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CASE STUDY

COMPETING INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Nicholas F. Andrews

FOURTEENTH SESSION

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THE SENIOR SEMINAR IN FOREIGN POLICY

FOURTEENTH SESSION
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CONFLICTING INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

A CASE STUDY

BY

Nicholas G. Andrews

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SUMMARY

This study explores the nature and importance of United States and Free World interests in the Indian Ocean area (principally the Persian Gulf's crude oil reserves) as well as the interests of the Soviet Union, China and the littoral states. Two conflicts of interests are distinguished: one between the United States and the Soviet Union in competition for political influence and strategic advantage; and the other between the super-powers and the non-aligned littoral states as to whether the Indian Ocean is to be free of nuclear weapons and naval rivalry. The conclusions are drawn that the Soviet threat to Western interests is political rather than military and potential rather than actual; that the United States should not allow the situation to drift; and that the United States and Free World nations should more closely coordinate their policies in order to develop better relationships with the littoral states and, particularly, to ensure a stable political climate in the Persian Gulf area where, within a few years' time, vital interests will be at stake.

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Introduction

The entry of Soviet naval units into the Indian Ocean in March 1968 and their more or less continuous deployment in those waters since then have aroused concern in the West - concern as to Soviet motivations, as to whether Western interests might be damaged by this Soviet intrusion and as to what the Western response or reaction should be. In his 1972 Foreign Policy Report to the Congress, President Nixon said: "The emerging Soviet capability to apply military leverage in remote areas has further underlined the need for countervailing American forces." 1/ As examples of Soviet capabilities, he cited the Soviet treaties with Egypt and India, Soviet claims to be protecting the interests of an increasing number of nations, and the enlarged Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Western Hemisphere. This paper surveys United States and Free World interests in the Indian Ocean as well as the interests of the regional or littoral states, investigates the potential Soviet threat and suggests ways in which the West may work to safeguard its current and future interests and minimize that threat.

The Indian Ocean area is not a homogeneous economic or political region. In and around the Ocean and its contiguous seas is a conglomeration of less developed states, most of which have recently acquired their independence and which have little in common with one another. While this region may be subdivided into component areas for more detailed analysis, I have preferred to consider it as a whole in order to maintain as broad and comprehensive a view as possible of the variety of complex issues which bear upon it.

United States and Free World Interests

The interests of the United States in the Indian Ocean revolve around general propositions such as freedom of the seas for all states and unhindered access for commercial and naval vessels. The United States would be concerned in the event of any interference with navigation and trade which could undermine the principle of freedom of the seas. This principle was upheld by the British Navy during 150 years of British domination of the Indian Ocean area. Now that the British no longer exercise a dominant influence, the United States would be opposed to any attempt by an external power, particularly the Soviet Union, either alone or in combination with other states, to establish hegemony in the region. In fact, the United States would probably be opposed to any attempt by a littoral state to establish hegemony in the Indian Ocean, although this is not a present likelihood or preoccupation. American policymakers wish to avoid the impression that the relative vacuum caused by the reduction in British interests and in British naval activity constitutes an opportunity for the Soviet Union to operate with impunity in the Indian Ocean. In the view of some military authorities, not the most negligible American interest is to be able to deploy missile-firing submarines in the Indian Ocean, for contingency purposes at least. Nevertheless, in the general view, all these considerations do not make a convincing case that United States interests in the Indian Ocean at the present time are vital to the security and well-being of the American people.

Free World interests (Western European and Japanese) are similar to those of the United States but carry a different emphasis. Crude oil from the Middle East, especially from the Persian Gulf states, is vital for their industry and economy. British trade with the Commonwealth countries around the Indian Ocean and the "dense network of connections between Commonwealth countries in almost every field of activity" 2/ are of major importance both to the United Kingdom and to its partners. Moreover, British investments in the Persian Gulf are considerable. Japan depends for a sizeable proportion of its raw materials, especially

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minerals, on trade across the Indian Ocean although this dependence is not as great as in the case of crude oil (87%). Both the British and French have continuing responsibilities requiring security of access to and transit through the Indian Ocean. For the British, this means Hong Kong and participation in the Five Power Arrangements with Australia and New Zealand to bolster Malaysian and Singaporean defensive capabilities. It accounts for the staging posts at Masira, off the coast of Oman, and at Gan in the Maldives. It includes British responsibility for the Seychelles and the British Indian Ocean Territory as well as facilities available to them in Mauritius and at Simonstown in South Africa to help them protect their interests. For the French, this means the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas with the key port of Djibouti, the island of Reunion, the Comoro Islands and the base facilities at Diego Suarez in Madagascar.

In coming years, United States and Free World interests are not likely to decline measurably. In fact, they are more likely to increase. A strong case can be made that the United States will of necessity become vitally concerned about the Indian Ocean in the early 1980's. It is estimated that United States consumption of petroleum products in 1980 will be 40-60% higher than in 1970. Meanwhile, American domestic petroleum production peaked in March 1972 and has been declining since. The United States will, therefore, become increasingly dependent on crude oil imports, especially those from the huge Persian Gulf fields. Although imports from the Gulf met only 5% of total United States requirements in 1970, they are expected to fill 35% in 1980 and 50% in 1985 according to conservative estimates. Other sources of energy are not likely to be developed fast enough to reduce this dependence on oil. By 1980, nuclear energy may meet 25% of American energy requirements and by the year 2000 as much as 50%. By 1980, shale oil production may provide one per cent of United States daily needs. Natural gas production from proven reserves is likely to peak this year, and economical coal production in the quantities required to reduce dependence on crude oil imports presents difficult environmental problems expensive to overcome. Nor is the exploitation of other sources of crude oil, such as Alaska, likely to make a significant difference to this outlook. Thus, the shortage of alternative sources of energy as well as the lack of sufficient alternative sources of crude oil will cause the interests of the United States, Western Europe and Japan to become virtually identical in regard to the Persian Gulf -- namely, that a steady flow of oil passing through the Indian Ocean without interference will be vital to the security and welfare of them all.

In the littoral states themselves, United States and Free World interests are again similar and rather general: to maintain Western influence, to encourage political stability, to promote their economic development by providing various types of aid and to safeguard commercial interests and investments. Given the paramount importance of crude oil, the maintenance of politico-economic stability in the Persian Gulf states is and will be vital in order to ensure the safety and continuity of crude oil production for the Free World. Later in this decade, there may well be no substitute sources of crude oil in the contingency that a Persian Gulf producer for whatever reason interrupted production. This possibility makes it vitally important for the West, therefore, to do all that may be politically necessary to ensure the adequacy and regularity of Persian Gulf oil production and transport. It goes without saying that these sources of supply constitute a security interest of the Free World since armies, navies and air forces will be as dependent on the derivatives of crude oil as industry and the civilian economy as a whole.

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Interests of the Littoral States

All the states facing on the Indian Ocean or its contiguous seas would approve the general principle of freedom of the seas. Nevertheless, many of them see disadvantages to their well-being in the development of great power competition in the Indian Ocean. They oppose strongly, therefore, any exhibition of United States-Soviet naval rivalry and would much prefer, in effect, to close the Indian Ocean to the warships of the nuclear powers.

These states seem to fear that the major powers, intent on their bipolar competition, will suck the littorals into military combinations, reduce the littorals' freedom of independent action and add unnecessarily to international tensions. Reflecting this fear, the Lusaka Declaration of September 1970 called on all states to respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries as well as bases should be excluded and stated that the area should also be free of nuclear weapons. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 2832 of December 16, 1971 went further: in addition to declaring that the Indian Ocean is a zone of peace, it called on the great powers to enter into immediate consultations with the littorals with a view to halting the expansion of their military presence and removing their bases and nuclear weapons; it called upon the littorals, the Security Council's permanent members and the major maritime powers to consult on ways to ensure that warships or military aircraft do not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the independence of any littoral state; and provided that "subject to the foregoing", the right of vessels to use the Indian Ocean without hindrance is unaffected.

Reactions vary among the littorals on how to deal with the naval presence of the Soviet Union. Australia, concerned about its Indian Ocean trade and feeling somewhat insecure about its western flank in the absence of traditional British protection, would prefer not to allow Soviet naval activities to continue without a counter-demonstration of Western interest in the Indian Ocean, hence its offer of facilities to the United Kingdom and the United States in the new West Australian port of Cockburn Sound. Indonesia, apparently regarding the Soviet naval presence as one aspect of a potential Soviet threat to undermine the littoral states politically and ideologically, could probably adjust to an increased United States presence. Ceylon, determined to remain non-aligned but afraid of Indian pressures, especially after the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty, unexpectedly welcomed Admiral McCain, Commander in Chief, Pacific, during an April 1972 visit. It balanced this visit quickly by receiving the Commander of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, Admiral Smirnov, at the end of the month. Iran and Saudi Arabia, looking with some trepidation at British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, are trying to fill the vacuum and halt any centrifugal tendencies on the part of the Trucial States and the other small countries. By establishing itself as the strongest military power in the Gulf and increasingly projecting its influence, Iran hopes to dispel any notion about the area's instability. Tanzania insists that great power naval activities should be eliminated entirely from the Indian Ocean. Singapore, mindful of its ideal port facilities, would settle for the presence of all major powers in the Ocean on the basis of an equilibrium of mutual neutralization.

The views of India are of special interest in this connection. India has consistently put forward the position that the great powers should remove their navies and their nuclear weapons from the Indian Ocean. Some Indians claim that the British would still like to dominate the Ocean -- this time from island rather than continental bases. Others, assuming a United States-British desire jointly to control these waters,

attack the modest American force of three naval vessels stationed permanently at Bahrein in the Persian Gulf and the communications facilities at Northwest Cape in Australia and (eventually) at Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago. The expedition into the Bay of Bengal of the nuclear-powered attack aircraft carrier "Enterprise" accompanied by seven supporting ships during the Indo-Pakistan war consternated many Indians as a frightening example of great power gunboat diplomacy. On the other hand, India has gratefully obtained Soviet military aircraft and naval assistance. The Indo-Soviet friendship treaty served a useful and timely purpose in providing defensive assurances against Pakistan and China. While Indians recognize that Soviet prestige has risen as a result of its support of India during the war and its prompt political and economic assistance to Bangladesh, they believe that Indian stature has also risen. They anticipate that India will now be recognized as the unquestioned dominant power in South Asia by both regional and external powers. They expect India to capitalize on this fact in its foreign policy and gradually to project its influence outward. Increased defense expenditures for the Indian navy in 1973 will enable it to take a more active role in Ocean areas around its shores and continental shelf. From India's perspective, withdrawal of the Soviet and American navies would be desirable since it would leave the Indian navy as the largest and dominant power in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, the navies of India and other littoral states - Australia, Indonesia and South Africa -- will for the foreseeable future be able to exercise only local hegemony. (The Indonesian navy is especially weak since it consists largely of Soviet ships obtained during Sukarno's rule and now partly inoperable for lack of spare parts.)

A complicating factor which cuts across the question of United States and Soviet conflicting interests is the Malaysian-Indonesian statement of November 17, 1971 that the Straits of Malacca and Singapore are not international straits, while recognizing the principle of innocent passage for international shipping. Singapore joined the other two governments in expressing concern for the safety of navigation in the Straits. At the Law of the Sea Conference scheduled for 1973, both super-powers will be interested in securing free passage through international straits, and the Soviet Union's needs in this regard may be even more pressing than those of the United States. Meanwhile, the Japanese are sensitive to the fact that the three-power initiative appears aimed in part at their super-tanker traffic from the Persian Gulf and are actively seeking ways to protect this vital trade while relieving the coastal states' anxiety about possible pollution of their shores.

Soviet and Chinese Interests

Soviet behavior in the Indian Ocean suggests that the following are major interests:

- to behave like a world power, emphasizing parity with the United States, and to use the navy to project Soviet power and influence;

- to keep watch over American naval activities, including missile-firing submarines to the extent possible;

- freedom of the seas, freedom of access to the Indian Ocean for all its ships;

- to familiarize naval elements with the Indian Ocean and establish a regular sea link between European Russia and Siberia;

- to protect navigation and commerce.

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From this perspective, the reopening of the Suez Canal would clearly benefit Soviet interests by considerably reducing the distance from the Black Sea to the Indian Ocean.

Among the littoral states, Soviet interests appear to be:

- to make clients and influence governments;
- to establish positions of strength from which existing and future interests may be defended and expanded as opportunities arise;
- to oppose China and the West in Third World countries;
- to promote a climate in which a Communist system may set down roots and flourish.

While it may be said that Soviet interests in the Indian Ocean area are growing gradually, that region is not vital from the point of view of Soviet security. The size of the Ocean, its distance from the Soviet Union, the problem of access to it and the difficulty of logistic supplies to naval elements, the lack of air and naval bases and the keen sensitivity of the littoral states to the actions of external powers in the region -- these are factors which militate against any far-reaching conclusion as to Soviet interests in the region as a whole. It appears more likely that, in the wake of substantial British withdrawal and the emergence of numerous non-aligned states testing their independence, the Soviet Union has seized upon certain countries as targets of opportunity.

While Chinese interests in the Indian Ocean seem relatively limited, it appears that they include at least freedom of the seas, unhindered access to the Indian Ocean and the prevention, if possible, of the unhampered use of the Ocean by the Soviet and American navies. In regard to the littoral states, the Chinese aim at expanding their influence at the expense of both the Soviet Union and the West and at promoting and supporting Third World objectives which may reduce or inhibit the activities and maneuverability of the super-powers. It is conceivable that the Chinese may, within two or three years, organize a naval demonstration with political overtones in the Indian Ocean, sending a small force of warships on a goodwill cruise around its shores. Such a demonstration would underscore China's desire to be considered and treated as a world power and to be consulted about developments in which it has a political and economic interest.

Conflicts of Interests

The conflict of interests between the United States and the Soviet Union is usually seen as existing on two planes: on the political level, it is competition for influence among the littoral states leading, possibly, to a dominant position; and on the military level, it is rivalry for strategic advantage and control of the seas. In both instances, it is usually admitted that neither country has crucial interests in the Ocean area comparable to interests closer to home.

Political competition follows traditional patterns using the customary tools of diplomacy, economic aid, trade, military assistance and other devices. This competition occurs in all corners of the Indian Ocean to a greater or lesser degree and might have been expected to go on as a normal political exercise even in the absence of the stimulus of ideological differences. In fact, ideology probably is not playing a very important part in the conflict at the present time since the

Soviet Union is placing more stress on normal government-to-government relations than on support of indigenous communist parties or promotion of revolutionary movements.

On the political level, too, this conflict of interests is not only bipolar since it is frequently complicated by the competitive activities of the People's Republic of China. Chinese political support and overall assistance to Pakistan is already well known. In Tanzania, China is appreciated because of its generous economic and military aid agreements and its doctrinaire support of African liberation movements. China extends economic aid to Somalia in competition with the Soviet Union and military aid to Ethiopia in competition with the United States. It is active in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and lends encouragement and assistance to the rebellion in neighboring Dhofar against the Sultan of Oman. In identifying itself with African and Asian aspirations, China would like to deny to the Soviet Union and the United States the freedom to use the Indian Ocean area for their own purposes.

On the strategic level, it is presumed that the United States, as a contingency measure, would like to deploy missile-firing submarines in the Indian Ocean in order to provide additional second-strike retaliatory capability against Soviet land targets (the Poseidon would be far more effective because of its greater range). Use of the Indian Ocean would somewhat reinforce the effectiveness of the retaliatory strike and would complicate Soviet defenses against it. In fact, it can be argued that one of the reasons for Soviet naval penetration into the Indian Ocean is for defensive purposes: to monitor and inhibit the activities of the United States navy and its missile-firing submarines. It is reasonably clear that this particular American deployment is not an essential ingredient in the "strategy of realistic deterrence". Deployment of missile-firing submarines in the Indian Ocean might well increase Soviet apprehensions and alarm the littoral states, resulting in counterproductive reactions such as the establishment of Soviet naval and air bases in certain littorals and the conclusion of additional bilateral friendship treaties between the Soviet Union and the littorals.

The strategic conflict of interests may abate somewhat now that a first agreement to establish ceilings on offensive and defensive missile capabilities, including missile-firing submarines, has been reached within the framework of the SALT talks. A bilateral agreement on limiting deployment of naval warships in the Indian Ocean may likewise dampen down the strategic conflict and may reduce the present perceptions of the potential threat to existing interests.

Another conflict of interests pits the littoral states against the major nuclear powers for the reasons already suggested. Most of the littorals have preferred to remain non-aligned in the confrontation between the superpowers and fear the possibility of being compelled to choose sides. They want to concentrate on domestic economic development and feel that their urgent needs are being ignored or sidetracked in the superpowers' preoccupation to outdo one another in world power and influence. Along with economic development, their most important goal appears to be to avoid the buildup of tensions and naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. The Chinese, for their own reasons, support these littoral states in this endeavor.

The Potential Soviet Threat

The perceptions of a potential Soviet threat to United States and Free World interests are based on an amalgamation of facts, rumors and judgments. According to this view, the Soviet Union has a commanding position in the United Arab Republic and, hence, in the Middle East. Its activities in the Sudan, Yemen, South Yemen and Somalia, where American competition is very slight, appears to give it virtual control of the Red Sea and its southern outlet into the Indian Ocean. In this connection, the South Yemeni island of Socotra is frequently cited as on the verge of becoming a Soviet base of some kind. In the Persian Gulf, the Soviet friendship treaty with Iraq and ready access by Soviet naval ships to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr herald danger to Western oil interests. Soviet cultivation of Iran in recent years resulting in economic agreements, military sales and generally much improved bilateral relations is considered to be a continuation of the Russian nineteenth century policy of expanding its influence southward. Fear is developing that, even if the Soviet Union has adequate reserves of crude oil for the next ten years to cover its own needs and those of Eastern Europe, it may choose to enter the Persian Gulf markets as a competitor for practical economic considerations of price, quality or convenience. Should it decide to try to deny oil to the West, its activities aimed at disturbing the political stability of the Persian Gulf states or interfering in other ways with the sources of supply would be regarded as most threatening and potentially damaging to Free World interests.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union has established itself in India and, to some extent, in Bangladesh, as a friend in need and a friend indeed. The Soviet navy enjoys the use of various naval facilities in Indian ports. Access to Ceylonese ports, rumors about Soviet naval use of the Andaman Islands and Soviet arrangements with Mauritius tend to add up, in this view, to a picture of the Soviet Union gradually creating positions of strength in key areas of the Indian Ocean for use in peacetime as well as wartime. In this context, Soviet naval deployments are not considered innocent training exercises or familiarization cruises but rather as specific activities contributing to the diplomatic, political and economic policy of expanding Soviet influence at the expense of the West. Soviet hegemony in the Indian Ocean is presumed to be the eventual goal of Soviet policy.

The littoral states do not agree in their perceptions of whether a potential Soviet threat is present in the Indian Ocean. On the one hand, India does not regard the activities or the intentions of the Soviet Union as threatening to itself. Nor does Tanzania which would regard the establishment of naval bases with hostility but does not believe that this is the Soviet intention. On the other hand, Australia would welcome a more active United States presence in the area. Other states, such as Indonesia and Ceylon, may at times favor a temporary American presence to balance the Soviet presence although their first preference is for the Indian Ocean to be free of superpower warships. Most of the littorals fear that an escalation of naval demonstrations by external powers may increase tensions, create instability and disturb the peace of the region.

Some observers, however, do not ascribe much weight to the political role that a navy can play and thereupon find little evidence of a potential Soviet threat. One problem is the difficulty of defining the relationship between a given level of military or naval presence and the political influence which may be derived thereby. Another is the size of the Indian Ocean and the relatively modest number of Soviet ships deployed on it at any one time. There are more Soviet and American ships in the Mediterranean Sea than in the Indian Ocean, and it may be said that,

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despite exceptional incidents, they now seem to have adjusted, although perhaps not happily, to a form of peaceful coexistence. A third point has to do with the opportunities in this era for using naval ships in gunboat diplomacy. Such opportunities rarely occur and do not appear to be of crucial importance in the Indian Ocean area. Moreover, small efficient regional navies can hinder the freedom of action of the superpowers and add to the latter's risk in using naval ships in a political role.

Other observers believe more attention should be paid to Soviet statements in defense of freedom of the seas and in favor of reducing world tensions. For example, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, speaking to the Supreme Soviet in 1968, apparently attached importance to "freedom of navigation for our ships and fleets, and no less than for the ships and fleets of any other power." Brezhnev, addressing the Soviet Communist Party Congress in March 1971, expressed himself in favor of the dismantling of foreign bases and the reduction of armaments. Again, in a speech on June 11, 1971, Brezhnev suggested a mutual limitation of naval forces in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. 3/

Finally, many descriptions of Soviet positions of strength do not take sufficient account of Soviet weaknesses. Much is made of the Soviet use of the island of Socotra as if the Suez Canal were open and a vital artery of trade for Western Europe and the United States. Little is said, however, about the fact that the Soviet Union does not control other points of access into the Indian Ocean on which Soviet naval and commercial vessels depend, namely, the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Malacca. Moreover, comparison of Soviet and American naval activities in the Indian Ocean on a head-to-head basis unfairly slights the movements of the British and French navies and their use of regional naval bases and miscellaneous facilities.

Conclusions

Certain broad conclusions as to the nature of the potential Soviet threat to United States and Free World interests may now be drawn. Although there may be some dispute as to the facts, as to Soviet capabilities and intentions, and as to the likely attitude of littoral states under a variety of circumstances, these conclusions should clarify the type of options available to the West.

The first conclusion is that a Soviet military threat to United States and Free World interests does not exist at the present time. The balance of the evidence rules out the likelihood that the Soviet Union would use force to promote its purposes in the Indian Ocean area. Soviet naval units in the Ocean, operating far from home bases in relatively unknown waters without air support, do not and are not intended to present a serious military threat to any state. Not only operational problems but also political constraints make it appear that the role of the Soviet navy in the Indian Ocean is not primarily a military one.

The second conclusion, which clearly follows from the first, is that the Soviet threat is political in character. Broadly speaking, it consists of undermining United States and Free World interests and influence in the less developed countries along the Indian Ocean rim and maximizing Soviet influence. In this long-term endeavor, the Soviet Union calls upon all the diplomatic, commercial, economic, and political weapons in its foreign affairs arsenal, to which it has recently added the Soviet navy. In order to be effective, the Soviet navy should be perceived as basically friendly by the littoral states.

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Thirdly, the Soviet political threat to Western interests should be seen as potential rather than actual. It is, by no means imminent or dangerous at the present time, but it can and may grow if it is not neutralized. The Soviet Union is not so dominant or influential in the littoral states that its position is beyond challenge by either the West or China. Nationalism in the area is a pervasive and entrenched force to be reckoned with, and Marxist-Leninist ideology has not so far made significant inroads among the littorals. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union appears to be able frequently to react with flexibility and commendable speed in order to take advantage of Western weakness.

Finally, the United States will not be able to protect its interests in the Indian Ocean if it allows the situation to drift. The Soviet Union is fully capable of, and appears committed to, taking maximum political advantage of the West's declining interest in the Indian Ocean area. The West, and especially the United States, must meet this challenge with all the instruments of Western foreign policy, including, of course, judicious use of military or naval options. Looking to the future, lack of a continuity of Western interest in the Ocean will likely result in a relatively much weaker position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union at the time that Persian Gulf crude oil supplies will become really vital.

If something is to be done, the first essential point is for the United States to develop closer liaison with Free World nations and coordinate policies toward the littoral states. The objective should be to protect common interests more effectively by developing much-improved relations with the littorals. A sensitive ear to their political interests as well as continued economic and technical assistance are probably the minimum requirements. Better coordinated Western policies should reflect the recognition that the welfare of the littorals is as important to the United States and the Free World as, for example, the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. After all, without friends among the littorals, naval activities would be severely circumscribed.

A secure and stable political climate in the Persian Gulf is an especially important objective. Since crude oil is so vital to highly industrialized states in these times, the United States, Western European and Japanese governments cannot afford to let the oil companies alone negotiate with the oil-producing states on questions of supply, price and other contract conditions. Much more cooperation among governments and companies will be necessary if Western security interests are to be adequately protected. At the same time, the development in the United States of alternative sources of energy -- nuclear energy, coal and hydrocarbons from shale -- should be accelerated.

The second point is for the United States to adjust itself to the realities of power considerations in the Indian Ocean. In its policies, it should take into account the emergent military pre-eminence of India in South Asia and of Iran in the Persian Gulf. It should, of course, stand for the sovereignty and independence of the smaller regional powers and for non-interference in their internal affairs but avoid actions which may be misinterpreted as supporting anti-Indian or anti-Iranian policies. It should encourage peaceful regional initiatives such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

On the military side, the United States should support regional defensive groupings exemplified in the Five Power Arrangements. It should consider ways to improve the Indonesian navy for more efficient coastal and regional service. The possibility of the Pakistani navy playing a regional role in cooperation with the Iranian navy is worth looking into. Occasional and timely visits by units of the Seventh Fleet to friendly Indian Ocean ports may prove beneficial in conveying American interest

in Indian Ocean affairs and complementing other United States and Free World activities. But military and naval options should be carefully analyzed in terms of their contribution to overall United States political goals.

In the event of sizeable increases in Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean, the United States should initiate efforts for a bilateral understanding on limiting American and Soviet deployments in terms of ship-weeks or any reasonable measurement. In view of regional sensitivities, establishment of United States air or naval bases or installations beyond what is now available in the Indian Ocean or its contiguous seas appears unwise and should be strenuously avoided. Similarly, it seems counter-productive at this stage to call for "countervailing American forces" to deal with the possibility of Soviet military leverage, to which the President referred in his Report to the Congress. But an American offer to negotiate limits on the size of the naval forces of the superpowers in those waters should be well-received by most littorals and may prove acceptable to the Soviet Union.

It is trite to say that the situation in the Indian Ocean must be carefully watched. However, the Middle East and Indochina have so preoccupied American policymakers in recent years that on the infrequent occasions when the Indian Ocean area has aroused concern, it has usually been in terms of the Indo-Pakistan confrontation. Despite the fact that, as of this writing, neither the Arab-Israeli nor the Vietnam conflict looks like drawing to an end, it seems evident that, in the future, the Indian Ocean area will require more attention, if not a higher absolute priority, in American and Western thinking, than it has received in the past. Both the long-term political efforts of the Soviet Union in the Ocean area, symbolized most recently by its naval presence and by the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty, and the future security of United States and Free World crude oil supplies justify a greater share of concerted political attention by the West to the Indian Ocean and to relations with the littoral states.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1/ U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's - The Emerging Structure for Peace. A Report to the Congress by Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States, February 9, 1972 (Washington, D.C., U.S.G.P.O.), p. 3.
- 2/ Edward Heath, "Realism in British Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 48 No. 1 (October 1969), p. 48.
- 3/ In this connection, the United States-U.S.S.R. agreement of May 29, 1972 on "Basic Principles of Mutual Relations" may also be cited.

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