CHAPTER I

THE INDIAN OCEAN - A ZONE OF CONFLICT

Indian Ocean became a hot bed of rivalry during the cold war between the East and West. On the one hand U.S.A. and its Western allies ventured to retain and consolidate their presence in diverse parts of the region. On the other hand the Soviet Union with its allies were attempted to liquidate the Western influence from the region. The Indian Ocean region provided a stage for U.S.A and U.S.S.R. to pursue their rivalries. To put it tersely the Indian Ocean became a zone of conflict. In order to understand the complexities and dimension of conflicts in the Indian Ocean region in a perspective this chapter will attempt to provide the necessary background.

The sequence of this chapter can be underlined as follows: The chapter will begin by describing the geography as well as the resources of this region. On the basis of this it will highlight the geo-political significance of the diverse parts of the region. Further it would take a detail tour of U.S. policy in the region especially since the withdrawal of the British Navy from the East of the Suez in 1971. To apprise the U.S. policy in a critical perspective it would also devote space towards the understanding of U.S.S.R’s changing attitudes towards the Indian Ocean region primarily during the Brezhnev period (1964-1982).
The Indian Ocean Region - in a geo-political perspective:

The Indian Ocean is geographically the third largest ocean in the world next to the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans respectively. This expanse of water covers an area of 75 million square kilometers on the surface of the globe. A continuous coastline provided by the countries of Africa, Asia and Australia makes the Indian Ocean a huge bay. The unbroken stretch of land from the east to the west with minor irregularities makes it an unified geographic zone. In its Southern stretch the Indian Ocean meets the Antarctic Ocean at latitude 60° ‘O’ s beyond the Tropic of Capricorn.\(^1\)

According to the UN Document A/AC 159/1, 1974, the Eastern stretch of the Indian Ocean extends upto 147°0’E and meet the Pacific Ocean. Stretching from the South Eastern Cape of Tasmania; the Western exit of the Bass Strait, from the median line between the North-West of Australia, the Malay strait upto Sumatra. The Western frontiers of the Indian Ocean begins at meridian 20° O’E at the Cape of Agulhas.\(^2\)

The entry points to this vast stretch of water is possible through the various straits located at its western and eastern frontiers. The major openings are the Suez canal, Bab-el-Mandeb strait, the Cape of Good Hope in the west and the Malacca strait in the East and to a lesser extent the Sunda strait in the Indonesian archipelago. The straits handle one-third of the international maritime traffic. An annual estimate of 30,000 ships including 1,500 tankers operate on these sea-routes.
About one third of the international air-routes also lie across the Indian Ocean.\(^3\)

The Indian Ocean region comprises of one-third of the states in the world and one-third of the world's population. It is one of the richest natural resource zones in terms of oil and mineral wealth. The Persian Gulf region for example produces 2.6 million barrels of oil daily. The Gulf region supplies about 70% of the oil to the western countries. Around 57% of the world oil trade passes through the Straits of Hormuz at the rate of one ship every 11 minutes. Dwindling oil reserves of the world and lack of a substantial alternative oil energy source makes this region one of great importance for all oil dependent states.\(^4\)

The Indian Ocean Region is not only rich in oil but in other mineral resources and marine products as well. Some of the minerals that can be listed are tin includes 70% of the world reserve, 28% of manganese; 32% chromium; 25% iron ore; 12.5% of lead; 11.5% nickel; 67% of zinc; 30% antimony; 34% bauxite; 31% of diamonds; apart the world's largest known deposits of thorium and titanium. The unexplored sea-beds have large deposits of minerals such as manganese, nickel, copper, cobalt and molybdenum. The warm tropical waters are also a major preserve of marine life as well.\(^5\)

One-twelfth of its population live with a per-capita annual income of about 1000 U.S. dollars.\(^6\) With the help of these general salient features,
we shall proceed to locate different states of the region in the context of the main sub regions of the Indian Ocean region.

For analytical convenience as well as to build a better understanding, this study has been bifurcated into five major sub regions or zones. The sub-regional groupings are based on the geographical proximity of the member states in each group. The sub-regions beginning from the Western Indian Ocean region to the eastern region may be described as follows:

*South Eastern African Coast line and the islands of the Western Indian Ocean:* The states of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uganda belong to this sub-region. The islands of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles are the major islands of the Western Indian Ocean. Moving north along the east African coastline the second sub region of the Indian Ocean comprises of the countries in the *Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Countries.* The main states in this sub-region are Egypt, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Israel, Jordan Somalia, Sudan, North Yemen and South Yemen. The third region comprises of the states of *South West Asia including the Persian Gulf and the Arabian peninsula.* The states included in this sub-regional group are Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). *The Fourth sub-region i.e. South Asian sub-region* includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The fifth zone that completes the Indian Ocean ‘arc’ is *South East Asia and Australia.*
It includes the states of Burma Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Australia\(^n\). Physiographically the Indian Ocean region appears like a complete, unbroken unit. The states in this region are divided by constant clash of interests. Moreover ethnic, religious and cultural diversities coupled with sub regional or regional power struggles have persistently posed fresh Security dilemmas in the political process of the region. What is more the power struggles within the region have invariably involved extra regional powers as well. To understand the complex political processes of the region it would be worthwhile to underscore the major diversities and similarities among these states. To begin with we can illustrate the diversities in various spheres in the following manner.

**Religious and Cultural Diversity :**

The predominant religion and culture of the region has been Islamic. This one religious culture stretches from the entire north western part of the Indian Ocean region. This part includes the states of the Arabian Peninsula in North East Africa, Iran and Pakistan. Towards the east the same cultural influence continues in Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh. Even within the same religion there are examples of schisms such as between the Shia and the Sunni in the Gulf. Ideological differences also exist between the so called Islamic fundamentalism and the forces of secularism and modernisation.
Another dominant religion in the region, particularly in India is Hinduism. Traces of this religion can be seen in Bali and other Indian Ocean diaspora. The people of Hindu origin are also found in Malaysia, Singapore, East and South Africa, Mauritius and Seychelles. The third ethno religious groups are the Buddhist found in countries like Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand as well as among the Chinese minorities in Malaysia, Indonesia, North Himalayan parts of India and areas in Bangladesh bordering Burma. Christianity is yet another religion that dominates the region. It is the major religion of Australia, Southern and South-Eastern Africa, Madagascar and Ethiopia.\(^{(3)}\)

**Socio-Economic Diversities :**

Disparities and divergences in the economic conditions in this region are perhaps not shared by any other region in the world on the same scale. In terms of modernization and economic performances, some countries have achieved concrete results. To state a few examples, the Republic of South Africa and Australia are industrialized even by western standards. Some of the South East Asian states belonging to Association of South East Asian (ASEAN) states have witnessed economic prosperity particularly during the eighties. Oil revenues have accounted for the economic progress of these states namely Malaysia and Indonesia. The better living standards of Persian Gulf states, was a result of oil trade to the different regions of the world since 1973.\(^{(4)}\)
In contrast there are states like Bangladesh with the highest density of population and the lowest per-capita income in the region. While countries like India strike a midway path. Economic disparities of the region has been an important factor that has fragmented the geo-political structure of the Indian Ocean region.\(^{(10)}\)

**Political Diversities:**

Political diversity in another marked feature of the Indian Ocean region. Constitutional governments and democracies exist in marked contrast to monarchies and mass based Governments. States like Australia, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka are examples of the first type. While on the other hand there are conservative monarchies such as the Gulf Emirates or the Islamic Republic of Iran, after 1979. There are also states vacillating between military dictatorship and democratic systems like Pakistan and Bangladesh, in the recent years.\(^{(11)}\)

Thus the Indian Ocean Region is a mosaic of diverse religions, cultures, ethnic groups which vary in their economic conditions and political institutions. Such diversities act against any unifying factor in this region. That is why it cannot be treated as a single geo-political or geo-strategic unit in a blanket form. The diversities in the region have also left sufficient room for conflicts within the region owing to the incompatibility of interests among the various states and groups. Even within the same religion two different sects may be in conflict. Such clashes are evident in the Shia and Sunni schisms in the Gulf or
between liberal and secular views and Islamic fundamentalism.\(^{(12)}\) Despite such differences there is a running thread of common experiences that act as a link in unifying the Indian Ocean region into a unit. These commonalities may be summarised in the following manner.

**Colonial Experience of the states in the Indian Ocean Region:**

Most states of the region around the Indian Ocean were colonies of one of the European colonial powers. A majority of these colonies however, were a part of the former British Empire. Moreover the Indian Ocean was regarded as the British sea because of the dominance of the British navy on its waters. This status continued till the British decision to withdraw began after the Suez crisis of 1956.\(^{(13)}\)

Though the British rulers could not resist against the forces of nationalism which dominated the post-war period, Britain continued to retain its links with most of its former colonies as they became members of the British Commonwealth.\(^{(14)}\)

**Low levels of Economic Growth and Technological Development:**

Most of the post colonial states have been characterised by economic underdevelopment which, in its turn has been a binding factor among most of the states in the region. The lack of capital and
technological know how to tap natural resources forced these states to depend on technologically more developed countries outside the region. In addition the lack of intra-regional cooperation and communication further contributed to their dependent status. On the whole the lack of enterpreneurial skills and infrastructural facilities have forced these states to import technology.\(^{(15)}\)

**Military Inequalities:**

Another common feature of most of the Indian Ocean states is their relatively weak military strength vis-a-vis the developed states of the west. The inequality in military prowess between advanced states of the west and the Indian Ocean states is quite glaring. Furthermore, as far as the armed forces and naval power is concerned none of the states from the region are self sufficient.\(^{(16)}\)

Sea power and power on the land are inextricably interwoven in practically all situations and the Indian Ocean region is no exception. The dependence of the states from the region on stronger external powers and their military alliances with extra-regional powers is a very significant feature of the politics of Indian Ocean. In the past, the security of these states was the responsibility of the colonial powers. Today, though they are no longer colonies, most of the states within the region are not capable of influencing any major events on issues independently or even collectively.\(^{(17)}\)
The twin experience of economic and military vulnerability in addition to the diversities between the states in the Region makes it one of the most complex zones in the world. Economic and military vulnerability has often strengthened the rationale behind the presence of extra regional powers. The overarching presence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean can be understood in this context.

Having discussed the salient features of the Indian Ocean region, it might be worthwhile to discuss some of the important trends in the foreign policy orientation of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in the Indian Ocean. Such an exercise will allow us to take a brief overview of some of the major aspects of their foreign policies since the seventies. Our discussion broadly would revolve around the expanding role of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and their strategies of building bases in different parts of the region. Both these external powers were also involved in the large armament market that the states of the Indian Ocean had to offer. We can proceed to discuss the U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean.

**U.S.A.’s Presence and Indian Ocean Politics:**

The U.S.A.’s mercantile shipping in the Indian Ocean dates back to the 18th century. The U.S. interest in this region began to increase when the American commercial firms participated in oil explorations in West Asia towards the end of the First World War. Afterwards the U.S. continued to maintain its presence in the Indian Ocean in order to secure its commercial interests in the inter-war period.\(^\text{118}\)
In the post war period, U.S. presence was generally maintained in coordination with Britain. Britain continued its dominance in the Indian Ocean in the immediate aftermath of the war. The U.S. presence was maintained by its naval force known as the Middle-East Force (MID EAST FOR). The U.S.A. and Britain participated in certain joint ventures in this region. One such joint undertaking was the construction of the Strategic Air Command Base (SAC) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1951. With the expiry of the joint contract between Britain and USA, the U.S. Military Airlift Command (MAC) took over the Base independently for its world wide transit operations.\(^{(18)}\)

The British withdrawal: A Boost to U.S. involvement:

The increasing U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean region coincided with the diminishing role of Britain in the east of the Suez. This event was directly related to the protection of Western interests in the region. Protection became an even more important motivating factor following the final decision of Britain to gradually withdraw its naval presence after the Suez crisis of 1956.\(^{(20)}\) One of the initial moves towards protecting Western interests was the signing of the pacts. This diplomatic manoeuvre included the countries of the Region and the Western powers. The pacts were intended to serve a dual purpose of protection of interests of the signatories. They also served to secure the commercial and political positions of the Western powers.
In the Persian Gulf the pact was known as the Baghdad Pact which was signed in 1955. U.S.A. was however not a signatory to that pact. The signatories to the treaty were Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Great Britain and Iraq. In 1958 Iraq withdrew from the pact with fall of the monarchy and the establishment of Ba’ath Party rule. The U.S.A. which had remained outside the pact joined the pact which came to be known as the Central Treaty Organisation (or CENTO) in the same year. The second treaty consisted mainly of the South-East Indian Ocean states and some countries of the Pacific Region as well. This treaty was called the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) which was signed in 1954 in Manila. The signatories to this treaty were U.S.A., Britain, France, the Phillipines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan.\(^{(21)}\)

The CENTO, and the SEATO while protecting the economic interests of the Western powers in the region formed a buffer against communist expansionism in the context of the cold war. However, Britain continued to be a component of U.S. policy decisions in the Indian Ocean region. After the mid-sixties Britain’s role further declined as a result of internal political pressures. The economic non feasibility of maintaining military bases in the region became a major issue in the politics of Britain in the sixties. This generated great political pressures in which both the major political parties of Britain, the Conservative party and the Labour party advocated the withdrawal of British presence from the Indian Ocean region.\(^{(22)}\)
In February, 1966, the British Government issued a White Paper on Defence (Command Papers 2901 and 2902). The Paper was against any independent role for Britain in the Indian Ocean. In early 1968, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced the reduction of British presence east of the Suez. The deadline set for British withdrawal was by the end of 1971. In March, 1971 yet another white paper was issued. This was related to the British bases and colonies in the Indian Ocean. It ordered the closing down of its naval communication centre and air-strip in Mauritius and airfield in Gan in the Maldives. The British colony of Seychelles subsequently became independent in 1976.\(^{(23)}\)

The British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean region ushered in a new dimension in the U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean region. The evolution of the politics of the Indian Ocean, over the span of fifteen years since the mid fifties, steadily led towards the growing U.S. involvement in the Indian Ocean since the beginning of the seventies. However Britain’s withdrawal was initiated at a time when the U.S.A’s pre-occupation in Vietnam (1971) prohibited the U.S.A. from increasing its commitments in the region.\(^{(24)}\)

The U.S. foreign policy towards the Indian Ocean region was shaped according to the changing political circumstances in the region. Being a participant in the cold war the U.S.A. was ever present in the political context of the region. During the late sixties and early seventies, Nixon-Kissinger administration of the U.S.A., shaped its foreign policy in the region (1969-1976). The single dominant episode in this era was the
U.S. debacle in the Vietnam war (1964-1973). This issue had a long range repercussion in U.S. foreign policy. Which would be discussed at a later stage.

**Reviewing Nixon Doctrine**:

When the U.S.A.'s Vietnam war was at its height, the Nixon administration was busy spelling out a few important guidelines for the U.S.A's Asian policy. Such guidelines were encapsulated in the Nixon doctrine. The Nixon doctrine was announced in 1969. It stood for minimizing direct American presence in the Indian Ocean. In a report to the Congress on the 9th February, 1972 President Richard Nixon explained the new initiative thus - “The heart of our new conception of that role is a more balanced alliance with our friends - and a more creative connection with our adversaries.”

The same report outlined the future of U.S. policy which was directly related to the U.S.A's Indian Ocean policy. In the future U.S.A. decided to work towards decreasing bi-polarity in world politics. This was to be achieved by striking a strategic balance with the Soviet Union rather than aiming at strategic superiority. The report pronounced the U.S.A's willingness to work with all nations with particular reference to support for the U.S. allies in Asia, such as Iran. They were to receive special attention from the U.S. administration. The report stated that - “friendships are constant but the means by which they are mutually expressed must be adjusted as world conditions change. The continuity and vigour of
our alliance requires that our friends assume greater responsibilities for our common endeavours."[27]

In line with its new policy the U.S.A. achieved a breakthrough with its former adversaries. It was able to unveil a new set of relationships with the Peoples' Republic of China and the U.S.S.R.[29] In fact befriending China was a master stroke of Kissinger's diplomacy. Sino-U.S. cooperation could have gone a long way in resolving the Vietnam crisis. In view of China's active support to the Vietnamese guerillas, be-friendng China became a necessity for the U.S. Furthermore detente with the U.S.S.R. proved helpful in initiating the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-I) - I and ensuring peaceful coexistence between the rival systems.[29] By trying to strike cordial relations with China and the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. tried to protect its Asian allies such as Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The Nixon administration chalked out its Asian strategy with a conviction of maintaining and enhancing the role of U.S. allies to the mutual benefit of both parties. The full range of U.S. force options with regard to its allies in the region were drawn up as follows:

* The U.S.A. would use its nuclear capabilities to protect its Asian allies from attack or coercion by another nuclear country.

* Strong U.S. force deployment was considered to be essential in the region. Simultaneously both military and economic assistance
was to be provided to its allies. This was evident from the increased U.S. aid to Iran and Saudi Arabia to a lesser extent.

* As a result of the U.S. aid to its allies the military capabilities of its allies were to increase simultaneously.

* The increased support for its allies by the U.S.A. was justified by the administration. This policy was adopted to support local efforts against subversive and guerrilla attacks.\(^{(30)}\)

The U.S.A. pursued the twin objectives i.e. it strengthened the position of its allies, and continued land, sea, and air presence of the U.S. forces in Asia. The U.S. presence further reassured its Asian allies of U.S.A’s determination to meet its commitments. Nixon - Kissinger administration also initiated diplomatic negotiations with Bahrain for retaining airbase facilities there for the MIDESTFOR. Economically, the U.S.A’s import of Gulf oil increased to 10% (of total oil imports) by 1973.\(^{(31)}\)

Nevertheless the Nixon-Kissinger era (1969-76) of the U.S. Foreign Policy was dominated by the Vietnam crisis. This had far reaching consequences for the U.S.A. both nationally and internationally. The Vietnam factor influenced U.S. Foreign Policy in practically all parts of the globe. The U.S. President’s report recorded the ‘Vietnam Crisis’ as the single "largest international challenge"\(^{(32)}\) to the administration. The U.S. allowed the responsibilities of ending the war on Hanoi Simultaneously it outlined the conditions for negotiations as follows:

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"We are ready to reach an agreement which allows the South Vietnamese to determine their own future without outside interference. This goal can be reached whenever Hanoi distinguishes between settlement and surrender".\(^{(33)}\)

The Vietnamese debacle offered an evidence of U.S.A.'s incapability to influence an outcome of a regional conflict. Certain objectives of the U.S. Foreign policy such as balancing its relations with U.S.S.R. and ending bi-polarity met with a limited success. One significant event that reversed the U.S. policy intentions in the region was the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. The U.S.A. failed to prevent the momentum of war or resolve the situation amicably. The issue eventually led to the separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh.\(^{(34)}\)

We have discussed the Indo-Pak war in the next chapter. However at this stage the intricacies of triangular politics between the U.S.A.-China and the Soviet Union need to be underlined. First as the U.S.A. got over the stalemate in its relationship with China the possibilities of resolving the Vietnam crisis became wide open. Second, the U.S.A. could not have maintained entirely cordial relations with China and the U.S.S.R. at the same time. For, international relations during the late sixties and the early seventies were characterised by Sino-Soviet schism. Therefore in the 1971 war the U.S. and China supported Pakistan while the Soviet Union rallied round India.\(^{(35)}\) Such alliances at the regional level certainly affected the prospects of Russo-American detente at the global level. Finally the U.S.-U.S.S.R. rivalry as well as co-existence had become a reality of international politics. But Sino-U.S. detente
was certainly a significant event which shaped the politics of the Indian Ocean.

The impact of Sino-U.S. relations and Henry Kissinger’s secret visit to China in July, 1971 were acknowledged and defended in the Presidential report on China.\(^{[36]}\) The U.S. President Nixon consequently blamed the Soviet Union for escalation of the South Asian crisis by vetoing the U.N. resolution for ceasefire at the Security Council on December, 1971. The U.S. viewed the Soviet action as an attempt against super-power detente and an opportunity for the strategic expansion of the Soviet influence.\(^{[37]}\)

In addition to the political problems in South Asia, South East Asia and the Far-East the Nixon administration also had to contend with political issues in West Asia. The U.S. administration was particularly concerned with the strained relationship between the Arabs and Israel. The U.S.A. failed to bring about peace and friendly relations between the Arab states and Israel. This failure was noted by the U.S. administration in its report on U.S. policy towards Asia.\(^{[38]}\) Infact the Arab – Israel tension blew into a full scale war in October 1973. The Arab States reacted by applying an oil embargo against the Western powers and the U.S.A. from December, 1973 till March 1974.\(^{[39]}\)

The Western allies of the U.S. were against the U.S. policy during the October 1973 Crisis between the Arabs and Israel. U.S.A.’s partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) refused over-flights for
the U.S. air-crafts carrying supplies to Israel. In such a situation, the
U.S. administration had to reconsider its policy in West Asia. The U.S.
administration deployed a Task Force in the Arabian Sea and maintained
it till March 1974. By deploying a Task force the U.S. opted to protect
the interests of its allies. On the whole the Nixon era proved to be
quite eventful in U.S. policy towards the states of the Indian Ocean
region.

U.S. Policy under the Carter Administration:

The Carter administration (1977-1980) which followed the Nixon
administration witnessed a few major events within the politics of the
Indian Ocean region. It moulded the U.S. perceptions not only in the
region but also in the international arena. Chronologically speaking the
Carter era had to encounter a few important problems such as the war
in the Horn of Africa (1977-78), the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia
(1978), the fall of the Shah's regime in Iran (1979), the U.S. hostage
crisis in Iran (1979) and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979).

To start with, we underline the significance of the war in the Horn
of Africa to the relationship between U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. To
put it simply the war between Ethiopia and Somalia (1977-78) almost
thwarted the process of detente that was initiated by the Nixon
administration. Particularly when the Cuban and the Soviet forces began
to intervene in the Horn of Africa the U.S.-U.S.S.R. ties witnessed a
marked deterioration. This was formally confirmed by Cyrus Vance, the
U.S. Secretary of State on the 10th February, 1978.\(^{(41)}\)

President Carter also expressed a grave concern in the
developments in the Horn of Africa. At a news conference on the 2nd
March, 1978, he defined the U.S. policy in the crisis. The U.S. President
advised the two belligerants Ethiopia and Somalia to cease hostilities
and end the war. President Carter's rhetoric was also aimed at the
Soviet Union. The U.S. wanted the withdrawal of Somali forces from
the Ogaden, the withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban forces from Ethiopia;
and lessening of tension by each concerned party by honouring their
respective international boundaries.\(^{(42)}\) Apart from the Horn of Africa,
the South-East Asian region continued to create tensions in U.S. -
U.S.S.R. relations. Tensions began to build up with the Vietnamese
intervention in Cambodia in December, 1978. This crisis affected U.S. -
Soviet relations as the Vietnamese were supported by the Soviets. The
U.S.A. matched this move with increased aid to its allies in the region.
Thailand was one such ally which received special attention because of
its geographical proximity to the scene of conflict.\(^{(43)}\)

Finally, as the Carter administration was completing its term of
office, the developments in the domestic politics of Iran disturbed the
U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. To begin with, the Shah of Iran was
overthrown with the Islamic Revolution in Iran during 1979. The U.S.A.
had built Shah's Iran as a bastion to uphold the Western interests in the
Persian Gulf. After the Arab - Israel war of 1973 the U.S. had literally
nurtured Iran into a formidable U.S. ally. Iran in its turn had refrained from imposing an oil embargo against the western powers.\(^{(14)}\)

In 1979, the fall of the Shah of Iran embroiled the U.S.A. into an even more difficult situation with that state. The new Islamic regime under Ayatollah Khomeini held 50 Americans as hostages in Iran.\(^{(45)}\) This issue became an embarrassment for the Carter administration. In addition to hostage issue, the fall of the Shah’s rule in Iran was a major loss for the U.S.A. in the Indian Ocean region. The U.S.A. now required to enhance its naval presence to protect its security interests in the region. However U.S. calculations regarding its policy in the Indian Ocean region received another set-back when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in December, 1979.\(^{(46)}\)

The U.S.A perceived the Afghan issue to be a potential threat to the region and to the securities of the states surrounding Afghanistan. The U.S. administration also considered the presence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan as a major threat to the world’s oil supply zone of the Persian Gulf. In the aftermath of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan U.S. - U.S.S.R. ties touched a new low. Apart from reviewing its policy towards the Soviet Union, the U.S. also reviewed its policy in the Indian Ocean region. The U.S.A. recalled its ambassador from Moscow and halted the ongoing negotiations on the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty - II (SALT-II). Bilateral relations between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union were also adversely affected. U.S.A.’s policy in the Indian Ocean also acquired a new shape.\(^{17}\) The concepts of the seventies which had
stressed on power sharing and balancing U.S. relations with the U.S.S.R. were sidelined. The U.S.A. was on the threshold of playing a more constructive and influential role in the region.

**U.S. Policy under President Ronald Reagan (1981-1988):**

On the 1st January, 1981 the President elect, Ronald Reagan a Republican candidate assumed the powers of Presidency in the U.S.A. The new administration continued the policy of its predecessor as far as the states of the Indian Ocean region was concerned. The U.S. hostage issue with Iran was resolved with Reagan as the President of the U.S.A. Similarly the new administration completed the sale of U.S. made Air-borne Warning and Control System (AWACS) air crafts to Saudi Arabia as committed by the Carter administration.\(^{(46)}\)

As far as its policy in the Indian Ocean was concerned the Reagan administration did not give priority to the on going Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) at the initial stages. It was more occupied in counteracting Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan received the attention of the U.S. policy makers because of its close proximity to Afghanistan. As a traditional ally of the USA it received moral and material support from the U.S. administration to meet the crisis that emanated from the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.\(^{(47)}\)

Pakistan received immediate assistance in military equipment, food and other aid up to 3.2 billion dollars in 1981.\(^{(5)}\) The Reagan'
administration's effort to counteract Soviet position in Afghanistan increased its interest in Pakistan. Pakistan is located on the southern flank of Afghanistan. As an ally Pakistan could play a constructive role for the U.S.A. in countering Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the U.S.A. could have direct access to the Afghan rebels through Pakistan. These rebel groups fighting against the Soviet backed government in Kabul, were assisted by the U.S.A. which supplied arms to them.\(^{(51)}\)

The Reagan period during 1981-88 witnessed a measurement of rigidity in foreign policy, particularly towards the Soviet Union. The U.S. foreign policy could be called as Soviet-centric. The administration was not only inclined to arrest Soviet 'expansionism', but was willing to adopt a confrontationist attitude to stop Soviet advancement. The rigid trend in U.S. foreign policy was also a result of the views of its policy framers. President Reagan's team of foreign policy advisers comprised Richard Allen, Robert Mac Farlane, John Poindexter, all of whom were former National Security Advisers. Later on, William Casey the CIA director. All of them shared the common view on Soviet centric policy as well.\(^{(52)}\)

The Reagan administration along with its eminent personalities tried to carve out the policy based on restoring U.S. prestige in world affairs. The Reagan administration was motivated by a conviction that the U.S. reversals in the different parts of the Third World, such as Vietnam,
Angola, Persian Gulf, South-East Asia had led to the loss of U.S. prestige.\[53\]

As far as the Indian Ocean region was concerned the U.S.A. decided to hold on and consolidate its presence by wooing diverse set of allies in the region. To understand the magnitude of U.S. involvement as well as the decisive role the U.S. played in the region it would be necessary to undertake a broad survey of the states and areas that were linked with U.S.A's strategy.

U.S. Allies in the Region:

Among the important states which became important U.S. allies in the Indian Ocean region were Bahrain Islands, Oman, Kenya, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Phillipines (a Pacific Ocean state). We shall discuss the significance of these states in the U.S. policy.

Bahrain Islands:

Initially the base was jointly managed by Britain and the U.S.A. in the period between the Second World War and 1971. After the British withdrawal, the U.S. assumed sole charge of the base and the military facilities there in. U.S.A. and Bahrain entered into a formal agreement on 23rd December, 1971 to facilitate the American take over. It became a base for the MIDEASTFOR of the U.S.A. In the October 1973 Arab-Israeli dispute, Bahrain base was put to extensive use by the U.S.
forces for supplies to Israel. A new agreement followed on the 28th June, 1977 by which U.S.A.'s basing facility was further extended. Facilities at Bahrain's El Manama port including military airfields, satellite relay and communication facilities were controlled by the U.S.A.\(^{(54)}\)

**OMAN:**

U.S. base of Oman was acquired much later than that of Bahrain. This base was acquired following an agreement between the U.S.A. and the Sultanate of Oman on 4th April, 1980. Following this agreement the U.S.A. was believed to have traded military business worth 25 million U.S. dollars with Oman.\(^{(55)}\)

Oman and the U.S.A. entered into a second agreement on the 4th June, 1980. By this U.S.A.'s access to base facilities was further extended. The facilities at Masirah was updated and new bases at Juft in the Gulf of Oman at Al Qasab on the extreme end of Oman on the Strait of Hormuz were acquired. An amphibious Marine Task Force, numbering 1800 and the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), a command ship were based around the facilities at Oman.\(^{(56)}\)

In the Western Indian Ocean the U.S.A. acquired considerable facilities amongst certain East African countries. They are enlisted below:
KENYA:

In an agreement signed with the Government of Kenya on the 26th June, 1980, the U.S.A. agreed to provide economic and food assistance up to 50 million U.S. dollars. Military equipment worth 27 million U.S. dollars was provided on credit sales extending over a period of 1981-1982. In turn, the U.S.A. increased its presence and facilities in that country. The U.S. also benefited by acquiring basing facilities at Mombasa which has one of the largest harbours in East Africa. The U.S. airforce was allowed to use Nanyuki air-base close to the Kenyan capital Nairobi.\(^{(57)}\)

SOMALIA:

The U.S. signed an agreement with the Government of Somalia on 22nd August, 1980. By this agreement the U.S. naval forces were permitted porting facilities at Berbera. The U.S. airforce received access to refuelling and reconnaissance facilities at the Mogadishu air-base. Air-base facilities here allowed the U.S. to patrol and observe the entire region around the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.\(^{(48)}\)

Apart from the air-base facilities that were available to the U.S.A. in East Africa, the U.S. had good relations with some other countries in the region. In times of need these countries could provide necessary aid to the U.S.A. Two such countries were Sudan and Egy\text{p}t. The three military bases which could be utilised by the U.S. were Suakin on the
Red Sea; El-Fasher on the Sudan - Libya - Chad border and Dongola located to the north of Khartoum.\(^{(59)}\)

The three bases available in Egypt were Cairo West; adjacent to the Cairo airport, Qena air-base 50 kms south of Cairo, and the Ras Banas air base on the Red Sea. Both Sudan and Egypt have extensive relations with U.S.A.\(^{(59)}\)

In the Western Indian the U.S.A. could make use of the modernised basing facilities in South Africa. The U.S. had the right of access to almost all military and naval bases in South Africa. Some of the important naval base was Richards Bay, located opposite Madagascar Island in the Indian Ocean. There were technical support facilities at the advanced military bases at Simonstown and Durban.\(^{(61)}\)

In West Asia, U.S.A.'s key partner was Israel. In fact most of U.S.A.'s foreign policy options in the Indian Ocean revolved around the Israel factor. The U.S. military had access to all Israeli bases depending on the collaboration between Washington D.C. and Tel Aviv.\(^{(62)}\)

**SAUDI ARABIA:**

Saudi Arabia was another strategic state in South West Asia which could extend its facilities to U.S. forces located at the Persian Gulf. Riyadh and Dhahran air bases could be utilised extensively in times of need.\(^{(63)}\)
TURKEY:

Though this state was not a part of the Indian Ocean region it was a major partner of the U.S.A. in the west. It was a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Because of its strategic location Turkey could play a major supportive role for U.S. operations in the Indian Ocean region. There were seven major NATO bases in Turkey. One very strategically located base was ‘Incrilik’ near the town of Adana. This base could be utilised for military operation in West Asia and the Persian Gulf area.\(^{66}\)

In South Asia Pakistan could offer operation and basing facilities for the U.S. task force if any need arose. As mentioned earlier, Pakistan’s importance in U.S. defense designs was enhanced as a result of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 and the Iran-Iraq war 1980-88. U.S. warships also utilised naval facilities in the Sri Lankan ports like Trincomalee.\(^{66}\)

In South-East Asia, U.S. Warships regularly called at the different ports in Thailand while on transit from the Indian Ocean waters to the Pacific Ocean. Following an agreement signed between the governments of Thailand and the U.S.A., the U.S. military aircrafts could use the facilities available at Bangkok. The U.S. military was also allowed the use of the Takhli air-base during military exercises in the region. Apart from Thailand, Singapore’s Tenga military air-base provided basing facilities
of U.S. military aircrafts on reconnaissance flights in the Indian Ocean. U.S. warships regularly called at the Singapore port.\(^{(65)}\)

In the eastern Indian Ocean the most prominent U.S. military bases were located in Australia. It had the most advanced ports, repair and communication facilities available. The Exmouth communication centre at the North West Cape was most crucial to U.S. defense plans in the entire Indian Ocean Region. Its strategic location allowed coordination and communications with all other bases such as the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, Phillipines and Diego Garcia. Apart from that the Nurrungar early warning satellite station can detect any missile attack. The military space research centre at 'Fine Gap' in Australia was one of the foremost U.S. strategic installation there.\(^{(67)}\)

Moreover the U.S. navy along with its Australian counterpart could carry out joint operations from the numerous Australian naval bases at Cockburn Sound, Fremantel and Stirling. All these ports have repair and docking facilities and were some of the most advanced bases in the region. The U.S. air-force (USAF) air crafts stationed around the region often used the Dawin air base for regular exercises.\(^{(68)}\)

The U.S. bases located near the South China Sea, particularly in the Phillipines had boosted the U.S. naval presence and operations in the Indian Ocean region. The Subic Bay was a major American naval base in the Phillipines. It had a technologically advanced port that would play an intermediary role to U.S. naval deployments in the Indian
Ocean. The Clarke air-base in the Phillipines was another major operational base for the U.S.A.\(^{(69)}\)

The U.S. bases in the Indian Ocean region and around that region have provided extensive support to U.S.A’s role as a super power. However, the basing facilities have been utilised on partnership with the local states where these facilities were located. Though the U.S. presence among the regional states enhanced its stature within the Indian Ocean region there was always a possibility of a reversal in the situation. Past experiences in Ethiopia (in 1974) and Iran (1979) may be cited as instances to support this view.

Therefore the establishment of base facilities at Diego Garcia in the central Indian Ocean may be seen as a measure to counter act the factor of non-permanency. This base was built up in a phased manner, as the U.S. became more involved in the affairs of the Indian Ocean region. The base at Diego Garcia contributed substantially in consolidating U.S. presence in the region. We now examine the U.S. base at Diego Garcia.

**Diego Garcia an act of Consolidation:**

Diego Garcia is an atoll of the Chagos Archipelago, a former British Indian Ocean territory (BIOT). The White Papers and the command papers that had announced the withdrawal of Britain from the Indian
Ocean region had excluded this island territory from its list of overseas possessions.\(^{(70)}\)

On the 30th December, 1966, following an exchange of notes between Britain and the U.S.A., the latter gained the rights to use the island for its defence purposes. The formal take over was completed in 1968, which was followed by the establishment of a communication facility on the island. At the initial stage Diego Garcia was envisaged as an important communication link point for the U.S. between South Central and North Eastern parts of the Indian Ocean U.S. plans included the reconstruction of a small logistical base, petroleum storage facility, and an 8,000 feet runway which could handle heavy transport aircrafts like C-130 and C-140 and a basin to handle naval deployments in the waters of the atoll.\(^{(71)}\)

The plans for the financial year 1971, were implemented within two years. On 23rd March 1973 the communication station became operational. This was the beginning of an increasing U.S. involvement in the region as Diego Garcia was assimilated into the U.S. world wide military command. Till the mid 1970s, however Diego Garcia was a low key area in the priority of considerations for development into base facility. The U.S. involvement in Vietnam kept the island out of the focus of the U.S. planners.

The 1973 Arab-Israel war, followed by the oil embargo led to a major expansion plan for the island estimated at an expenditure of 29
million dollars. This expanded facility was to meet the requirements during peace and war times. In March 1975 President Ford announced the Diego Garcia and its facilities were essential for the U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean. Thus an expansion plan was drawn up by the Department of Defence.\(^{72}\)

According to the plans Diego Garcia was to be transformed from a communication station to a support facility site. The lagoon of the atoll was dredged to handle repair and replenishments to augment U.S. naval deployments in the Indian Ocean. Petroleum storage facility was increased to 480,000 barrels, capable of supporting a task force up to 60 days. The airfield was expanded from 8,000 feet to 12,000 feet to handle heavy cargo aircrafts and the basing of P-3 maritime patrol aircrafts.\(^{73}\)

Facilities at Diego Garcia were further enhanced and it was transformed into an island station, capable of supporting major military and strategic activities of the U.S. CENTCOM in the Indian Ocean area. The runway was capable of handling any aircraft in the world. The U.S. strategic bomber B-52 flew regular missions from Diego Garcia. This was confirmed by the U.S. administration in 1979. Diego Garcia became a transit point for long range reconnaissance aircrafts namely, the P-3 and SR 71 aircrafts, flying between the Philippines and Kenya.\(^{74}\) The harbour facilities at Diego Garcia were capable of handling a carrier task force consisting an aircraft carrier and support ships. Fuel storage capacity was increased to 320,000 barrels of fuel oil.\(^{75}\)
The British administration was informed on January, 1980 of the proposed plans for expansion of the facilities at Diego Garcia. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan contributed to a great extent the decision of the administration to enhance the facilities in the island. The U.S. plans converted the atoll into one of the foremost support bases for the U.S.A. in the Indian Ocean region. The Reagan administration continued with plans and programmes initiated by the earlier administration.

In the earlier discussion relating to U.S. Policy in the Indian Ocean it was analysed how changing circumstances had influenced U.S. policy decisions in the region and Diego Garcia was no exception. The take over of the British Indian Ocean territory (BIOT) in the sixties transformed the U.S.A from a transitional naval power into one with an independent foothold in the Indian Ocean. The establishment of the of the base allowed the USA to play an increasingly influential role in the Indian Ocean. The tools or instrument used by the U.S administration to maintain its hegemony in the region were the USCENTCOM and the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) against any Soviet advance in the Indian Ocean.

The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) and U.S. CENTCOM - Instruments of consolidation:

The U.S. Presidential order in 1977 resulted in the origin of the RDJTF, and it was created to protect U.S. and Western interests in the Persian Gulf and the surrounding region. U.S. and Western dependence
on Gulf oil and other strategic minerals and U.S. economic investment made the Persian Gulf a focal point in the Indian Ocean. The volatile nature of the states of this region added to the apprehension of the U.S. administration. All these factors justified the formation of the RDJTF as a preventive force against any eventuality. This Rapid Deployment force was to be created to operate outside the NATO command areas.\(^\text{77}\)

In October 1979, President Carter announced the formation of the RDJTF along with the specification of its services and the establishment of a command structure. The force came into formal existence on the 1st, March 1980 as a Readiness Command. It was located at the Mac Dill Air Force Base in U.S.A.\(^\text{78}\) It became a separate unified command, on the 1st January 1983, under the Reagan administration.\(^\text{79}\)

Transformed under a new independent command the task force was renamed the United States Central Command or USCENTCOM. Its territorial jurisdiction included areas around the Persian Gulf. It also included countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan Kuwait, North Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the Red Sea region it included states such as Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan under its jurisdiction.\(^\text{80}\)

The task force presence supplemented the role of the bases in the different parts of the Indian Ocean. However this region was also one of the major areas of U.S. arms transfer.
U.S. Arms transfer in the Indian Ocean region:

Transfer and trading of arms by the USA was yet another major instrument in its Indian Ocean policy. Arms trade particularly its demands for it in the third world had increased out of proportions. Both the U.S.A and the Soviet Union were major suppliers of arms to the region. Within the Indian Ocean West Asia had emerged as the highest purchaser of arms particularly from the seventies.

Between 1979-1983 the two priority zones for U.S. Arms transfer in the Indian Ocean were East Asia which accounted for 20%, West Asia and North Africa accounted for 37% of the arms supplied. South Asia accounted for 17% of the arms transferred.\(^{61}\) In dollar terms the entire region beginning from Morocco to South Asia including the Persian Gulf in 1977-1984 accounted for three-fourths of the value of all U.S. arms sales agreements in the Third World. Apart from arms sales most of the U.S military assistance financing was also made in this region. The largest recipients were Israel and Egypt which received over half of the military assistance funding for the financial year 1986.\(^{62}\)

The Gulf States were the heaviest buyer of arms in the region because of its security interests. The zone was one of the most volatile and conflict prone and the security concern of the states could not be ignored. The region was also the buyer of the most sophisticated arms delivered in the Indian Ocean region. However most of the states with the exception of Israel and Egypt lacked the infrastructural facilities to
absorb high technologies. Thus along with the supply of the arms, large scale imports of technology and infrastructure construction was also required in the Persian Gulf region.

Often the degree of arms trade was influenced by certain events. These events affected both the buyer and the supplier's policies alike. For instance the isolation of Israel following the 1973 war led to massive air-lift of arms by the U.S.A to Tel Aviv, on emergency supply missions. The fall of Pahlavi dynasty in Iran in 1979, followed by the hostage crisis and finally the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 made the U.S. reconsider its policy in the region. Saudi Arabia because of its close proximity to events expressed its vulnerability. This eventually resulted in the supply of sophisticated arms transfer to Saudi Arabia by the U.S.A.\(^{(63)}\)

Base building, development and deployment of special task force and arms transfer combined as major factors in U.S.A.'s foreign policy in the Indian Ocean Region. The U.S. policy in the Indian Ocean region was formulated in the light of the above mentioned dimensions and it aimed to achieve the following objectives -

* Securing the U.S.A.'s economic interests in the region,
* Preventing and reducing of Soviet influence in the region,
* Maintaining U.S. diplomatic status quo amongst the states of the region,
Securing free and unhindered passages to shipping and air crafts in the Ocean, and

 Ensuring a better bargaining capacity and enhancing its capabilities to play a decisive role in the affairs of the regional states both at peace times and during conflicts.

Having analysed the broad parameters of U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean region, we now discuss the Soviet policy in the region.

**U.S.S.R.'s Presence and Policies of the Indian Ocean Region:**

Unlike the U.S. the Soviet involvement in the Indian Ocean in the post-cold war period was neither pervasive nor intense. Because of its alliance with Great Britain as well as to safeguard its' interests in the region the U.S.A. was constrained and compelled to play an overarching role in the Indian Ocean. However, the Soviet Union during the post-second world war years was in the process of cultivating allies among the states in the region to offset the design of the U.S.A. and its allies.

Before discussing certain Soviet policies in the Indian Ocean it might be worth making certain preliminary observation on the Soviet policy.

1) The Soviet Union found a space to play an important role in the region, primarily after the withdrawal of the British Navy from the
East of the Suez. The British withdrawal also meant increased U.S. role in the region. Evidently, being anti-thetical to U.S. presence in the region the Soviet Union accentuated its involvement in the Indian Ocean region.

ii) As a corollary the Soviet role in the Indian Ocean from the standpoint of this thesis basically covers the Brezhnev years and the earlier phase of Gorbachev. i.e. (1964-1989)

iii) We have already described the trajectories of U.S. - Soviet rivalry in South Asia, the Horn of Africa, Persian Gulf and so on. Having introduced the Soviet position in these regions vis-a-vis the U.S.A. it would be futile to repeat Soviet attitudes in this regions. Nevertheless it would be important to highlight broad ideological considerations that guided the Soviet foreign policy in the region in the Brezhnev years.

In order to simplify our perspectives of the Soviet role in the Indian Ocean region we shall touch upon the two aspects of Soviet foreign policy. To begin with, the Soviet policy can be understood on the basis of its ideological foundations. Later, concrete empirical evidences can be provided to ascertain the nature of Soviet military bases, arms transfer and modes of cultivating friendship with the states of the region.

There are three strands to Soviet ideological position vis-a-vis colonial and post colonial states of the region. First ideologically the
Soviet Union identified capitalism with imperialism.\(^{(84)}\) Hence the Soviet Union supported an alliance between national liberation struggles and the proletarian movements in the advanced capitalist countries to defeat imperialism since Lenin.\(^{(85)}\) Ever since its inception the Soviet Union supported anti-colonial anti-imperialist and anti racist struggles. For instance the Soviet Union backed the anti-colonial movements in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It also supported the anti-racist movement led by the African National Congress (ANC) against apartheid rule in South Africa.

Second, the Soviet Union always tried to support progressive anti-imperialist states which were non-aligned. In the fifties India, Indonesia and Egypt came under this category. By acknowledging the anti-imperialist credentials of Nehru, Nasser and Sukharno the Soviet Union was weaning them away from becoming camp followers of the West. What is more, the Soviet Union also promoted the development projects of these states by offering them material assistance. The major recipients of Soviet economic and technical assistance between 1954 and 1977 were Afghanistan which received 1263 million U.S.Dollars; India received 2263 million U.S.dollars. Iran 805 million U.S.dollars, Iraq 704 million U.S.dollars and Pakistan 652 million U.S.dollars.\(^{(86)}\)

Third in the late sixties the Soviet Union evolved a category of states with socialist orientation. These states were Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. After the civil war in Yemen the Marxist oriented regime of
South Yemen received extensive Soviet military aid. Some of the characteristics of these states were as follows:

i) They allowed some private capital investment (foreign as well as domestic) to remain;

ii) Apart from supporting Marxism-Leninism in varying degrees they emphasized the role of nationalism and religion in their ideologies. 

iii) They considered a multi-class (as opposed to simply proleterian) party to be the leading revolutionary force. We can cite South Yemen as an example.

iv) The China factor which was another determinant of the Soviet policy towards the Third World in general comprising a majority of the Indian Ocean states. China by the sixties had turned a permanent rival of the Soviet Union after the Sino-Soviet split since 1957.

Apart from ideological considerations, the Indian Ocean was of considerable geo-political importance to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had close geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean. Most of its territory was within the striking range of the Indian Ocean. Therefore from the mid-fifties Moscow began a careful assessment of the situation and initiated a process of building up relations among the different states.
of the Indian Ocean region. One major feature of this region that the Soviet Union had to consider was the existence of West-supported alliances such as the Baghdad Pact and to a lesser extent the SEATO. Certain states that comprised the Baghdad pact like Iran, Pakistan and Iraq formed the Southern periphery of the Soviet Union.\footnote{91}

As a land based state in Asia the Soviet Union was concerned about the U.S.A.'s policy of creating a ring of allies around it, to contain the Soviet influence. The Soviet Union acted in order to counter-act the threat of Western domination. The emerging non-aligned states after the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states 1955, provided U.S.S.R. the stage to oppose Western influence in the Region. The chances of Soviet Union's success remained high as long as the non-aligned states were opposed to 'Western imperialism'. The Soviet Union, therefore expressed its appreciation of these states of Asia and Africa and Khrushchev called them as a new 'zone of peace'. The Soviet leadership hoped for a future of friendly cooperation with these states in Asia and the Arab world.\footnote{92}

From the mid-fifties the Soviet Union established an independent network of bilateral relations with countries like Egypt, India, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Burma. Moscow, thereafter entered into an arms deal with Egypt in 1955. The Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited Moscow and the visit was reciprocated when Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Bulganin visited India, Burma and Afghanistan in 1956.\footnote{93} The Soviet Union developed closer ties with another Indian Ocean littoral state of
Yemen. The first treaty between U.S.S.R. and Yemen was signed on the 31st October, 1956. Accordingly the Soviet Union provided economic and technical assistance and a limited quantity of arms to Yemen. Increasing Soviet involvement amongst its newly acquired allies was visibly evident as well. The Soviet Union pledged commitment to the Aswan Dam Project in Egypt in 1958. Similarly in India it undertook to build the Bhilai Steel Plant; and the construction of the port of Hodeida in Yemen. It also offered technical and military assistance to Afghanistan.\(^{(04)}\)

Beginning from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties the Soviet Union was able to extend its influence and interests into new frontiers of the Indian Ocean region. Khrushchev was successful in extending Soviet role into certain strategically important areas like Egypt, India, Yemen. The mid-sixties marked the end of the Khrushchev era and the beginning of the Brezhnev era as there was a change in the Soviet leadership.

The three most signigicant developments in the Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean during the Brezhnev era were-

i) Soviet aid and economic relations with the states in the Indian Ocean region were reviewed. Soviet assistance was to be concentrated only in certain selected states or areas. These areas were to be selected based on their strategic advantage to the Soviet Union. Strategic considerations were based primarily on three factors. The degree of Chinese interest, the extent of Western
influence and the Soviet Security. Availability of support facilities such as airfields, harbours, communication sites for military purposes were also assessed.\textsuperscript{(96)}

ii) Independent Soviet naval presence received high priority under the new leadership. The Indian Ocean like the Mediterranean sea was considered to be an important sea-lane of communication. Therefore the Soviet Union was to initiate the process of independent and increased naval deployment in the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{(97)}

iii) An important feature of the Soviet foreign policy was the Brezhnev plan for collective security in Asia. This idea was formally launched in June 1969 at the International Meeting of Communist and workers parties in Moscow. The Brezhnev plan aimed to form an association of the Asian states for creating a zone of peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation. Such an association of states was to collectively work towards peace, freedom and security of the people of the region.\textsuperscript{(98)}

Accordingly from 1968, the Soviet Union began to have a permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean. The first appearance of the Soviet navy was on a familiarisation mission. In March, 1968 the Soviet navy paid a goodwill visit to India led by the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Pacific Fleet Admiral Amelko. The fleet comprised of four Soviet warships, a guided missile destroyer (that returned to Vladivostok), a cruiser, a destroyer and a support ship continued its visit to Pakistan,
Aden and Somalia. The Soviet navy did not play any combatant role but its deployment increased over the years. During the seventies an average of twenty to twenty two ships were present in the Indian Ocean annually. In times of crisis the number reached thirty as well.

The Soviet navy's visit to the different ports in the Indian Ocean increased over the years. During the period 1968-1971 there were 162 ships visiting various Indian Ocean ports. In 1971 alone the Soviet Union paid 33 visits to seven states in the Indian Ocean. According to a U.S. data Soviet ships logged a total of 6,712 ship days in the Indian Ocean. At an average eight Soviet ships (combat type) were present daily in the Indian Ocean. The initial deployment of the Soviet Navy as well its progress was to counter act a perceived threat of the U.S. aircraft carriers or the U.S. strategic missile submarines present in the Indian Ocean.

Later having developed submarines and naval vessels with tactical cruise missile capacity, the Soviet naval presence could be a result of bureaucratic decision-making or a routine show of strength. The writings of the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy Admiral Sergei Gorshkov bears testimony to the fact that Soviet naval presence was towards enhancing the achievements and domination of the Soviet Union in the region. Admiral Gorshkov played a constructive role in building up the Soviet navy's presence in the Indian Ocean.
The Soviet Navy played a twin role once it established itself in the Indian Ocean. It was able to safeguard its economic interests and investments among the Indian Ocean littorals. At the same time it played the role of a deterrent against U.S. domination in the region and also China to a certain extent. The Soviet Union with the help of its navy has been able to maintain its political and economic influence among the Indian Ocean States. In the certain cases the U.S.S.R. further consolidated its relationship with those states which it considered to be of strategic importance. These relationship were further cemented by the signing of treaties. For instance the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation with India (1971); with Iraq (1972).\(^{(105)}\) and so on. Apart form peace time operations the Soviet navy also had the capacity to act swiftly in case of a crisis. This was amply demonstrated during the Bangladesh Crisis 1971,\(^{(106)}\) Iraq-Kuwait conflict 1973 and Iraq-Iran War 1980-88 etc. Soviet naval actions at such times have been either aimed at protecting its clients' interest, as in the Bangladesh crisis, or its own interest as in the Iraq-Iraq War 1980-88.

Another means by which the Soviet Union was able to further consolidate its position in the Indian Ocean was by gaining several anchorage facilities. The Soviet Union was successful in obtaining base facilities whenever opportunities arose. It must be noted here that bases of the Soviet Union did not always coincide with all the states with which it had friendly relations, for instance India. We will now proceed
to outline the different basing facilities of the Soviet Union in and around the Indian Ocean.

**Soviet Bases in the Indian Ocean:**

**South Yemen:**

South Yemen was one of the earliest Soviet allies in the Indian Ocean. Over the years Soviet presence in South Yemen became substantial.\(^{(107)}\) The importance of South Yemen increased with termination of Soviet Union's relationship with Somalia in 1977. Aden was not only a major port of call but had docking and repair facilities as well. This port was utilised for a major Soviet naval demonstration in May, 1979. The port at Aden had the capacity to handle Soviet air craft carriers such as Minsk and an amphibious assault ship “Ivan Rogor”.\(^{(108)}\)

The airfields at Aden international and Al-Anad were utilised by the Soviet Union for military purposes. The Soviet Union further extended the basing facilities in Aden.\(^{(109)}\)

**Iraq:**

The U.S.S.R. had signed a Treaty of Friendship and cooperation with Iraq in 1972. In exchange for the military support it received from the Soviet Union, Iraq offered the rights to use its airfields and docking facilities in the Persian Gulf island of Umm Qasr. The facilities that
were available at Umm Qasr were reportedly more sophisticated than that at Dahlak, Ethiopia. However the base was closed following the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88).\(^{(110)}\)

**Ethiopia:**

The Soviet Union was able to receive landing rights at Dahlak islands after it cooperated with Ethiopia during the Ogaden War (1977-78). The facilities at Dahlak islands consisted of storage buildings, a floating drydock floating piers and navigational facilities. In addition to Dahlak the Soviet Union were permitted to use the Asmara air base for re-connaissance flights.\(^{(111)}\)

**Mozambique:**

The Soviet Union had a permanent base at Mozambique. The Soviet warships utilised the three harbours of Maputo, Beira and Nacala. However the infra-structure facilities in these bases were limited.\(^{(112)}\)

**Vietnam:**

In South and South-East Asia the permanent base facility of the Soviet Union was restricted to Vietnam only. Though Vietnam was not located on the Indian Ocean waters it was within easy reach of the Malacca strait. The geo-strategic location of Vietnam provided the Soviet
Union with surveillance facilities over the Pacific as well as the Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{(113)}

The Soviet Union's presence in Vietnam increased significantly after the Sino-Vietnamese conflict in 1975. Vietnam offered two bases for Soviet military purposes. They were Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang. According to U.S. Defence sources Soviet Union had major offensive capability at the Cam Ranh base in Vietnam. This base had a floating dry dock facility and repair facilities for warships.\textsuperscript{(114)}

In addition to the permanent basing facilities, the Soviet Navy had a few other anchorage and berthing facilities. Since December, 1979, the Soviet Union were able to gain a major strategic stronghold in Afghanistan following its intervention there. Afghanistan was located in the periphery of the Persian Gulf and also shared its southern borders with India and Pakistan. This geo-strategic position could allow the U.S.S.R. to play an influential role not only in the Persian Gulf region but also in South Asia. Even after gaining an important base in Afghanistan the Soviet Union unlike the U.S.A. lacked any independent military base like Diego Garcia. The U.S.A. continued to maintain superiority in terms of military bases as well in the deployment of fire power in the Indian Ocean Region.

**Soviet Arms Transfer in the Indian Ocean region**:

However the Soviet Union like the U.S.A. had a sizable arms market among the Indian Ocean states. The arms trade between the Soviet
Union and the states of the Indian Ocean increased appreciably from the seventies. In 1979 the U.S.S.R. had supplied arms and ammunitions worth 15,561 million U.S. dollars which was 45.6% of the total arms exported.\textsuperscript{115} In 1984, Russian arms supply to the Indian Ocean States was 8.6 billion U.S. dollars.\textsuperscript{116} The Persian Gulf and the Middle East regions emerged as the most intense areas of arms transfer. It was an important market for arms export for both the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. This area received half the value of Soviet military export and one third of U.S. arms transfers in the eighties.\textsuperscript{117}

The Soviet Union was not completely successful in gaining total political or ideological influence over its allies in the region despite extensive military aid. The Soviet policy had to face some set-backs as well. One major plan that failed to materialise was the Brezhnev plan for “collective security in Asia”. Some of the major actors slated for the scheme were Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India. Pakistan defied every effort made by the Soviet Union to develop closer relations with it. Instead Pakistan preferred China’s friendship. Sino Pakistan relationship intensified further particularly after the Bangladesh crisis.\textsuperscript{118}

The Soviet Union failed to win over Islamabad even after the latter had withdrawn from the CENTO in 1977.\textsuperscript{119} Further in 1975 the hopes for “collectivity” receded further as Mujibur Rahman’s government was overthrown following a coup in Bangladesh. Even India chose to define the limits of its relationship with the Soviet Union. This was despite Brezhnev’s personal request during a visit to New Delhi in 1973.\textsuperscript{120}
The Soviet foreign policy in the Indian Ocean region was a combination of ideology and power politics. There were very few contradiction in policy goals as well. The Soviet Union was able to evolve clear and time-bound policies whether long-term or short-term. These policies often resulted in its favour.

The Soviet Union entered into bilateral agreements, supported the “peoples struggles” against Western imperialism, supplied arms and ammunitions to its allies in the Indian Ocean region. By the seventies it had a locus-standi in the major sub-regions of the Indian Ocean. From the Khruschev era the Soviet Union began a sustained effort towards counter-acting the U.S. presence in the region. The Soviet policy received further impetus and direction under the long leadership of President Brezhnev. The Soviet Union was able to consolidate its position with an independent naval presence vis-a-vis the deployment of the U.S. navy in the Indian Ocean region.

Nevertheless it may be stated that with the increasing presence of both the Soviet Union the U.S.A. both super powers were increasingly involved in the politics of the regional states. This created further tensions in the Indian Ocean region. As a result regional conflicts amongst the littoral states were often globalised. Such conflicts became a part of the bi-polar rivalry as a result of Soviet and U.S. involvement.

On the basis of this background to the politics of the Indian Ocean region we can proceed to analyze the Indo-Pak conflict of 1971.
CHAPTER - 1 - FOOT NOTES


2. Ibid.


10. Ibid - p.165.

11. Ibid.


16. Ibid - p.11.

17. Ibid.


20. Presentation by Ronald I. Spiers, of the U.S. Department of State, before the House of Representatives, Sub-Committee on National Security Policy and Scientific Development of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 92nd Congress 2nd Session July 1971 pp 164-165.


22. Ibid.


26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.


29. Ibid.


34. Department of State Bulletin No.66 March 13, 1972, p.388.


36. Ibid.


40. Braun, Dieter. op.cit. p.58.


42. Ibid, 1236.

43. Beazley, Kim C. op. cit p.117.

44. Ibid pp. 124-125.

45. Sick, Gary op. cit pp 28-29.

46. Ibid p.33


58. Ibid, pp. 43-44 & Also see The Hindustan Times, 28th August, New Delhi, 1980.


61. Krutskikh, Andrei. op. cit. 125.

62. Times of India, New Delhi, 8 February, 1981.


71. Ibid p.438.


73. U.N. Secretary General’s Report, A/AC 159/1 p.12; and also see - Foreign Affairs and National Defence Division, Congressional Research Service. U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives and Overseas Military Installations, prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on


83. Ibid.


88. Harshe, Rajen - op. cit. p. 194-195

89. Lenczoowski, George. op. cit. p. 54.


93. Nogee, Joseph L. (et al) op.cit 150-151.

94. Ibid, pp. 157-158.


96. Nogee. op. cit. p.166.


103. Nogee & Donaldson op.cit p.166.


107. Lencoowski, George. op.cit p.54.


