zone." The proposal of the Indian Ocean as an area of peace free from nuclear weapons and big power navies was supported by Ceylon, Mauritius, and numerous other Afro-Asian countries of the area.

India's present policy in the Indian Ocean has for its long-term objective the creation of a regional security system, without big power interference and primarily through non-military means by mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the nations of the area. Indira Gandhi's proposal of March 1967 for a convention among the nations of Asia, insuring respect for independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity

of the countries of the region, and neutrality of such countries as wished to remain neutral is typical of the Indian approach to security in the Indian Ocean.

A study prepared by the Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses reflected the historical perspective of India. The Institute's conclusions were (1) that the United States is taking steps to acquire a capability for force diplomacy to be used, if necessary, against the littoral powers; (2) that this will invite Soviet reactive response, and that superpower politics will thus interact with local disputes, creating opportunities for intervention by the superpowers; (3) that it recommends a mutual balance between the two superpowers of "no presence," instead of a balance at "a very high level of armament," as was the case with rivalry between Britain and France in the latter half of the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, the increasing militarization of the Indian Ocean posed a major challenge to Indian policy makers during this period. India has been a firm proponent of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of December 16, 1971, saying that the Indian Ocean be designated as a zone of peace and calling upon the great powers to eliminate their military

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 650.

presence from the region and to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral states to that end. Along with other states of the region, India has been contributing its voice to the generation of world opinion in favor of this resolution. The General Assembly has been recommending steps toward implementation of this resolution in subsequent years. In pursuance of one of these steps, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed a three-man expert committee to prepare a factual report on big power presence in the Indian Ocean.

Since the increased suppression of the press and dissidents by Indira Gandhi in the mid-1970s, tension between India and the U.S. has increased, commensurate with the growing Indo-Soviet friendship. Gandhi's defeat in the 1976 election, however, has altered the situation. Indian-American rapprochement has become a reality, while the Soviet Union has found itself coming under an increasingly critical Indian eye.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RIVALRY

#### India and the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union has for a long time taken an approach to India as the major country of the emerging neutralist bloc. It quickly recognized the potential of the Communists and the Third World united in common goals in a "vast zone of peace." The weight of this configuration of power was deemed sufficient to radically shift the balance of world power against capitalism and in favor of socialism. This unity of power destroyed the much-feared "capitalist encirclement" of the past. But more importantly, it prevented the capitalist world from launching a new world war. Accordingly, Khrushchev concluded that war was no longer a fatal inevitability and that the world had entered a new era of peaceful coexistence.<sup>1</sup> This policy of "peaceful coexistence" provided the Russians with an opportunity to curry favor among the Indian Ocean nations as a prelude to increasing Soviet military influence in the area.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. House of Representatives, The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed in Great Power Policy?, Report to the Committee on International Relations, 95th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1977), pp. 21-22.



India's reaction to the Soviet navy's presence in the Indian Ocean was that the Soviet Union was attempting to fill the vacuum left by the British and to impose a military and economic supranational policy upon the heads of Asian nations. India advocated the United Nations guarantees of security and freedom for the countries of the region. Growing tensions between India and Pakistan compelled the Indians to pay attention to the Soviet proposal of collective security in Asia. The conclusion of the Soviet-Indian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty in 1971 was interpreted by the Soviet side as the first and most important step in the effort to erect a system of collective security in Asia. The presence of the Soviet navy in the Indian Ocean has been a source of discomfort to both political and military leaders in India.<sup>2</sup> The power vacuum theory in the Indian Ocean, which calls for the presence of one of the superpowers, was rejected by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during her visit to Ceylon, when she declared that the Indian Ocean must remain a "zone of peace free from the military contests of the United States and the Soviet Union." The most important factors in India's reluctance

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<sup>2</sup>Alexander O. Ghebhardt, "The Soviet System of Collective Security in Asia," Asian Survey, XIII (December, 1973), 1086-1087.

to maintain a close alliance with the Soviet Union were the expansion of Soviet power in the Indian Ocean, the desire to improve its regional role, political and military, which India was prepared to fulfill in Asia.<sup>3</sup>

Within the context of Soviet-Indian relations, Soviet circumspection regarding the United States policy in the area has forced it to temper its support for India's proposal to convert the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. In order to keep their options open to counter any American initiative, the Soviet Union along with the United States abstained in December 1971 on an Indian-sponsored U.N. resolution setting up a fifteen-member committee to explore further the proposal for a demilitarized Indian Ocean. The Soviet Union did not reject the Indian plan in principle. The plan received the qualified endorsement of Leonid Brezhnev, when he stated during his visit to India that the peace zone proposal was among the initiatives inspired by a concern for the peaceful future of Asia. The Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister is reported to have said the first step in the direction of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace would be the dismantling of all foreign bases, including British, American, and French--a proposal which is certainly consonant with

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

India's desire to eliminate a major big power presence in the area and thereby leave herself as the dominant regional power.<sup>4</sup>

The Indo-Soviet Treaty made India an ally of the Soviets. The treaty was both a military and a political alliance. The treaty marked a big departure from the general course of India's foreign policy pursued during the last twenty-five years.<sup>5</sup> The Indo-Soviet Treaty was at one time a step for the Indian Government toward the point of no return as regards dependence upon Moscow, and its support during the second half of 1971 decisively improved India's position on the subcontinent. The Indians pointed out that, prior to 1969, major Soviet arms offers were accepted after India had been refused by the West.<sup>6</sup> The study by the United States Security Council for the House Armed Services Committee states that the Russians and Indians were then completing military ties, the Soviets having already given four submarines to the Indian Navy. There is also an indication that the Soviets were using massive military aid to India as a wedge to obtain naval bases in the Andaman and

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<sup>4</sup>Richard B. Remnek, Soviet Scholars and Soviet Foreign Policy, pp. 316-317.

<sup>5</sup>J. P. Sethi, "Indo-Soviet Treaty and Non-Alignment," India Quarterly, XVII (October-December, 1971), 327.

<sup>6</sup>Dieter Braun, "The Indian Ocean in Afro-Asian Perspective," The World Today, XVIII (June, 1972), 253.

Nicobar islands. These islands are within easy striking distance of Malaysia and Indonesia and are of high strategic value.<sup>7</sup>

When Indira Gandhi visited Moscow in August 1975 and signed the Declaration on the Further Development of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and India, the Declaration reaffirmed their will to increase their joint contribution to the solution of key international problems in the interest of peace, helping to develop detente, and spread it to other parts of the world. This declaration thus shows a willingness on the part of India and the Soviet Union to work for a common goal. They also pledged support for the desire of the peoples in the Indian Ocean area to prevent the setting up of foreign military bases in the region, and reiterated their readiness to participate, on an equal basis and together with all states concerned and in keeping with the norms of international law, in the search for a satisfactory solution to the problem of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"A Committee Report of the Strategic Planning Study on U.S. Alternatives for an Indian Ocean Area," Naval War College Review, XXIII (June, 1969), 166.

<sup>8</sup>A. Chernyshov, "Peace and Security for the Indian Ocean," International Affairs (Moscow, December, 1976), p. 45.

The Soviet Union has publicly favored the idea of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace because it accords with the general trend of Soviet foreign policy, which is aimed at promoting detente, ending the arms race and strengthening the security of nations. How much such a professed policy actually means, considering the Soviet desire to increase Russian influence, is a question of great importance to the nations of the Indian Ocean area. The official stand on this issue was formulated in the Report of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Leonid Brezhnev. Pronouncements have proliferated in many countries against any of the powers setting up military bases in the region of the Indian Ocean. The Soviet Union called on the United States to take the same stand. This statement was contained in the Declaration on the Further Development of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and India.<sup>9</sup>

#### The United States and India

American foreign policy after the Vietnam war is in transition. The United States has abandoned its forward positions in Southeast Asia, and the future of its alliances with South Korea and Taiwan is subject to debate. Repercussions

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

from the United States policy in Asia are also felt in Europe. The prospect of Communist participation in the governments of one or more NATO nations would weaken the alliance. India provides a good opportunity for the United States to bolster its sagging influence in Asia and, by extension, throughout the world.

The United States believes India could be one of the most powerful nations in the area of the Indian Ocean. India is a non-aligned nation and has a large population--second only to that of Communist China. She possesses the strongest of all the regional armed forces. Her well-trained and well-equipped army is the fourth largest in the world. Because of its regional military strength and its willingness to use that strength, as evidenced by Indian actions against China and Pakistan, India is a possible stumbling block to any strategic alternatives or U.S. military power in the Indian Ocean region.<sup>10</sup> The United States tried to suggest terms for a new framework of relations with India. In the Nixon foreign policy message of February 1972, India was listed under "area of turbulence and change" and accorded lower priority. The message stated that if India was interested in a balanced

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<sup>10</sup>"A Committee Report of the Strategic Planning Study," p. 163.

relationship with all major powers, the United States would respond favorably. It offered to initiate a "serious dialogue" on future relations. Other official statements made the point that the United States accepted India as the dominant power of the region.

For the United States, one important question was the relationship between India and the global structure of power. The United States did not want India to act toward its neighbors in a way that would jeopardize the stability of the region. It also did not want India to join any other major power in a tie-up which was directed against the other United States alliances.<sup>11</sup>

Geographically, India would be in an ideal position to sever the main lines of communication between the Middle East and the Pacific, and if she decided to "go nuclear" the United States might feel compelled to accept the Australian offer of a base and establish a fleet to operate largely in the eastern sector of the Indian Ocean. The Indo-Soviet Pact of 1971 gave evidence of closer ties between these two nations, and American commitment to protect Japan includes not only the home islands but the sinews of her economy, which depends on trade transiting

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<sup>11</sup>B. K. Shrivastava, "Indo-American Relations: Retrospect and Prospect," International Studies, XIV (January, 1975), 31-32.

the Indian Ocean.<sup>12</sup>

Militarily, the two superpowers plan to establish and maintain a major fleet in the Indian Ocean and neither has the resources to do so while deploying units in areas that are deemed more vital for military security and the promotion of interests abroad. For the Soviet Union, India is important as a counterweight to China.<sup>13</sup> For the United States, India has not received the strategic consideration that other world areas have, despite the fact that the United States has provided great amounts of economic and military aid to India and the countries in that area.<sup>14</sup> While both the United States and the Soviet Union will probably continue to project a naval presence into the area, most likely it will be a low-key competition, and India may continue to maintain locally the larger number of surface naval vessels. On the other hand, the United States, in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, might consider it worthwhile to establish a fleet in the Indian Ocean to protect Japan's lifeline--for 90 per cent of her oil and 50 per cent of her trade cross this ocean--and to protect

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<sup>12</sup>Raymon G. O'Connor and Vladimir P. Prokofieff, "The Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean," Virginia Quarterly Review, XLIX (August, 1973), 489.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 488.

<sup>14</sup>"A Committee Report of the Strategic Planning Study," p. 167.



Australia, which is so concerned about its safety that it has offered the United States base facilities.<sup>15</sup>

Testifying before a U.S. House Committee Hearing on the Indian Ocean Political and Strategic Future, Norman D. Palmer, Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, suggested that for the future of the Indian Ocean, the United States should encourage countries in the Indian Ocean area to take a more active interest and role in the security of the area as a whole, particularly in that part of the area contiguous to their shores, and to cooperate more effectively and more extensively with the other countries in the area with respect to oceanic security and defense. This should not, however, be interpreted as an encouragement to any country to seek to assert exclusive responsibility for the security of any part of the Indian Ocean area, for this would conflict with the principle of the open sea and would lead to tensions with other countries in the areas immediately concerned. The growing interest of Australia in Indian Ocean security should be welcomed and encouraged, and the United States should continue to cooperate with Australia in this respect. Japan already has strong economic interests there,

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<sup>15</sup> O'Connor and Prokofieff, "The Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean," p. 488.

and it will undoubtedly be more active, in more diversified ways, in future years. Japan will probably increase its political as well as its economic presence, and perhaps eventually will maintain a naval presence as well. These developments will provide grounds for both caution and encouragement on the part of the United States, as well as of the littoral states. In all aspects of the United States policies in the Indian Ocean, the interests and sensitivities of the Indian Ocean states should not be overlooked.<sup>16</sup> The United States protection of the interests of the non-aligned nations should, in the long run, best serve American interests as well.

#### India among the Non-aligned Nations

The Cold War rivalry and the consequent political and military fall-out in the Third World was opposed by several local leaders as being detrimental not only to world peace but also to local peace, security, and unity. However, the policy of non-alignment, evolved to counter the ill effects of the Cold War rivalry in the Third World, remained a theoretical proposition until the area was invaded by the Western

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<sup>16</sup>Norman D. Palmer, The Indian Ocean: Political and Strategic Future, Hearings of the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments, House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Washington, 1971), pp. 159-160.

powers with their offers of military and economic aid and regional defense pacts.<sup>17</sup> India has realized that while mobilization of regional opposition to the Indian Ocean arms race of the superpowers is important, it is not sufficient. Therefore, while keeping up the regional opposition, India is also seeking talks between the superpowers and littoral countries to devise ways and means of limiting the naval presences of big powers in the Indian Ocean. This approach was indicated in a statement by India's foreign minister in Parliament which strongly favored discussion among littoral countries of the Indian Ocean and the big naval powers for an agreement regarding the presence of rival forces in the region and exercise of "some restraint," and which conceded that according to the well-known principles of freedom of the high seas, some naval vessels will be present, while reiterating opposition to the establishment of bases and introduction of naval units on, more or less, a permanent basis.

The significance of these proposals lies in suggesting an alternative avenue for constructive discussions away from the publicity-prone forum of the United Nations, confirming opposition to the permanent naval presence of superpowers

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<sup>17</sup>Rajendra K. Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean (Delhi, 1974), p. 180.

while conceding the inevitability of some presence, thus seeming to rule out the impractical proposition of military balance at a "no armaments" level and seeking a voice for the littoral countries in a possible bilateral deal between super-powers on the Indian Ocean. The new Indian approach, while continuing to adhere to the principle of a "peace zone" is nonetheless flexible and more concrete in its possibility of practical application.<sup>18</sup>

In the speech on September 8, 1970, at the Lusaka Non-aligned Conference, Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, declared that India would like the Indian Ocean to be an area of peace and cooperation, saying that military bases of the outside powers would create tension and great power rivalry. Among the resolutions adopted by the heads of the non-aligned states at the conference was one relating to the subject of "Adoption of a Declaration calling upon all states to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries and competition, whether army, navy, or air force, are excluded."<sup>19</sup> The declaration said the area should also be free of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>18</sup>Seth, "The Indian Ocean and Indo-American Relations," pp. 653-654.

<sup>19</sup>Subrahman K. Yam and Y. P. Anand, "The Indian Ocean as an Area of Peace," India Quarterly, XXVII (October-December, 1971), 289.

In the United Nations, the country that took the initiative and did the most to formulate the peace zone idea was Sri Lanka (Ceylon). After numerous talks among leaders of the littoral and hinterland states, and after the initial general discussion in the General Assembly's First Committee in October-November 1971, Sri Lanka addressed a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General entitled, "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace."<sup>20</sup>

Third World proposals to limit Soviet and American naval presence in the Indian Ocean are vital to the relations between each of the superpowers and the countries of the region. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union requires the Indian Ocean as a deployment area for maintaining an adequate global balance of military power against the other. Moreover, the superpowers have yet to center any rivalry in the Indian Ocean littoral states. In addition, these states have asked that the superpowers make the Indian Ocean a "zone of peace."

Both the United States and the Soviet Union, however, have been dragging their anchors in resistance to an Indian Ocean arms limitation agreement, let alone a complete military

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<sup>20</sup>Misra, "International Politics in the Indian Ocean," pp. 1093-1094.

disengagement; rather, both have been proceeding apace to enhance their naval deployments and facilities there, each citing the unilateral increases of the other as justification for their own augmentations. The recent change in the Indian government is causing both superpowers to reconsider their positions.

Although the superpower naval competition in the Indian Ocean may emanate from national interests on each side that are intrinsic to the main United States-Soviet Union power rivalry, the local competition can persist and become a special arena for that rivalry. The Soviet Union's deployments are important aspects of its effort to counter China's suspected drive for influence in South Asia and Africa.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, the futures of the involved nations in the Indian Ocean are interrelated. For the non-aligned nations, the question could easily become one of retaining true sovereignty; that is, how are the Third World countries, singly or in unison, to prevent either Soviet or American intrusion into their affairs once they have allowed exclusive influence by one of the superpowers? Alignment with either the Soviet Union or the United States would inevitably alienate the superpower left out, and such a development would only increase

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<sup>21</sup>Committee on Commerce, Soviet Oceans Development, 94th Congress, 2d Session (Washington, 1976), pp. 42-43.

tension in the area and threaten the security of all parties. On the other hand, the continuation of the present rivalry is also unacceptable, as it provides constant opportunity for the escalation of American and Soviet military presence. The non-aligned nations could find themselves forced to take sides in an unavoidable conflict which, while it would benefit no one, would wreak its greatest destruction in the underdeveloped nations that served as the staging grounds. The consequences for the Third World nations of the Indian Ocean could be serious indeed if no peaceful and collectively satisfactory agreement can be worked out.

As for the Soviet Union and the United States, neither can afford to be shut out of the area. Neither one can afford to grant the other exclusive sway over the Indian Ocean. Also, the idea of a neutral Indian Ocean without sufficient military strength present to forestall a possible takeover by the other is not particularly appealing to either the Soviets or the United States. Mutual distrust between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would seem to make an "armed neutrality" the most feasible course for peace. Economic competition could drain the resources of both the United States and the Soviet Union without resolving the issue. Just as military domination by one side is unacceptable, so is total economic control.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The need for the establishment of a security system in the Indian Ocean--the smallest of oceans with the bulk of the world population living along its shores--must be emphasized. The intrusion of the big-power naval competition into the hitherto placid waters of the Indian Ocean has made the security problem of the region further complicated.

Faced with strong opposition from the popular forces in Asia and Africa, the United States is trying to consolidate her hold on the Indian Ocean by capitalizing on the British withdrawal, the consequent vacuum, and the filling it up with multilateral alliances under the Anglo-American aegis to forestall the Russian drive to the waters in the South.

Control of the Indian Ocean region is considered by the Western powers as dominant in shaping world politics. Apart from the great importance of the region on account of its raw materials and mineral reserves--it contains more than two-thirds of the world's oil reserves, 60 per cent of uranium, 40 per cent of gold, and 98 per cent of the world's supply of diamonds--it has currently become all the more important



following a change in the global strategy of nuclear warfare placing greater reliance on undersea long-range missiles. Its location to the south of the Soviet Union makes the Indian Ocean an eminently suitable area for deployment of such a system planned by the United States.

Many of the difficulties facing the region of the Indian Ocean have either been transplanted from outside or are rooted in external interference. The states of the Indian Ocean--an area torn by internal strifes and cleavages, many of them a legacy of the colonial past--are no doubt far less homogeneous in terms of cultural, economic, and ideological foundations than areas dominated by a single culture. There are several distinct civilizations--Buddhist, Islamic, Hindu, and Christian--and levels of political and economic development are also widely different. Yet they all share a common historical experience of Western colonial rule which induces a common reaction to many international issues relating to colonialism and racism, and an aspiration for economic development and social progress is also common to them. Hence, given persistent efforts and elimination of outside interference, there is a good chance that the states of this region can evolve into a distinct community having its own regional system of security in course of time.

The situation in the Indian Ocean area may be compared in many ways with the Balkans in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries, where extraneous interest in the inner conflicts of the region made their settlement well-nigh impossible and even sparked off a world conflagration. An essential prerequisite for successful regional cooperation, and through that the creation of a regional security system eventually, is to keep the area free from the power rivalry and naval competition of the outside big powers whose presence will only further fan the intra-regional conflicts. With the Soviet Union agreeing to withdraw her navy from the Indian Ocean provided the Western powers, too, do the same, the littoral states should mobilize their efforts to put pressure on the powers concerned to start negotiations over this question. A declaration by the United Nations on the necessity of establishing a nuclear-free zone of peace in the Indian Ocean will also focus world opinion on this vital problem. Such an expression of world opinion might induce the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to work together to aid in the resolution of conflicts among the non-aligned nations, to the benefit of all parties. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. could even unite to prevent such conflicts. The discontinuance of military aid by both America and Russia could elicit a willingness to compromise from any

less powerful nations involved in a conflict which could ultimately threaten world peace. At present, however, the U.S. and the Soviet Union are pursuing different courses.

The Soviet approach to the Indian Ocean area has fundamental implications for U.S. foreign policy: it compels Americans to define anew their role in the world, to reassess the value of the Third World to U.S. national interests, and to formulate a national policy toward the Third World to achieve those interests, a policy directed at the Third World as a whole rather than an excessive concern for just the Soviet competitor, which is only one component of what ought to be a much larger national concern.

The United States faces a politically multipolar and economically interdependent world which, except for southern Africa and the Horn, has become remarkably stabilized. Europe, having somewhat stabilized along frontiers acknowledged in international accords, could possibly be entering an era of extended peace. The Far East also seems to have become reasonably stable in its national borders with the emergence of China, the opening of relations with the United States, and the creation of a quadrangular balance of power among the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and the non-aligned countries. The contest for power continues in the Middle

East, but in a form less acute than in the past, as the interested powers move somewhat closer to the conference table.<sup>1</sup>

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger perceived the Indian Ocean countries as a component of regional power in the larger context of a balance of global power between the Soviet Union and the United States. For him the problem of this age was how to manage the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower; the solution was to be achieved essentially through constructing an intricate balance of power system.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Union is seeking to expand its influence by manipulating local tensions and conflicts, particularly in the Third World. The Soviets regard the Third World as a primary area for competition both with the West and with China. The expansion of Soviet strategic and conventional forces was believed to have given them more room for maneuver in support of their clients and in attempting to intimidate neutrals and friends of the United States. Dangers were perceived in challenging the United States directly in such critical areas as Europe, the Indian Ocean, or Asia. However, the Soviet activity in the Indian Ocean is expected to increase rather

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<sup>1</sup>House of Representatives, The Soviet Union and the Third World, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

than diminish.<sup>3</sup> As the United States Navy constricts and draws back from traditional deployment patterns, the Soviet Navy, according to Admiral Turner, a professional American naval officer and Rhodes scholar, "has been demonstrating increasingly imaginative and frequent global deployment of forces in response to developments in international politics--as in Angola, Mozambique, the Indian Ocean, and West Africa."<sup>4</sup> The United States is a declining sea power and the Soviet Union is a growing and restive one. The transformation to a global competitor of the United States has given rise to political dilemmas and strategic dangers which may limit the benefit the Soviet Union may derive from its new status as an oceanic power--as a sea power the Soviets have developed a vested interest in oceanic issues such as preserving unrestricted passage of straits and limiting the expansion of territorial water claims, a posture that could put them in conflict with some developing countries. That is the threat from China in the Far East, which also could have a constraining effect.<sup>5</sup>

The crucial idea that emerges from an analysis of the Indian Ocean area is that of interdependence among nations. No single country, no political bloc can stand alone. The

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 166-167.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Third World is emerging as a force which must be reckoned with. In time, the Third World may even prove to be the force which mediates conflicts between the two superpowers and brings about a reduction of the destabilizing and debilitating effects of the arms race.

Strategic deterrence for the present, however, continues to be a primary governing principle in the superpowers and remains a fair measurement of the balance of their global power. But pressures have been building up in important areas of the Third World, bringing to the fore the factor of regional balances and their effects on the overarching global balance. Decolonization has come to an end, lifting a heavy burden from the West and robbing the Soviets of one of their most formidable charges against the West. The emerging nations in the Third World, strengthened by the imperatives of interdependence, have thrust upon the table a new agenda of grievances and have demanded a response from all the industrial nations of the North.<sup>5</sup>

It is not an easy task, but it seems to be time to begin serious negotiations in the interest of the future Indian Ocean community, in order to achieve more meaningful and closer regional economic cooperation among the states of the Indian

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-172.

Ocean, which is an important phase in the creation of a regional system of security. In order to accomplish such security, the nations of the Indian Ocean feel it necessary to keep the Soviet-American rivalry out of the area. Only then can the Indian Ocean become a zone of lasting peace.

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