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THE USSR'S NAVAL CHALLENGE IN THE  
INDIAN OCEAN

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15 December 1972

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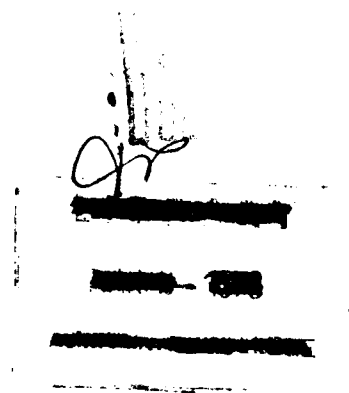
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## THE USSR'S NAVAL CHALLENGE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

BY

COLONEL BURT DALL  
CHEMICAL CORPS



### NONRESIDENT COURSE

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA



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USAWC RESEARCH ELEMENT  
(Essay)

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INDIAN OCEAN

by

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AUTHOR: Burt Dall, COL, CmlC  
TITLE: The USSR's Naval Challenge in the Indian Ocean  
FORMAT: Essay

The United States' attention has been focused anew on the Indian Ocean area because of the buildup of the Russian Navy and the regular appearance of Soviet naval vessels in the region. Questions are raised concerning the nature and consequence of the Soviet presence. Attitudes of the littoral states are examined and their impact on possible US courses of action. The principal problem concerns how to inhibit a Soviet hegemony in the area which might, in time, affect the central balance of power adversely to American interests. Information and data were collected from American, British, and SEATO sources. There is some controversy regarding the actual magnitude of the Soviet threat, but, nonetheless, there appears to be one in the Indian Ocean area. A subsidiary problem becomes evident: How to counter the threat of the Soviets' effort to spread their influence without resorting to a competitive buildup of forces. The solution requires the US to emphasize and give credence to its Foreign Aid and Security Assistance programs in order to exert American political and military influence in the region.

## THE USSR'S NAVAL CHALLENGE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian Ocean area, unlike Europe and Asia, has been only on the margins of US attention. Never considered of great importance to the central balance of power, it has been on the edges of great power rivalry.

Recently, this perspective has been challenged and attention has been refocused on the Indian Ocean. The buildup of the USSR navy with the regular appearance of Soviet naval vessels in the Indian Ocean, has contributed to this renewed interest.

This new attention raises important issues concerning US foreign and defense policy which require consideration. However, prior to any discussion of the subject it would be helpful to review the history of the Indian Ocean area.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Georgetown University conference report on the Indian Ocean summarizes salient historical aspects as follows:

"The Indian Ocean is the smallest of the three great oceans of the world, and is the only one not bounded by a major world power. The

history of the Ocean is long and complex, but one outstanding feature is that none of the littoral countries has ever exercised exclusive power across its face. At various times trading empires based themselves on the western approaches via the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, while at other times strong maritime states have existed in Sumatra and Java. But it was not until Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in November 1497, five years after Columbus' landfall in the West Indies, that one nation was able to unite the eastern and western halves of the Ocean under its own domination." <sup>1</sup>

Since Vasco da Gama's time, the Indian Ocean area has seen outside power competition and influence. The conference report continues:

"Portuguese power began to wane in the early 17th Century, while that of the Dutch grew, and control of the lucrative spice trade passed from Lisbon to Amsterdam. The cloth and tea trade of India and China attracted British -- and for a time -- French merchants, but war in Europe and conquest in India gave Britain predominance. The Dutch Empire in the East Indies remained and the French held their possessions in Southeast Asia, but to all intents and purposes the Indian Ocean was a British lake by the mid-nineteenth century. A central and overwhelming position in the Indian subcontinent was reinforced by control over all the approaches to the ocean. Naval bases protected shipping lanes and trading posts from Capetown to Singapore. The building of the Suez Canal posed a temporary threat, but the purchase of shares by the British government, followed by occupation of Egypt in 1882, ensured that the approach from the Mediterranean was also safeguarded. Towards the

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<sup>1</sup>R. M. Burrell and A. J. Cottrell, The Indian Ocean: A Conference Report (Washington: Georgetown University, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1971), p. 11.

end of the nineteenth century a new European power, Russia, began to take an increasingly active interest in its southern borders, and British efforts were bent on maintaining Persia as a buffer against Tsarist expansion towards India and on keeping the Persian Gulf free of any Russian naval presence. British paramountcy in the Indian Ocean rested upon larger military forces stationed in India and the continued maintenance of the world's finest navy. The first world war saw the destruction of the latter, and the inter-war years saw the growth of nationalist aspirations which would end the former." <sup>2</sup>

To this day Portugal remains a significant regional power through her control of the large territory of Mozambique. French influence is still present, as France controls several islands in the Indian Ocean, including Réunion and the strategic port of Djibouti in the Gulf of Aden. Also, France has maintained access to the large naval base at Diégo-Suarez in the Malagasy Republic. However, the basic historic imprint in the region has been British. By the end of World War II, though, British supremacy in the area was more illusory than real and proved short-lived.

This erosion was one of several factors that caused the gradual emergence of American involvement in the region. The United States pre-1945 interest in the area was based on the availability of oil in the Persian Gulf

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

and by the Persian Gulf Command in Iran, which managed delivery of land-lease equipment to the USSR. American World War II association with Iran survived, mostly due to the post-war USSR effort to detach Azerbaijan Province from Iran.

An American military presence was introduced to the area in 1948, and still remains there. This force (COMIDEASTFOR) consists of a small flagship, a converted seaplane tender home ported at British facilities in Bahrain, and two destroyers assigned on a rotational basis from the Atlantic Fleet. <sup>3,4</sup>

Under arrangements with the Saudi Arabian government a Strategic Air Command (SAC) Recovery base was established at Dhahran in 1951, until terminated at Saudi request in the early sixties. However, it appears that Dhahran remains a key military airlift command transit base.

During the 1950's, military advisory and training missions were sent to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia, and today remain important assets in exercising of US influence in peripheral areas of the Indian Ocean.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69

<sup>4</sup>Richard C. Schroeder, Indian Ocean Policy (Washington: Editorial Research Reports, 1971), p. 201.



Bilateral defense agreements were negotiated with Iran and Pakistan in 1950 and 1954, respectively, which interlocked with the Baghdad Pact of 1955 (CENTO after 1958) and, in the case of Pakistan, with SEATO.<sup>5</sup> To fortify US growing interest in the Indian Ocean area, substantial military and economic aid was initiated in the early 1950's and has continued to this day.

In the sixties, British power and influence continued to decline. Twelve new independent states emerged from former British-controlled territories. During the same period a parallel rise in US activity continued. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) incursion into Indian territory in the Northeast frontier in November 1962 led to a substantial US military aid program. America's new association with India survived until the India-Pakistani three week war in September 1965. Meanwhile, close US relations with Pakistan had deteriorated rapidly, in part as a result of American post-1962 support of India.

During the early 1960's the Departments of State and Defense began thinking of the longer term strategic requirements of the US in the Indian Ocean area. Great Britain had parallel interests with the US, which essentially centered on the need for secure communications

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<sup>5</sup> During November 1972 Pakistan announced her withdrawal from SEATO.

and transit rights through the Indian Ocean. In 1965 the British decided to sequester a number of sparsely populated or unpopulated islands which had been under the administrative jurisdiction of Mauritius and form a group called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). The outcome of the US-UK interests was the BIOT Agreement, negotiated with the UK in December 1966. The agreement provides for the BIOT remaining as UK territory, for detailed agreements between designated administrative authorities (i.e., US Navy and Royal Navy), and for each government bearing the cost of its own sites. The initial period covered by the agreement is 50 years, with a provision for a 20 year extension.

#### UNITED STATES' INTERESTS

The range of US interests in the Indian Ocean is complex. Our interests are these:

- The oil of the Persian Gulf is vital to our allies and of considerable direct interest to the United States.
- About 30 of the 127 members of the United Nations belong to the Indian Ocean Region, and one-third of the world's population is there. Several of the nations, such as, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, and the U.A.R., and, in certain respects, South Africa play a significant

international role. Further, the US continues to be concerned with assisting in the development of these countries. The Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology sees forward movement in economic development and towards political stability as the best means to promote an environment conducive to our own interests. <sup>6</sup>

- Conversely, the instability and intra-regional antagonisms that characterize much of the Indian Ocean area could serve to promote Soviet interests at the expense of the US. The concern is with the potential for instability in the Persian Gulf and what this might mean to US and allied oil interests.

- In addition to the BIOT, the US has other security interests in the area. The Indian Ocean must remain available to free passage to US commercial and military traffic, if only for contingency purposes. Also, we require secure air routes into and across the region.

- It is to our interest that countries of the area not pass under the control of forces hostile to the US.

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<sup>6</sup>The Center for International Studies, "The United States Interest and Foreign Aid", in Economics in Action, ed. by Shelley M. Mark and Daniel M. Slate (San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1961), pp. 415-416

Specifically, we would be concerned if PRC or Soviet influence in the area extended to control of the water areas<sup>7</sup> or significant parts of the littoral.

US strategic interests in the Indian Ocean include oil requirements. Over 50<sup>8</sup> percent of the oil required by our western European allies and 90<sup>9</sup> percent of the oil used by Japan comes from the Middle East. This assumes even greater importance when viewed in the light of known oil reserves.

With the USSR naval presence in the Indian Ocean now an established fact, the US faces the prospect of enhanced Soviet politico-military power flanking Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Australia. This calls attention to the growing Soviet naval capability in reference to the so-called choke points which control ingress and egress to and from the basin. These include Bab el Mandab at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, the Strait of Hormuz at the Narrow of the Persian Gulf, and on the eastern side the straits of Malacca and Sanda.

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<sup>7</sup>There are only a few well defined shipping routes through the Indian Ocean. Except for those which round the Cape of Good Hope or pass through the Tasman Sea around the South of Australia, the other transoceanic routes converge at the already cited choke points. Ships which desire to avoid these choke points must add many days, and in some cases, thousands of miles to their voyages from European and other North Atlantic ports.

<sup>8</sup>Burrell and Cottrell, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup>Schroeder, p. 192.

The practical effect of the Soviet presence athwart lines of communication would be acutely felt in the case of armed hostilities. A Soviet attempt to block maritime routes in peacetime could lead to a major world crisis. Nonetheless, with appropriate military basing and establishment of political preeminence in these funnel areas, Soviet domination of the most critical of these choke points is possible. The knowledge that in the event of war or great tension, the USSR or its associated states might control traffic into and out of the Indian Ocean at one or more of these points could not but exert some influence on the political orientation of those nations who would be most affected should this contingency come to pass.

In terms of strategic weapons, the Soviets would probably make every effort to limit US use of the Indian Ocean as a launching area for ballistic missile submarines.

#### SOVIET INTERESTS AND STRATEGY

The Soviets, like the czars, have long had an interest in the Indian Ocean because of the opportunities it offers for trade and for the extension of their political influence and because it lies athwart the ice-free ocean route between ports in the Western and Far Eastern USSR.

Currently, many of the merchant ships transiting the Indian Ocean are Soviet.

Since the mid-1950's, the Soviets have demonstrated a clear interest in the Indian Ocean area. Since that time, for example, almost two-thirds of their financial and economic aid has been devoted to third-world countries in the Indian Ocean area.<sup>10</sup> It is however, in the expansion and classic peacetime employment of their navy in the Indian Ocean area, where they are using sea power to complement ongoing economic and political objectives, that they have made a recent dramatic impact.

Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean was inaugurated in the Spring of 1967<sup>11</sup> with the deployment of ships with military and civilian crews for oceanographic and space-event support operations. Soviet combatant deployments in the Indian Ocean were initiated in March 1968.<sup>12</sup> Since that date the Soviets have maintained an essentially continuous presence in the Indian Ocean and have increased the number of ship-days in that

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<sup>10</sup> Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Short Paper No. 50 - Soviet Interest and Influence in the Indian Ocean Area (Bangkok: The Research Office, SEATO 1971), pp. 18-22 and p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Ocean. <sup>13</sup> This includes naval combatants, naval auxiliaries, and oceanographic ships. <sup>14</sup>

To enhance their staying power, the Soviets are soliciting access to existing seaport facilities in various locations in the Indian Ocean and its littoral. If their efforts meet success, it could permit them to develop a position of strength in such areas as the Gulf of Aden, the southern gateway to the Red Sea.

The complexities of maintaining the Soviet Indian Ocean squadron would be considerably ameliorated if the Suez Canal is reopened. Supply lines would be drastically reduced, transit times shortened, and rotation of units expedited. Similarly, with the canal opened to traffic, the number of Soviet naval deployments into the Indian Ocean would be increased significantly because elements of their Black Sea fleet would become available for rapid deployments south and east of Suez. <sup>15</sup>

The Soviets continue to probe for facilities for

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>15</sup>The time required to deploy US naval units to the Indian Ocean would be reduced also, but to a lesser extent even though the US 6th Fleet could be employed on short notice. In addition, access to Persian Gulf oil by our western allies is of considerable strategic and economic interest to the United States and would be positively affected by the reopening of the Suez Canal.

their growing Indian Ocean fishing fleet which now accounts for almost one-third <sup>16</sup> of their annual catch. In 1970 they made a limited support agreement with Mauritius and reportedly are now feeling out other nations for additional assistance.

However, in addition to its economic and maritime needs and local political considerations, SEATO writers point out that:

"The importance of the Indian Ocean to the Soviet Union must also be seen against the background of the global objectives of Soviet foreign policy. These objectives include ensuring the security of the Soviet Union, the expansion of Soviet influence outside the Soviet bloc, the undermining and disruption of Western influence and the containment and, where possible, the elimination of Communist Chinese influence." <sup>17</sup>

Admiral Zumwalt also supports the thesis of the Soviet intent to outflank the PRC. <sup>18</sup>

In its efforts to encircle the PRC, the USSR's intent is to diminish PRC influence not necessarily to preclude PRC naval expansion into the Indian Ocean region. For unlike the Soviets, the Chinese have no

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<sup>16</sup>Schroeder, p. 197.

<sup>17</sup>SEATO, Short Paper No. 50, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., "Why We Must Meet Russia's Naval Challenge," The Reader's Digest Magazine, January, 1972, p. 128.



traditional interests in the Indian Ocean. Only since the Communists came to power in 1949 have they made significant diplomatic or economic moves in the area. These efforts, which include both trade and foreign aid to selected countries like Tanzania and Pakistan, are designed to improve the image of the PRC to increase its influence. Militarily, the PRC has not ventured out of its own coastal waters, although that nation has a few ships which are capable of such deployments. To date, the PRC has seen little value in operations of a naval force in the Indian Ocean.

However slight might be the encirclement of the PRC by the USSR, the situation is potentially explosive, a threat to world peace, and, of course, contrary to United States interest in maintaining political and economic stability in Asia. Mr. Buchan summarizes Communist China's predicament succinctly: She

" ... is the world's largest state, which for the past generation has had an uncharacteristically dynamic leadership. She is surrounded on one side by a country with whom she has a bitter territorial quarrel, but who is much stronger than herself - the Soviet Union; on the east, the Pacific side, by a country that has in political terms been dormant in the last quarter-century - - - Japan, but with the shadowy American presence, and all that it forebodes, in the background; on the south-west by a country whose pretensions China bitterly resents - India; and on the south by a string

of small and weak states." 19

#### US VERSUS USSR

As previously mentioned, the US has very important interests in and ties to portions of the Indian Ocean area. At the same time, the USSR appears to be determined to gain supremacy or at least be in a position to exert a significant influence over the area. Control of the region would enable the USSR to adversely affect American interests in the area. Also, it would permit the Soviets to outflank the PRC and to open a bridgehead into all of Southeast Asia. Therefore, it appears that the US should be just as determined to prevent the USSR from taking full control and shutting the US out of an increasingly vital part of the world that Great Britain held in a firm grip for the West until recently.

Notwithstanding the dialogue and agreements that have been consummated recently between US and USSR officials, the Soviets' ultimate goal of world domination persists and is a threat. USSR excursions into the Indian Ocean region are only part of the Soviets' grand strategy. W. Averell Harriman, an acknowledged expert in international affairs, in discussing American-Soviet relations,

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<sup>19</sup>Alastair Buchan, "The Balance of Power in Asia After Vietnam," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, (June 1969), p. 137.

stated that: "Russia is still the major threat we face ... the Soviets are trying to communize the world." <sup>20</sup>

As to Soviet intentions to drive east of Suez into the Indian Ocean, Admiral Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations, has stated:

"... it's exactly what I would be doing if I were running the Soviet empire... the presence of their ships in the Indian Ocean in much larger numbers than ours, coupled with an aggressive foreign policy, gives them an opportunity to acquire the same sort of port capabilities that they've been able to achieve in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea." <sup>21</sup>

Admiral Zumwalt considers the Soviet Navy "... to be a first class professional outfit ..." and "It is dramatically more powerful than it was ten years ago." <sup>22</sup>

He goes further to point out the significance of the Soviet naval expansion and the threat it poses to the US:

"The Soviets don't need a navy superior to ours to protect their vital interests. They can aspire to have a navy larger than ours only for purposes of interfering with our vital interests." <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>W. Averell Harriman, "Reflections on American-Soviet Relations," Perspectives in Defense Management, (Winter 1971-1972), pp. 11-12.

<sup>21</sup>Admiral Zumwalt, Jr., p. 127.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

Vice Admiral Rickover in testimony to the House Appropriations Committee regarding possible reductions in US military forces versus the Soviet naval buildup stated:

"If they now succeed in building a navy which can prevent our navy from supporting overseas military operations, they can have their way over any issue for which we are not willing to risk nuclear warfare." <sup>24</sup>

The threat posed by the Soviet naval buildup, however, has turned out to be a controversial subject. There are some who believe the buildup is more of an optical illusion and some who believe the buildup to be a fact but not as significant as it appears on the surface.

In an analysis of the military aspects of the 1973 budget, the Brookings Institution points out:

"Contrary to popular impressions, there has not been a major recent expansion in the size of the Soviet Navy, although its quality has improved. ... The Soviet navy has followed a course similar to that of the US navy, accepting lower force levels in return for modernization. ... Nonetheless, the Soviet navy is now a far more capable force than it was earlier." <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Vice Admiral Hyman Rickover, "A Timely Warning," The Reader's Digest Magazine, January 1972, p. 129.

<sup>25</sup>The Brookings Institution, Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1972), p. 87.

The analysis goes further to state:

"The widening presence of the Soviet navy should not obscure the fact that it is primarily a defensive force, designed to blunt nuclear attacks on the Soviet homeland that are launched by carrier-based aircraft and strategic submarines." <sup>26</sup>

The latter part of the statement is obviously alluding to the US naval threat to the USSR.

Hanson Baldwin, in commenting on Soviet sea power, indicates there has been an overemphasis on the present capabilities of Soviet sea power, that Soviet naval power comprises both some of the best and worst in its craft and weapons systems, and that the Russians are primitive in logistics and maintenance, and they are very weak in amphibious and antisubmarine capabilities.<sup>27</sup> But he goes on to show that

"The Russians, in any case, have accomplished much with little; they have created in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean what Mahan called 'fleets in being.' Like the German High Seas Fleet in World War I, we are forced to consider the Soviet ships, to reckon with them and counter them. For they have already

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>27</sup>Hanson Baldwin, "Panelists' Comments," in Soviet Sea Power, Special Report Series: No. 10, The Center for Strategic and International Studies. (Georgetown University, June 1969), p. 110.

had - partly due to clever propoganda and to extensive western press coverage - political and psychological influence disproportionate to their combat effectiveness, and they have, for Moscow, great preemptive value." 28

This same point is covered in much more detail in the Georgetown University Conference Report on the Indian Ocean. 29 Also, in his book on Soviet naval strategy, four years ago, Robert W. Herrick, points out that Soviet naval propoganda was extensively and successfully "... employed to hide the fact of the USSR's very great and potentially disastrous qualitative naval inferiority vis-a-vis the NATO naval forces." 30 Mr. Herrick also concluded that the Soviet naval strategy at that time did not support "... the popular view that the Soviet Union is bent on the buildup of military forces essential to any aim of world domination by force." 31

Similar conclusions have been contested for years. The evidence indicates though, that if the USSR is not seeking world domination by force it certainly has been and is using her military forces to support attaining

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>29</sup>Burrell and Cottrell, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup>Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy - Fifty Years of Theory and Practice (Annapolis: US Naval Institute, 1968), p. 145.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

her political/international objectives on the road to achieving her ultimate goal.

The USSR's recent drive to power in the Indian Ocean area is similar to the containment policy the US once used against her and is accompanied by the usual formal alliances, arms aid to the less developed nations, and a display of military might. The intermediate Soviet objective apparently is to obtain military port and air bases stretching from the Middle East to the Bay of Bengal. In the meantime the US is building a naval communications center on the Island of Diégo Garcia, due south of India. Also, we are strengthening an American base in Bahrain on the Persian Gulf and sending Seventh Fleet vessels into the region on periodic patrols.

It should be noted, though, that expansion of US activities in the Indian Ocean area is not the only detriment to the USSR's actions to dominate the region. The keystone to the Soviet effort is India, South Asia's biggest and most powerful nation. India is by no means a Soviet client but arms aid, a treaty of alliance, and USSR vetoes in the United Nations during the December 1971 war with Pakistan have raised Russian influence. However, Mr. Richard C. Schroeder points out:

"Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has declared, 'We are opposed to the establishment of foreign military bases, and believe

that the Indian Ocean area should be an area of peace ...' " 32

Further, with Ceylon maintaining particularly friendly relations with the PRC there is not much chance of the Soviets acquiring bases on that island. 33

Messrs McGarry and Tretiak go further by stating that:

"Local nationalism and the antagonism of major regional states will limit the expansion of Soviet influence." 34

Also, they indicate that:

"Challenges in this area will be particularly dangerous for the USSR since her forces will be operating at the end of long vulnerable lines of communication ..." 35

The latter point could be significant in a "cold war" situation as well as in open hostilities.

It should also be noted that although India may be a hurdle to the USSR acquiring bases in the Indian Ocean area,

"The Soviet Union continues to regard India as a bulwark against Chinese hegemony and American influence in Asia. A politically

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<sup>32</sup>Schroeder, p. 190.

<sup>33</sup>SEATO, Short Paper No. 50, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup>James McGarry and Daniel Tretiak, The Impact of Developments in the Asian Pacific on South Asia and the Indian Ocean Basin, 1972-1984 (Falls Church: Westinghouse Electric Corporation, Center for Advanced Studies and Analysis, 1971), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 10.



stable and economically strong India alone can wield such countervailing influence. This is the basis of Soviet economic assistance and diplomatic support to India." <sup>36</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

We cannot assign a single value to the totality of US interests in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, it appears that over the next several years, US interests there will be of a substantially lower order than those in either of the great ocean basins, the Atlantic and the Pacific. The US borders on the Atlantic and the Pacific, and the nations of these areas are for the most part economically, politically, and militarily more important to us than those on the Indian Ocean. However, there does appear to be a requirement at this time for the US to control, or decisively influence, portions of the Indian Ocean and its littoral, given the nature of American interests there and the current level of Soviet and Communist Chinese involvement. We should consider, that our present interests cannot be served solely by normal commercial, political, and military access.

In sustaining US interests in the Indian Ocean region, it should be recognized that there is a real problem for

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<sup>36</sup>Maya Kulkarni, Indo-Soviet Political Relations Bombay: Vora and Company, 1968), p. 123.

the non-regional powers. A number of the littoral states, among them India, Ceylon, and Tanzania, have on several occasions expressed the desire to see the Indian Ocean kept free of big-power rivalry. While this attitude to some extent may condition the political atmosphere, it does not change the fact that this vast ocean area remains international waters or the fact that USSR and the PRC have not been dissuaded from continuing to augment their presence in the region.

Although the threat to any US interest in the Indian Ocean appears to be of relatively low order compared to Europe, it nevertheless is an area that merits close and continuing attention, particularly in view of the apparent Soviet and, to a lesser extent, Communist Chinese objective to enlarge their influence and presence in the region. Therefore, as we look at the region over the period of the next few years, we note that the US is faced with several policy dilemmas:

- How can America best respond to the increased Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean area and the extension of Soviet influence?

- How can the US maintain its own ability to exert military influence in that area in case of need without acting in a way that would stimulate a competitive build-up of forces?

- How can the US encourage economic development, international political responsibilities, and domestic political stability in the countries around the Indian Ocean and have good relations with them as a way of limiting the development of Communist influence hostile to American interests in those countries?

- How can the US insure maintenance of free transit through the key access points to the Indian Ocean?

I only intend to address the first two questions, because of the limited scope of this paper, and that is to state that a partial but important part of the solution to the problem posed by these questions is already in existence, i.e., the use of foreign aid and the military assistance programs that operate thereunder. In a discussion of the US interest and economic aid, it is stated that economic aid can contribute to maintaining a stable balance of military power "... insofar as it bolsters military strength and the will to resist Communist aggression, particularly in the nations bordering on the Soviet bloc." <sup>37</sup>

Lieutenant General Arthur G. Trudeau, former Chief of US Army Research and Development, supported the extension of US economic aid as a necessity to keep the nations of

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<sup>37</sup>The Center for International Studies, p. 415.

the Eastern Hemisphere free because: "Whoever controls the area within a thousand-mile radius of Cairo today (1960) can control most of the Eastern Hemisphere." <sup>38</sup>

As mentioned, these programs are already in existence. However, they are not receiving the emphasis and support in the US Congress that is necessary for adequate programs to fulfill the requirements in competing with similar Soviet programs and the overt Soviet advances discussed in this paper. The use of these programs is the best method possessed by the US to:

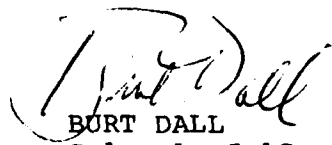
- Economically and militarily develop the third world nations,
- Exert influence over the nonaligned and underdeveloped nations, and thus
- Counter USSR influence without resorting to competition in the buildup of forces and weaponry.

We will have to find answers to the remaining questions within the constraints provided by our desire to avoid a great-power competitive buildup in the Indian Ocean. There are factors which favor our objectives. Among them are the efforts of some Indian Ocean countries

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph Bernardo and Eugene H. Bacon, American Military Policy (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 1961), p. 502.

to restrain Soviet military activity. Nonetheless, the United States must decide ultimately whether or not it will maintain the option to counter an enlarged Soviet military buildup.

  
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