CONCLUSION

Ever since the beginning of maritime activities, the Indian Ocean has remained an area of attraction to outside powers. But it is since 1970's that the area is witnessing an ever-increasing level of tensions and instability in the Littoral States and an increasing level of external military presence in the region. Some of the Littoral States attempted to refuse these tensions, reduce dissonances and improve the security environment, regional cooperation through proposals like that of Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and support for Naval Arm Limitations Talks.

In the last ten years, the security environment of the Indian Ocean and its Littoral States has undergone a significant, and perhaps irreversible charge. What India is interested in, is to ensure that this area becomes an area of peace, peaceful co-existence and cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit; a role of partnership with all other countries in safeguarding Independence and security; promoting peace and progress and a role of opposition to all forces of economic exploitation, and racial discrimination.

With the decline of British empire and its influence on Indian Ocean, the idea of power vacuum was projected in view of the fact that regional communities were not economically and
politically sound and stable which India did not accept saying that any power vacuum can be created if any foreign power leaves any particular area. Then it is for that area and territory to take adequate steps to safeguard their own security and their own country.

Rejecting the myth of power vacuum India asserted the right of regional powers to fill up the so-called power vacuum which was possible only through intensive and durable regional cooperation both in political and economic fields. India provided a lead to the nations of Indian Ocean to defend their maritime coast lines and the common sea beyond and ensure that the ocean is not policed and dominated by the unfriendly foreign powers and thereby ensure the security of their own maritime trade and the ships of other nations which come to trade and transit.

As India was evolving its views regarding an alternative to power vacuum myth in the Indian Ocean in the form of regional community cooperation, the Anglo-American thrust became predominant by 1967 which led the Soviet Union to jump into the arena in the following year. The super powers were attracted to do so primarily due to the fact that Indian Ocean offers an attractive prize to any power and with two power blocs having reached a stalemate in both the pacific and Atlantic oceans the one which acquires the control of the Indian Ocean region to the exclusion of other may be able to tilt the balance of power in its favour. The Americans
particularly began the develop their bases in the Indian Ocean area posing a serious threat to Littoral states particularly to India for she has to defend its coastal waters and Ocean territories such as the Andaman, Nicobars, Laccadives and Minocoy etc. Motivated to protect her interests in the region India deplored the arrival of the power game in the Indian Ocean and warmly accepted Sri Lanka’s view that weapon, attract weapons and that if the major power could be persuaded to pull out of the Indian Ocean, the root cause for the bases would vanish. Taking a long term view of the super power rivalry in the region, India observed that the interplay of the rivalries of the external powers or the disputes and quarrels among the Littoral states has always resulted in the establishment of colonialism of the people of the region. India has been making its opposition known in almost unequivocal terms through appropriate national and international forums without taking upon itself the responsibility of organising a concerted campaign by the Littoral States against the growing super rivalries in the Indian Ocean. India has been missing no opportunity of using relevant committees and the United States for decrying the super power rivalries in an area which the Littoral States want to treat as a zone of peace.

The consistant Indian support to the concept of peace zone in the Indian Ocean establishes India’s commitment to the purpose of holding conference on Indian Ocean wherein India hopefully envisaged to find an acceptable framework within which
consultations between the Littoral and hinterland states on the one hand and the great powers and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean on the other could be initiated and a process of constructive dialogue get in motion. Indian perspective of the concept of peace zone has hardly been influencing the attitude and activities of the big powers in the Indian Ocean region. India, knowing that it can not individually or collectively, prevent the United States or Soviet Union from coming in the Indian Ocean and adopted the policy of regional cooperation and negotiations amongst the regional powers and external powers.

The response and reaction of different nations to the idea of peace zone was determined by their interests in the Indian Ocean region. The American interests in the Indian Ocean emerged as a part of the Global strategy in the Post World War II period to contain the expansion of communism in the Afro-Asian region. With the passage of time it assumed different dimension, particularly politico-military. With the increasing interest American involvement in the region also increased leading to the establishment of a net-work of military bases and installations in the region. American involvement in the region has tremendously increased particularly after the fiasco of the policy of armed aggression in Vietnam. America hopes to browbeat the countries in the remaining part of the Afro-Asian region through an unwarranted military intrusion into an area which the resolution of 1971 of the UN General Assembly designed to declare
as the zone of peace and free from nuclear power presence. Coupled with the policy of arming the friends and allies in the region beyond their needs and capacity and the entente with China the Indian Ocean has become immensely significant not only for what it is but for what it would be a base for projecting influence into region.

The American Defence Department has been reported to urge, time and again, upon the need for a sizeable naval presence in West Asia including stationing of a strong fleet of warships in the Indian Ocean. To bolster American interest in the region Diego Garcia has been made into a full scale naval and air support facility. The Americans have also planned to undertake periodic flights of their war planes as demonstration of US support to their friends and allies in the region and to create a new Indian Ocean fleet based on the island of Diego Garcia. The Americans believe that the Diego Garcia base will enable them to exercise a far more effective control over the political and economic policies of South Asia, Middle Eastern and East African countries. This measure is designed to demonstrate, American resolve to protect oil-routes and stand by its allies.

American response to the concept of peace zone in the Indian Ocean region, during 1971, was primarily shaped by its increasing involvement in the region as a part of its global strategy. However the United States shared the desire of the
sponsors of the draft resolution to promote conditions of peace and tranquility in the region and in that connection to seek to avoid a competitive expansion of military strength on the part of the major powers but they rejected the view that a group of states in certain region can establish a legal regime for the high seas in that region. American policy further elaborated in an official document stating that the peaceful use of the Oceans requires treaty that will strengthen shared community rights in the Oceans including freedom of navigation. It should also provide a far-sighted legal regime on the use of Marine resources, the conduct of scientific research, protection of Marine environment and the peaceful resolution of oceanic disputes. The USA felt that the resolution adopted by the United Nations declaring the Indian Ocean to be a zone of peace may affect the fundamental security interests not only of states compelled to maintain significant security preparedness but also of States that rely on the stability created by a politico-Military balance.

By the year 1974, America developed a definite attitude towards Indian Ocean declaring that American interests in the region are directly linked with American interests in Europe and Asia and with the fundamental American interests in maintaining a stable world-wide balance of power. American envisaged its bases to be essential staging area for operations to be conducted
in areas remote from national shores. The American policy seems to be closely connected with its age-old oceanic concept which considers that the U.S. has a special right to exercise hegemony on the world's oceans. It appears that the America has a definite desire to control the political developments in the Indian Ocean region and to use them to the own advantage whenever necessary ignoring the desire and interests of the States of the Indian Ocean region.

By 1978, the possibility of America accepting the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace become very bleak but increasing international tensions and the fear of the Littoral States forced the Americans to consider an agreement with the Soviet Union regarding the future of the Indian Ocean region. But the talks remained inconclusive due to cold American response. The observers felt that the America had no intention to make any significant change in its Indian Ocean policy. The maximum that they could accept was a freeze on the naval presence of the external powers in the region at the existing level.

As far as the escalation in super power military deployments in the Indian Ocean region is concerned, the Americans believe that such deployments have declined perceptibly since the beginning of the eighties. They believe that the 'blue water' naval forces have not escalated after that. On the other hand
India is concerned about the qualitative change in such deployments reflected in the regular stationing of carrier battle groups in the Arabian Sea. There is a continuing growth in the super power infrastructural support facilities especially the prepositioning of equipment and weaponry at Diego Garcia for use by the U.S. rapid deployment forces which poses a direct threat to the security of India as most of Indian air-fields, parts, dockyards, communication networks infrastructure and military installations fall within the range of language aircraft like B-52 Bombers based at Diego Garcia and submarines plying over and under the surface of the Indian Ocean. India has been particularly concerned unlike the U.S.A., that a failure of global armies control efforts could open the way for various forms of new and destabilising military activity in the Indian Ocean by both super powers, including possible nuclear deployments.

The United States retains the option of submarine launched nuclear missiles deployments in the region. The deployment of these missiles will pose problems that are likely to aggravate nuclear anxieties in the Indian Ocean region as well as in other parts of the world. India's concern is that the present relative stability in super power conventional deployments could abruptly change in a climate of increasing tension jeopardising the security of the Indian Ocean region in particular and the world at large. The changes in military technology, the advent
of cruise missiles, anti-satellite weaponry, and space-based and operated anti-missile systems could make the Indian Ocean waterspread and the Littoral and hinterland states a theater of growing tension between the super powers marked by an expanding competitive search for facilities in the region. India believes that it would be desirable for super powers to give attention in some form to issues of specific concern to Indian Ocean region as part of their global arms control dialogue. At the same time when and if it is appropriate in the global context, the super powers should resume a separate dialogue on regionally-defined issues with an eye to the possibility of freeze and subsequent reduction of military deployments and facilities in the region.

India fears that the continuing instability in the region arising from interacting regional and extra-regional factors could lead the super powers into a direct confrontation, including the whole the Indian Ocean region. India in the background of the continuing India-Pakistan tension and the provision of advanced American military technology to Pakistan believes that the presence of a U.S. carrier battle group in Arabian Sea, together with U.S. base at Diego Garcia could lead to intelligence sharing with Pakistan in the event of an India-Pakistan war and the possibility to more direct forms of American intervention on the side of Pakistan. India is also concerned
about that the Saudi Arabia, China and other third party may transfer U.S. military technology and equipment to Pakistan and that American military sales to China could affect the India-China military balance, especially in the Indian Ocean.

India's policy towards the Indian Ocean has been shaped both by its concern for world peace and by the very vital considerations linked with its own interests. Geographically located as it is, its security, commerce and trade in all depend on preservation of peace and stability in the region. Along with other developing of economic and political interests, stability of allies and friends and prevention of seaward thrust of Soviet power. There is now more flexibility in the American attitude to cooperation; but at the same time America insists that the 1971 mandate of the Indian Ocean Peace zone must be changed; its main emphasis should no longer be on the elimination of foreign navies and installations, but rather a much more comprehensive concept should lead to a strengthening of elements of peace in the area. What is required according to American position is a code of conduct to which all the regional and extra-regional countries would adhere. There seems to be now more flexibility in the American attitude to cooperation; but at the same time America insists that the 1971 mandate of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone must be changed; its main emphasis should not be on the elimination of foreign navies and military installations, but rather a much more comprehensive concept should lead
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