CHAPTER - V

THE REGIONAL STATES RESPONSE TO US MILITARISATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN
With the entry of external powers in the Indian Ocean region, the littoral and hinterland States faced problems, which almost compromised their sovereignty. The Indian Ocean possesses forty five littoral and hinterland States. The region was under the control of the British till the 1950s. In 1960s when the British naval supremacy declined, there was a 'power vacuum' in the region. The Super Powers wanted to fill the vacuum but the littoral States strongly opposed the presence of external powers in the region. However, the fact remains that though no State of the region was in a position to dominate the Indian Ocean, they tried to pressurize the international fora to foreclose the Super Powers from being involved in the region. They urged the United Nations community to declare Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

The Western powers justified their presence in the Indian Ocean region on the strength of traditional international law. The freedom of the high seas, which has been provided by the law of the sea of 1958, allows the maritime users to explore and exploit the Indian Ocean region. In fact, no State has sovereignty over the sea, because control of the high seas is not possible for any one. At the same time, all the countries are not at par in terms of their power on the high seas. The big powers have greater capacity than the others on the seas. In fact, the smaller States faced severe problems due to the involvement and intervention of the big powers. The freedom of the high seas and the doctrine of sovereignty of each nation allows the major maritime powers to free access to the Indian Ocean.¹

THE CONCEPT OF THE ZONE OF PEACE

If a particular geographical area is declared as a "Zone of Peace", it connotes, the particular region is deemed as protected from the danger of war or the danger of an outbreak of conflict in the region. Sri Lanka, was the first to propagate the idea of a zone of peace instead of the 'demilitarisation principle'. In accordance with the littoral States, as well as external powers, would be called upon to confine their military capability

and related activities to their territories only. The idea of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean would urges the external powers to foreclose their military presence in the region.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of a Peace Zone is to ensure that by explicit action, the major powers either by mutual or unilateral agreement, respect the region as a Zone of Peace, and refrain from action which threatens the peace. In other words, it means that the freedom of the high seas would be subject to important voluntary limitations. It also implies that the great powers would voluntarily limit their activities in collective security arrangements and would not seek to use any facilities for establishing their bases in the Indian Ocean. The ultimate objective of the peace zone principle was to stabilize the Indian Ocean region and to prevent the cold war politics from entering and influencing it. This would enable the countries of the region to concentrate on major issues viz: security, poverty alleviation and development.

The Indian Ocean region is an area of low solidarities or community interests because of ethnic diversity and the impact of colonial rule. Most of the countries have conflicts with their neighbours (India and Pakistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Kuwait, Indonesia and Malaysia, etc.). A Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean was to provide countries of this region with time to develop trends towards integration and co-operation so that in course of time, the Indian Ocean region could move from an area of low solidarity to an area of high solidarity.

INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE (IOZP)

The evolution of the concept of IOZP could be traced to the Cairo Conference of the Non-aligned States held during 5-10 October 1964. The

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Conference criticized the imperialist powers for trying to dominate South Asia by establishing their bases in the Indian Ocean region.\textsuperscript{5} The concept of a Zone of Peace is inherent to the concept of Non-alignment which opposes imperialism and colonialism. Non-Alignment precludes members from membership of the two blocs. It does not permit their territories, air space and territorial waters to be used by big powers. This was done to prevent conflicts and rivalries in the region. In fact, the Non-aligned countries at the 1970 Lusaka Non-aligned Summit, discussed the great power rivalry and competition in the Indian Ocean region and put forth the proposal of the IOZP. It further demanded that the area should also be free from nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{6} The proposal of the IOZP was mooted by Sri Lanka at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference (CHOGM) in January 1971 at Singapore. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (1960-1965 and 1970-1977), suggested that the Indian Ocean should be declared as a Zone of Peace.\textsuperscript{7}

The great powers are geographically far away from the region. They should have realized that the interest of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean were greater than that of the major maritime powers. This view was echoed by Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. On 12 October 1971 while addressing the UN General Assembly, she stated: "It may be argued that a Zone of Peace in an Ocean area would be incompatible with a body of customary and conventional international law which seeks to preserve the seas beyond territorial waters as open to all nations. There is no reason why this concept should not be modified to accommodate the needs and realities of the world of today. One may go so far as to say that the principle of the freedom of the high seas does not adequately serve the fundamental interests of all nations alike, but is clearly weighted in favor of the interests of the dominant user nations. This inequality must be redressed".\textsuperscript{8}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{8} Address by Bandaranaike before the UN General Assembly on 12 October 1971, cited in Iyer, n.3, p.105.
\end{flushright}
Every year there were a series of meetings in this regard and each time the resolutions were passed in the UN General Assembly in a ritualistic manner. Thus, the UN and NAM failed in their efforts to influence both the external powers and regional States to secure peace zone in the Indian Ocean. The following section on Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace (IOZP) elaborates the resolutions passed in the UN General Assembly.

**IOZP AND THE UN**

Bandarainike urged the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, to include the declaration of the IOZP in the agenda of the twenty sixth session of the General Assembly.\(^9\) While speaking at the General Assembly, she maintained that this proposal was intended as a direct and tangible contribution to the disarmament decade and to the strengthening of conditions for world peace.\(^10\)

On 16 December 1971, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to declare the IOZP.\(^11\) The first operative paragraph dealt with the implementation of IOZP.\(^12\) The second operative paragraph called on the great powers to consult with the littoral States of the Indian Ocean to halt the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean and to eliminate all bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great power military presence from the region.\(^13\) Third paragraph called upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean.

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\(^11\) The Resolution 2832 (XXVI) was adopted by a vote of 61-0 with 55 abstained, regarding the first-operative paragraph of the Resolution. 61 votes in favour and none against with 55 abstaining. See UNGAOR, 2022nd plenary meeting, 16 December 1976, Agenda item 98. The second and third operative paragraphs were supported by a vote of 43-0 with 55 abstained. On the same day, voting was held once again and this time the first operative paragraph was passed by a vote of 60-0 with 55 abstained. The second and third operative paragraphs were approved by a vote of 52-0 with 63 abstaining. For details of first, second, and third Operative paragraphs, see UN Resolution on a Zone of Peace, December 1971, Appendix-VII, pp.-A-14-15.


\(^13\) *Ibid.*
the permanent members of the UN Security Council and other major maritime
users of the region to ensure that warships and military aircraft should not
use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty,
territorial integrity and independence of any littoral and hinterland State of
the Indian Ocean and arrangements were to be made for the maintenance of the
IOZP.\textsuperscript{14} On 15 December 1972, the General Assembly reiterated the 1971
Declaration of the IOZP. It called upon the littoral and hinterland States,
the permanent members of the Security Council and other maritime users of the
Indian Ocean to support the concept of IOZP.\textsuperscript{15} The Assembly also decided to
establish an ad hoc Committee consisting of fifteen members,\textsuperscript{16} to study the
implications of the proposal with special reference to the practical measures
that might be taken to further the objectives of the 1971 Declaration. The
Declaration gave due regard to the security interests of the littoral and
hinterland States of the Indian Ocean and the interests of any other State
consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.\textsuperscript{17}

In the General Assembly, on 6 December 1973 the Resolution on IOZP was
passed. It requested the Secretary General to prepare a factual statement of
the great power military presence in all its aspects in the Indian Ocean and
with special reference to their naval deployments conceived in the context of
great power rivalry.\textsuperscript{18} In the following year, the General Assembly passed two
resolution to implement the IOZP\textsuperscript{19} and to increase the membership of the Ad hoc
Committee on the Indian Ocean to eighteen by the inclusion of Bangladesh,
Kenya and Somalia.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{U.N. Year Book}, n.12, p.35
\textsuperscript{15} The Resolution 2992 (XXVII) was passed by a vote of 95–0 with 33 abstentions
p.28.
\textsuperscript{16} Ad hoc Committee members were: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran,
Iraq, Japan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the United
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{18} The Resolution 3080 (XXVIII) on IOZP was passed by a vote of 95–0 with 35
abstentions. See \textit{UNGAOR}, First Committee, 1969 mtg, 23 November 1973,
p.586.
\textsuperscript{19}
\textsuperscript{20} General Assembly passed two Resolutions on 9 December 1974. First

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On 11 December 1975, the General Assembly requested the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to continue their consultations on convening a conference on the Indian Ocean,\textsuperscript{21} with particular reference to the following issues:

a. Purposes of the conference;
b. Date and duration;
c. Venue;
d. Provisional agenda;
e. Participation; and
f. Level of participation.\textsuperscript{22}

The General Assembly thereafter every year passed the resolutions regarding the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIAN OCEAN

In 1982, the UN General Assembly emphasized that the Ad hoc Committee should work towards holding the Conference no later than the first half of 1984. However, in 1984, the Committee was divided into two groups, which maintained diametrically opposing views regarding the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{23} In fact, most of the States, particularly Non-aligned States and Eastern European States, were of the opinion that the Committee should prepare for convening the conference without delay. However, a group of the Western States, including the US, stressed the importance of harmonizing the views of all concerned with the proposed zone of peace concept and for improving the political and security climate in the region before convening the conference. In other words, the Western States wanted to convene the conference only after achieving consensus of all concerned. In 1985, the Assembly requested the Ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to complete

\textsuperscript{21}Report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, UNGAOR, 30th session, Supplement no.29 (A/10029), 1975, p.64.
\textsuperscript{22}See Report of the First Committee on Agenda Item 39. Document no.8/10436, UNGAOR, 30th session Agenda Item 39, 8 December 1975, p.12.
\textsuperscript{23}UN Year Book 1984 (New York: UN Publications 1984), p.79.
preparatory work for the conference on the Indian Ocean in 1986, and hold the conference before 1988. This never materialized because there was no unity among the littoral States and they had no support from the Western States.

LITTORAL STATES AND IOZP

Due to Indian Ocean's vast size, tri-continental dimensions and diversity not only ethnic but also cultural, the littoral States could never perceive a single strategic stance. Most of the countries in the region have conflicts with neighbours viz. India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Jordan, Egypt, Somalia, Ethiopia. There existed candid difference of opinion amongst them regarding the presence of the great powers in this region. Most of the littoral States opined that in the absence of the great power military presence, India, Indonesia and Iran, being larger in the region, would dominate the region. They preferred the presence of the great powers to check the dominance of the regional powers. The following section provides testimony to the said statement.

SRI LANKA

Though the idea of IOZP first came from Sri Lanka, a littoral State in the Indian Ocean region, it later did not show much interest in implementing the proposal in the Indian Ocean because of its apprehensions about India. This was implicit in the opposition leader of Sri Lanka, J.R. Jayawardene's address to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference at Colombo in December 1974 where he opined: "India is a peaceful country today, We respect and honor her, Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. But, can we say that every day India will have a peaceful ruler? There may be a dictator like Tippu Sultan of Mysore or there may be some dictator like Yahya Khan."24

Sri Lanka maintained that in the inter-dependent world of today, the great powers cannot accept the whole of Asia to be under the control of one country (India). It emphasised that it was better to depend on some kind of a balance being established between the great powers to ensure that there was no hegemony of any single power. Sri Lanka with Singapore and Australia, called

24 Bangkok Post (Bangkok), 14 December 1974.
for a "balanced presence" of external powers in the region. Thus, the
country which initiated the concept of IOZP itself changed its stand because
of its Indophobia. Sri Lanka, however, consistently emphasized the need for
denuclearisation of the entire Indian Ocean region as a prerequisite for
making the region a zone of peace. The following sections examined the
attitudes of other countries on the issue of IOZP.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan entered into a military alliance with the US in the 1950s, and
supported the US presence in the Indian Ocean. It maintained that in order to
counter the USSR's influence in the region, the US must remain in the region.
It maintained that by allowing US Ships to ply in the region it would not
become the monopoly of any external power. In 1974, the Pakistani Prime
Minister, Z.A. Bhutto (1971-1977), observed that Pakistan had no objection to
Diego Garcia being converted into an American base. Pakistan's attitude
towards Indian Ocean was governed by her suspicion of India. It was not happy
calling the Ocean as "Indian Ocean" and wanted to call it "Afro Asian Ocean"
or "Eastern Ocean".

Pakistan introduced a motion in the UN General Assembly for declaring
South Asia as a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) and this was adopted on 9
December 1974. This resolution envisaged:

*a. use of nuclear materials only for peaceful purposes and to ban on testing,
use, manufacture, production, acquisition or storage of any nuclear weapons or
nuclear launching devices;
b. a system of verification and inspection;
c. undertaking by nuclear weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear

25Adi H. Doctor, "India's Indian Ocean Policy", The Indian Journal of Political
26By the Patriot (New Delhi), 28 April 1974.
27Anita Bhatt, The Strategic role of Indian Ocean in World Politics: The Case
28UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution 3265 (XXIX) on 9 December 1974 by
29Also See James E. Dougherty "Nuclear proliferation in Asia", Orbis
(Philadelphia), vol.19, no.3, Fall 1975, pp 936-937
weapons against the States of the region". The General Assembly continued to adopt such resolutions every year thereafter. India rejected it on the ground that the whole world should be declared as Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) and not any particular region. This difference of opinion too prevented the littoral States from jointly working for the success of the IOZP.

SINGAPORE

Singapore justified the great Powers presence in the region. It maintained that it was not only the American navy or the Soviet navy, there was also Chinese navy presence in the Indian Ocean. It supported the naval units presence in the region, because they play a role in curbing piracy in the area and might prove useful in preventing sea going hijackers. It felt that there was no logic in seeking the withdrawal of the great powers from the region. There has been no time in history when the States could be prevented from involvement in international politics.

AUSTRALIA

Australia is one of the important countries of the region. It did not oppose the US presence on Diego Garcia. In 1975, the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser supported the US naval base at Diego Garcia as essential for the US to protect shipping lanes, as oil from Middle East passed through the region. The liberal government of Australia abstained from voting on the proposal in 1971 at the UN considering that it was neither practical nor realistic approach (to the Super Powers). However, when the Labour Party came to power in 1972, its leader Gough Whitlam decided to

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30 Indian Express (New Delhi), 18 December 1974.
31 While referring to the US base in the Indian Ocean, S. Rajaratnam said "Let us be honest about it. If the base is there purely to protect American interest only, then we are not interested. If the base is there purely for Americans to counter balance the Russians, we are not interested. But if the American base or any other base for that matter is to guarantee our security as well because it coincides, then I say we would be prepared to consider that." Cited in The Hindu (Madras), 28 June 1976.
32 The Times of India (New Delhi), 21 December 1975.
33 UN Year Book 1981, Vol.25 (New York, UN: UN Publication), p.34.
support the proposal in December 1972 and joined the Ad hoc committee.\textsuperscript{34} The Whitlam government though supported the peace zone proposal, observed that it was difficult to implement a peace zone without the support of US and the USSR.\textsuperscript{35} It showed less interest for proposal after it signed an agreement with US for a communication station at North-West Cape on 5 January 1974.\textsuperscript{36} However, it did not give up supporting the proposal, in order to maintain the diplomatic relation with other Indian Ocean States. It advocated mutual restraint of Super Powers, de escalation of Super Power naval deployments and bilateral negotiations between them for the objectives of the IOZP Proposal.\textsuperscript{37} Robert Hawke's, Labour Party came to power in 1983. He declared that the military alliance with the US was important to the security of his country.\textsuperscript{38} It is important to note that Australia provided facilities for the US forces.\textsuperscript{39} The ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, and the US) treaty further provided a strong link between Australia and the US. Australia did not treat the external powers involvement as a threat in the region. It argued that the maintenance of peace and security in the region depended on the cooperation among the countries of the region. There was no consistency in Australian policy towards IOZP due to regular changes in the government there.

WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND STATES

The four island States of the Western Indian Ocean region, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoros and Seychelles, supported the proposal of IOZP. Mauritius opposed the militarization of the Indian Ocean. It criticized the US military presence on Diego Garcia. It wanted to get back. Diego Garcia was

\textsuperscript{34} UN Year Book 1972, Vol.26, p.845.
\textsuperscript{36} This agreement was provided for military men of the US and Australia to operate the station at North West Cape in Western Australia as a joint facility. For details see Facts on File (New York), Vol.34, no.1732, 19 January 1974, p.30.
\textsuperscript{37} See Rais, n.35, p.157.
\textsuperscript{38} New York Times, 7 March 1983.
\textsuperscript{39} Pine Gap and Nurrunger, interior of Australia, Lear month at Exmouth Gulf, North West Cape in western Australia and Cocos islands are some of the facilities, Australia provided base for the US. See Henry S. Albinski, "Australia and the Indian Ocean", in Larry W. Bowman and Ian Clark (ed), The Indian Ocean in global politics (Colorado: West View Press, Inc, 1981), p.68.
a part of Mauritius when the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) was established in 1965. Mauritius, at that time, was under the British rule. When Mauritius was negotiating with the British for its independence, the British promised to give independence only if they were allowed to detach the Chagos Archipelago. Mauritius accepted the British condition and thus the Archipelago, to which Diego Garcia belongs, detached from the Mauritius. The US never agreed to give back the island to it. Mauritius claimed that France should give back Tromelin to it, as it was attached to it since 1826. France argued that Tromelin was never a dependency of Mauritius and so it could not be considered as an integral part of it. Madagascar criticized the French presence in the region. It claimed that the French should give back the Indian Ocean islands of Glorious, Juan de Nova, Europa, and Bassa da India, to it. The French, however, ignored the claim. Comoros had a dispute with France on Mayotte which is under control of the French but France responded negatively to the demand.

MIDDLE EAST

Middle East countries supported the IOZP. They opposed the foreign domination in the region in 1970s. The Iranian domination in the region consequent to the Iran-Iraq war made the other countries strengthen their defence to save their shipping, oil and military facilities. The Iranian unilateral abrogation of the Shatt-al-Arab Treaty with Iraq in 1969, a treaty that had regulated the use of that way since 1937. Its occupation of three islands of the Great, Little Tombs, and Abu Musa in December 1971, gave the complete control over the Straits of Hormuz. This shows the concern regarding Iran and its intention in the region. The Persian Gulf States and Saudi Arabia moved closer to the US and started obtaining sophisticated equipment. The Persian Gulf States felt the need of the Western countries presence in the region to curtail the dominance of Iran in the region. Thus, despite their support to the IOZP in the UN General Assembly, they were developing security relations with the external powers especially the Super Powers.

\[\text{Washington Post, 17 July 1982.}\]
\[\text{See Rais, n.35, p.162.}\]
\[\text{For details see Washington Post, 30 May 1984 & Washington Post, 16 June 1984.}\]

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India’s policy towards the presence of the external powers in the Indian Ocean was neither consistent nor strong. At times India overlooked the USSR’s activities in the region. This was due to India’s close strategic linkages with the erstwhile USSR. In the beginning of the 1950s and the 60s India was not aware of the extra regional powers’ activities in the region as it was concerned with domestic problems. It is interesting to note that till 1960s India’s reaction towards the Western military presence in the Indian Ocean was mild. When the US Seventh Fleet entered into the Indian Ocean in 1963, India did not criticize it. Other countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia protested against its entry. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, stated in the Lok Sabha on 19 December 1963 “If the US government decides to do this, all that we need to say, today, is that outside the territorial waters of India, the Ocean is naturally open to them.” Nehru termed the entry of the fleet as “sightseeing, seeing the waters etc.” Nehru, perhaps, realised the importance of US presence in the region to counter Chinese expansionism. In 1962 Sino-Indian war, the US supported and supplied arms to India to contain the Chinese forces. Interestingly Pakistan, which had already joined South East Asian Treaty and Central Treaty Organization in a military alliance with the US, criticized the US activities.

Lal Bahudar Sashtri, who succeeded Nehru, as Prime Minister in 1964 (1964-1966) reiterated Nehru’s policy towards the presence of external powers in the Indian Ocean.

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44 Ibid, col.5772.
45 Mohammed Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan (1958-1969), wrote “...US was free to do what it liked on the high seas but I could not understand what military or political advantage they could get from such a move. They were in a position to achieve their objectives from their existing locations. Where was the need to add another element of tension in the Indian Ocean Littoral? Politically the move would be most unpopular and countries in Asia and Africa would strongly resent it. So far as Pakistan was concerned such a force would only add to her problems and encourage India to act in an even more irresponsible manner”. Cited in Mohammad Ayub Khan, Friends Not Masters – A Political Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.152.
Indira Gandhi came to power in 1967 on the death of Shastri at Tashkent on 11 January 1966, where he had gone to meet Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan, at the behest of the Soviet leadership Alexie Kosygin. Her government began to criticize the US presence in the Indian Ocean since 1971. It protested the entry of US Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal in 1971. The US sent its fleet to pressurize India to minimize its activities in the East Pakistan crisis of 1971. The explanation given for the deployment of the task force was to evacuate American nationals in Dacca and elsewhere in East Pakistan. Countering this stance, India argued:

a. American nationals stationed in Dacca were brought out of the city by 12 December 1971 (three days before the US task force reached the Bay of Bengal);
b. India had not attacked Pakistani territory and reiterated that the military operations would cease as soon as Pakistan was ready to give independence to East Bengal. The entry of the Seventh Fleet came as a shock to India and exposed the weakness of its naval forces. This made India recognize the importance of strengthening its naval force. There were other factors which

46. The purpose of sending its naval force into the Indian Waters, according to Jack Anderson, Columnist, was to

a. compel India to divert both ships and planes from East Pakistani border to shadow the task force;
b. weaken India's naval blockade against East Pakistan;
c. divert the Indian aircraft carrier "Vikrant" from its military mission; and
d. to force India to keep planes on alert thus reducing their operation against Pakistan ground forces. See Jack Anderson, *Washington Post*, 31 December 1971.

There were other reasons for the dispatch of the US naval units. They were as follows:

a. to help evacuate threatened American citizens;
b. to induce Moscow to prevent military operations; and
c. China was to be assured that the United States would do every thing in its power to forestall a complete collapse of Pakistan. See C.L. Sulzberger, "The Policy of Enterprise", *New York Times*, 21 April 1972, p.39.

47. Indian navy needed to be strengthened:

a. to safeguard the Indian coastline and vital installation in the vicinity of the coastline against both surface and submarine threats;
b. to safeguard the flow of trade in and out of Indian ports during limited war situations;
c. to restrict the naval activities of the potential adversary in this case. Pakistan during limited war; and
d. to be in a position to assist island republics of the Indian Ocean – notably Mauritius, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka in case they sought Indian assistance, particularly against threats of subversion. The Indian intervention in Sri Lanka beginning in 1987 and in the Seychelles in 1982 which has been subjected to two coup attempts since 1982 illustrates this
made India strengthen its navy. They were:
a. India did not want the Super Power involvement in the region;
b. India did not want to depend on other countries;
c. Indira Gandhi's urge to project India as a regional power;
d. the US, for the first time, militarily supported Pakistan and went against India.
India did oppose the presence of external powers in general and US presence in particular.

INDIA'S OPPOSITION TO US BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA

In the beginning, India did not protest vehemently against the US-British agreement on Diego Garcia. However, when Indira Gandhi came to power in 1969, she started opposing the US proposal for establishing a naval base at Diego Garcia. At the January 1971 conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers at Singapore, India's representative, Minister for External Affairs, Swaran Singh, opposed the construction of an Anglo-American base at Diego Garcia. It was Indira Gandhi who took a bold decision to oppose the Anglo-American proposal. Indira Gandhi started raising her voice against the US involvement only after the 1971 crisis in the subcontinent. The US Seventh Fleet entry into the Bay of Bengal shocked India and it acted as a catalyst for this stance of India vis-a-vis the US.

On 1 November 1973, speaking in the Lok Sabha, Swaran Singh, Ministry of External Affairs (1970-1974) in Indira Gandhi's government, opined that India was concerned at the prospect of any major escalation of external naval presence in the Indian Ocean.


48 Indira Gandhi addressing the Parliament of Sri Lanka on 28 April 1973 stated "we should continue to resist the expansion of military presence. It is of paramount importance to us that Indian Ocean remains a zone of peace and free from military contests". Cited in National Herald (New Delhi), 29 April 1973.
India did not oppose the ships of other countries sailing in the Indian Ocean. A report in the Hindustan Standard of 7 July 1969 mentioned, what Indira Gandhi stated the previous day, that India would allow ships of friendly nations to come to the region. However, Indira Gandhi, addressing the Lok Sabha on 12 November 1973, clarified the report and observed: "we cannot prevent them (ships of any country) from sailing in the Indian Ocean". India did oppose the external powers having naval bases in the region.

The US was unhappy about India's constant criticism of its presence on Diego Garcia. On 4 March 1974 Daniel P. Moynihan the US ambassador to India in a talk with journalists at Madras said that "Diego Garcia" was more than 1,100 miles away from India and he maintained "why call this Ocean the Indian Ocean? One may call it the Madagascar sea". Reacting to this US position on 15 May 1975 the Indian Defence Minister, Swaran Singh (1974–1975) at a press meet at New Delhi argued that the name Indian Ocean was based on the geographical situation. It was not a gift of the United States or the Ambassador.

INDIAN OCEAN REGION-INDIA AND BIG POWERS

India was against balance of power game being resorted to in the region, by the big powers. While addressing the thirty first CHOGM Conference in Singapore on 15 January 1971, Sardar Swaran Singh, the Minister for External Affairs, observed that the days of domination or leadership by any power or group of powers were over. He further stated "no small country is prepared to surrender its sovereignty and independence to the great powers. India wants to avoid rivalry between the Super powers in the Indian Ocean."

India was also against spheres being carved out for influence by external powers. Replying to a question, Swaran Singh told the Rajya Sabha on 26 May 1972 "...we can never accept any such carving out of spheres of

50 Lok Sabha, n.4, cols.,254-257.
51 Ibid, cols. 248-249.
52 The Hindu, 5 March 1974
53 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 7 March 1974.
54 Times of India, 16 January 1971.
55 Ibid.
Influence, because the countries in the Indian Ocean have got their own approaches to the various problems and we refuse to accept any idea of carving out spheres of influence and we would be totally opposed to it and we will never accept it.\textsuperscript{56} He reiterated this position in the Lok Sabha on 12 November 1973.\textsuperscript{57}

India did not want involvement of any external power in the region, hence, it opposed the Anglo-American agreement on Diego Garcia. It felt that it was another version of colonialism, which was being perpetuated in the region.\textsuperscript{58} India did not believe in the power vacuum theory.\textsuperscript{59}

India supported the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 1971 declaring "Indian Ocean as a zone of peace", its objective being to avoid external powers presence and their rivalry in the region.\textsuperscript{59} At the same time, India wanted to strengthen its navy to keep the external forces out of the region.\textsuperscript{60}

India maintained that the question of external power presence in the region was not the concern of India alone but all littoral countries and that

\textsuperscript{56}Rajya Sabha Debates (New Delhi; Rajya Sabha Secretariat) Vol. 80, no.15, 26 May 1972, col. 23.
\textsuperscript{57}Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.32, no.1, 12 November 1973, col.252.
\textsuperscript{58}Indira Gandhi on 6 February 1973 while addressing the "One Asia Assembly" New Delhi said that India rejected the theory of political vacuum. Europe left its colonies, not out of altruism or caprice but because of the rising pressure of Asian nationalism. With this assertive nationalism, how could there be a vacuum?. The very theory of a power vacuum was then a continuation of the colonial outlook in another garb. See Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs), Vol. 19, no. 2, February 1973, PP 65-68.
\textsuperscript{59}On 12 March 1974 in the Lok Sabha Swaran Singh said that the establishment of bases and induction of naval units would increase tensions in the region. This was in opposition to the concept of Indian Ocean being maintained as an area of peace. The Super Power rivalry would create more problems for the littoral States. See Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.36, no.15, 12 March 1974, cols. 173-174.
\textsuperscript{60}Swaran Singh writing in the Weekly Round Table - mentioned that India had been strengthening its navy after 1962. But said that Indian naval strength would be used for strengthening peace in the region and not against any country. For details see Sardar Swaran Singh, "Freedom of Judgment and Action", Weekly Round Table(New Delhi), Vol.3, no.1, 3 February 1974, pp.3-11.
they should jointly resist the external military presence in the region.\(^61\)

Probably, India wanted to indicate to the Western powers that it did not have any hegemonic intentions in the region by demanding the withdrawal of external powers from the region. Supporting Sri Lanka's proposal, it held that if Sri Lanka wanted to agitate on this matter in the UN, India would extend its support to it.\(^62\)

Surendra Pal Singh, the Deputy External Minister (1967–1973), while addressing the Lok Sabha on 16 August 1974 explained that the objectives of India in the Indian Ocean were the following:

a) the defense of India's territorial integrity;
b) defending the freedom of navigation on the high seas; and
c) to see that the Ocean remained an area of peace, free from nuclear weapons.\(^63\)

INDIA'S VIEW ON INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE

On 11 December 1975, the General Assembly requested the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region to continue their consultations on convening a conference on Indian Ocean.\(^64\) India had supported the demand for holding the conference on Indian Ocean since 1975. It suggested the following issues to be included in the proposed conference:\(^65\)

a. General assessment of the extent of great power's military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean;
b. Elaboration of measures for achieving the elimination of all foreign military bases conceived in the context of great power rivalry and a reduction of their military and naval presence in the region with a view to its eventual

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Swaran Singh’s deputy Surendra Pal Singh, in the Lok Sabha on 21 February reiterated the same and stated that the entire world community was seized by the external military presence in the region. See *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol.35, no.3, 21 February 1974, col.3. Also on 16 August he reiterated the same. For details see *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol.42, no.79, 16 August 1974, col.323.


\(^{64}\) See Report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, n.20, p.64.

\(^{65}\) For details see *UNGAOR, First Committee Report*, 30 sess. 1975, Item 29, Document A / 10029.
elimination; and
c. Procedure for implementing such measures through appropriate follow-up action and machinery.

The Indian government clearly stated that the question of IOZIP was not the problem between India and the presence of external powers in the region. It was a question of creating units amongst the littoral countries and working very effectively at the international forum of the United Nations as this was the only basic way of approaching this problem.66 Y. B. Chavan, who took charge of the External Affairs Ministry (1974–77), on 10 October 1974, made it clear in the Lok Sabha on 15 November 1974 that the Diego Garcia base was not a bilateral issue between the US and India.67

Swaran Singh who switched over to the Defense Portfolio from the External Affairs (1974–77) on 10 October 1974 announced in November that it was essential for India to keep the sea lanes open to provide for the protection of India's merchant ships.68 Professor Madhu Dandavate, opposition Member of the Lok Sabha (Socialist Party, 1971–74), participating in the Lok Sabha debate on 21 February 1974 suggested that India had to increase its naval capabilities to reduce escalation of big power rivalry in the Indian Ocean.69

INDIA AND SOVIET BASES IN INDIAN OCEAN?

The Indian government, under the Congress (I) party, criticized the US presence in the Indian Ocean but never referred to the Soviet presence. In 1969, a pro-Soviet party came to power in Somalia. The Soviet Union planned to construct a naval base at Berbera (Somalia). India's reaction to this

67 Ibid., cols.48 & 425.
69 This was in tune with the naval chief's views put forth at a seminar on the India Ocean at New Delhi in 1973. There Admiral Sardarilal Mathradas Nanda, Chief of Naval Staff, said "The new US naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean would enable USA to command trade and commerce in the Indian Ocean and provide logistic support to its Seventh fleet in the region. The Soviet Union would evidently consider this base a threat to its security and would be obliged to increase its naval presence in the Indian Ocean leading to tension and confrontation quoted by Prof. Madhu Dandavate in Lok Sabha. See *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol.35 no.3, 21 February 1974, cols. 4–5.
differed from its reaction to Diego Garcia. It did not equate the Somali – Soviet agreement in 1969 as an example of neo-colonialism as it did the US – British lease of Diego Garcia. On several occasions in the Parliament, the Congress, the ruling party in India, was criticized for the Indian government’s support to the presence of the Soviet navy in the Indian Ocean. However, when the USSR and Iran planned to obtain the Gan airfield of Maldives as a base following the withdrawal of the British in 1976, India persuaded Maldives to convert Gan into a tourist resort. Its contention was that the agreement between Somalia and the USSR was a traditional arrangement and was between two independent States and the Anglo-American agreement, a diplomatic bargain between two external entities. Indira Gandhi’s government should have condemned the activities of the Super Powers instead defining the nature of the agreement.

The government of India maintained that it had no information about the Soviet naval movements or its strength and that the Soviets did not have any base which was under its control in the region. In the Lok Sabha on 19 November 1970 Kamvar Lal Gupta of the ruling party (Congress-I) sought information about the Soviet naval presence on the island of Socotra (Indian Ocean). Swaran Singh, the Minister for External Affairs, responded that the acquisition of port facilities by a naval power was for civilian and innocent (harmless) shipping, and that it is a "normal international arrangement". He made a distinction between a base and a port facility. On several occasions, while discussing about the Indian Ocean, he stated that the Soviet Union did not have a naval base in the region and indicated that other port arrangements made with littoral States, were of no concern to the Indian government. It should be noted that the Soviet Union, unlike the US had not possessed jurisdiction over a local port and had not built up a naval base for its fleet in the Indian Ocean. India felt that since the Soviet Union did not have a base, its presence was not a matter of India’s concern either politically or militarily. When N.K. Somani (Swatantra Party, 1967-70), a Member of Parliament

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72 Ibid.
In the Lok Sabha raised the question on 19 November 1970 regarding India’s position on the Soviet naval fleet, Swaran Singh stated that the ships, both naval as well as fishing trawlers of USSR were present on the high seas and there was no objection from the Indian side, since they were not violating international law.\textsuperscript{73}

India opposed the US allegation that the Soviet Union had a base in the Indian Ocean - at Berbera. In the Rajya Sabha on 19 February 1974 Swaran Singh pointed out that India opposed to the presence of foreign troops or any foreign military presence on the Indian soil and that it was totally opposed to give such facilities to any country.\textsuperscript{74} Two days later, on 21 February Deputy External Affairs Minister, Surendra Pal Singh, while answering a question in the Lok Sabha said that Indian government had no evidence showing the Soviet presence in the region. He announced that the Soviet Union agreed to participate in a conference to discuss the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{75}

India’s stand regarding the base and port facility for external powers was ambiguous. In general, it opposed the activities of the external powers in the region and tried to differentiate between a base and port facility. Swaran Singh, on 12 March 1974, in the Lok Sabha said that there was a difference between the provision of facilities of naval units and the provision of bases.\textsuperscript{76} This was the reason why India did not equate the Soviet presence with the US in the Indian Ocean.

\textsuperscript{73} Lok Sabha Debates, n.71, col.263.
\textsuperscript{74} Rajya Sabha Debates, Vol.86, no.2, 19 February 1974, cols. 83 & 96.
\textsuperscript{75} Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.35, no.3, 21 February 1974, cols. 2-386.
\textsuperscript{76} For instance Swaran Singh said “India provides the normal bunkering facilities, even purchase of food, provisions etc. to all the friendly countries naval vessels whether it is the United States, Britain, France, or the USSR. So the provisions of these normal facilities in peace time is not regarded as something objectionable”. But the provision of a base is a serious matter which cannot remain undetected”. cited in Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.36, no.15, 12 March 1974, col.190.
JANATA GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE (1977-1979)

Indira Gandhi proclaimed Emergency in June 1975. Due to continued pressure from the people to end the emergency rule and hold election, she decided in January 1977 to hold election in March. Under the Janata Party banner, Congress (O), Jan Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLP), Socialist Party and Swatantra Party contested the 1977 elections. The Janata Party under Morarji Desai assumed power in March 1977. This was the first non-Congress government at the centre since independence. Before coming to power, the Janata Party, in its election manifesto, announced that it would maintain friendship with both the US and the USSR. It should be remembered that the party leaders criticized Mrs. Gandhi when she entered into an agreement with the Soviet Union i.e. the 1971 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. They maintained that they would abrogate the agreement with the Soviet Union if they came to power. Later on, they realized the fact that it was not possible to ignore the USSR. The External Affairs Minister in the Janata Coalition government A.B. Vajpayee (1977-1979) appealed to both the powers i.e. the US and the USSR to eliminate their military presence in the region.

The Janata government, unlike its predecessor, treated both the USSR and the US alike and called upon them to withdraw from the region. There was a strong opposition in the Parliament. The opposition party sought clarification from A.B. Vajpayee on 16 June 1977 about India's policy towards Diego Garcia. Vajpayee was very careful in expressing his government's stand on Diego Garcia. He did not mention Diego Garcia by name but rather asked the US to quit the region but requested the Super Powers to quit the region. He said

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77 This treaty was signed as a result of the 1971 Sino-US rapprochement, their close relationship with Pakistan and the US declaration of supporting Pakistan in the war.

78 Vajpayee said that India should continue to press for the implementation of UN resolutions on the subject in accordance with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean in all international fora, including the United Nations and the Non-aligned group. India should also continue to appeal to the great powers and to the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to cooperate with the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean in translating the concept of the zone of peace into reality and to eliminate foreign military presence and the resulting tension from the region. India has also to continue to welcome and encourage any move towards extension of the spirit of detente to the Indian Ocean. Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. 2, no. 5, 16 June 1977, col. 141.
that his government did not consider Diego Garcia as a bilateral problem between India and the US and he contended that the rivalry between the Super powers and the issue of a zone of peace must be solved at bilateral talks amongst them. In other words, it was not possible for India to pressurize the outside powers to vacate the region. It did not want to enter into a rift with the US by opposing the latters' military presence in the region. The rivalry between the external powers was to be resolved either by themselves or at the United Nations. Desai's response to the activities of the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean was not akin to that of the earlier government. He told the Parliament on 14 July 1977 that it was wrong in stating that the Soviet Union had no base whatsoever. It had its spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean. That could not be denied. It was a race between the two powerful nations.

The Janata government resigned on 15 July 1979. Charan Singh formed a coalition government on 28 July. However, the coalition resigned on 22 August. The President dissolved the Lok Sabha and called for election in December 1979. Charan Singh did not give importance to the Indian Ocean policy.

When the Congress party once again came back to power under the leadership of Indira Gandhi in 1980, it reiterated its earlier stand that the USSR had no bases and differentiated the USSR and US activities in the region. India's attitude towards the Soviet presence in the region under Indira Gandhi was different. Indira Gandhi's government had cordial relations with the USSR. The latter helped India in Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 and supported Indira during emergency period. Thus, there was a feeling in the West that India under Indira Gandhi's government had a favorable disposition towards the Soviet naval policy. India's policy could be justified on two grounds: 

a. India reckoned the Soviet presence as a defensive measure and

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80. Though the USSR had no bases, according to the Indian sources, its involvement would increase tension in the region. Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. 4, no. 29, 14 July 1977, col. 6. Also see The Statesman (New Delhi), 15 July 1977.
81. Bhatt, n.27, p.84.
b. as per the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, the Soviet Union had certain responsibilities in the region.

India did not concur with the US justification of its expansion of the Diego Garcia facility due to Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. India’s stand was that the decision was taken long before the Afghanistan crisis. The US did not agree to negotiate with the Soviets in demilitarizing the Indian Ocean during the Afghanistan crisis between 1979-1988. It expected India to condemn the Soviet Union which India did not. India maintained that when the US involved itself in Vietnam, it did not move a resolution against the US in the UN, but urged for a political solution. The same kind of political solution through the UN was sought by India with regard to Afghanistan. The US, however, failed to comprehend India’s approach.

There were other reasons for India’s opposition of the US presence in the region. They were:

a. India’s opposition to colonialism and imperialism, it could not brook any external presence in the region;
b. the US presence was treated as a threat to its sovereignty;
c. the US failed to recognize India as a major power and India regarded it as an affront to its prestige;
d. India’s contention of the US being responsible for the arms race in the region.
e. India as a major power in the region did not want any other external power to interfere in the region.

Thus there was no consistency in India’s policy towards the presence of external powers in the region. This was due to change of governments at the centre. On the whole, there was no shift in India’s policy (1971-1988) towards the need for establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The short lived Janta government also supported the resolution for making Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

INDIA’S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
The external military presence in the Indian Ocean was a matter of deep concern to India. It was a great danger to India’s security. The US maintained Rapid Development Force (RDF) in the Indian Ocean which could
attack India at any time. Its access to other facilities such as Masirah Island in Oman, the Egyptian air naval base at Ras Banas, Mombasa in Kenya and Berbera in Somalia became a matter of deep concern for India.

India had twenty seven major warships and twelve major ports to defend its 7,500 kilometer coastline, whereas Pakistan had ten major warships and two major ports to defend its 1,000 kilometers. 82 In a conflict with Pakistan India had to have more warships to protect its coastline.

As a regional power, India had to maintain peace in the region. It had to protect the interest of people of Indian origin living in different parts of the region i.e. in Maldives, Mauritius, Reunion and the Seychelles. The external military presence in the region was not only a threat to its security, but also a constraint to its legitimate role in the area. It also posed a threat to India’s economic interest. India imported two thirds of its crude oil from the gulf region and hence had to protect its oil routes. It’s merchant marine possessed 890 vessels of a total 6,516,780 tons traversing the Indian Ocean region and thus was dependent on the sea for its trade. 83

India imports natural gas and sulphur from West Asia and exports tea, tobacco, spices, vegetables, fruits, meat, jute, iron ore, engineering goods, leather, medicine and defense equipment to West Asia. Hence it became necessary for India to strengthen its navy to defend its trade with other countries.

India felt an urgent need for enhancing its naval strength because, in the 1965 war with Pakistan, Indonesia offered its help to Pakistan and the Super Powers increased their military presence in the region. In addition to these factors, India possessed the largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the region and it had to protect its economic interests. 84

83 Ibid, p.79.
84 It has 2.015 million km of EEZ of which 30% lies in the region of the Andaman and Nicobar islands. It was estimated that stock of fish was from 50,000 to 100,000 tonnes in the area of 129,000 nautical sq. miles. It was estimated that
India had been given the status of a pioneer nation in 1987 to explore and exploit the resources in the sea bed and allocated 150,000 sq. kms of sea bed by the UN Sea bed authority for mining in the central Indian Ocean which is only 240 miles away from Diego Garcia. Thus it became necessary for India to strengthen its navy to defend its economic and strategic interests.

Regarding India’s need to develop its naval force in the region, K.M. Panikkar, the eminent Historian stated "...India’s security lies on the Indian Ocean, that without a well considered and effective naval policy. India’s position in the world will be weak, dependent on others and her freedom at the mercy of any country capable of controlling the Indian Ocean. India’s future, therefore, is closely bound up with the strength she is able to develop gradually as a naval power".

India does not want to play a dominant role in the region, as it desires to maintain peace, coexistence and cooperation among the States and protect independence of all States. However, some of the littoral States expressed doubts about India’s intentions. For instance, Sri Lanka expressed that India, being a regional power, would dominate the region.

India’s constant opposition to the presence of external powers in the region, particularly in 1970, was an essential element of its goal to strengthen its naval supremacy and its role in the region. Most of the littoral States felt that India wanted to adopt the role of a big brother in the region.

453000 sq kms of EEZ contain about 40 million tons of fish and about one billion tons of oil. The West coast region was estimated to have 570 oil bearing structure of which 176 have been confirmed and 81 discovered. See S.L. Rao "Geopolitical and Economic Realities of the West Coast of India" in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Opportunities (New Delhi: Navy Foundation, 1992), p. 50.

86 Cited in K.M. Panikkar, India and the Indian Ocean (Bombay: George Allen Unwin (India), Pvt. Ltd, 1945), p.92.
87 Bangkok Post, 14 December 1974.
88 Its two military conflicts with Pakistan, capture of Goa from Portugal, peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974, its involvement in Sri Lankan ethnic problem (1980’s), were instances of the manifestation of power that made
The US presence in the Indian Ocean region made the littoral States particularly India feel insecure. India further suspected the US intentions as it was inducting military weapons into South Asia with its massive dose of military aid to Pakistan.

**US REACTION TO THE IOZP**

The US took the opportunity in the UN General Assembly in 1971 to express its attitude towards the IOZP. It supported the first operative paragraph of the resolution of IOZP\(^99\) in the company of other Western countries, and did not acquiesce with the second and third operative paragraphs of the 1971 declaration of IOZP\(^90\) on the grounds that they violated International Law relating to the ‘freedom of seas’. These operative paragraphs prevented the external powers’ presence in the Indian Ocean region. In subsequent sessions, till 1988 the US view remained similar.

In 1986, along with other Western States, the US reiterated their stand, stressing the need for a clear understanding of some fundamental issues, such as the scope and definition of the zone of peace concept and on improving the political and security climate of the region. In the Committee, the Western States were against the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean. It is obvious that when the great powers became members of the Committee, the work comes to a stand still. The Committee could not take any step in convening the conference on the Indian Ocean due to the objection of the US.

The conference on the Indian Ocean was supposed to be held in Colombo but it had been postponed since 1981. The US maintained that it was futile to convene such a conference due to the prevailing uncertainty in the context of politico-security atmosphere of the region.\(^91\) It should be noted, here, that

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\(^99\)See *UN Year Book 1974*, n.28 (I), p.35.

\(^90\)See *Ibid.*

It is unfortunate that the US had not perceived uncertainty in the politico-security environment of the region, and it should have called for the convening of the conference at an early date, as it may have worked towards removing uncertainty in the region. The US argument was that after stabilizing the political and security situation, the conference should be held, which was nothing less than putting the cart before the horse. The purpose of conducting the conference was to resolve the differences and find a common ground. It is a well known fact that the US did not want the conference to be convened as it would not serve its interests in the region.

The US sought to justify its presence by invoking the clause of freedom of navigation. Freedom of navigation, according to the external powers, means the freedom of mobility for military forces. The US pointed out that the resolution denoting the IOZP does not allow warships in the high sea and therefore the resolution was unacceptable. It did not realize that the objection arose only when its activity posed a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the littoral States.

The third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) was adopted in 1982. This was adopted in place of the laws proposed and practiced by UNCLOS I of 1958. The UNCLOS II convention took place in 1960, but unfortunately, it was an utter failure. The UNCLOS III was ratified and came into force on 16 November 1994. It was a complex and difficult affair. This new convention provided for the coastal countries to have the right to exploit and explore territory on the high seas to a limit of 200 nautical miles measured along the

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92 The UNCLOS I was held in 1958 in Geneva. The Conference provided guidelines for the use of bays, islands, straits, and base lines, as well as a 12 mile contiguous zone within which coastal States were authorized to enforce their customs, fiscal, immigration and sanitary regulations. The Coastal state had territory right till 3 nautical miles from the coast. See James B. Morell, The Law of the Sea (Jefferson: Mc Farland and company, Inc, Publishers, 1992), p.8.

93 In between 1958 and 1960 several countries claimed to extend the jurisdiction over territorial seas to 12 nautical miles from 3 nautical miles. But maritime powers (US, USSR, UK, France) did not agree to extend the territorial zone. See Ibid.

This was not reckoned by the earlier - UNCLOS I and II. The area beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is called as high sea (no man's land). However, the US observed that it was not bound by the new Law of the Seas, as it did not ratify it and it wanted to follow the UNCLOS I, which notified the high seas as beyond three nautical miles of the coastal line. Further, US maintained that since high seas were regarded as no man's land, Indian Ocean region States did not have the right to prevent the external powers from moving their warships in the Indian Ocean region.

Though it was realised that the intervention and competition among the extra-regional powers in the Indian Ocean region would harm the interests of the littoral and hinterland regional States, unfortunately, the varying positions assumed by the regional powers hampered the success of the IOZP proposal. Quite naturally, the extra-regional powers were against the move because the proposal was formulated to counter them.

It was wrong to claim that the opposition of the US stalled the declaration of the IOZP. It was equally hamstrung due to the lack of consensus on that score among the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. With the operative power politics of the regional and extra-regional powers, it became difficult to declare the region as a zone of peace. In the following chapter an attempt has been made to examine the politics involved in the US military assistance to Pakistan.