CHAPTER V

THE U.S.A. AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

The U.S. Interests in the Indian Ocean Littoral:

The littoral region of the Indian Ocean has become the focus of a new Cold-war rivalry between the Two Super Powers. In this region there are conflicts in South-East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran-Iraq, West Asia, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. Arms are being pumped by the major arms suppliers of the world to countries in this region. The two super powers are engaged in obtaining more and more facilities for their forces in this region. The Geographical position of the Indian Ocean is such that the Power which is able to control the Suez Canal, the Malacca, and Indonesian Straits can Exercise significant control over the Indian Ocean. The physical configuration of the Ocean is such that it can be used for strategic weapon deployment against the U.S. which is in an altogether different hemisphere. With this in mind, the strategic importance of the ocean was enhanced for a Super Power in the 1960's after nuclear missile submarines became a major component of their weapon-systems along with the long-range bomber. This strategic significance became even more acute after the 1973 oil embargo against the West and the onset of the world Energy crisis.
The U.S. Strategic interests in this region have gone through a significant qualitative change during the last two decades. "Earlier, during the first and the second phase of the Cold War confrontation, which was based upon the weapon system demanding control of the land frontier and the air-space, the littoral was the peak-head against the land-mass of the Eastern block, since 1964, with the introduction of the Polaris submarine, the littoral became a base to control the sea end to preserve the American Naval Supremacy in the Indian Ocean".  

In these early phases of the cold war, the U.S. had used the strategy of intervening in the Indian Ocean littoral in collaboration with the local elite. When in Iran Mossadegh nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and Iranian nationalism began to assert itself, the U.S. through the Shah of Iran put it down to ensure that oil to the western industrial countries flowed uninterrupted. Consequently, till 1979 when the Shah was overthrown, Iranian oil was pumped for the benefit of the industrial west. After Mossadegh's overthrow, the United States forged the Baghdad pact and subsequently, Central Treaty in South West Asia, and the SEATO in South East Asia. Along with these military alliances, arms transfers started to alliance members among the littoral countries, such as Iran and Palestine. It was

in this period that the U.S. started periodic naval exercise in the Indian Ocean.

The United States was adopting these methods with a definite objective of denying the U.S.S.R. an opportunity to establish its presence in areas from where the land-based defence system could be out-flanked. That is why at that time there was much anxiety in the United States about the growing Soviet influence in India, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Indonesia. But by the middle of 1970's such anxiety had given place to mild irritation. A detente had started developing between the U.S.S.R. and the CENTO countries, but the U.S. was not acutely perturbed. The U.S. was countering on its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. For this also the U.S. was not depending on countries like Iran, Pakistan and Ethiopia. Though it continued to maintain interests in them, the U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean was not based on the support of these local states. An alternate system had been evolved in collaboration with Britain and Australia, to maintain an independent naval presence upon the Island bases in the Indian Ocean. This alternate system did not mean an abandonment of United States interests in the region. In fact, the U.S.A. was committed strongly both in the political and economic sense, to leave this area to the U.S.S.R. Not only were there a number of pro-U.S. States in need of U.S. protection but the oil interests were also there. Therefore a new policy was designed to protect the U.S. regional interests without any direct commitment on the
part of the U.S.A. This policy centred around a new alliance, the Regional Cooperation for Development.

The Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) was established in July 1964, and its emphasis was upon economic cooperation rather than military collaboration. This was a tripartite arrangement between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan and its objective was to pool the resources of the three countries, under the regional economic development programme, for creating greater solidarity among its members.²

But instead of creating a regional understanding, the RCD isolated itself from other countries of the region, particularly creating a division of the West-Asian countries into Arab and non-Arab blocs.

The U.S. need for the West-Asian and Gulf Oil is vital and undisputed and is likely to continue according to the U.S. estimates, by 1985 the United States will get 35 percent of its oil imports from the Persian Gulf, Western Europe 62 percent and Japan 73 percent.³ In other words of the 20 million barrels daily (MBD)

oil produced in the Gulf region. The OECD Countries import 14.6 MBD. For the Gulf countries, in 1980 the production figures were as follows: Saudi Arabia 9.5 MBD, Iran 3 MBD, Kuwait 2.3 MBD, UAE 3 MBD and Oman 0.3 MBD. The U.S. apprehensions and fears in respect of availability of oil from the Persian Gulf Countries relate to the possibility of stoppage of oil flow consequent to internal developments, such as in Iran after the overthrow of the Shah. The U.S. feels that while it would be easy to handle one crisis at a time (as during the period of decline in Iranian Oil Production during the anti-Shah revolution and then the Iran-Iraq war), it would be utterly devastating if the oil supply from Saudi Arabia is suspended. Therefore the main focus of the U.S. attention is Saudi Arabia and the developments in the Gulf which may have some impact on Saudi Arabia. Besides oil the U.S. has vital trade interests in the Indian Ocean littoral which in 1977 was worth Fourty (40) billion dollars as against Sixty-one billion dollars with western Europe and Twenty-nine billion dollars with Japan. Trade with the Persian Gulf alone was 20.6 billion dollars and half of this was with Saudi Arabia. Apart from the trade most of the surplus Petro-dollars of the Gulf countries to the time of something like

4. Ibid., pp. 233-137.
80 billion dollars are invested in the Western and the U.S. banks. It is for these reasons that this region is of vital interests for the United States. The Western Strategic analysis makes no secret of the fact that if even the Rapid Deployment Force is to be used, the most likely target is to be Saudi Arabian Oil Fields and Complexes: Ab-qaiq, Dammam, Chawar, Qatif and Berri Ras Tanura, Juaymeh, Dharan and Hormuz. Whether such a move will ensure the U.S. interests in another matter. What is significant is that the United States policy makers were prepared to go to this extent to ensure what they consider the vital interests of the United States.

In a very interesting study on the West Asian region, the U.S. commission on U.S. - Soviet Relations points out: "the Persian Gulf area in the present circumstances have the highest priority among our regional concerns. This region's strategic importance to the West is obvious; it is one of the perversities of our time that an area so crucial to the Western survival should be geographically so close to the U.S.S.R. (the Soviets have no comparable dependence on any area similarly located near the U.S.). The Gulf is and will remain the primary supplier of energy which the industrialised nations so closely associated with the needs of the United States in order to function. Internal conflicts and cross currents also make the region a cause

6. Adelphi paper 166, op.cit.
of worry for the Soviets - as well as vulnerable to their intrusion. As a result in the commission's view, the Soviet Union has the following objectives in the area: "to establish influence for its own sake, to prevent a renewed western military presence to acquire the potential capacity to deny, constrict or control western access to the area's energy; and to assure Soviet access if or when it comes to have major energy needs".  

It is against any such "strangulation of the Industrialized Economic" that President Carter spelt out the nature of U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean area. An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. And such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force. It is these "wells of power" that are of primary U.S. concern.

For the United States interest and involvement in this region, a novel but interesting argument is also given: "The Economic and political weakness of the United States is reflected


curiously enough in many arms deals with countries ranging geographically from Morocco to Pakistan. It is hard for the opponents of the arms sales to counter the argument that were it not for such transactions the American balance of payment deficit not to mention unemployment figures would be totally unacceptable. In other words, the United States is keeping its Economy limping along with the crutch of foreign currency earnings from weapons sales. The face saving argument put up by those who benefit from the prosligate spreading of advanced armaments through out a volatile region is that this in turn given the U.S. control over the military and even political strategies of recepient countries, for, in the absence of U.S. back up support protracted military operations are impossible.  

As far as Africa is concerned, the United States did not have big states in the African littoral of Indian Ocean in the beginning and as late as the beginning of the 60's. It was considered a low priority area. "The U.S. had thus far failed to develop any over all policy which would compare in breadth and dynamism with those it had devised in other parts of the world. Africa had been regarded in Washington as essentially a responsibility of the European powers, to whom the United States might give advice on occasions but whom it could not and did not wish

At this time the assistance programme was also not much, whatever was there, was given mostly to Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia. It was with the Kennedy Era that the U.S. realised "the verdict of history in Africa, it is not yet fully spelled out is unmistakable and irrevocable. The old colonial Era is dead, and with it the old power relationship by which the world was formerly shaped".  

With the beginning of 1960's the North-Eastern Africa, known as the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya become involved in conflicts and by the middle of the 1960's the Southern African region had also become a crisis area. The factors having an explosive effect included the Rhodesian crisis. The policy of Apartheid, National Liberation movement, the Socialist Government in Tanzania and its close relations with China.

The United States started its African involvement in the context of the cold war. The U.S. Ethiopian relations provided the U.S. not only a footfold in the continent but also the


Kegnew communications base on important position among the U.S. military communications from the Philippines to Morocco. This relationship continued and by 1977 Ethiopia was receiving 285 million dollars.¹³

With the development of these crucial situation South Africa assumed an important role in the United States diplomacy. It controls approaches to the western Indian Ocean through the South Atlantic Ocean. The strategic advantages of South Africa for the United States were recognized as useful by the United States. "In scientific Economic and strategic respects our bilateral relationship with South Africa is useful to us - even in some fields important".¹⁴

Particularly after the closure of the Suez Canal the Sea-route via Cape of Good Hope became strategically important for the United States. In the whole of sub-saharan Africa, harbour facilities for major naval vessels were available only in South Africa;¹⁵ further South Africa definitely the most powerful local states in the region according to numerous

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15. Ibid., p. 108.
unconfirmed reports already a nuclear power. Naturally it is of vital interest for the United States.

After 1965 the United States position in the South Asia was not enviable. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and the consequent Tashkent Agreement were responsible for the downgrading of the U.S. influence, and ascendency of the Soviet. The United States image suffered another setback after the futile "title" in the December 1971 war. With this the U.S. not only alienated India further but also lost face territorial integrity of Pakistan, under the terms of March 1959, bilateral agreement, the U.S. support was far less than what the Pakistan had expected. With this an inference may be drawn that the United States can try to intimate Indian Ocean littoral through Gun-Boat diplomacy, Ala Enterprise in December 1971 but at the same time such in December 1971 but at the same time such an intervention would be ineffective if the littoral States become determined to oppose such a move. In the wake of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan the Strategic importance for Pakistan increased manifold. "Pakistan is a friendly independent developing country and an important strategic location. It is in a position to exert constructive leadership among an important group of nations....

The Government of India has taken strong exception to our new security relationship with Pakistan, arguing that military equipment sales to Pakistan will upset the power balance in South
Asia and pose a security threat to India with whom Pakistan had fought three wars. We emphatically disagree. It is the Soviet Union by its Invasion of Afghanistan which had upset the Power Equation in this region. Moreover, India has an overwhelming military superiority in South Asia and the arms assistance which we will provide to Pakistan will not alter this situation significantly.

There are few who doubt that developments in Iran and Afghanistan have fundamentally altered the strategic situation in this region. It is our common view that the dangers to this country have been increased by developments since 1979. Soviet actions in Afghanistan have turned Pakistan in the popular phrase, into a "front-line" State. I must stress my conviction that Pakistan will find the United States a reliable and supportive friend when it comes to dealing with threats which may emanate from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. 16

About the Indian Ocean littoral as a whole, it may be said that the U.S. involvement has not brought any extra advantages on land but U.S. has been able to spread its influence in the Ocean. The U.S.A. has not only the base facilities in Pakistan, South Africa and Chain of British Islands bases in the

Indian Ocean, besides bases in Diego Garcia, Bahrain, Australia and Saudi Arabia. All the facilities and bases are intercon­
tected not only for the strategic interests but also for the interventionists capability of the United States of America.

**United States Perceptions of Threats to its interests in the Indian Ocean:**

United States believes that the threats to its national interest could be from within and outside the region. These threats could originate from the local conflicts or from Soviet action alternatively there may be a combination of the two. But the fact is that any real threat to the U.S. interest could come when the local conflicts or intra-regional conflicts get mixed up with any Soviet action. Without such Soviet action, local conflicts or threats may be injurious to the United States interests but no such scenario is possible just now in which they pose a direct and grave threat to the interest of the United States.

It is in the United States' interest to preserve and improve, wherever possible a local balance of power in the Geo-political terms that would reduce the risk of any direct Super Power confrontation. 17 This task of preservation and improvement of such a balance would have to be related to such

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geographical facts as are part of the Indian Ocean region and are connected with the question of the security of oil resources and sea lanes.

It is an unpleasant geographical fact for the United States that the U.S.S.R. is contiguous to the chain of State on the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is an established and proved fact that massive Soviet military power based on internal lines of communications and supply can be projected directly into the littoral of the Gulf or Arabian sea. Such a potential capability has always existed for the Soviet forces. But, after 1970's these capabilities have vastly improved as far as ground assault and air defence equipment are concerned. These ground assault capabilities have been augmented by an impressive airlift and airborne assault capability. All the latter has considerably reduced the warning time available to the United States and allies, affecting adversely their responses. In the region, Soviet military bases, in Yemen, Ethiopia and Vietnam, are situated strategically on maritime choke points and Soviet "blue naval forces" are capable of considerable harassment in support of the Soviet naval operations in the Indian Ocean.

These are not just theoretical scenarios, but are hard facts based on experience of Soviet actions. The danger to the
U.S. interests through these Soviet forces is illustrated by Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and their long range air lifted and sea lifted intervention in the Horn of Africa in 1977-78. This African incident in which Cuban forces were also involved, reversed the military fortune of Ethiopia and Somalia. Along the red sea and the Horn of Africa, the possibility of any sudden large scale Soviet military action had become an established fact and the U.S. faced with the most direct threat to its interests in the region.

In this way the Soviet Union has consolidated its military position along the northern Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea near the Hormuz Strait. This may jeopardise the International Oil delivery destinations making them hostage to Soviet wishes and threatening the interest of those countries which are greatly dependent on the West-Asian oil for their overall industrial capacity. A direct Soviet occupation of Gulf Oil may not be unconceivable but a consolidated Soviet presence in the region would definitely provide to the Soviets a political control over oil. It may be mentioned that this is only a war scenario because in peace time there is no need for the Soviet Union to destroy Gulf Oil facilities. In fact control over them would far more useful and this is what the United States fears.

Philip Wilcox, U.S. Department of State, pointed out that that the Soviet Union has an immense military force which could
be made available at a moment's notice within the Indian Ocean region vastly greater than what is at the disposal of the West. The listed not only the 1,00,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan but also 3,50,000 troops "employed in the Southern military district of the U.S.S.R. He mentioned that within some 4,000 km. of the strait of Hormuz between Oman and Iran are 40 tank motorized and air borne divisions, some 8,000 tanks, 1400 armoured vehicles, 100 long range bombers, 700 air defence fighters, 200 transport aircrafts and medium range and intercontinental range nuclear missiles. There is a feeling in the United States that the deduction of naval forces in the area would only increase the preponderence of land forces, the Soviets have in South of Soviet Union and Afghanistan, that is the reason they could afford to champion their idea of Indian Ocean as a zone of peace which the United States perceives against its interests.

There are two forms of U.S. perceptions of a plausible threat to its interest. First that a Soviet perception of a possible geopolitical game in achieving political control, over the oil life time of the West would make a territorial enchroachment also highly tempting. This the Soviets could do if the risk can be skilfully because of political considerations such as the weaknesses of some buffer states in the region.

As far as U.S. geopolitical interests in this region are concerned, they got adversely affected by the continued affects of the revolution in Iran and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. This was an abrupt deterioration in the regional geopolitical balance of Power. To compensate for this a military response on the part of the U.S. was not only required but also imperative. From the point of view of vulnerability of Gulf Oil the Iranian developments were crucial. But the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also demonstrated the Intentions and capabilities of the U.S.S.R. Hence the rapid Deployment Forces was perceived as a counter to this threat in the region. This force is intended to any direct Soviet moves against the Gulf States and to provide a measure of deterrence to those States, which are friendly to the United States against any such Soviet designs.

The United States does come to realize that: without secure alliances and due to internal weaknesses and instabilities of the region, the protection of United States interest require the availability of military forces. These forces must be able to swiftly reach the area from considerable distances and be able to once they arrive. According to a U.S. Study the United States should:
Seek to preserve local political and military balances by impeding either the emergence of a dominant regional power or the control of any major regional country by a Soviet-Client region. (As a general matter however, it must be recognised that U.S. ability directly to influence developments within a region may be limited when they stem from events like, for example the Iraq-Iran war).

Fashion de facto security relationships with friendly states in the region against external aggression while being sensitive to the needs for their maintaining domestic support.

Build a regional infrastructure of military facilities and stocks of equipments and obtain accessive rights to sustain rapidly deployable (and perhaps stationed) forces to meet a wide range of military contingencies, short of large-scale land warfare —

Commit itself to keep open the sea lanes to and from the Persian Gulf and take visible steps to this end. To give the substance to such postures, the commission recommends that U.S. should proceed with the development of forces deployable
overseas, including Rapid Deployment Forces, and building the required Infrastructure (as already noted above in the context of the Persian Gulf). This will require generating the necessary congressional and public understanding of the purposes and limitations of these forces —

Maintain the opinion of arms transfers and other kinds of military and police support (e.g. training) where it is in our interest to contribute to internal security and to preserve local and regional security balances —

Make clear to the Soviets that the United States is prepared to consider restraints on competitive arms transfers to local adversaries provided there is a strict reciprocity and enforcement". 19

U.S. Armed Presence in the Indian Ocean:

Right after the second World War the United States had started vigorous efforts to build up its military presence in the Indian Ocean. The United States navy had started procuring

bases as early as 1948. It based its Middle East Force in Bahrain as a guest of the British navy at that time, and this force consisted of two destroyers and commandship, a converted sea-plane lender. In 1971 the United States signed an agreement with Bahrain to use the former British naval base for its Middle East Fleet. 20

It was explained that the base was needed to manifest U.S. interests in the Area. A small task force at the time, provided a constant show of United States flag in the Arabian Sea and the Western Indian Ocean. Bahrain has welcomed the U.S. base as a protection against the Soviet presence which was growing in the region.

This agreement was kept a secret sometime, because Bahrain was apprehensive of Arab reaction against leasing the only base in the Gulf. In 1973, Bahrain unilaterally asked the United States to withdraw the base, which was done in June 1977, but from November 1979, United States got there harbour facilities for its warships. 21

21. Ibid., p. 137.
With the cooperation given by Oman, the United States was able to sustain its permanent naval presence in the region. The United States got from Oman the Island of Masirah and this paved the way to the stationing of Gulf strike force of the United States multiservice Rapid Deployment Force.

In the Gulf of Aden itself, close to the Island of Socotra is the U.S. Somali Port of Berbera. The runway at this base has been modernized to cope with the B-52 strategic bombers with nuclear weapons. This is in addition to similar facilities in the port of Matra, Salalah and the Island of Masirah.

It was at around the same time that the United States had developed the Polaris A-3 missile with a range of 2500 nautical miles, and had commissioned the very low frequency communication station in the North-West Cape of Australia (1967). With these development it became possible for the United States to attack the southern U.S.S.R. by its missiles launched from sub-marines stationed in the Indian Ocean.

In a report "United States Foreign policy objectives and overseas military installations" prepared by the congressional research service for U.S. senate committee on Foreign Relations in 1979, it has been stated: "The United States had both
conventional and perhaps a strategic nuclear military interest in the Indian Ocean region. Military objectives for U.S. conventional forces include the capability to

i) Protect the U.S. Economic interests in the Persian Gulf region.

ii) employ or threaten force in support of U.S. diplomatic objectives in the Middle East.

iii) secure the Indian Ocean air and sea routes against harassment of protection.

iv) intervene in support of other objectives in the littoral, and related to all of these.

v) balance Soviet forces in the region and attain superiority in a crisis. The United States also possesses a potential strategic nuclear military objective of deploying when necessary or convenient, ballistic missile submarines targeted on the U.S.S.R.22

This report points out that the objective of deployment of submarine based Nuclear Missiles targeted against the U.S.S.R is seldom discussed by the U.S. officials and, in fact, the official public position of the U.S. Government is that the Navy does not regularly operate these submarines in the Indian Ocean. "Nevertheless, there is a widespread belief that the U.S. uses the Indian Ocean for SSBN Patrols. With the development of Trident I Missile system the Soviet Union will become even more vulnerable to SSBN deployed in the Indian Ocean". 23

In the strategic competition between the Super powers for the capability in the Indian Ocean, the United States appears far ahead of the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. is severely handicapped in the sense that it has no bases in the Indian Ocean, whereas the U.S. has. The fact that the U.S.S.R. has no bases but only accesses to local facilities in the Indian Ocean also stands out in U.S. assessment of Soviet facilities at Socotra. The advantages enjoyed by the U.S. in local facilities are unbeatable. The U.S. has the U.S. Air Force Satellite tracking Station at Mahe also serves as a communication link between Diego Garcia and other U.S. bases. Among the notable features of the Diego Garcia base are a highly classified intelligence and communications

facility a 12000 ft. run away capable of taking in big nuclear bombers, a large natural harbour which is protected on three sides fuel storage, capacity of 380,000 barrels of aviation fuel oil for ships, and anchorage and 500 ft borthing for loading and unloading fuel. 24

The North West Cape communication station in Australia forms part of the U.S. Global command and control network to operate nuclear submarines. 25 In 1981, the U.S. acquired access to facilities in Berbera in Somalia in exchange for arms and worth 40 million dollars; 26 and to the former British base in Masirah off Coast of Oman. 27 There are reports indicating broader access to facilities in Pakistan. 28 And the U.S. reconnaissance aircraft make use of landing rights at Mombasa in Kenya and Singapore in their patrol flights to track ships and submarines.

The U.S. naval strength in the Indian Ocean ostensibly increased as a counter to the growing Soviet naval presence.

25. Ibid., pp. 90 and 97.
This not only made the U.S. strategically superior to the U.S.S.R. but enabled her to deploy if and where necessary, its conventional naval power as an interventionist force in the region. The entry of the U.S. task force led by nuclear aircraft carrier, Enterprise into the Indian Ocean in December 1971, marked a new phase of the U.S. naval strategy as an interventionist role was also acquired. This policy of Gunboat diplomacy was again demonstrated at the time of Arab-Israel War of October 1973. This conflict demonstrated the "vital necessity of having a demonstrable U.S. capability in the Indian Ocean - Persian Gulf area was so sharply brought home. It was a classic case where the fact that the U.S. had a presence in the area, and was seen by all to have it there made it highly unlikely that it would ever have to be used. In short it played the traditional role which military power should play that of supporting diplomatic initiatives.\textsuperscript{29}

Essentially the United States armed response to the Soviet threat revolves around (i) Rapid Deployment Force and (ii) Security guarantee and assistance for threatened countries such as

\textsuperscript{29} Semour Weiss, "U.S. Interests and Activities in the Indian Ocean Area", \textit{Department of State Bulletin,} 70 (1815), 8 April 1974, pp. 371-75.
Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

The RDF response largely consists of establishing and integrating a new command structure of U.S. Forces for long distance emergency response. This is intended for a rapid projection of forces in a regional emergency. This force was under consideration since 1975, but President Carter on October 1, 1979 announced its formation, consisting of 50,300 troops on three aircraft carrier, tactical fighterships 82nd and 101st Airborne Division and one mechanised Infantry Brigade. The area of concern are the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

It is widely held that the real target for the RDF is Saudi Arabian Oil field. Four on shore oil fields - Abqaiq, Dammam, Chawar and Qatif, and one offshore at Berri - are within 10,000 sq. miles - will cover the United States needs. It will also be necessary to secure the Ras Tanura and JUAYMEH complexes the Dammam port and the Dharan air base and Hormuz straita. This could be easily done by the RDF, because it is sparcely populated area easily monitored and patrolled from air.

All this is not something new. In fact even in 1971; the United States was thinking on similar lines when the RDF was

30. K. Subramanyam, in his Lecture on Indian Ocean at The Department of Political Science, AMU Aligarh, on March 26, 1983.
not heard of, at that time the U.S.S.R proposed limiting the naval forces of the super powers in the Indian Ocean. The United States did not agree to it because their planning had started for improving the Diego Garcia base. It was pointed out that "we are not in arm race with the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean area, and our requirements for a facility at Diego Garcia are related to an entire spectrum of U.S. interest and considerations only one half of which bears on the level of Soviet deployments there. Such arrangements as might be possible to agree to with the Soviet Union concerning the levels of our respective naval forces in the area are unlikely to be inhibited by our having a capability to deploy forces in the area; in fact, precisely the contrary would be true. We seek nothing more than an ability to stage forces in the area similar to the ability the Soviet Union presently has by using port facilities at Berbera in Somalia and at Aden plus the anchorages they routinely use off the Island of Socotra. Our capacity to deploy in no way prejudices future agreements on levels of forces to be deployed. Thus, while we remain open to the constructive possibilities of an arms control arrangement bearing on specific deployment levels in the area, we see the reason to believe that such an agreement would prelude the need for the capability which Diego Garcia would provide."

31. Seymour Weiss, _op.cit._, p. 375.
Diego Garcia Base:

In November 1965 the British Government announced the formation of a new crown colony, designated as a British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). Previously it consisted of four separate Islands groups scattered over the Western and Central sectors of the Ocean, detached from the previous governing authority. Mauritius added Chagos Archipelago including the Diego Garcia Seychelles gave the three Islands of Aldabra, Deschorces and Farquhar, but, in 1976 Britain returned them to the control of a new Republic. Since then BIOT has been basically limited to Diego Garcia only.

United States got the base of Diego Garcia in 1972. The rivalry between the two Super Powers was becoming more prominent against the background of a progressive destabilization of the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa, facilities for United States Navy and Air Force, were constructed. Originally, the activities at Diego Garcia were very limited. It was only a communication site, but, gradually there was a rapid increase in the activities and by the middle of 1970s, it had become America's primary naval airbase in the Indian Ocean.

Including the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea the Island has become extremely important for the implementation of military
power throughout all sectors of Indian Ocean. The American warship fleets, patrolling the waters are provided with dock facilities. The air strips are also no less important from the point they provide an opportunity for landing and refueling to the much needed planes fighting from U.S. Pacific base to various destinations in the ocean and as far away as the middle East. Approximately four hundred million dollars are being spent on the construction programme to strengthen the airfield to allow B-523 to land on a regular basis. U.S.A. is taking every precaution to meet the crisis in this part of the world by storing tons of military equipments abroad, seven prepositioned merchant ships docked in the lagoon given to a U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces.

As far as the geographical situation of Diego Garcia is concerned its isolation is striking of the six atolls of Chagos Archipelago, it the Southern most located 3400 miles from the Cape of Good Hope, 2600 miles from North-Western Cape of Australia and 2200 miles from the U.S. coast it covers a Sea voyage of more than 10,000 miles, the nearest neighbours being Maldives in India 1000 miles away. The natural features of Diego Garcia include a deep water sheltered lagoon located in the centre of the Island, which is approximately 15 long and four-eight miles broad.

As early as 1965 British and the U.S.A. had started the negotiations a U.S. Base in Diego Garcia. Britain guaranteed to U.S. a 50 years back from a base on the Island in December 1969. At that time the objective of the U.S. policy was the same as it develop later on i.e. "not a sudden reactive response by the United States to the possible Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean but a culmination of the U.S. efforts to meet a naval communications requirements dating back to the early 1960's.

Another British U.S. agreement was concluded on October 24, 1972, specifically dedicating Diego Garcia to their joint military use. By this U.S. was authorised to develop a limited naval communication facility to provide a link in defence communications, furnishing improved communications support in the Indian Ocean for ships and air crafts. According to this agreement the U.S. use of Diego Garcia was to continue "for the duration of the BIOT colony of until such time as no port of Diego Garcia is any longer required for the purposes of the facility which ever occurs fast. By the mid 1970's the United States was feeling that the Diego

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35. *Treaties and other International Agreement series*, No. 7481 U.S. Department of State, Article 1(a) & 2.
Garcia facilities were in need of upgradation to support the navy and the air force in their respective missions in the Indian Ocean and with this in view the British Government was required for authorization to begin a series of construction programme to design to transform the Islands and into "a support facility of the U.S. Navy". The agreements authorising such changes were signed on February 29, 1976. There is a significant provision under this agreement where by the two states are periodically concerned on their joint objectives and policies in the Indian Ocean.

If before this agreement the emphasis was on developing a communication base after it the emphasis shifted to the construction of a large fuel dumps, improvements in harbour facilities, improvement on air strips and accommodation facilities for a large number of people, this was designed to make Diego Garcia function as a base for U.S. submarines conventional Task Forces, a staging port for heavy transport planes and a base for range Bomber operations. In 1981 the United States Air Force started works on Thirty-nine million dollar construction. For the

37. Joel Larus, op.cit., p. 47.
38. Treaties and other International agreements series, No. 8230, U.S. Department of State.
39. Ibid., Article 3.
extension of facilities for B-52 Bombers. Then it would be possible for these bomber planes flying out of the U.S. base at Guam, to land and refuel at Diego Garcia before continuing on their mission. In this way Diego Garcia would become a new jumping from which the United States can project its interventionist capability at any point in the Indian Ocean area. Because of its geographical factors (—small size and remoteness—), Diego Garcia cannot be compared to the United States base at Guam but it is an all purpose home port base of facility.

After the development of oil these facilitates American capabilities in the region would increase. It is for the protection of the naval and communication base at Diego Garcia that the U.S. has assembled the members reconnaissance and the anti-submarine aircrafts. This would provide safety for the nuclear submarine stationed at the around Diego Garcia protection from possible counter measures would increase the U.S. conventional capabilities and the latter may be then used for the Gun-boat diplomacy in the region, the net result would be an American supremacy over the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean.

With the U.S. policy circles there have been differing stands regarding the necessity of the United States presence in through the Diego Garcia base. From the very beginning there was
a considerable opposition within the U.S. congress to the request of the Administration for building this base. Those who opposed the base termed it as "an extension of a policy of the United States trying to be policeman of the world, a stepping stone to a three ocean Navy". 40

Many unanswered questions were raised among the policy circles at this time.

"Why have the Soviets in the past six years gradually expanded their naval presence in the Indian Ocean and why do they now seem intent on establishing a support facility in Somalia? Is their purpose merely to extend their geopolitical influence into the Indian Ocean by showing the flag in much the same manner that Western nations here have been doing for decades or do they have a more sinister motive of interdicting the crucial sea-lanes leading out of the Persian Gulf? But are the Soviets really likely to take the risk of attacking Western shipping when the price may be an all out nuclear war? Cannot the U.S. already project naval power in the Indian Ocean if it wants? By constructing a base at Diego Garcia, is not the United States contributing to a super power naval race in the Indian Ocean, which may or may not have been started by the Russians". 41

On the other hand, are some stands that border on being ridiculous. Some U.S. spokesmen have been denied the right of littoral states even to question the U.S. presence in the area. For instance Daniel P. Moynihan, which questioning the very name of the Indian Ocean (Why call it the Indian Ocean? One may well call it Madagascar Sea"), pointed out that Diego Garcia was 1600 kmts. away from Indian and there was nothing of fundamental concern for Indians there and that the Global strategy of U.S.A. required a base on that Island, notwithstanding what friendly countries might feel about it.

The 'forward base' concept of the U.S. strategy necessitated the building up of over 60 naval bases in different countries, including one of the biggest at Diego Garcia. No doubt, under normal conditions, there may be no need to permanently base ships and naval forces there. But the inherent mobility of maritime forces enable them to be brought to this base within a matter of days. Diego Garcia is capable of meeting all the needs to enable sustained operation in the Indian Ocean. The objective of deployment of nuclear missile submarines, targeted against the Soviet Union from the Indian Ocean, is seldom discussed by the U.S. and, in fact, the official position of the U.S. government is that the U.S. Navy does not regularly operate

42. The Hindustan Times, March 5, 1974.
nuclear submarines in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, it is believed that the U.S. uses the Indian Ocean for this purpose, because with the development of the Trident-I missile system, and its deployment in the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union will become vulnerable.\footnote{Congressional Research Service, \textit{U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives and Overseas Military Installations} (Washington, D.C., 1979).}