CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many decades the region was the object of colonial domination by European parent states. As the process of decolonization developed after World War II, the Indian Ocean region acquired an increasingly greater independent role in world politics. Now that only some remnants of the former colonial empires remain, and the regional states which had achieved independence have become actively involved in international relations, the Indian Ocean area has turned into a region of intense political activity. It is of major military and political importance and has recently become the scene of a powerful upsurge in the anti-imperialist movement. The sizable contribution of the Indian Ocean region to the world economy and culture is universally recognized.

A good part of the region's area is the Indian Ocean, the world's third largest. The Indian Ocean and its seas cover almost 75 million sq. km. (20.7 percent of the world Ocean) and contain approximately 300 million cubic km. of water (21.3 percent).
Geographically, the Indian Ocean region represents an aggregate of several subregions. It includes South Asia, part of the Middle East, West Asia, South-East Asia and the Australian continent, the Horn of Africa, East Africa, and the south-eastern part of the African continent. The political map of the Indian Ocean is comprised of 44 littoral and hinterland states officially registered in the United Nations, with a total population of 1,300 million (one-third of the world population). The UN documents list the following littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Burma, Burundi, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Qatar, Ruanda, Saudi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic and Zambia.
The Indian Ocean states represent distinctive national, ethnic, racial and religious groups; have different levels of economic development and positions in the international division of labour; and vary in their political orientation and role in world politics. Such heterogeneity in the region hampers the development of a common position on many major international issues and the pooling of available resources for solving common problems. Imperialism has thus opted for a policy of neocolonialism based on the old principle of "divide and rule".

Indira Gandhi, the late Prime Minister of India, noted that not one week had passed without armed conflict in some part of the Asian continent in the past decade. Most, if not all, first started due to the unwillingness of imperialists to renounce their domination and then continued as they resorted to new forms of interference. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the situation in the Indian Ocean area was becoming increasingly explosive. Imperialist policy
contributed to the threat of new armed conflicts which, considering the power of modern weapons, could spread to other regions and bring about a wider confrontation.

It is with good reason that the politicians and military leaders of imperialist powers single out the region of the Middle East- Persian Gulf- Indian Ocean as the most probable place for the "detonation" of a global nuclear war.

The countries whose security problems are the subject of this study cover the whole of southern Asia- south-central and south-eastern Asia. In area they form about a fifth of the continent of Asia, including its western and Soviet Asian parts. With the east coast of Africa, Australia and New Zealand they cover the entire Indian Ocean Area. India dominates the string of countries from Afghanistan to Indonesia in the north of this area which is framed on its sides by the African and Australian continents. Both by geography and politics the area is a region as important as the region of the Far East comprising China, Japan and
the northern Pacific. If Soviet Asia were excluded, because it is not a region in the same sense, the only other region in the continent is western Asia which, geopolitically, ranks perhaps next to the other two. Of the twelve countries of the region under consideration—Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Srilanka, Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, Indo-China, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand—all except two (Malaysia and Indo-China) are fully self-governing. Three, Afghanistan, Nepal and Thailand, are monarchies; the Dominions, Pakistan, Srilanka, Australia and New Zealand are monarchies only in the devious sense of being members of the Commonwealth of which the British monarchy is the head. In so far as the Commonwealth is an organization, however loosely-knit, it dominates the region both in extent and numbers. Taking the contiguous land mass from Afghanistan to Malaysia and Indo-China, land communication between the countries is rendered very difficult either by natural barriers or otherwise by
lack of road and rail development, except between India and Pakistan. Excepting Afghanistan and the Himalayan States which are land-locked, the states of the region are easily served on water by the Indian Ocean navigation routes. Rapid strides in civil aviation since the war have given the region a good, if still inextensive, network of air communication. The region, however, has a poor countries of it were not 'states' until recently. While political contact was negligible, commercial contact on a substantial scale was barely more ancient than the past quarter of a century. And Australia and New Zealand have been practically aloof from the rest of the region for not only political but racial reasons.

Geographically Afghanistan is more a part of western Asia. But western Asia is ethnically and culturally dominated by Arab civilization for the most part and for the rest by the Persian. Though the Persian language is spoken in Afghanistan and its
religion is Islam, it has little in common with the culture and history of the Middle East. On the other hand its history lay almost wholly to the east. Despite this, Afghanistan's social and political tradition has not very much resembled the Muslim tradition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Compared with the latter, as well as with the evolution of Middle-Eastern politics and society, Afghan socio-political trends are rather backward. Afghanistan is, therefore an ethnographic and cultural interpolation between the Arabic-Persian tradition of western Asia and the Hindu-Muslim tradition of the sub-continent. The country's part in recent Asian history might have been different if its strategic value were higher. But as this value is low compared with either of the two physical agglomerations between which Afghanistan is situated. A highly mountainous country, with no rail communications, inextensive motorable roads, negligible basic economic development, (with its difficult ground for constructional engineering as
engineers of many nationalities have found) and a half of its population of 12 millions being tribal or nomadic, Afghanistan has not attracted the same geopolitical attention as the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. The creation of Pakistan was an event of major importance to Afghanistan as a source both of friction and collaboration; friction over the 'autonomous' tribal territory between the two countries and collaboration with a neighbour to the east to which Afghanistan had all along but ineffectually looked.

1. For a forward view of the future role of the two countries as between themselves and vis-a-vis tribal territory, see W.K.Fraser Tytler, Afghanistan, 1950, pp. 229-30. - "As it stands at present behind the artificial boundary of the Durand Line, Afghanistan is ethnographically, economically and geographically an incomplete state". "It (the tribal territory) is an anarchonism and a danger to the stability of northern India and the peace of Central Asia. The remedy is the fusion of the two states of Afghanistan and Pakistan in some way or other...history suggests that fusion will take place, if not peacefully, then by force."
When Pakistan was carved out of the undivided India in 1947 the differences between its two parts, western and eastern, were more than merely the physical, arising from the distance of a thousand miles Indian territory between them. Though there may be little in common between the Muslims of western Pakistan and those of Afghanistan, Pakistan's western part has the feeling of being a link, even though the last, in the chain of Muslim states from Egypt eastwards, whereas eastern Pakistan was surrounded by Indian territory except for about a hundred odd miles of a border with Burma. There is practically no Hindu population in Western Pakistan whereas the country's entire Hindu minority of more than 10 million was concentrated in eastern Pakistan. Despite provincial differences between Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier, a common state language has been easier to enforce in western Pakistan than in the eastern province. The Muslim population of East Bengal (now Bangla Desh) is strongly bi-lingual and the persistent
demand there for the recognition of Bengali also as a state language is not necessarily co-extensive with the Hindu population. Moreover, culturally, the Muslims of East Bengal seem to be less distinctly Muslim and more provincial than their co-religionists in any of the three provinces of western Pakistan. In spite of the virtual cessation of land-frontier contact between the two countries in both east and west since partition in 1947, intercourse between the two Bengals seemed more natural and easily resumed than intercourse between the two Punjabs. There is no substantial Muslim concentration adjoining the Indian side of the West Pakistan - India border; the Muslim concentrations of northern India now begin one tier lower. With practically no Hindus in western Pakistan, therefore, the Indo-Pakistan border is at present culturally and linguistically firmer in the west (excluding Kashmir). In the event of tension between the two countries, there is no question here of
any more movement of populations between them. But
prospect of migration was real in such an event in the
case of the Indo-Pakistan border in the east, as was
demonstrated early in 1950. The Muslims of West Bengal
and the Hindus of East Bengal can still practicably and
profitably look across the border. For these reasons
eastern Pakistan, which was the largest and most
populous of Pakistan's provinces, was its weakest unit,
a centrifugal drag on an otherwise centripetal state.
In internal communications Pakistan is, relatively to
its size, as well developed as India. The railway
system that fell to Pakistan's share as a consequence
of partition was among the most closely laid of
undivided India's. Harbour and airport facility on the
modern and large scale is, however, confined to Karachi.
Chittagong and Chalna in East Bengal may develop into
major ports, but their location in a peculiar land
extremity of eastern Bengal and their close proximity
to the Burmese border reduce their defensibility as
compared with that of Karachi.
"Unity in diversity" was the phrase constantly employed to describe the structure of the undivided Indian sub-continent. It is not curious that partition reduced only the extent of both, not their nature. Post-partition India is proportionately as diverse and unified. The nature of unity has perhaps somewhat changed, for the better, because the political distinction in undivided India between the provinces and the princely States has now disappeared. The new India still retains some 40 million out of undivided India's 100 million Muslims. They continue to be scattered all over India in the same strengths more or less as before, except in the area between Delhi and the Indo-Pakistan border in the north and northwest. After partition the only serious separatist agitation based on religion came from the Sikhs. But the agitation was a hangover from pre-partition politics and is fizzling out both because the Sikh community realises that an autonomous state for it is politically and economically untenable in the altered geography and
politics of the sub-continent and because a very large section of the community had found political self-expression in PEPSU, one of the unions of former princely states embedded in the Indian Punjab. The agitation for redrawing the boundaries of the states of the Union of India on a linguistic basis was intense in only one linguistic area. Even otherwise it is not an agitation for more autonomy of the Union but for making a linguistically homogeneous, rather than an arbitrarily political boundary the repository of the existing autonomy. The territorial integrity of India is thus complete; the French and Portuguese possessions did not materially affect this integrity. In the negotiations which have so far taken place between India and the foreign powers, France seems to accept in principle that its Indian territories must eventually revert to Indian suzerainty but is dilatory ever the modalities of making reversion possible. Portugal once rejected Indian claims to its territories in the peninsula even in principle.
The depth of the country is fairly well matched by its internal communications in India. The south and, the north of the country are connected by railways on lines running both towards the centre and along the coasts, thence joining from north-east and north-West. But the west and the centre are as yet poorly served by railways. When the port of Kandla was completed on the west coast, the peninsula had six major ports and harbours, three on each coast. Roads have hitherto received far less attention than either railways or harbours, though the main trunk roads are good and 'all-weather' for heavy transport.

It is in subsidiary and feeder roadways and inland water transport that Indian communications are deficient.

2. Among India's major port facilities should perhaps be included certain ports in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands which are of strategic value in the eastern Indian Ocean.
Civil aviation over internal lines is still undependable but facilities of air navigation which conform to international standards are increasing.

When history came to Nepal in 1951 and broke up the century old feudal structure of its state, it became apparent that Nepal freed from its oligarchy looked to collaboration to the new India as much as oligarchic Nepal had looked to the moral patronage of the British Power in the former India. By geographic position there could be little contact for Nepal with Tibet; profitable economic and political intercourse lay only with India. By the deep Hinduism which is the religion of the Nepalese the country has also natural cultural affinities with India. The most important cementing factor between India and Nepal during the later British period was the membership of the Gorkhas in the Indian Army. This continues in the new set-up of the two countries as well. Rail and road communications in Nepal are rudimentary and commercial air transport has barely begun. Its northern neighbour has a new meaning to Nepal now as Red China has incorporated Tibet
in the republic more completely than nationalist China was over interested in doing. Once before there had been a feud between the two countries. And it is becoming increasingly evident that both politically and strategically Nepal is India's outlying interest.

The east coast of Africa, which is the western limit of the Indian Ocean, is fringed, up till the border of the Union of South Africa, entirely by colonial territories from British Somaliland in the north to Portuguese Mozambique in the south. Other former British territories here are Kenya, Tanganyika under United Nations trusteeship, and the tiny islands of the coast, Zanzibar and Pomba. The former Italian Somaliland in the north had been Italian territory under U.N. Trusteeship and the island of Madagascar, the biggest colonial outpost in western Indian Ocean, was French. The total population of these territories was just over 24 million; it is overwhelmingly native African; there are about 200,000 Asians and 150,000 Europeans; Religion varies from the tribal in most of the area to Islam in British Somaliland and some parts of Kenya,
and Christianity where proselytisation effort was of long standing as in Madagascar. The economy as well as the administration of these territories is very colonial and the port and harbour facilities have developed with more of commercial than of strategic consideration in view. For the British at any rate the east coast of Africa does not appear to have rated high in their Indian Ocean calculations which proceeded from Aden straight to Trincomalee and Singapore. And there was South African loyalty to count upon for the entire east coast of Africa. Mozambique and Madagascar may mean much more respectively to Portugal and France in the Indian Ocean Area, especially since the Sovereignty of their possessions on the Indian coast had been controversial. Because India's commercial relations with east and south Africa has throughout been more intimate than with southeast Asia, India's contacts were naturally better fostered in the western than in the eastern Indian Ocean.

Smallness of territory and proportion between its length and breadth have helped a good deal in
promoting unity in Sri Lanka the distance between north and south at the longest points is less than 300 miles and between east and west about a hundred miles. On the other hand the concentration of communities, by no means overwhelming in any one region, is as follows: the Tamils in the extreme north and the east coast, the low country Sinhalese in the extreme south, the Kedyan Singhalese in the north-centre and south-centre, and the Moors in the east coast. The geographic distribution of religions goes with this concentration. Hinduism and Islam at the top and one side of the island and Buddhism at its heart and base. For its area and population Sri Lanka is well served by rail and road communications, particularly by the latter. Colombo is a great international airport as well. The close reliance of the country on Britain for its defence, coupled with the geographic position of the island in the centre of the Indian Ocean area give it a strategic importance different from that of any other country in the region, east or west of Sri Lanka. It may not be without significance that an independent Sri Lanka has not drawn closer of India since Indian independence
as Burma and Indonesia have been; to the extent that Srilanka looks to India with suspicion. Yet, curiously enough Burma was a part of India in modern history and the Burmese resented the Indian brand of nationalism, whereas neither of these was the case with Srilanka.

Burma has five countries around her borders. Burma was practically inaccessible by land from the northern neighbours, India and China, until the last was when the construction of the Lido road connected the country with Assam in India and the Burma road with Yunnan in China. The Burmese border with Indo China is about as short as that with Pakistan. It is with Thailand that Burma has the most extensive border, and on its coast on the Indian Ocean is a chain of commercial ports from the Arakan in the west to the Tenasserim at the southern tapering strip of the country. Of first importance in Burma's internal communications is its systematically developed inland water transport along the course of the Irrawaddy, with its chain of river ports. Roads come next as transport medium with more than double the mileage of railways which come last and are a little more than 2,000 miles in length, too small a length in relation to the size
of the country. Independence brought patent territorial disunity to Burma. The coherence of the war-time league against foreign rule could not survive political assassination. The insurgents communist or others have effectively deprived the Central authority of power over a sizable extent of central Burma. In Burma territorial and administrative divisions approximated to regions inhabited by the various nationalities. In no other Asian country of the region do the communities politically embody their separatism under one state as they do in Burma. Burma is a small state though multi national, and the slowness of the central authority in asserting itself over every region is a sign of the structural weakness of the state.

The conflict of territorial nationalities in Burma is wholly internal; it draws nothing from across any of the countries five borders. Indochina on the other hand embodies a curious mixture of structural incoherence. First the loose bond between Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia and Laos is traditional). Secondly, the millions Chinese in the population of the country and the accessible border between Tonkin and the Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Kwangsi in the north can make Chinese influence, for good or evil, very real. Though there is also a Thai minority of 3 million and Thailand is also similarly
situate in relation to Laos, the prestige of Thai politics is too low to be influential outside; in fact it is not very high even inside the country. Thirdly comes the incoherence directly arising from post-war French policy in Indo-China. This had cut the country into two, neither on the ethnic nor on the territorial basis but on ideological grounds. It is not inconceivable that Indo-China is becoming strong structurally under a communist democracy free from French moral tutelage. But in the absence of that prospect its unity is being forged by the communist wing of nationalism. As it stands at the moment Indo-China is a particularly weak entity in south-east Asia. The French lark the physical power of sustaining the structural weakness which they had fostered, and no indigenous source of strength would care to sustain it; on the contrary it has eventually worked for the unity of the country. In the absence of alien power, it is evident from Indo-China's geographical position that only China could benefit, it failed.
Thailand is probably the best knit and homogeneous unit among the countries of this region. Its unity has been achieved by distinctiveness on the ethnic side and by monarchic despotism and military dictatorship, in a non-colonial framework, on the political side. Thailand was a buffer between two colonial regimes. The policy of the Imperial powers of blocking egrees of Thai influence to the Shan plateau and Laos cut both ways; it was used by Thailand to prevent ingress of Burmese and Indo-Chinese influence. But with the ending of empire from Burma and its rapid collapse in Indo-China, Thailand cannot hope to insulate itself against the mutual traffic in ethnic and political influence. In this event Thailand's military dictatorship is in a disadvantage, encompassed as it is by the leftist democracies of its neighbours. Possible Malayan developments in the south reinforce such a view.

In a post-war Asia bubbling with nationalist enthusiasm, the evolution of nationhood for Malaysia has become an extremely tortuous process. The structure
which the British gave to Malaya, and which endured till the second World War, was if anything even less coherent than what the French gave to Indo-China. The ethnic composition of Malayan population, which reduces the indigenous Malaya to minority of the total population, coastsins about an equal number of Chinese and has a substantial Indian minority, is however the secondary cause; since the end of the war it has served as a convenient alibi for British procrastination over promoting Malayan sovereignty. The primary cause is the administrative one of disjointed territorial rule as between the federated, the unfederated, and the directly administered areas. The Federation which was constituted in 1948 is markedly an advance towards territorial unity, though not towards political freedom; to embrace eleven out of Malaysia's twelve territories - Singapore being the one outside. The post-war deflation of British armed power in the Indian Ocean area is irretrievable: The culmination of Malaysian politics in full statehood for the country is inevitable. The detachment of Singapore from the main
Malayan trends is therefore understandable. Singapore is probably the best British strategic outpost in the Indian Ocean area and naturally Britain would like to keep its political status unqualified by any derogation of sovereignty whatsoever. The danger of the situation in the Federation laid in having advanced territorial unity without at the same time devolving political power to the colony. Negatively this danger arose from the inability of the Malaya, Chinese and Indians to combine; positively also the structural integrity of the country is threatened by the same factor because communism has to an extent been able to cut across racial loyalties and cut into the structure on ideological lines, as in Burma and Indo-China. In Malaysia physical unity is easy both to maintain and disrupt: the west coast is well served by railways and exceptionally well by roads. The hilly jungle in the core of the country is ideal base to hamper communications from, as the Japanese, the Allies and the insurgents had successively demonstrated. With Bangkok and Saigon, Singapore forms a triangle of major
port facility in the east of the peninsula. But because of their close proximity to each other the strategic utility of these ports also depends upon keeping the Gulf of Siam and the South China Sea clear.

Indonesia, rather than the Philippines, is the bridge between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans; and, with its chain of islands, each stretching in length and narrow in breadth, Indonesia, with New Guinea, is the link with Australia in the eastern Indian Ocean. Ethnically Indonesia is largely homogeneous in religion as well as race. Not only is the population overwhelmingly indigenous; the two main 'sub-races' of the Proto-Malays and the Deutero-Malays together outnumber the rest six to one. The untenability of a federal structure in the small countries of east Asia which had been ruled on a unitary basis by the Imperial powers was realised quickest by Indonesia in its own case. If the federating units of these countries - whether they be based on nationality, community or geographic territory - fail to discover that the alternative to the former compulsory centralism is not
regional autonomy but voluntary centralism, they would be hard put to resisting possible external stresses as well as the current internal stresses, as in Burma for example. Federalism in these Asian countries resulted largely from the perverse policy, of the withdrawing Imperial powers, of pampering to diversity, and from the forces that made for this diversity drawing flattered encouragement from this parting kick of paternalism to unity. In the first half of 1950 it was the federative units on the periphery, and not the nucleus of the 'Republic Indonesia' that helped scuttle the federal structure in favour of a unitary republic. The close proximity of the islands to each other is conducive also to geographical unity notwithstanding their large number. Both in Java and Sumatra ports are

3. Of, L.K. Rosinger (Ed), The States of Asia, 1951, p.*439-" Indonesia had a long tradition of centralism but none of federation; the unwieldy, costly federal structure was also inextricably linked in the public mind with Dutch colonial policy. With this in mind, Indonesia's leaders decided that only a unitary structure of state could provide stable, efficient and popular government."
more numerous and harbour facilities are better in the inner towards the South China and internal communications, however, railway development is intensive only in populous Java; railway lines are comparatively very thin in Sumatra and almost non-existent in the outer territories.

The continent of Australia is roughly the same size as the United States and dominates the centre between the South Pacific and Indian Oceans. Its population is highly urbanized. It is also highly concentrated in one corner of the continent— the south-east and the port towns. Even the semi-urban and rural population is largely concentrated in a coastal belt about 300 miles deep from the coastline, east and south-east. Two-thirds of the northern half of the continent is practically uninhabited and the remaining one-third is very sparsely populated. Nearly 90 percent of the Australian population is now Australian-born and the rest immigrant. The feeling of being indigenous even in the narrow sense is thus nearly complete. Three-quarters
of the original aboriginal population are confined to
the northern fringes of the continent. These do not
enter Australian domestic calculation as the Maoris are
increasingly entering New Zealand'. The latter is due
to the gradual increase of Maoris numbers contrary to
expectations, though they are still barely 7 percent of
the total population of the country. Not only are the
Maoris politically more conscious now; they seem to be
reaching the end of their own frontier in land
settlement. But New Zealand has on the whole been
imaginative in meeting the sociological challenge of
this minority whose members impair somewhat the New
Zealander's sense of being indigenous to the country
unlike the aboriginals of Australia who can never hope
to produce a similar feeling in the Australian
whites. However, New Zealand feels more secure with a
racial minority inside than Australia does without one.
The reason is not far to seek. Relatively to size New
Zealand is more reasonably populated than Australia,
and the distribution of the population between the
North and the South Islands is fairly proportionate to their relative size. The fact that large areas of the Australian continent are uninhabitable from the climatic point of view may be reassuring to Australians but may not be deterring to prospective seekers of lebensraum.

Moreover, Australia's continental position saddles it with a two-ocean responsibility, whereas New Zealand is entirely in the South Pacific. To New Zealand the continent of Australia is itself the strategic barrier on the Indian Ocean side and it is vulnerable here mostly to the extent Australia is unable to hold its Indian Ocean line. In so far as harbour facilities ensure naval defence Australia is well served, as could be expected in a coastally-settled continent. The strategic efficiency of the Australian railway system is impaired owing to its varying gauges between states of the Commonwealth.

4. Queensland and Western Australia have 3 ft. 6 in gauges but they are not contiguous. South Australia and New South Wales have 4 ft. 8½ in gauges and are contiguous, but Victoria has a 5 ft. 3 in gauge. However, in the south the lines are contiguous, though the gauges break.