

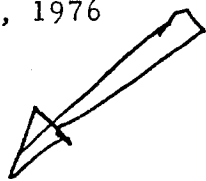
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## MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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March 26, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT 

FROM: RICHARD T. BOVERIE *RTB*

SUBJECT: Alternatives for Handling the Report to the Verification Panel on Indian Ocean Arms Limitation

Our earlier memo to you on this subject (Tab A) referred to a requirement for a report to the Congress by April 15 on initiatives the Administration has taken regarding US/Soviet arms restraint in the Indian Ocean. I understand there is some question about the origin of this requirement.

Our FY 76 budget request to Congress included \$13.8 million for the Diego Garcia expansion. These funds were approved by the Congress in the FY 76 Military Construction Appropriation Act, but a freeze was placed on the expenditure of all but a small portion of the funds until April 15, 1976, as a concession to those Congressmen who wanted to allow time for the Administration to pursue possible arms limitation in the Indian Ocean area with the Soviets. The legislation itself does not mention any report to Congress on this subject but the Conference Report (Tab B) states that the conferees have the "full expectation" that the Administration will report to the appropriate committees "regarding negotiation initiatives" before April 15.

It is the opinion of the legal counsel and Congressional relations people at State and Defense that while there is no formal legal requirement for a report on April 15, the language in the conference report has the same effect, and we ignore it at our peril. Senator Culver has indicated in discussions with George Vest that he is expecting the report, and Senator Mansfield mentions the need for a report in his December 3, 1975 letter to the President (Tab C). Criticism of our Diego Garcia expansion seems to have died down and there is great concern that failing to submit a report on April 15 would raise the issue again in the most disadvantageous context -- the apparent failure of the Executive to comply with the express will (if not the legal requirement) of the Congress. A report pessimistic

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on the prospects of Indian Ocean arms limitation would apparently be better than no report at all.

Before we can prepare the April 15 report to the Congress, we need a decision on what US Government policy is on this issue -- do we want to commit ourselves to an initiative to the Soviets on Indian Ocean arms limitation or do we want instead to be negative on the idea. The VPWG report to the Verification Panel (revised version at Tab D) was prepared to provide the basis for this decision. The report presents four alternatives:

- (1) Take no new US initiative for arms limitation in the Indian Ocean.
- (2) Make a unilateral declaration of restraint conditional upon reciprocal Soviet restraint.
- (3) Make a generalized approach to the Soviets.
- (4) Seek negotiations with the Soviets towards a bilateral Indian Ocean arms limitation agreement.

While a Verification Panel meeting to review the VPWG paper could be desirable at some point, there seems to be general recognition (at least at the working level) that at the present time there is little prospect of any new arms limitation initiative. It might be useful, nonetheless, to send out the VPWG report to Verification Panel principals requesting official agency recommendations on which alternative we should pursue. This could be done rather quickly and would give everyone a chance to be heard on the issue. The VPWG could then proceed to draft the report to Congress. Alternatively, you could decide now that the US should take no new initiative (Alternative 1 in the VPWG paper) and direct the VPWG to begin preparing a draft of the April 15 report to Congress which supports this position.

#### Your Decision

W Send out the VPWG report to Verification Panel principals for formal recommendations on the alternatives. (Our recommendation.)

10 The US will take no Indian Ocean arms limitation initiative at this time. The VPWG should begin preparing a report to Congress which supports this position.

Other.

Les Janka concurs.

Report to the Verification Panel

Arms Limitation in the Indian Ocean:  
Issues and Alternatives

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## I. PREFACE

For more than a decade, US security policy toward the Indian Ocean region has been influenced by three interrelated developments: the withdrawal of British military forces East of Suez; the increasing demand for Persian Gulf oil by US allies, and more recently, the United States itself; and the growth of Soviet military presence in the region.

Since 1949, the United States has maintained a limited permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean area in the form of the flagship and two destroyers of Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR) stationed at Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. In the early and mid-1960s, as it became apparent that the British historical role was coming to an end, the United States initiated a policy of periodic naval deployments to the region. Although several naval contingents made flag-showing excursions into the area at that time, and US forces occasionally participated in exercises, this policy was never fully implemented due to overriding requirements in Southeast Asia. In October 1973, however, in the aftermath of the Arab-Israel War and the Arab oil boycott, the United States sent a carrier task force into the northwest Indian Ocean, and shortly thereafter the Secretary of Defense announced the return to the previous US policy of more frequent and more regular naval deployments to the area.

The US had also begun to look for potential support facilities in the area to help sustain an increased level of deployments. In 1965, the British -- with US encouragement and financial assistance -- detached a number of islands from the colonial administrations of Mauritius and the Seychelles to form the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), and an agreement was concluded the following year to permit joint US-UK use of the islands for defense purposes. A limited communications station on the island of Diego Garcia was approved in FY 71 and became operational in early 1973. In early 1974, the Administration requested Congressional authorization to expand the facilities at Diego Garcia. Funding for the first increment of this project was provided by the Congress in July 1975 and the expansion was formally approved by the British in February 1976.

Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean is a much more recent phenomenon. Although the USSR actively pursued economic and

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military assistance policies in the region from the mid-1950s, including harbor construction in Hodeidah and Berbera near the mouth of the Red Sea, the establishment of a significant Soviet naval presence first occurred in 1968. By 1972, the developing Soviet relationship with Somalia was becoming apparent as the USSR established a naval communications station at Berbera, and the frequency of Soviet ship visits to that port increased sharply. In early 1975, our intelligence identified Soviet construction of a major airfield and a missile storage and handling facility at Berbera. A re-analysis of intelligence data indicated that initial work on the missile facility had commenced in October 1973 and that planning for the Berbera installation must have preceded the Arab-Israel conflict.


During this period of a gradually expanding US and Soviet naval presence, pressure was building among the littoral states bordering the Indian Ocean for some form of arms limitation on the US and Soviet naval forces. In 1970 this pressure found expression in the Lusaka Declaration of the Non-Aligned Conference which called on all states to respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power competition would be excluded. Whether or not in response to the Declaration, in March 1971, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin informally asked Secretary Rogers for US views concerning a possible joint declaration on arms restraint in the Indian Ocean. In July 1971, US Ambassador Beam informed Gromyko that we agreed in principle that it would be in our mutual interest to avoid military competition in the area and requested to know more specifically what the Soviets had in mind. Gromyko was not prepared, asked that the discussion be postponed, and the subject has not subsequently been raised by the Soviets. In December 1971, the UNGA passed the first of its annual Indian Ocean Zone of Peace resolutions calling for the elimination of all major power military presence "conceived in the context of great power reivalry," with the US, USSR, and most other major maritime powers abstaining.

Considerable pressure for arms limitation in the Indian Ocean area has also appeared in the US Congress. During the 1974 debate over the expansion of the Diego Garcia facility, efforts were made to postpone the expansion until an arms limitation initiative was made to the Soviets. The effort failed, but a letter from the State Department to Senator Hart on July 15, 1975, stated that ". . . were the Diego Garcia matter resolved in such a way as to demonstrate that the US is determined, and has the means, to

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protect its security interests in the Indian Ocean . . . we would be prepared . . . to explore the possible methods of limitations which we have been discussing with the government." A subsequent amendment to the FY 76 Military Construction Appropriations Act (November 1975) prohibits the use of all but a small portion of the FY 76 funds for Diego Garcia prior to April 15, 1976, and the conference language specifies that this action was taken "with the full expectation that the Administration will report (to the Congress) regarding initiatives" on mutual arms restraint in the Indian Ocean before that date.

In part to respond to this requirement, a Verification Panel Working Group was established in December 1975 to study the technical issues involved in arms limitations in the Indian Ocean and to examine alternative approaches to the problem.



## II. General Considerations

There are significant limits on what any arms limitations arrangement in the Indian Ocean could be expected to achieve. It is evident, for example, that even a very stringent limitation on naval forces would have very little effect on the ability of either side to provide support to dissident political movements in Africa or elsewhere. Soviet support for activities in Angola relied primarily on transport by air and sea which was -- or could have been -- provided by civilian means. It is unrealistic to expect that a similar situation in Rhodesia, Mozambique, or elsewhere in the future could be prevented, or the course of events significantly changed, by the prior negotiation of a limitation on operational deployments. Conversely, any attempt to broaden the scope of negotiations to limit the political and material support that a superpower could provide its clients would in the current atmosphere be expected to get little support from the Soviets.

This is not to say that a US/Soviet arms limitation arrangement would have no impact on political relations in the area. The ability of each side to deploy and maintain credible military forces in the Indian Ocean is widely perceived by the littoral states and others as a tangible measure of superpower interest and involvement in regional affairs. Whether or not an arms limitations agreement would be welcomed by any littoral state depends on its own view of the value of superpower presence. Most nations in the area would probably at least pay lip service to the concept of mutual US-USSR military restraint, and some would be positively relieved to be free of the pressures of a big power arms race in the Indian Ocean. But those states which feel exposed, and which rely implicitly or explicitly on superpower presence to shore up their own political security and stability, would certainly examine any agreement very carefully in terms of their own immediate interests. A significant reduction of superpower presence would certainly lead many states of the area to reexamine the concept of regional security in a new light.

The most direct impact of an arms limitation arrangement would be on the superpowers themselves, since such an arrangement would affect at least to some extent their ability to employ military power in pursuit of their own interests in the region. The degree to which this would influence the behavior of either power depends, of course, on the type of arrangement. A generalized declaration of mutual restraint would probably have relatively little impact, whereas the acceptance of explicit restrictions on deployment levels would probably lead to significant changes in present strategies, possibly including greater reliance on economic and diplomatic means and the temptation to use surrogates to achieve regional objectives.




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In negotiating any arrangement, a principal concern of both powers would be to avoid even the appearance of having institutionalized a set of conditions favoring its adversary or otherwise skewing the overall regional balance to its disadvantage. Any arrangement will be scrutinized for such evidence of imbalance by the regional states in terms of their own security, by allies and other external powers whose interests are involved, and by domestic interest groups in the US and USSR. Given the very different perspectives of, for example, Pakistan, India, France, Japan, and various elements of the US Congress, almost any arrangement is certain to be controversial. The basic interests of the US and USSR in the region are also sufficiently different to require a careful calculation of costs and benefits.

#### US Interests in the Indian Ocean Area

Previous studies have concluded that US interests in the Indian Ocean area are quite specific and of a lower order of priority than our interests in areas such as the North Atlantic, Mediterranean and Western Pacific. Our principal interest is to insure continued access to the oil of the Persian Gulf region for ourselves and our allies. At a minimum, this requires that states of the region remain free of predominant influence by forces hostile to our interests. Also, as part of our global relationship with the USSR, particularly in the wake of Angola and other evidences of a more aggressive Soviet interventionist policy, we have acquired an immediate interest in preventing the appearance of a major shift in the global military balance in favor of the USSR. This is particularly applicable in the Indian Ocean region where there are a number of likely targets for Soviet (or Cuban) attention.

On the other hand, the Indian Ocean is geographically remote -- being precisely the opposite side of the globe from the continental United States. Our vital interest in the oil resources of the area will probably peak within the next 10-20 years and then decline, as alternative energy sources begin to become available. The level of military force presence we can maintain in the region is severely limited. The Government of Bahrain has requested that we terminate our only permanent presence (MIDEASTFOR) by mid-1977, and the future of this force is uncertain. While the airfield and port facilities at Diego Garcia could support a large military force presence if required, the assets available for deployment to the area are limited. At the present time, the US has only two attack carriers available on station to cover the entire Western Pacific and Indian Ocean.



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## Soviet Interests in the Indian Ocean Area

Soviet interests are of quite a different nature. Geographically, the nations of the Persian Gulf and Indian Subcontinent lie immediately to the south of the Soviet border and have been the object of Russian imperial interest since the 16th century. The most economical sea route between European Russia and the Soviet Far East lies through the Suez Canal and Indian Ocean. This region was the site of the first major Soviet overtures to the Third World in the mid-1950s, and it was here that the Sino-Soviet schism first became publicly apparent at the time of the Sino-Indian border war in the early 1960s. The intense Soviet rivalry with China will continue to be a major factor in Soviet policy toward this area for the foreseeable future, as evidenced by repeated Soviet calls for an Asian security pact aimed at containment of Chinese influence. The range of geographical and political interests which have sustained a 20-year courtship of India insure that the Soviet leadership will continue to devote political, economic and military resources toward the achievement of their security objectives in the region indefinitely.

## Soviet Attitudes Toward Indian Ocean Arms Limitation

Soviet attitudes toward arms limitations in the area are ambivalent. It is apparent that the political leadership understands the advantages to be gained by at least maintaining the appearance of active interest in the subject, since it is regarded as a major issue by India and other regional states. However, it is very unlikely that the Soviet military -- and particularly the Navy -- find any merit in the idea. Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean currently operate without benefit of air cover -- a serious handicap -- and with the airfield facilities at Berbera still incomplete, they would rightly fear arms limitations discussions as interfering with their development of the "triad" of air-surface-subsurface capabilities prescribed in Soviet naval doctrine. They could be expected to argue internally that the USSR would be negotiating from a position of weakness and that acceptance of limitations would affect the long-term competition with China and the security of their own lines of communication across the Indian Ocean.

Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership has found it necessary or desirable in the past to pay lip service to the concept of mutual restraint, and they would consequently find it difficult to reject out of hand a US proposal which appeared to be more than a propaganda exercise. Based on Soviet statements to date, it appears that the USSR might attempt to turn such talks to their own advantage by demanding the elimination of US "bases" on Diego Garcia and Bahrain, while insisting that the Berbera facility was for Somali

use and not in the same category. They might also insist that talks be broadened to include some or all of the littoral states, or they might insist that any agreement insure military "parity" between their own forces on the one hand and the combined forces of the US, UK, France, and possibly Australia, Iran and Pakistan on the other. In short, if the USSR chose to sabotage such discussions or to exploit them solely for short-term propaganda objectives, there would be ample opportunity to do so.

On the other hand, there are some grounds for believing that if the US were to make an initiative, the Soviets might consider that their long-term interests would be served by negotiating seriously. Given the erosion of support for detente in the US, the Soviets might be anxious to show progress in the area of US/Soviet arms control, particularly if early SALT II and MBFR solutions appear unlikely. They may also wish to dispel any negative image which may have resulted from their actions in Angola and Somolia. Finally, they may be interested in limiting the naval competition in the Indian Ocean area on the belief that, at least in the short term, the advantages of such a competition might accrue to the US.

With this background, the principal arguments for and against possible arms limitation in the Indian Ocean can be summarized as follows:

#### Principal Arguments for Possible Arms Limitation

An arrangement limiting force levels in the Indian Ocean provides a potentially effective and economical alternative to matching the expansion of Soviet military capability by a military buildup of our own. If such an arrangement were successful in restricting or preventing the introduction of Soviet land-based aircraft into the region, while possibly reducing or eliminating the Soviet submarine threat, the capability of Soviet naval forces would be significantly impaired and the probability of direct military confrontation would be reduced or shifted to other areas where US force levels are much stronger. In those circumstances, US interests in the Indian Ocean would be at least as secure as they are today, even at considerably reduced levels of military presence.

This option is particularly attractive at the present time when we are being forced to unilaterally reduce our military presence in the area due to budgetary constraints and competing requirements on our own limited naval forces and when MIDEASTFOR facilities in Bahrain may be lost.

If and when the USSR introduces land-based aircraft into the region, the need for a more frequent US carrier presence will increase if we are to maintain a credible balance with Soviet forces. Yet we will have only two carriers available on station to cover the entire Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. Moreover, our long-term prospects of competing militarily with the USSR in this region are not bright. Soviet interests are permanent and much more diverse than ours, and the Soviets have demonstrated over more than 20 years their willingness to invest significant political, economic and military capital in the region. It is recognized that there are many obstacles to achieving an effective agreement on arms limitations, but the problems will never be smaller or more manageable than they are today, before the USSR completes the development of its facilities in Somalia. The present balance is in our favor, and we have the opportunity to seize the initiative in seeking an arrangement which would serve our own best interests.

A genuine US arms limitation initiative could have tangible benefits even if it ultimately failed. It would attract considerable support in Congress and among the littoral states, and a Soviet rejection would add credibility to any subsequent efforts to counter Soviet expansion by a buildup of US forces. It would serve to dramatize long-term Soviet intentions, and would provide an added incentive for regional states to resist Soviet efforts to acquire further base facilities on the littoral.

#### Principal Arguments Against Possible Arms Limitation

From all appearances, the Soviets are not truly interested in arms limitations, and the multiple asymmetries of force structure, basing, deployment patterns, and basic interests insure that they will have ample opportunities to sabotage any such initiative or turn it to their own short-term political and propaganda ends. In order to arrive at any mutually acceptable arrangement, we would have to be willing to make significant concessions in those areas where we have some advantage today, i. e., carrier forces and politically secure support facilities. This would be dangerous since the USSR is geographically proximate to the area and could bring power to bear from its own territory for which we would have no counterpart. Moreover, any arrangement would provide little effective control on those areas of activity, e. g., covert support of dissident movements, military aid to expansionist regimes, use of surrogate forces, and other forms of disguised intervention at which the Soviets excel, and which pose the most significant threats to regional stability. Rather, an arms limitation arrangement might actually assist the Soviets in their covert efforts by providing apparent proof of Soviet claims that it seeks no dominant position


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in the Indian Ocean area. Such cynical manipulation of an arms limitation arrangement by the Soviets could only foster further US domestic criticism of the US/Soviet relationship.

It is true that many of the potential threats to US interests in the region are essentially political and unrelated to the Soviet military presence -- as was the oil boycott of 1973-74. The only previous blockade in the area was conducted by Egyptian, not Soviet, forces. Yet an agreement which established stringent limitations on US force deployments to the area would sharply curtail our flexibility to respond to such situations in the future.

Any formal arrangement which established limitations on naval activities on the basis of some form of parity could have undesirable consequences in other parts of the world. Such an arrangement could be interpreted as tacit acceptance of the Peace Zone proposal, thus lending credence to the concept that littoral states have the right to establish restrictions on adjacent areas of the high seas. It would encourage the USSR to press for similar restrictions in the Mediterranean, where our interests are much greater. And, it could establish the precedent for a Soviet attempt to impose global "parity" on the two navies. As a major maritime nation, we have more to lose in an exchange of naval concessions than does the USSR, which is still primarily a land power.

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 III. Findings

A. Comparative Military Presence

US and Soviet Naval Ship Presence

The Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean normally exceeds in number of ships that of the US. Seven to eight Soviet naval combatant ships, including one or two destroyers, a submarine, two frigates, two minesweepers, and an amphibious ship, are nearly always in the area. These ships, which operate primarily in the northwestern part of the ocean, are accompanied by 8-12 assorted support ships. In addition, during 1974 and 1975, three to four combatant ships would occasionally operate in the Indian Ocean for a few months while transiting from one of the western Soviet fleets to the Pacific. The US naval presence normally consists of two destroyers and a command support ship. Three to four times a year a US naval force, led by a cruiser or an aircraft carrier, operates for about six weeks in various parts of the ocean.

Ships of both countries constitute a visible naval presence in support of political objectives. Most Soviet ships spend most of their time at anchor near the Horn of Africa. From there, they conduct port visits to about ten countries each year, most of whose governments lean politically toward the USSR. Until 1974, US ships conducted each year more port visits to about twice as many countries throughout the littoral than Soviet ships. In 1975, US ships made port calls to only 13 countries. The Soviet level of visits was comparable.

Soviet naval forces normally in the Indian Ocean do not have much of a sea control or projection capability. Although greatly superior in number to the normal US naval presence, Soviet ships would have only marginal military capabilities against the US cruiser group and would be no match for the US carrier force which deploys there during alternate quarters. The Soviets increase their naval presence in the Indian Ocean during periods of tension in response to US task force deployments. They normally conduct active surveillance of US task forces in the area.

There are military as well as political reasons for a presence of US and Soviet forces in the Indian Ocean. A continuous naval presence affords a superpower the ability to take some immediate naval action to support its interests and provides a foundation for the introduction of additional forces into the area in the event of a crisis. The US naval presence supports US interests ashore and reflects a desire to protect the shipment of oil from the Persian Gulf. The Soviets have the capability to support their interests

in certain countries, assist their clients and deploy additional forces to counter-balance US naval forces during a crisis. Past periods of tension have shown that the Soviet Navy's main mission in the Indian Ocean would be the destruction of US carrier forces.

The Soviets have also voiced great concern over the threat from US SSBNs which they say operate in the Indian Ocean. It appears that they are seriously concerned about the potential deployment of US SSBNs to the area. The normal Soviet naval force in the area, though not structured primarily for ASW, is capable of limited anti-submarine warfare operations. On the other hand, the US is concerned over the potential threat which uncontested Soviet submarine forces could pose to US and NATO oil shipments.

#### US and Soviet Shore-Based Facilities

US and Soviet naval forces rely primarily on their own ships for logistic support in the Indian Ocean. Soviet ships obtain most of their fuel oil and supplies from their own replenishment tankers, but they occasionally purchase fresh food and water during port visits. Communications relay services are in part provided to Soviet ships by the facility at Berbera. Soviet repair ships enable the Soviets to make minor repairs at anchor. The recent delivery of a floating drydock to Berbera; however, now makes it possible for the Soviets to make major repairs in the Indian Ocean for the first time. The Soviets have a limited capability to transfer ammunition at sea, but would have to obtain missiles from the missile-handling facility at Berbera. The Soviets are only slowly developing a capacity for sustained combat operations at sea. Although storage facilities ashore are valuable for resupply, during prolonged conflict combatant naval forces need to be resupplied at sea while underway if they are to remain a viable force after an initial exchange. Most Soviet naval support ships do not have an alongside underway replenishment capability and most of them are unarmed. These limitations of Soviet support ships are tangible indications that Soviet naval strategy has only recently begun to address the requirement for a capability to conduct extended combat operations in distant areas.

The two US destroyers which normally operate in the Indian Ocean purchase fuel oil, fresh food and water from littoral countries. The other US naval forces that periodically deploy to the area rely primarily on their own support ships which have modern and extensive replenishment capabilities. Communication relay services are provided mainly by the station at Diego Garcia. The Diego Garcia expansion will provide significant fuel storage capacity and temporary berthing for US ships.

Shore-based facilities improve each navy's command and control and logistic capabilities and enable ships to lengthen deployment times, resulting in a more effective and economic utilization of assets. Prepositioned supplies are presently inadequate to support either navy during a prolonged period of tension. In such a case, both the US and Soviet navies would have to rely on their own logistic supply chains for support. Soviet operational resupply capabilities are presently inferior to those of the US.

#### Surge Capability Into the Indian Ocean

US and Soviet ships in the Eastern Mediterranean could deploy to the Arabian Sea through the Suez Canal in less than five days. The Soviets probably could send a superior force because most US carriers could not pass through the canal. If the canal is closed, the US would be in the best position of all the major non-littoral naval powers to quickly deploy additional naval forces into the Indian Ocean. Under normal conditions, a US carrier task group from the Pacific Fleet can be in the eastern Indian Ocean within five days. Such a capability was demonstrated to some extent during the India-Pakistan war of 1971 when a US carrier task group arrived in the Bay of Bengal on four days notice. During the Mid-East war in 1973, a US carrier task group arrived in the vicinity of the Gulf of Oman within 12 days after receipt of its orders.

If naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean are discounted, the Soviets could not be as responsive. It would take Soviet surface ships approximately ten days and submarines 15-20 days to reach the entrance to the Indian Ocean from home ports in the Pacific Fleet. Soviet surface ships could sail to the Arabian Sea from the Black Sea in a few days less if the canal is open. During the two identifiable surge deployments of Soviet naval ships to the Indian Ocean (1971 and 1973), it took Soviet ships and submarines at least 10 and 15 days respectively to arrive in the Indian Ocean. (The Suez Canal was closed in both cases.)

British and French naval forces are in a much less responsive position. With the canal open they could deploy some ships to the Indian Ocean in two to three weeks. With the canal closed, it would take over a month for forces to reach the northern portion of the Arabian Sea. Neither nation responded to the recent Middle East conflict or the Indo-Pak war.

#### Land-Based Air

Neither the US nor the USSR has military aircraft permanently stationed in countries on the Indian Ocean littoral. Aircraft of both countries, however, conduct flights into the area.



Since 1968 the Soviets have conducted occasional TU-95 Bear D flights over the Indian Ocean from bases in the USSR, overflying Iran. The declared mission of the aircraft has been support for space events, but area familiarization, training, and reconnaissance support for Soviet warships probably have been their missions. In 1975, US carriers were overflown by two such aircraft for the first time. In addition to this air activity, during the past year the Soviets have sent IL-38 May aircraft to Somalia on three occasions for approximately nine days. While in Somalia these aircraft conducted one or two anti-submarine warfare or ocean surveillance flights over the Indian Ocean. In total, Soviet military aircraft conducted almost 20 sorties\* over the Indian Ocean during 1975.

The US started sending P-3 Orion aircraft into the Indian Ocean area in 1972. These ocean surveillance and anti-submarine warfare flights are flown from Diego Garcia and Iran. The aircraft stage to Diego Garcia via Thailand. In 1975 the US conducted about ten times as many sorties in the area as the Soviets.

Despite the greater number of US sorties, the Soviets have the capability to conduct flights from Somalia, and from their bases in the USSR (the latter subject to overflight restrictions). Moreover, Soviet anti-ship strike aircraft are capable of carrying out missions over the northern Indian Ocean from bases in the USSR. If strike aircraft were deployed to Somalia, they could pose an even more serious threat to US naval forces in a conflict.

#### Combat Ground Forces

Neither the US nor the Soviets have stationed combat ground forces in countries on the Indian Ocean littoral. Overseas deployment of ground combat forces, while not unusual for the US, is rare for the Soviets. More common would be the deployment of amphibious ships with embarked combat troops. Even this has not been done in the Indian Ocean area by either country. But a limited potential exists, though the United States would have a significant advantage because of its larger and more capable amphibious forces.

#### Presence of Other Forces

In terms of ship days, the French have the largest naval presence of any external power in the Indian Ocean. In terms of ship tonnage, they are nearly equal to the Soviet Union.

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\*A sortie is defined as a single flight by a single aircraft.

The French force permanently stationed in the Indian Ocean normally includes a command support ship, three frigates, five or six patrol boats, an amphibious ship and a support ship. This force is periodically augmented by short-term deployments from France of a few destroyers and, on occasion, an aircraft carrier. Recently, France announced plans to station two submarines at Djibouti.

The French naval presence, however, may become difficult to sustain. French ships in the past received extensive support from facilities at Diego Suarez and Djibouti. They no longer have naval access in Malagasy and France will soon grant independence to the Territory of the Afars and Issas (TFAI). Though France desires to maintain control of the fuel storage and repair facilities in Djibouti, this may not be politically possible once the TFAI becomes independent. Even if the permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean is reduced, the French Navy can be expected to make periodic major deployments to the area.

Unlike the French, the UK does not maintain a permanent afloat naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Four or five frigates of the Royal Navy occasionally deploy to the Far East and from there make periodic short-term port visits in the Indian Ocean. Future deployments are expected to occur less frequently and for shorter durations because of economies imposed on the Royal Navy.

The British have no ship repair facilities in the Indian Ocean. They will rely on the communications facility at Diego Garcia after they close their station in Mauritius this April. The UK also plans to withdraw from its two airfields at Gan and Masira by 1977.

The six principal littoral naval powers in terms of ship inventories are Indonesia, Iran, India, Australia, Pakistan and South Africa. Five of these six countries are generally disposed toward the US. Ships of these navies have normally operated near home waters, although India made good use of her fleet in blockading Dacca during the India-Pakistan war, and Iran is training her fleet to insure access to the Strait of Hormuz. In the future, the navies of Iran and India will increase in both size and capability. The Indian fleet remains the more substantial although it is unable to match the capability of a US carrier task force deployed to the area.

#### Future Naval Presence of US and USSR

During the past five years, the Soviets have gradually increased their naval presence in the Indian Ocean (though their total deployments declined in 1975). Future levels are uncertain. The Soviets can be

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expected to increase their naval presence during a crisis situation and to respond in some degree to major Western initiatives in the area. To a considerable extent future Soviet naval capabilities may depend on the evolution of their relations with Somalia. By 1980 the Soviets are expected to station reconnaissance, ASW and perhaps strike aircraft in Somalia if the Somali government does not feel threatened by a greater Soviet presence. Somalia is the only Indian Ocean littoral country where current circumstances suggest that the Soviet Navy is likely to make significant gains in access to shore facilities in the near term. The deployment of Soviet strike aircraft to the region would represent a significant change in the combat capabilities of the Soviet naval units operating in the area. Soviet naval doctrine calls for close coordination of land-based aircraft with its surface and subsurface forces, and the availability of air cover to complete the "triad" prescribed in Soviet doctrine would be the single development most likely to affect the relative US-USSR military balance in the near future.

In South Yemen, the Soviet Navy will continue to seek landing and overflight rights for contingencies to supplement the Somali airfields. Aden, however, has resisted Soviet overtures for a substantially expanded military presence. Iraq probably will continue to permit the replenishment and periodic maintenance of Soviet ships in its ports, but will provide little else even if more is requested. Although the Soviets have been permitted sporadic visits to Indian ports, New Delhi has not granted the Soviet Navy free access to the ports or repair facilities and has rejected Moscow's attempts to use Indian airfields for "space support". Soviet prospects for regular access to any Indian facilities are dim in the foreseeable future.

The US naval ship presence in the Indian Ocean decreased in 1975 after an all-time high in 1974. Planning for FY 75 and FY 76 called for Pacific Fleet deployments of combatant groups once each quarter, alternating carrier and surface combatant forces. The fourth quarter FY 76 carrier deployment was cancelled, and current planning for future years will probably result in a reduction of PacFlt deployments to three combatant groups per year, including only one carrier deployment, due to budgetary restrictions and draw down of available carrier resources in the Pacific. US naval presence may decline further if MIDEASTFOR is required to terminate its use of facilities in Bahrain by mid-1977 as requested by the GOB. Flights of maritime aircraft are likely to remain about the same, although the facilities at Diego Garcia when completed will provide better logistic support to US naval and air forces in the event of contingency situations.

B. Broader Implications of Indian Ocean Arms Limitation

Precedential Effects

Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangements could have precedential effects which would be damaging to US interests in other areas, such as our position with regard to Freedom of the Seas, and the on-going Law of the Sea negotiations.

NSDM 122 recognized national security as the preeminent US oceans policy interest, and as a consequence, a central objective of US oceans policy is to preserve high seas freedoms -- the unfettered movement of our vessels and aircraft (commercial and military) on, under, and over the high seas.

To avoid creating legal precedents which might damage our position on freedom of the seas, any Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangement:

-- Should be clearly presented as a voluntary and limited contractual relationship undertaken between the parties that in no way prejudices their rights with regard to freedom of the seas, or imparts rights to third-party states. It should be couched in such a way that it is not perceived as a statement of generally applicable international law, but rather a contract between states regarding certain limited naval matters of mutual interest.

-- Should contain language specifically stating that the arrangement in no way affects the parties' positions with regard to freedom of the seas.

Certain political effects on our freedom of the seas position may flow from most kinds of Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangements, giving further impetus to the current trend toward encroachment upon rights with respect to the high seas.

-- Any arrangement when viewed against the background of repeated UN General Assembly resolutions, calling for an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, could be viewed as tacit acceptance of the general concept that coastal states have a right to regulate activities of other nations in high seas areas adjacent to their territorial waters.

-- By appearing to be a weakening of the US position on freedom of the seas, Indian Ocean arms limitation might encourage further support for demands for a 200-mile limit for territorial seas. It might also undercut

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the US position favoring free transit through and over international straits, encouraging Indonesia and Malaysia, for example, to stiffen their demand for prior notification of transits through the Strait of Malacca.

The extent to which precedents (either legal or political) would be created by an Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangement would vary depending on the form of the arrangement. A properly worded Declaration of Restraint would raise the fewest problems, since it would be a statement of intention rather than a legally binding agreement. However, even this could be interpreted as a weakening of our position on Freedom of the Seas. On the other end of the spectrum, a formal agreement would be more difficult. With appropriate disclaimers, an agreement could avoid any damaging legal precedents. But it would be more likely to give impetus to some of the adverse political effects discussed above by giving the impression that the US was willing to accept restrictions on its rights in the Indian Ocean, and perhaps elsewhere. A prime candidate would be the Mediterranean where the Soviets have already called for arms control. It would be more difficult to resist pressures for limits in the Mediterranean (despite our more obvious commitments and interests there) in the face of concessions previously made in the Indian Ocean.

#### Relationship to Other Negotiations

The potential impact of Indian Ocean arms limitation on other on-going negotiations is important enough to warrant special consideration.

-- The third substantive session of the Law of the Sea Conference began on March 15. We would not want at this stage to create expectations of concessions (on such issues as passage through straits and the extent of the territorial sea) which in fact will not be forthcoming. An Indian Ocean arms limitation initiative runs the risk of doing just that.

-- The inclusion of a limitation on submarine deployments in the Indian Ocean would restrict the deployment areas of US SSBNs. Acceptance of such a restriction could establish a precedent for similar restrictions in other geographic areas or on other strategic systems.

-- If the US were to accept a relatively "soft" level of verification as part of an Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangement, this could provide a basis for stiffened Soviet resistance to our requirement of "hard" verification provisions in the SALT and MBFR negotiations.

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Crisis Management

An Indian Ocean arms limitation arrangement could be aimed simply at restraining peacetime naval competition between the US and the Soviets. In this situation the parties might want to include a provision permitting them to suspend or adjust the terms of the arrangement in time of crisis. Such a clause would, however, probably draw fire from the littoral states by appearing to be an explicit assertion of the right of the US and the Soviets to intervene militarily in the Indian Ocean area.

Alternatively, force limitations could be established on a flexible basis (e. g., yearly averaging) which would permit force levels to fluctuate from day to day. Each side would then be able to "budget" its in-area deployments and hold some of its allotment in reserve for crisis contingencies. Thus, the need for a crisis escape clause would be reduced, and the arms limitation arrangement would not only minimize peacetime competition but also constrain the ability of the parties to reinforce in time of crisis. To constrain this reinforcement capability still further, the arrangement might include a limit on the size of these crisis deployments (couched, perhaps, in terms of total number of ships and/or total tonnage). Even under this approach, the parties' freedom of action in grave situations could be protected by including a provision for withdrawal in case of a threat to a party's "supreme national interests."

Under either approach to the crisis deployment problem, a mechanism for consultations between the parties might be desirable, to deal with possible minor violations and with situations which might lead to crisis deployments by either party.

C. General Constraints on Any Arms Limitation Arrangement

Participation by Other Non-Littoral States that Deploy to the Indian Ocean

Since the only other states outside the Indian Ocean littoral (other than the US and the Soviets) that deploy naval ships into the area are the UK and France, the Soviets are likely to argue that any arms limitation arrangement should provide for parity between Soviet deployments on the one hand and aggregate US, French, and British naval deployments on the other. The US would want to firmly resist this approach, which could only result in a net reduction in the Western naval presence vis-a-vis the Soviets. We would want to insist that any arrangement be limited to US and Soviet forces. If the Soviets were unwilling to fall off their demand (as they were in SALT). We would have to consider whether it was worth accommodating their concern. If so, one of the following alternatives might help:

-- Make restraints (both US and Soviet) loosely contingent on the maintenance of current levels of all extra-regional deployments.

-- Ask extra-regional powers to associate themselves with the intent if not the terms of a US-Soviet arrangement by unilateral declarations of their own.

While the US would not want to include France and the UK in any formal way in the discussions, we would want to consult with them prior to initiating talks with the Soviets. We would probably also want to consult with Japan and Australia, and to assure other friendly states (e. g., Iran and Saudi Arabia) that US aid programs would not be affected by the talks.

#### Participation by Littoral States

In addition to seeking a limit on UK and French deployments, the Soviets might also seek to cover the Australian fleet. The US could probably resist this demand without much difficulty by countering with a demand to include the Indian Navy, arguing that the USSR's special relationship with India is similar to the US/Australian tie.

Whether to include the littoral states generally involves two separate issues:

-- what role, if any, should the littoral states play in a US-Soviet negotiation; and

-- what would be the utility of a multilateral negotiation leading to an arrangement designed to limit all navies in the area.

Apart from the possible desirability of advising certain states at some point that discussions had taken place, there are a number of good reasons not to involve the littoral states in US/Soviet discussions. The principal one is that it would greatly complicate the negotiations and reduce the chances of reaching an acceptable limitation arrangement. The Soviets would be tempted to convert the discussions into a propaganda forum and join with some of the littoral states in advocating the removal of all foreign bases from the area -- pressuring us on Diego Garcia while steadfastly denying their own facilities in Somalia. Also, inclusion of littoral states in whatever form might be construed as tacit acceptance of their right to regulate activities on adjacent high seas areas.

Inclusion of littoral states would make sense only if the US wanted to press for a multilateral arrangement under which all extra-regional

naval powers and all littoral states (or all littoral states with large navies) would agree to limit their deployments or exercise restraint in expanding their fleets. There is little chance that the principal littoral states would agree to such an arrangement. Pressure for an Indian Ocean "Zone of Peace" has been intended solely to exclude external powers, not to establish an intra-area arms limitation regime. While there might be scenarios in which a call for area-wide limitation including littoral states might have some tactical advantages in resisting pressure to exclude us from the area, for the present and foreseeable future the littoral fleets will remain of such modest capability as to pose little threat to US interests in the area -- even if US deployments were to be limited at current levels under a US/Soviet bilateral limitation arrangement.

#### Verification

Verification of any limitation arrangement would presumably be by national technical means. Using existing systems, our verification capabilities would vary depending on the item subject to limitation.

-- Submarines. The probability of detecting submarines is very low, and the ability to distinguish the nationality of the submarine is virtually nil.

-- Aircraft. Limits on stationing Soviet aircraft in the area would be verifiable over time. The probability of detecting aircraft overflights of the Indian Ocean is higher than for detecting submarines, and it is likely that its nationality could be identified. However, the absolute probability (in a violation scenario) of detecting single covert flights of BEAR aircraft is still low.

-- Surface Ships. The probability of detecting a surface ship during transit or deployment is high enough to deter deployments in violation of a surface ship limitation unless a major event were planned.

-- Construction of Facilities. We could detect the construction of new facilities in the area. It would be more difficult to establish Soviet connection with the construction and very difficult to establish the degree of Soviet control over the facilities.

-- Use of Facilities. We could detect the presence of Soviet aircraft or naval units at military facilities and in general how long these units are present. It would be difficult to determine the type and amount of support obtained by Soviet units at these facilities.