CHAPTER V

INDIAN OCEAN: A ZONE OF PEACE

After hundred and fifty years of British naval domination the Indian Ocean is now assuming new strategic significance. The littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean are deeply concerned about the frequent movements of nuclear powered sub-marinines and warships of the two Super Powers. With the commissioning of the U.S. Communication base in Diego Garcia on March 20, 1973, "The United States...became the first of the two Super Powers to establish a military base on foreign territory in the region..."1

According to Mr. Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs sub-committee on the Near East and South Asia, the Nixon administration asked the Congress for $30 million for the build-up of U.S. naval facilities in Diego Garcia. Great Britain had agreed to the U.S. Plan of expansion of the Diego Garcia base.

With the already existing Anglo-American bases in the Indian Ocean Diego Garcia symbolised the growing strategic interest of the American Navy in the Indian Ocean presumably to counter any extension of Soviet naval influence into the region. The Soviet Union had no base in

the Indian Ocean, although the Soviet naval presence was noticeable since March, 1968. The Soviet Union had no base in the Indian Ocean but they were watching the developments there carefully. France with its few bases was also determined to make its presence felt in the Indian Ocean region.

Thus, the greatpower rivalry had lead to the militarization of the Indian Ocean. In the eyes of the littoral powers, "Weapons attract weapons, and bases whatever they may be called, will attract bases from the opposing parties. If either of the Super Powers established a naval base in the Indian Ocean, it will only be a matter of time before the other follows suit". The Indian Ocean was not in any way critical or vital to the security of the United States, and the Soviet Union too was not in a position to threaten or disrupt the Western oil routes or trade and commerce carried on across the Indian Ocean as has been alleged by Britain. Yet the Anglo-American policy worked up the bogey of a Soviet threat and to accelerate their
programme of establishing naval bases at important strategic islands in the Indian Ocean. The cumulative effect of this policy was to bring the Soviet navy into the Indian Ocean. "One of the immediate dangers of this apparent trend is that the Indian Ocean area which has been relatively free in this respect is in danger of becoming a satellite of the security system of the major powers - both as a launching area as well as a target area for nuclear systems. Another likely result of this development is that there will be an intensification of "cold war" politics which will in itself lead to a number of consequences."² What frightened the littoral States more was the immediate prospects of an arms race and the potential conflicts were also likely to arise from such a rivalry than an ever-growing and intimidating presence of nuclear weapon system in the Indian Ocean. The naval politics of the major maritime power was to involve some of regional powers, but also to threaten the security of the littoral States opposing such powers. The American gunboat diplomacy at the final phase of the Indo-Pakistan war for the liberation of Bangla Desh in December

1971, cannot be forgotten. "A grave threat to India did arise out of the activities of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and an implicit nuclear threat was held out by the presence of the nuclear powered carrier USS Enterprise with nuclear weapons on board, in the Bay of Bengal."³. The Indian Ocean littoral States had been known for their endemic political instability and economic backwardness for long time. "The Indian Ocean area is a region of low solidarities or community interests. Although it forms a geographical and historical entity, there are few cooperative links between countries in the region and these are either bilateral or sub-regional."⁴. Therefore, in the event of conflicts or crises in this region leading to a local war, the increased naval presence of big Powers whose land forces had only partly been withdrawn, were likely to terrorize the regional countries by their interventionist policies.


The Indian Ocean for several centuries has attracted the interest and attention of maritime powers from outside the Indian Ocean region and the emergence of independent states in Asia and Africa has in no way diminished the interests of the big maritime powers in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the newly independent countries of the Indian Ocean region have recognised the importance of the Indian Ocean being free from the tension and rivalries of the big power as a condition for their own development and further progress. The adoption of Non-alignment as the policy of a large number of newly independent countries has influenced them in their desire to transform the Indian Ocean into a Zone of Peace as a necessary condition for maintaining and preserving their political independence and sovereignty.

The proposal to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace can be traced to the Cairo Conference of the Non-aligned states in 1964. At that Conference it was recognised that the concept of a zone of peace is inherent in the concept of Non-alignment which requires that the land territories, airspace and territorial
waters of Non-aligned states be closed to big power conflicts and rivalries. At the 1964 Non-aligned Conference the participating States favourably viewed the establishment of atom-free zones in various parts of the world including Asia. It was agreed that a nuclear-free zone be adopted for the Indian Ocean as the Southern Atlantic. In September 1970, at the Lusaka Conference the Non-aligned countries went a step further and called for a peace zone in the Indian Ocean, which would be not only free of nuclear weapons but also one from which great power rivalries and competition would be excluded. It was felt that the intrusion of big powers' rivalries into the Indian Ocean could result in the loss of political freedom in Asia as in the 18th century. The Non-aligned countries were of the view that there should not be a recurrence of this situation. The object was to contain the activities of foreign powers and ensure that they do not make the Indian Ocean a battle ground for their rivalries.

The proposal was taken a step further when the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, in January 1971, suggested at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference that the
Indian Ocean be declared a "Zone of Peace". At the United Nations General Assembly in 1971, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka proposed formally to that body to declare the Indian Ocean a "Zone of Peace". Speaking at the General Assembly Mrs. Bandaranaike said, "The proposal should not be regarded merely as part of a scheme of collective security confined to the Indian Ocean. On the contrary, it is intended as a direct tangible contribution to the disarmament decade and to the strengthening of conditions for world peace".

Continuing her address, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka drew attention to the existing circumstances in the Indian Ocean, which were specially conducive to the adoption of the Declaration.

The aim of the proposal, as distinct from its implications, was the establishment, in the Indian Ocean area, of a nuclear free zone, where peace would be ensured by the exclusion from the zone of big power rivalries as well as elimination of bases as seen in the context of big power rivalries. To be more specific this would mean, firstly, the countries of the region
both littoral and hinterland states, as well as countries outside the region militarily active in the region would have to assume certain commitments if any stable agreement materialised. As far as the countries in the region were concerned, they would have to commit themselves to a policy of de-nuclearisation, which would entail permanent renunciation by them of nuclear weapons and the assumption of an obligation to deny the use of their territories and their territorial waters and their airspace to nuclear weapons belonging to other states. On the part of the nuclear powers, their contribution would be the assumption of an obligation not to deploy nuclear weapons in the peace zone area.

Secondly, the creation of a peace zone pre-supposed also the renunciation by states of the region of the threat or use of force against any other state in the region and the affirmation of their resolve to settle their disputes with one another by peaceful means and without resort to force. The right of self-defence, of course, was re-affirmed.
Thirdly, the freedom of the high seas was to continue to be guaranteed for peaceful purposes, including commerce & merchant shipping and the passage of warships across the Indian Ocean would be permissible. provided that their presence was not a threat to the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the littoral and hinterland states or prejudicial to the good order or security of these states.

Fourthly, it implied that the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace sought the elimination from this area of all foreign bases and military installations as well as a stop to the establishment of new bases and a limitation on the enlargement of existing bases. The United Nations General Assembly at its 26th session in 1971 adopted a Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a "Zone of Peace". 61 countries voted in favour and none against, whilst, 55 member states abstained. Of the big powers, USA, USSR, Britain and France abstained while China voted in favour.

The Declaration sought to define the concept of a "Peace Zone" and the essential elements of it were described in operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of Resolution 2832 (XXVI) which ran as follows:
"(2) Calls upon the great powers, in conformity with the declaration, to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean with a view to:

a) Halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean;

b) Eliminating from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great power rivalry;

(3) Calls upon the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, in pursuit of the objective of establishing a system of universal collective security without military alliances and strengthening international security through regional and
other co-operation, to enter into consultations with a view to the implementation of this Declaration and such action as may be necessary to ensure that:

(a) Warships and military aircrafts may not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or independence of any littoral or hinterland state of the Indian Ocean in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations:

(b) Subject to the foregoing and to the norms and principles of international law, the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels of all nations is unaffected;

(c) Appropriate arrangements are made to give effect to any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace".

The idea of a 'peace zone' in the Indian Ocean area was the outcome of fears generated by power rivalry
and the establishment of naval bases in the Indian Ocean. Apparently the western countries justified these developments as a reaction to the Soviet penetration into the Persian Gulf area, Middle East and the Indian Ocean. The Soviet presence constituted a threat to their vital oil supply lines and the commercial, trade and navigational routes. However, all the evidence available so far indicated the "any apprehension that the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean could constitute a threat to non-Soviet shipping.... do not seem to be well-grounded. It would not be logical for the Soviet Union to act in that way and risk its unimpeded use of the oceans throughout the world". The real interests of the West in the Indian Ocean was due to its "special significance to the Super Powers with regard to the latest technological devices in military strategy, both underwater and in the air, including satellites (such as the British American skynet communication system). Ships are part of this strategy of threat-deterrence, vigilance and in such context conventional bases such as

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Simonstown are likely to lose much of their importance. On the other hand, the Soviets perceived it as an outflanking strategy of the Soviet Navy by the West by "creating suitable checkpoints to keep it under surveillance in peace and war and generally to maintain the Indian Ocean as a sphere of their influence as in the past."

The Afro-Asian nations of the Indian Ocean area viewed it with grave concern because the power rivalry was bound to create tension, and even pose a threat to their independence.

Hence, at the Lusaka Conference of non-aligned nations in September, 1970, the concept of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean was formalised. The Lusaka Declaration, inter alia stated: "The Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace: Adoption of a Declaration calling upon all States to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of Peace from which great power rivalries and competition as well as bases conceived in


the context of such rivalries and competition either army, navy or air force bases, are excluded. The area should also be free of nuclear weapons".\(^8\)

One of the problems arising from the "Peace Zone" proposal was the geographical limits contemplated in the concept. Then Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike's view was that "... the concept of a zone of Peace is inherent in the concept of non-alignment which requires that the land territories, air, space, and territorial waters of non-aligned States must be closed to great power conflicts and rivalries. All areas under the jurisdiction of non-aligned states should, therefore, by definition be zones of peace". What was apparent in this definition was the attempt to include land areas around the Indian Ocean within the purview of this definition. The object of extending the scope of a peace zone concept to the land areas was to bring all militarization, arms build up including nuclear weapon programme within its ambit. This was implied in Ceylon's Memorandum submitted to the Singapore Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers on January 8. Indian Ocean Region, Op. Cit., Appendix H (P. 75).
21, 1971 which says: "A parallel corollary of a peace zone is that regional states bordering the Indian Ocean will themselves refrain from action prejudicial to the concept of a peace zone. Their defence requirements, therefore, would have to be measured against their obligations not to compromise the concept of a peace zone".\(^8A\).

However, Sri Lanka became agreeable to limit the zone of peace to the Indian Ocean only with the important rider that it would also be simultaneously a nuclear free zone. After presenting Ceylon's Memorandum on the Indian Ocean at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference at Singapore, she requested the Heads of States "to give serious consideration to accepting, in principle, a formulation acceptable to every body on the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace" and a nuclear-free zone". Similarly, on 12 October, 1971, she stated before the U.N. General Assembly, "I propose that the Indian Ocean be declared a zone of peace". The U.N. Resolution No. (XXVI) of 16 December, 1971 designated "the Indian Ocean, within

\(^8A\). The Straits Times, January 22, 1971.
limits to be determined, together with the air space above and the ocean floor subjacent thereto ..... for all time as a zone of peace". This resolution was adopted by 61 votes, none against and with 55 abstentions. Among the nuclear powers only China supported the resolution. All other nuclear powers abstained. At the 27th session of the U.N. General Assembly, under Resolution No. 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December, 1972 an adhoc committee, consisting, of fifteen nations, was set up to study the implications of the peace zone proposal "having due regard to the security interests of the littoral and hinterland states, the Security Council members, and all the principal maritime users of the Indian Ocean to strengthen the move to declare the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace". The resolution was adopted by 95 votes, none against and with 33 abstentions. China again supported the resolution. All other nuclear powers abstained. This time, practically all the littoral States supported it.


10. The 15 nations are: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia.
The objectives of declaring the Indian Ocean as a "zone of peace" were several. Ceylon's Memorandum and the U.N. Resolution 2832 (XXVI) of December 16, 1971, outline these aims in detail. The intention was to persuade the littoral states as well as the outside powers using the Indian Ocean especially for military purposes, to accept certain restrictions. The Prime objective was to prevent the militarization of the Indian Ocean. Mrs. Bandarnaike declared in the U.N. General Assembly on 12 October, 1971: "There are no nuclear powers nor any major nations among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. They are in fact, geographically remote from the area, and have no reason to consider the Indian Ocean as critical or vital to their security and strategic interests. The military and naval forces of the great powers in the Indian Ocean have not yet assumed significant proportions and the adoption of the Indian Ocean proposal would not involve us in the necessity of making elaborate provision for the dismantling of existing military bases and installations as would be the case in other
areas"\textsuperscript{11}. As a corollary to this, all armaments race, offensive or defensive, within the peace zone were to be prohibited. Warships, ships, carrying warlike equipments and submarines while passing through the Ocean should not halt except for emergency reasons. No manoeuvring by warships of any nation, no naval intelligence operations and no nuclear weapon tests of any kind be permitted. It also implied the elimination "from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destructions and any manifestation of great power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of the great power rivalry"\textsuperscript{12}.

The prevention of the extension of the Super Power nuclear arms into the Indian Ocean was clearly a part of the objective to demilitarize the Indian Ocean because it was a potential threat to the territorial integrity of the littoral States, as evidently proved by the intrusion into the Bay of Bengal, of the USSR Enterprise in December, 1971.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
It is evident from Ceylon's Memorandum that the peace zone as conceived by her was far more idealistic than that of the any other littoral states. For, one of the purposes of the peace zone, was the eventual evolution of an "Indian Ocean Community in which problems of security will be dealt with by orderly and institutional means for promoting peaceful change". Perhaps, the most important objective of Sri Lanka in establishing an Indian Ocean peace zone was to make it a nuclear - free zone as well, presumably by pressurizing the only near-nuclear power in the area, namely India, not to exercise its nuclear option and not to become another nuclear power. Another objective was "to stabilise the Indian Ocean as a power vacuum so that the abrasive conflicts of the "cold war" do not enter into it and the region could concentrate on the solution of its major problems of security, under development, etc.". Finally, "it should receive universal acceptance and be fitted into the larger design of world peace and security and of general and complete disarmament".


PEACE ZONE AND THE FREEDOM OF THE SEA

The major objection to the peace zone proposal was that it would amount to a gross transgression of the freedom of the sea and the existing body customary and conventional international law of the sea. This kind of criticism came mainly from the outside powers who were the principal users of the Indian Ocean. According to them, "a group of states in any given region cannot establish a separate legal regime for the high seas in that region." Some nations expressed misgivings that it would even interfere with navigation and trade, fishing, installation of submarine cables and pipelines as well as overflights. Some also opposed it because it was against the spirit of the defence arrangements in the region.

The protagonists of the peace zone proposal admitted that "the freedom of the high seas will be subject to important voluntary limitations." But

16. Ibid.
they argue that such outmoded concepts should be modified "to accommodate the needs and realities of the world today. One may go so far as to say that the principle of the freedom of the high seas does not adequately serve the fundamental interests of all nations alike, but is clearly weighted in favour of the interests of the dominant user nations. This inequality must be redressed".

As a disarmament measure, the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal was much more grandiose than anything that had been attempted so far. It "goes much further than did the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America (The Treaty of Tlatelolco), the Organization of African Unity's declaration of Africa as a nuclear-free zone or any other suggestion for zonal denuclearization, in that it provided for the exclusion of both nuclear and conventional weapons. It called for total dimilitarization and neutralization of the Indian Ocean".

According to one study, "the exclusion of all foreign naval powers is one which is widely held in those

Asiatic countries which fringe the Ocean"^{20}. It went on to assert that "the expressed desire of many a riparian State that this Ocean w-ould now remain a benign, unclaimed and innocent highway, freely accessible to all, is almost too idyllic to contemplate"^{21}. This was a distorting approach of the Indian Ocean states which mainly opposed the militarization of the Ocean.

**INDIAN OCEAN: A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE**

Apart from treating the Indian Ocean as a peace zone, let us discuss whether it was feasible to make it a nuclear-free zone? A move to establish a nuclear-free zone in one of the oceans was a recent development. So far, the attempt had been to create nuclear-free zones on territories and not in the oceans. The Rapacki Plan of October, 1957, had its application to Central Europe as the area to be declared a nuclear-free zone from which the conventional forces also were to be withdrawn. Similar plans for the Balkans, Middle East and Northern Europe also figured.

in the discussions since 1957. The U.N. General Assembly adopted Res. 2033 (XX) at its twentieth session on 3 December, 1965 endorsing the declaration on the denuclearization of Africa adopted by the Heads of States of the Organization of Africa Unity in 1964. The Latin-American nuclear-free zone became possible because there were "no opposing sides" none to speak, no balance of power problems, no confrontation of east-west power blocs, and no nuclear weapons or bases within the area. The Tlatelolco Treaty of 1967, known as the "Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America", had defined the Latin American nuclear free zone as "the whole of the territories" of Latin America (Article 4). According to the Treaty, "territory" had been defined to include not merely the land territory but also the "territorial sea, air space and any other space over which the State exercises sovereignty" (Art. 3). Geographically, the Treaty had application to the Latin American States which extended up to the territorial waters. In Latin America, claims to territorial waters varied from 12

23. CCD/PV. 453, P.P. 13-17.
miles to 200 miles as asserted by states like Peru and Chile. The basic difference between the Indian Ocean nuclear-free zone proposal and Tlatelco Treaty was: the former applied to the ocean (excluding the territorial waters) the air space above it and subjacent waters where is the latter was applicable to the land mass. The Mexican Representative, Mr. Robbs, in 'his' statement to the 'Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on February 26, 1970, Observed: "It necessarily implies in fact, the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons in the territories of all states parties to the treaty under which the zone is established". 24 In Latin America there were no nuclear powers, in the Indian Ocean littoral also there were no nuclear powers. Similarly, there was at least one near-nuclear power in each area. In the case of Latin America, both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans were nuclear zones. The Super Power rivalry and the transit of nuclear weapons beneath the oceanic waters were also taking place. However, in regard to the Indian Ocean, the

area was gradually becoming a focal point of Super Power rivalry and another nuclear zone. Hence, the littoral states were justified in taking a unified stand to opposing the power rivalry in the Indian Ocean and in declaring the area a peace zone through the U.N. Resolution.

The nonaligned countries accepted the principle of nuclear-free zone at the Cairo Conference, 1964. Among the Commonwealth countries, Sri Lanka was the foremost champion of a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean. A comprehensive definition of this zone embraced even the land areas of the Indian Ocean littoral. But, most of the countries which supported Sri Lanka's initiative including India had so far been very cautious in their approach in regard to the question of nuclear-free-zone in the Indian Ocean. The Lusaka Conference, 1970, did not go beyond the concept of a peace zone. The U.N. Resolution of 16 December, 1971, likewise reiterated the idea of a peace zone and made no mention of the nuclear-free zone although the presence of nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean in the context of the great
power rivalry had been considered a threat to the security of the littoral states.

Any attempt to declare the Pacific or the Atlantic oceans as nuclear-free zones was impracticable to have nuclear-free zones in these oceans as the vital interests of the super powers are involved there. The nuclear powers were so close to these oceans and the Polaris and Poseidon submarines and their Russian versions with nuclear warheads too were there. But in the Indian Ocean, the situation was different. The Super Powers were situated far away and their national security was not directly threatened or involved except when the introduction of American SLBM system into the Indian Ocean assumed a definite threat to the Soviet and Chinese territories. Hence, the local initiative to prevent the Indian Ocean partaking the character of the Atlantic and the Pacific was understandable. Probably the next step was to convene a conference of the littoral states to consider this question, in the same manner as the Geneva Conference of non-nuclear powers in 1968. They could on the basis of a general consensus get another resolution on the nuclear-free
zone adopted at the United Nations. Subsequently, an international treaty on nuclear-free zone was negotiable on the basis of the U.N. Res. 2028 (XX) (19 November, 1965) establishing the principle of an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and duties between the nuclear and non-nuclear powers.

There were, indeed, formidable problems about such a treaty taking shape. First is the uncertainty about India, the only near-nuclear power, becoming a party to such a treaty. It was often alleged that India refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) because of her nuclear ambitions. But how far was this allegation true? The ENDC records (Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee) showed that India refused to sign because the Super Powers flouted the principles embodied in the U.N. Res. 2028 (XX) regarding non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and especially that the NPT "should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligation of the nuclear & non-nuclear

Powers", by demanding the non-nuclear powers to give up their "nuclear option without accepting any corresponding obligation on their part to stop the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons". These were weighty reasons which led to India's decision to keep her nuclear option open. Under the climate of detente which resulted in the SALT Agreements if the Super Powers were prepared to examine the proposal for a nuclear free zone on the basis of the U.N. Res. 2028 (XX), it was quite likely that India could be willing to be a party to such an international treaty declaring the Indian Ocean a nuclear-free zone. All the littoral states of the Indian Ocean including India might be prepared to sign an international treaty declaring the Indian Ocean a nuclear-free peace zone, provided the nuclear powers were also willing to accept the U.N. Res. 2028 (XX) as the basis for negotiating such a treaty. Otherwise, it was most unlikely that India could give up her nuclear option. Because, by entering into a regional agreement without effective commitment by the nuclear powers, India, unlike all other littoral States was bound to lose her
bargaining power. In absence of a nuclear power undertaking, India would have been left with no other option but to strengthen herself militarily as a dominant regional power and become a full-fledged nuclear power. If the developments in the Indian Ocean in those years would lead to the emergence of a sixth nuclear power, the Super Powers alone were to be blamed for that. It would, indeed, had been a dismal outlook for the humanity.

But would the nuclear power oblige? Would they be prepared to accept restrictions on the freedom of the sea in violation of the customary law of the sea, in the Indian Ocean alone, while they had not done so in the case of other oceans? Even in regard to territorial nuclear-free zones, they had their reservation. In case of the Tlatelco Treaty, United Kingdom was the only nuclear power which had signed both the Protocols of the Treaty. The United States though ratified protocol II in 1971, insisted on the transit of nuclear weapons through the nuclear-free zone because of the strategic interests of the United
States in the Western Hemisphere. Hence, the U.S.A. had not so far signed protocol I of the Tlatelco Treaty under which extra-continental or continental states were "internationally responsible, de jure or de facto, for territories lying within the limits of the zone established by the treaty ....". The Soviet Union also had some reservations about the Treaty. One was the "clause concerning nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes" and the other "the absence of the prohibition to transport nuclear weapons through the territories of the contracting parties". The Soviet Union also "objected to what it viewed as excessive limitation on the freedom of its navy to move or be stationed in international waters". In its declaration on 14 November, 1972 China virtually accepted Protocol II, though without formally signing it. France had signed Protocol II some years ago.

The attitude of the nuclear powers indicated that regional nuclear-free zones were not readily acceptable to them if it is incompatible with their over-riding

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, P. 544
29. Ibid,P. 545
military balance at a particular regime or area and detrimental to their global or vital national interests. At the time of the voting of the proposal for a peace zone in the Indian Ocean, all the nuclear powers except China abstained. This is the crux of the problem about a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean. However, "it may undermine the credibility of the avowed positions of nuclear weapon powers and also adversely affect the prospects for the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones on other continents or areas." 30 The strategic scenario & more particularly the undersea militarization technology indicated that the trend was towards the deep ocean. The view had also been reinforced by SALT agreement which make it clear that "Nuclear ballistic missile marines will remain the strategic second strike weapon systems, of the United States and the Soviet Union for the foreseeable future." 31 Now after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Super Power Politics has been replaced by Sole Power politics. As in reality the U.S.A. does not want this, the prospects of Indian Ocean being a zone of peace are very bleak.