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RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARDS THE INDIAN OCEAN: AN ANALYSIS OF THE POST-SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMA

During the Cold-war era, due to its geographical proximity and geo-strategic calculations, the Indian Ocean represented an area of concern for the former Soviet Union. In the last four decades the Afro-Asian states of this region had acquired prominence in its foreign policy agenda due to the security thrust of the former USSR, along with commonality of approach on numerous issues. The disintegration of the USSR has not only led to the drastic transformation in the status and position of powers in the world, but also changed the global and regional power politics. The changed in the geo-strategic importance of the Indian Ocean region is no exception to this phenomenon.

Questions arise: whether the Russian Federation, the successor state of the Soviet Union, will be able to play a significant role in the politics of this region? What will be the new contours and postures of Russian policy towards the states of this region? Whether there will be continuity or change in its foreign policy? If changes occur, what will be the nature and shape of the changed foreign policy paradigm? How and to what extent the domestic and international milieu will work as determinants of such change? In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze these and other related issues, so as to appreciate the trends in Russian foreign policy towards the states of Indian Ocean region.

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Before analyzing Russia's Indian Ocean policy, it becomes pertinent to examine the formation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and its impact on the formulation of Russia's foreign policy. Besides, it is essential to study how the transformed nature of regional and global environment and the changed course of domestic capabilities have affected the process.

The declaration by the three Slavic republics of the former USSR - Russia, Ukraine and Bylorussia - on 8 December 1991 at Belovezh, near Minsk, supplemented by Alma Ata Declaration on 21 December 1991 initiated the process of dissolution of the composite state. When eight more republics joined them the dissolution became formal and a new political entity designated as the CIS¹ came into being. As a result, the geographic boundaries of the former USSR were redrawn. Fourteen new independent states, in addition to Russia which succeeded the state of the Soviet Union, were created (see Map 1). The newly founded CIS is neither a state nor a supra-state, neither a federation nor a quasi-federation. It has no flag, no state emblem, and no constitution. One of its objective is to forge cooperation among its member states "in accordance with the principle of equality through coordinating institutions formed on parity basis and operating in the way established by the agreements between members."² Thus, the CIS was created by the countries which had a common past, but has no common future.³

The formation of CIS does not mean that all the republics are going to play equal role in international politics. Moreover, the factors

1. The four republics which had not joined CIS were Georgia and three Baltic Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. See, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) Report, *The Commonwealth of Independent States: Developments and Prospects* (Moscow, 1992), p. 5.
2. Devendra Kaushik, "Commonwealth of Independent States and India", *International Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, April-June 1993, p. 231.
3. Taras Kuzio, *Russia-Crimea-Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict* (London, 1994), (Conflict Studies, No. 167) p. 7.

EMERGENCE OF C. I. S.



MAP-1

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Not to scale

and forces shaping the relations between the states and sources of power and influence have undergone substantial transformation after the disintegration of the USSR. Even at this crucial juncture, the role Russian Federation is going to play in the European politics in particular and world in general, however, cannot be underestimated.⁴ It is because Russia still continues to be most cohesive state in the CIS. About 82.6 per cent of its population is Russian.⁵ Besides, it contains 52 per cent of the total population and 75 per cent of territory of the former USSR. Three quarters of the minerals (diamond and gold) and fuels (oil, natural gas and coal) are concentrated in the Siberian and Far East region of Russia. The region accounts for 90 per cent of the oil output and 70 per cent of its natural gas output of the former Soviet Union.⁶ Thus, Russia has acquired a predominant place in the CIS. But even this Republic is not free from problems which are likely to have a serious bearing on Russia's foreign policy goals in the future.

It is pertinent to mention here that Russia has adopted contradictory foreign policy postures since its inception. The contradictions arose because of the different perceptions of the policy makers regarding Russia's role *vis-a-vis* international politics; progress of internal economic and political reforms; Moscow's policy towards its 'close foreign states' of the former USSR; official foreign policy line and the ideas and ambitions of other political groups in the system; continuity and change in the Russian national interest *vis-a-vis* the former USSR; and, the question of former Soviet status as 'superpower' vs Russian position as a great power are responsible for continuous ambiguity in the policies pursued by Russia at present.

4. For details see, Martha Brill Olcott, "Russia's Place in the CIS", *Current History*, Vol. 92, No. 576, October 1993, pp. 314-9. Also see, Andrei Zagorski, "Developments in CIS: Challenges for Russia", *Aussen Politik*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 1993, p. 144.

5. For ethnic profile of the CIS, see, Chaune D. Harries, "The New Russian Minorities: A Statistical Overview", *Post-Soviet Geography*, Vol. 34, No. 1, January 1993, pp. 1-28.

6. Kaushik, No. 2, pp. 233-4.

These shifts and varying foreign policy orientations, as observed by Olga Alexandrova, have pushed the Russian foreign policy under the influence of four main conceptional patterns - (i) the 'Westerners'; (ii) the Russian-nationalistic frame; (iii) 'Eurasism'; and (iv) the 'Geopolitical realism'.⁷

Without going into the details of these varied orientations in the Russian foreign policy, it is essential to point out in this context that twin parallel forces seem to be working in determining its foreign policy decisions. One of them is Yeltsin-Bozhyrev combine, who have given a pro-Western tilt to Russia's foreign policy. They believe that West is no more an ideological adversary of Russia. Instead of politico-military alliance bloc, the former is considered by them as a centre for collective regulation of world affairs and global economy. They view the West as Russia's natural ally both in regard to Russia's internal political and economic transformation and in the creation of a "new international order." Hence, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is in favour of forging a "constructive partnership" with the West. This is evident from his following remark:

The national and state interest of both countries no longer conflict but complement each other on most international issues. The stage is set, then, for Russia and the United States to influence positively the course of world affairs - not through a condominium or imposed superpower priorities, but categorically through a constructive partnership.⁸

It is assumed by them that without Western economic assistance Russia cannot continue its reform programme and achieve its goal of stability in prices. Consequently, the main aim of the Russian elite is to "strive to achieve stable relations with the United States on the basis of a 'strategic partnership', and, in the long term perspective, even a

7. For details see, Olga Alexandrova, "Divergent Russian Foreign Policy Concepts", *Aussen Politik*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 1993, pp. 363-72.

8. Andrei Kozyrev, "The Lagging Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3, May-June 1994, p. 59.

'union'.⁹ This is evident from the following published conversation between Russian President Yeltsin and, the then, US President George Bush:

I would also add that even in the future we intend to preserve the current orientations of Russian foreign policy. (We) shall continue to stand for strengthening our relations of partnership with the United States and follow it up with creation of a Union relationship.¹⁰

This approach became more evident with the Russian decision to join the NATO as "partner for peace" with the United States and other Western allies. It will definitely take Moscow away from Third World, in general, and the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean region, in particular.

In the recent public pronouncements, both Yeltsin and Kozyrev have, however, tried to emphasize that the Russian foreign policy was guided by the consideration of national interests. This change in their stance may have been made under pressures from the recent assertion of nationalistic and communist forces and the criticism of their policies by certain groups within their own party. But this may, in no way, be treated as their digression from their pro-Western tilt which still persists. This has been rightly summed up by Olga Alexandrova when he concludes:

In view of the unstable power constellation, President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev could find it increasingly difficult to sustain their pragmatic policy oriented towards cooperation with the West ...Nevertheless, the Yeltsin leadership, irrespective of all the fluctuations, still demonstrates its willingness to compromise with the "close foreign countries" and to seek partnership with Western countries.¹¹

9. Kaushik, No. 2, p. 239.

10. *Den* (Moscow) No. 3 (83), 17-30 January 1993, pp. 1-2, cited in Kaushik, N. 2, p. 242.

11. Alexandrova, n, 7, p.-372.

The other stream which is influencing Russian foreign policy is dominated by military and assertive nationalist elites. Their main thrust is anti-Westernism and the revival of old status of Russia as a great power. The military has succeeded in acquiring an important role in Russia because it has been sided with President Yeltsin since the anti-communist uprising in 1991. Besides, General Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov is the Chief of the armed forces of Russia, and at the same time, he holds the position of Commander-in-Chief of the defence forces of the CIS as well. The growing influence of military on Russian foreign policy is reflected in its vocal hostility to the entry of Central Europe in NATO. Its demand to the United Nations for granting Russia a special peacekeeping role in the former Soviet Republic and its call for a revision to the CFE (Conventional Forces Europe) treaty are proofs of such assertion.¹²

To fulfil these aims, the Ministry of Defence of Russia had requested for 50 per cent increase in its 1994 budget. In view of the existing internal scenario in Russia, there is likelihood of increase in the salience of the role of military leadership there. This might be the reason that Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, displayed more continuity with the foreign policies of the former USSR in his recent public pronouncement. He suggested that NATO might be converted into a "system of collective security and stability under the aegis of CSES". He also demanded veto power for Russia in the above quoted system.¹³

The rise of Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party in the recent elections has brought the assertive nationalist group at the forefront in Russia.¹⁴ He is in favour of reviving its past glory and superpower

12. Kuzio, n. 3, p. 6.

13. *Asian Age*, 6 June 1994.

14. The rise of Zhirinovskiy and its implications on Russia's foreign policy, see, Jacob Wikipp, "The Zhirinovskiy Threat", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3, May/June 1994, pp. 72-86.

status. Zhirinovskiy is convinced that unless Russia gets an outlet in the Indian Ocean it is not possible for it to be a great power. The acquisition of that status by Russia is necessary for the establishment of permanent peace in the Indian Ocean region. Hence, he pleads for a corridor for Russia through Iran and Afghanistan for getting an access to the Indian Ocean. He observed that :

The final 'thrust' to the South: As I dream of it, Russian soldiers will wash their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and forever change to summer uniforms... we must pacify that region forever.¹⁵

Zhirinovskiy is also concerned about the increasing threat to Russia from the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in the states of CIS located in the south. His ideas obviously have imperialistic overtones. But he represents a key school of thought in the post-Soviet Russia. The escalating popular support received by him has resulted in the emergence of a strong lobby which advocates an Indian Ocean orientation in Russia's foreign policy.¹⁶

Thus, it could be concluded that the disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of the CIS have not only reduced the great power status of Russia but also created a dilemma for the latter's foreign policy. Uncertainty still looms large on the goals and objectives of Russia's foreign policy. This may be associated to the contradiction in the assessment of Russia's place in global politics and instability in its internal political and economic conditions. The ruling elites of Russia are, however, inclined to maintain partnership with the West, but domestic compulsions may force them to adopt a nationalistic postures in their foreign policy pronouncements.

15. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, *Poslednii Brosok na yug* (Moscow, 1993), p. 64.

16. For details see, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, *O Sudbakh Rossii* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 106-32.

II

Russia's policy towards the Indian Ocean region could be analyzed better through a broader framework of the former's orientation towards the Third World. In the changed global milieu, Russia is pursuing a diametrically opposite policy posture towards this area as compared to the earlier policies of the former USSR. It is probably carrying the legacies of the Gorbachev era.

Historically, from 1917 to 1956, there was hardly any consistent policy for the Third World in Soviet calculations. In fact a significant transformation took place in the Soviet thinking towards the Third World only after the rise of Khrushchev to power, and particularly due to his concept of "peaceful co-existence" which he presented at the twentieth party Congress in 1956. Consequently, a sound relationship with a number of Indian Ocean states was forged. This understanding got strengthened with the convergence between the broad Soviet ideological commitments and the foreign policy interests of the countries of this region. The Soviet Union lent support to the demands of the Third World for national liberation of these countries and for the creation of New International Economic Order (NIEO). It began to condemn the policy of apartheid, and the militarization of the Indian Ocean. The Soviet Union also started supporting the Third World at various international forums. This brought it closer to them.

This trend, however, started declining in the early 1980s or during the last days of Brezhnev. Greater emphasis was hereafter given to cooperation with all the newly independent states irrespective of their domestic policies and programme. Pragmatism rather than ideology was introduced as necessary input in Soviet foreign policy calculations. The trend was not, however, very strong, nor did a firm commitment exist in this context. Hence, the leaders who came to power between the regimes of Brezhnev and Gorbachev were found oscillating in between the political extremes of ideological commitment and pragmatic considerations.

With the coming of Gorbachev to power, Soviet foreign policy as a whole, including its policy towards the Third World, underwent significant change. The "balance of interests" approach and East-West cooperation were the hallmarks of "new political thinking" during the Gorbachev era. With the end of the Cold War, most Third World countries of the Indian Ocean region - Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Vietnam, - lost their importance in Soviet foreign policy considerations. Only some regionally influential countries were cultivated by the Soviets for their local clouts. Hence, it began to pay more attention to a different set of states in the Third World. i.e., 'capitalist' countries which were not important earlier during the Cold War. This basic thesis of Gorbachev was apparent in a number of his writings, particularly in his *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*.¹⁷ It contained interesting analysis of trends in the Third World. For example : (i) the unresolved problems in the Third World were seen as worsening 'the prospects for universal peace', (ii) past theory of socialist orientation and non-capitalist path of development was wrong and should be discarded; (iii) earlier notion that the imperialists were out to plunder the developing countries was revised; (iv) stress was paid on making Soviet foreign policy economically viable; (v) Third World countries were increasingly criticized for their record on human rights and democracy; (vi) nuclear and missile potentials of the Third World countries criticized and joint cooperation with the West to regulate the 'risk zones' in Third World was talked about; (vii) support was extended by the Soviet scholars for the establishment of nuclear-free-zones everywhere including in the Third World; (viii) on environmental issue, it raised concern for the spread of 'dirty technologies' in the developing countries and criticized them for taking

17. For details see, Devendra Kaushik, "Perestroika and Indo-Soviet Relations in the 1990's" in R.S. Yadav, ed., *India's Foreign Policy Towards 2000 A.D.* (New Delhi, 1993), pp. 44-49.

a "politically accusatory and categorical approach"; (ix) despite sympathies for NIEO, Soviet perception was that it has been "hampering and will continue to hamper a productive discussion and solution of world economic problems", and, (x) the changed perception of the Soviet Union towards non-aligned movement.¹⁸

These trends in Soviet foreign policy are also reflected in an interview of the then Foreign Minister of the USSR, Edward Shevardnadze, when he remarked:

The Third World is also an arena of regional conflicts and such global problems as pollution, development strategy, foreign debt, the popularization of advanced civilian technologies and non-proliferation of technologies for the production of nuclear, chemical, missile and other weapons. All these problems are intertwined and can be solved only if we stop dividing this planet into categories and regard it as a single whole.¹⁹

Soviet response to developments in the Gulf (Iraq-Kuwait war) and militarization of the region by America and its allies demonstrated the former's changed approach towards the Third World, in general, and the Indian Ocean region, in particular. During this crisis, Soviets were quick to denounce Iraq - a one time close ally of the USSR - and to lend support to the Security Council resolutions which called for sanctions against Iraq. Even large scale naval presence of America and its allies in the Indian Ocean was overlooked. Instead of opposing militarization of the region, the Soviet Union maintained the passive presence of its ships during the course of action against Iraq.

The Gorbachevian legacy was strengthened by Yeltsin. He further de-ideologized Russia's foreign policy by making it "pragmatic to the

18. Arvind Gupts, *Ideology and Soviet Foreign Policy: Lenin to Gorbachev* (New Delhi, 1993), pp. 187-88.

19. *Pravda*, 26 June 1990.

point of being opportunistic".²⁰ Russia and the United States, instead of sustaining regional conflicts, began resolving them collectively. In the situations prevalent in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Nicaragua and the Horn of Africa, Moscow and Washington negotiated, cajoled clients, and fashioned interim settlements, ending their long standing competitive military involvement.²¹ Under Yeltsin, Moscow has even stopped economic aid due to its own resource constraints. Though Russia's capability to act as a patron-protector or to deliver large scale economic credits has been severely undermined, yet it has a major arms industry and is actively engaged in selling weapons to the states of Indian Ocean region which can afford to pay for them.²²

As far as peace-keeping is concerned, Russia is in support of using every means including direct military intervention. It no longer claims as guardian of the Third World against any coercive action by the UN under its collective security measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. "In instances where it is impossible to achieve agreement on a cease-fire or when treaties are broken, as well as when the preventive deployment of troops has failed to effect deterrence," viewed a Russian expert, "direct international military intervention may come into consideration."²³ Not only this, Russia feels that for the prevention of conflict, the CSCE - as a unique Euro-Atlantic forum - could be called to play upon an extremely effective role. This role, according to Russia, should be performed by an "authorized functionary" of the UN and the CSCE, i.e. by NATO in the crisis regulation stage.²⁴ Finally, its entry in NATO as twenty-first state on

20. Devendra Kaushik, "Common Wealth of Independent States and India", *International Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, April-June 1993, p. 237.

21. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Russia and America in Strategic Perspective", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 16, No. 3, June 1993, p. 351.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Daitriy Trenin, "The Army and Society: Blessed Are the Peacemakers", *Novoye Vremya*, 8 June 1993 in *FBIS-USR-93-086*, 13 July 1993, p. 43.

24. *Ibid.*

22 June 1994 as "partnership in peace" has affected Russia's relations with the countries of the Third World the most.

The document regarding *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*²⁵ approved by President Yeltsin in April 1993, is a severe blow to the friendly ties between Russia and the Third World. The countries of the Indian Ocean region will definitely be affected by such a change as it will prevent Russia from coming closer to this region. In its over enthusiasm of forging at first "strategic partnership" and later on "Union" with the West and by leaning towards Europe and NATO, Russia is leaving the Third World in lurch. The above document merits serious attention in view of the current world situation. This document brazenly alleges that the threat to world stability now "comes from the Third World countries, and that Russia together with the United States, should ensure the monitoring of actions of ambitions and unpredictable regimes and the prevention of local conflicts and crisis situation."²⁶ Though this has met with serious criticism from some Russian scholars, it is the governing consideration for foreign policy decision-makers of Russia.²⁷

Implication of this new approach towards the Indian Ocean region is that the present Russian policy towards these states is entirely different from that of the earlier Soviet thinking. The countries of this area are no more seen through the prisms of competitive military and ideological consideration, rather each sub-region in this area is valued differently. If Asia-Pacific is important for "emerging economic realities" then South and West Asia are significant because of their "geopolitical standpoint". Whereas, Russia's attitude towards the

25. For full text of the document see "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation", *FBIS-USR-83-037*, 25 March 1993, pp.1-20.

26. *Ibid.*

27. For criticisms of Russia's new foreign policy postures, see, Yurily Batalin and Pavel Filimonov, "Will the Might of the United States be enhanced by Siberia", *Pravda*, 15 April 1993 cited in *FBIS-USR-93-*, 28 April 1993, pp. 64-66.

Middle East is determined primarily by its "geostrategic and geopolitical reasons", it is concerned with "mutually beneficial cooperation, devoid of military-political bias in Africa". But one denominator is common with all the sub-regions of the Indian Ocean, i.e., Russia wants to settle all issues in joint action with the USA. America is no more a rival in Indian Ocean politics, but is considered as a collaborator in matters of peace and security in this region.

While envisaging the 'New Security Concept',²⁸ Russia's Defence Minister, Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov considered that security should be comprehensive and include "economic, political, social, military (and ecological) dimensions."²⁹ This thinking about security is more or less similar to that of the former USSR. But the perception of threat to the Russian security has undergone drastic change. In this context, the Russian elites are much more concerned about the threat from their near neighbours (i.e. the states of the former Soviet Union) and the likely instability resulting from the developments in the Third World, in the form of threat from increasing nuclear arms and growing Islamic fundamentalism in South and West Asia respectively.³⁰ To counteract this threat Russia is now willing to join the regional military alliance system. Shaposhnikov openly admitted this Russian strategy when he remarked that, "it would be very important for Russia to join regional security structure in the event that they are formed in the near abroad and along the perimeter on the former Soviet Union, or to establish cooperation with such structures."³¹ The Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev has specified as to what this structure would be.

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28. Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, "On the Concept of Russian Security," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 9, September 1993 in *FBIS-USR-93-149*, 24 November 1993, pp. 68-75. Also see Ednan Ageayey, "Foreign Policy Aspect of the Concept of Russia's Security", *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, no. 9, September 1993 in *FBIS-USR-93-149*, 24 November 1993, pp. 75-76.
29. Shaposhnikov, *ibid*, p. 69
30. "Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation" No. 25, pp. 1-17.
31. Shaposhnikov, n. 28, p. 75.

During his speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, on 27 October 1993 he remarked that:

The cooperation of our military men with their NATO colleagues must also become useful, including in the development of peace keeping operations. At the same time, we expect that the North Atlantic Council will act specifically as a partner in cooperation, and in turn will transform itself as is applicable to the new realities, also without any aspirations toward infallibility and monopoly.³²

The joining of the NATO by Russia as "partners in peace" and its efforts to become a junior partner of developed world's group of G-7 clearly manifest the shift in its perceptions regarding threat to its security.

The military presence of the United States at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean is now no more considered as a threat to Russia's soft underbelly in the south. Rather a strategic partnership with the West is the new orientation in its security calculations. Thus, the Third World has been marginalized from Russia's new approach to foreign policy both as a counterweight to fight the western imperialism and as its earlier security orientation against the containment policies of the USA. Now the policy of Russia will be rather inimical to the interests of the Third World in general and the countries of the Indian Ocean region in particular. Henceforth, only those countries in this region will matter, which still suit the pragmatic orientation of the Russian policies in terms of trade and selling of arms. The earlier sympathies and long term credit or broad ideological commitment towards them has become a closed chapter. Moreover, in future, relations between Russia and this region will be guided by the western perspective of the emerging new world order.

III

The Indian Ocean concerns of Russia are likely to be determined by the geopolitical set up of the present regime and the projections of

32. *FBIS-SUSR-93-149*, 24 November, 1993, p. 78

its foreign policy towards outside world, including the countries of the Indian Ocean region. Despite the breakaway of 14 republics, the two earlier outlets of the former Soviet Union (i.e. the Black sea and the Pacific Ocean) are still intact in their territorial settings. Through the Black Sea Russia could enter into the Indian Ocean and influence the politics of this region (see Map 2). Though the Black Sea Fleet of the USSR was used to counter the USA's Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean during the Cold War era, American threat to its security is no longer there. Russia could now well use its Black Sea fleet to increase its influence in the Red Sea, the Horn of Arica, and the Persian Gulf region of the Indian Ocean. But the political and strategic environments in the Black Sea area are not one of equanimity. Russia and Ukraine, however, started quarrelling only 5 days after the CIS Minsk agreement of 30 December 1991 because of differences between them on Crimea, division of the Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol which had created a Cold War like situation in the Black Sea region. Since then both countries are behaving like unfriendly neighbours.³³

Of all the points of dispute, Crimea is the most divisive issue at present between Russia and Ukraine. Historically, it was annexed by Catherine the Great in 1783 after enjoying periods of independence or semi-independence as a protectorate of the Ottoman Empire or Russia. Under Soviet control its inhabitants (Tatars) had to face eviction during Stalin's regime. Later Stalin incorporated Crimea as an *oblast* (region) of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in 1946. In February 1954, Nikita Khrushchev, one time party Chief in Kiev gifted it to Ukraine as measure of grand gesture to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Treaty of Pereiaslay (which united Ukraine and Russia).³⁴ Presently three parties - Russians, Ukrainians and

33. For details see, William H. Kincade and Natalia Melnychuk, "Un-neighbourly Neighbours", *Foreign Policy*, No. 94., Spring 1994, pp. 84-104.

34. Tara Kartha, "Crimea on the Brink of Conflagration", *The Observer*, 8 June 1994.

MAP -2

RUSSIAN OUTLET THROUGH BLACK SEA



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Not to scale

Tatars - are making claims on this peninsula on varying grounds: Russians on the plea of conquest and more than 150 years of settlement and control; Ukrainians on the ground of its possession since 1954; and Tatars on the strength of much earlier conquest, longer settlement and coerced eviction.³⁵ According to 1989 census the population of these three groups in this region was - Russian 67 per cent, Ukrainians 26 per cent and Tatars 7 per cent. But percentage of Tatars might have increased with the recent influx of about 1,66,000 Crimean Tatars to their homeland from Central Asian republics.³⁶ However, the claim of Tatars is not serious, the conflict at present, is mainly between Russia and Ukraine.

Throughout 1992-93 the Russian parliament pursued the demand to include Crimea in Russia's fold.³⁷ Accordingly, the Russian parliamentary committee circulated a draft resolution in January 1992 proposing to the Supreme Soviet to declare the 1954 transfer invalid. It was Ukraine which contested the claim as it violated previously signed Russian-Ukrainian treaties of 1990 and the article 5 of Minsk accord which guaranteed existing borders. Later, the then Russian Vice-President, Alexander Rutskoi, visited Crimea in April 1992 and declared that it is a "common sense" that Crimea belongs to Russia and those who made the 1954 transfer had been suffering from "a hangover or sunstroke."³⁸ A month later the Russian parliament passed a resolution declaring the 1954 agreement "illegal". But Ukraine did not agree and declared that this resolution has no meaning for it as Crimea is its internal affair.

Simultaneous developments in Crimea, however, created great setback to the Ukraine. The Crimean parliament declared its indepen-

35. Kincade and Melnyczuk, n. 3 p. 94.

36. Celestine Bohlan, "A 'new Crimean War' in the Making", *Times of India*, 3, April 1992.

37. For details see, Kuzio, n. 3, pp. 14-19.

38. Kincade and Malnyczuk n. 33, p. 94.

dence from Ukraine in May 1992 under Russian majority influence. Somehow, Ukraine patched up with the local elites of Crimea and agreed to grant them special rights under its autonomous republics but this proved to be only a short term arrangement. It was once again taken up by the Crimean president during January 1993 election. A Russian, Yuri Meshkov, of Republic Movement of Crimea, was elected as president in this election on the basis of his promise to split Crimea from "Kiev's silly economic and political polities" and strengthening Crimea's ties with Russia. He made Russian as the official language of Crimea. This created fears in the mind of decision makers in Kiev. Ukrainian fears were enhanced with the rise of Zhirinovskiy and his proclamation of giving Crimea to its "rightful owner" (i.e. Russia). Thus, the Crimean issue has brought about a state of 'cold war' between Russia and Ukraine which may escalate into a hot war.

Another contentious issue between Russia and Ukraine has been the issue of division of the Black Sea Fleet. The Black Sea ports are the only 'year-round' warm water ports of the former USSR. The fleet was used extensively by the Soviet navy, naval aviation, and naval infantry for testing new ships, air craft and equipment, and new naval tactics and operations, as well as for training personnel. The value of the ships and aircraft might be assessed in several ways, yet the value of the naval infrastructure ashore probably surpasses that of the vessels both in strategic and budgetary terms. It is this very complex question which needs to be resolved between Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, the issue is also indirectly linked to the future status of Crimea and Sevastopol.

Ukraine attempted in April 1992 to nationalize some portions of the fleet which were based in Ukraine. But the move was thwarted by the pro-Russian/CIS Fleet Commander. It is because only one-third of

its crew and one-fifth of its officers are Ukrainian while majority of them are Russian. Consequently, a summit was held between Presidents Yeltsin and Kravchuk at Dagomys in June 1992 where an 18-point agreement was signed that resolved to divide the fleet in equal proportions by 1995. But differences occurred soon. Hence both presidents again met at Yalta in August 1992 and reached an agreement which more clearly spelled out how the Black Sea Fleet would be staffed and supplied, as well as how it would be divided by 1995.³⁹ This commitment was reaffirmed in their summit meet in January 1993.⁴⁰ Both leaders met again in June 1993. But things could not be settled because of two clauses regarding dual citizenship and leasing of Sevastopol put forward by Russia. Later both presidents met again in September 1993 at Massandra to resolve this issue. Here Russia instead of listening to Ukraine, tried to use the latter's economic crisis and threatened to halt the supplies of energy to Kiev. Yeltsin offered to relieve Kiev of its estimated US \$ 2.5 billion debt to Moscow, stemming from oil and gas shipments, in exchange for at least some of the as-yet-undetermined Ukrainian portions of the fleet and a Russian lease on Sevastopol.⁴¹ Recently, it was reported in the press that both are likely to reach a historic accord on the division of the Black Sea Fleet. Under the proposed agreement Ukraine will be eligible for 50 per cent of the fleets, 833 vessels, but only 164 ships or 18.3 per cent will be owned by it and remaining 31.7 per cent will be sold to Russia as debt payments.⁴²

On the initiative of 12 factions, the Russian parliament debated the status of Sevastopol on 7 December 1992. In their opinion, it is the main base for the Black Sea Fleet, hence it should have a special status and not be left under Ukrainian sovereignty. Sevastopol, according to

39. *Kessing's Record of World Events*, Vol, 38, No, 8, August 1993, p. 39060.

40. *Ibid.*, vol. 39, no. 1, January 1993, pp. 39284-5.

41. Kincade and Melnyczuk, n, 33, p. 92.

42. *Times of India*, 23 April 1994.

1978 Soviet Ukrainian constitution, has Ukrainian republican status and was not under Crimean jurisdiction.⁴³ Notwithstanding Ukrainian objections, Russia's Supreme Soviet declared it as a Russian city in July 1993.⁴⁴ Though Yeltsin has decried the mood of the Supreme Soviet, he is in favour of getting the city on lease. Now, if once the question of the Black Sea Fleet is settled in Russia's favour, the acquisition of Sevastopol will follow suit.

Thus, the Black Sea Fleet issue may be resolved amicably in favour of Russia but it will definitely leave some bitterness in the minds of the Ukrainians. The existing unfavourable situation - Ukraine's dependence for its energy supply on Moscow; Russians being the ethnic majority in Ukraine; Crimean and Sevastopol issues, rise of Zhirionovsky and Yuri Meshkov etc., - will leave Kiev dissatisfied by this one-sided settlement. From this, however, it is manifest that Russia is desirous of playing a more serious role in the outside world through the Black Sea Fleet. In fact, it is not a question of settlement with its neighbour and defending its borders, rather the contention behind it may be to achieve a "great power" status for Russia in future.

Some may regard the establishment of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)⁴⁵ by six former Soviet and five non-Soviet states⁴⁶ on 25 June 1992 as a ray of hope for the peace in the Black Sea area.

43. Kuzio, n. 3, p. 15.

44. Kartha, n. 34.

45. For details see, Faruk Sen, "Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Supplement to the EC?" *Aussen Politik*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 1993, pp. 281-7; and Omer Faruk Genekaya, "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Regional Challenge to European Integration" *International Social Science Journal*, no. 138, November 1993, pp. 549-57.

46. The former Soviet states are - Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldavia; whereas non-Soviet states are-Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

MAP-3

RUSSIAN OUTLET THROUGH PACIFIC



Through this organization these states are aiming at increasing their multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the following areas:⁴⁷

- transportation and communication including infrastructure
- computer science
- exchange of economic and commercial information including statistics
- standardization and certification of products
- mining of ores and processing of raw materials
- tourism
- farming and agricultural industry
- prophylaxis in the field of veterinary medicine
- health system and pharmaceuticals
- science and technology

This organization is important because it covers a larger area as compared to the area covered by EC and equivalent to latter's population of 324 million. Russia acquires a prominent place in it by the sheer size of its territory and because half the population of BSEC i.e. 144.8 million lives there. But one must acknowledge the fact that basically it is a result of Turkey's initiative to make it "a supplement to the EC or a regional forum to increase the bargaining capacity of Turkey with the West and finally to integrate it with them." Besides, it is beset with numerous problems⁴⁸ like unemployment, ethnic conflicts, territorial clashes, inflation, chaos, and divergent foreign policy outlooks by the member states. If the present cooperation between them survives, it could only help in fulfilling Russia's limited vision of integrating itself to the Western economy but it will in no way strengthen its Indian Ocean position through the Black Sea.

47. Sen, n. 46, p. 382.

48. For details see, *Ibid.*, pp. 283-5; and Genckaya, n. 46, pp. 551-55.

IV

Another region through which Russia could interact with the Indian Ocean states is its outlet through the Pacific Ocean (see Map 3). Now-a-days, when economies of America and Western Europe are facing recession and those of the eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Africa are in disarray, Asian economy continues to head towards rapid economic growth⁴⁹ Consequently, this region of Asia-Pacific will definitely attract attention of all the major powers including Russia.⁵⁰ Besides, Russian policy is certainly different from that of the former USSR as it is devoid of ideological basis. It is likely to be more pragmatic. Hence, it may give a greater attention to economic aspects than politico-ideological orientations. Finally, Russian security concerns have also undergone shifts from West to South and East. This will definitely bring it closer towards this region.

Russia will certainly be struggling to reform its economy in the present and the next century. For this it will continue to be an active player in East Asia. But in this context, it will face difficulty in investing the capital needed to develop the Siberian Far East, in general and the Tumen River basin, in particular.⁵¹ It is only through its shift towards this region that it could resolve its future economic problems. Mikhail L. Titarenko, Director, Institute for Eastern Stu-

49. R.S. Yadav, "Recent Changes in Asia and its Implications for India's Foreign Policy", In *Proceedings of the 14 International Symposium on Asian Studies*, 1992 (Hongkong, 1994), Vol. 5. p. 581.

50. For the Soviet Policy towards Asia-Pacific region during Gorbachev era see, Gorbachev's Vladivostok Speech (28 July 1986) in *Strategic Digest*, vol.17, no.9, September 1987, pp. 1927-43; and his Krasnoyarsk Speech (18 December, 1988) in *Strategic Digest*, Vol. 18, No.12, December 1988, pp. 561-76. For critical appraisal of his policies see, Leszek Busznski, "International Linkages and Regional Interests in Soviet Asia-Pacific Policy", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, Summer 1988, pp. 214-34.

51. Whal Min Kim, "Consideration and Reconciliation of Other Regional Issues in Asia-Pacific Region", *Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Spring 1994, p.92.

dies, Russian Academy of Science and Alexander G. Yakovlev, Head of Department of the same institute have rightly observed that:

It is the economic build-up in those areas (Siberia and Far East) that would help (Russia)- (a) to have the "eastern door" wide open towards the two economic superpowers - the United States and Japan, and (b) to provide the material basis for the entire Asian scope of Moscow's foreign policy that extends from the Mediterranean through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific.⁵²

Thus, the region of Asia-Pacific will be looked upon with serious concern by Russia. *"In the long run, exactly the large scale involvement in the Asia-Pacific development would predetermine the geopolitical role of Russia."*⁵³ Any constructive policy towards Asia-Pacific will, however, be based on the Russia's relations with the other powers (the USA, Japan and China), in particular and its understanding with the countries of East and Southeast Asia, in general.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the USA is no longer considered as an adversary by Russia. Rather it shares the American security perceptions in global politics, in general and Asia-Pacific, in particular. Russia looked towards the USA as a major source of economic aid to run its reform programmes and integration of its economy with global network. Even on the issue of human rights it shared the USA's belief that the former should be protected by all states at all costs.

Overall relations of Russia with Japan have improved with the improved Russian-American relationship. In the northern Pacific Ocean region both are, however, involved in a controversial issue concerning sovereignty over the four southern Kurile islands - Iturup,

52. Mikhail L. Titarenko and Alexander G. Yakovlev, "Russia's Asia-Pacific Policy in the New International Situation", *Koren Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 1993, p.99. Also see Rafik Aliev, "Russian Far East: Strategy and Tactics of Development in Primorye", *Korean Journal of international Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp. 241-62.

53. Titarenko and Yakolve, *Ibid.*, (emphasis in original)

Kunishir, Shikotan, and the Habomar group - which are often referred in Japan as its "northern territories".⁵⁴ This issue is not going to generate much tension as Russia has agreed to transfer these territories to Japan at an appropriate time. Due to domestic pressure of nationalistic forces, present leadership of Russia may be looking for some other occasion to enter into a deal. Besides Russia's commitment to withdraw 700 thousand armed forces from the Far East helped to pacify Japan. Finally, Russian approach to disarmament, retargetting its nuclear weapons, and understanding with the USA, might have created confidence in Japan about Russia's peace initiative in this region.

Tension with China has been eased as the process of *detente* started by the earlier Soviet regime has set the pace of confidence-building between them. Settlement of boundaries, doing away with nuclear missiles and armed forces from Mongolia, reduction in armed personnel in the Far East, signing of trade agreements, and emerging military cooperation have strengthened their bilateral ties. Though Russia's policy toward human rights and fear of sudden overtures to Taiwan may create some fear in Chinese mind, but these are not considered serious threats to their bilateral understanding in the light of the existing compulsions.

The Russian efforts to build friendship with the two Koreans - by recognizing the North Korean regime and by way of signing the treaty of friendship and cooperation with South Korea - show its concern for a permanent peace in the Korean peninsula.⁵⁵ Simultaneously, Russians are working hard to improve their relations with the ASEAN countries. With the establishment of peace in Cambodia, Russia has at present good relations with the states of Indo-China, Malaysia and

54. Kim, n. 53, p.76.

55. A 15-article, 10-year Treaty on Basic Relations between South Korea and Russia was signed on 19 November 1992 during President Yeltsin's visit to Korea. For complete text of the treaty see, *Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No.1.

Thailand which have entered into defence agreements with it. The Russian withdrawal from the Cam Ranh Bay base has removed the suspicion among other countries of this region. It has also helped build good ties with India and the countries around the Persian Gulf.

Thus, through its outlet into the Pacific, Russia is trying hard to strengthen its ties with the countries of Asia-Pacific. However, this role is not to counter the American moves as was done earlier. It is now rather being done in partnership with the West. The understandings with China, Japan and ASEAN have been developed mainly to attract more economic investments in Russia. Hence, Russia is keen to play active role in the Indian Ocean region from the Pacific area in collaboration with the other powers and influential countries of the region. Its main strategy today is economic and political rather than ideological. It has jettisoned military doctrine of the Cold War era. Though Russia is improving its relations with other powers in the region and the countries of Asia-Pacific, uncertainty still prevails in its policy towards this region.

V

Intentions of a nation, howsoever pious they may be, could not be converted into reality unless they are supported by capabilities. That is true in the case of Russian navy as well. Russia's role in the Indian Ocean is restricted by its declining naval capabilities. Collapse of the USSR led to the chaotic conditions in Russia's political and economic set up. The slow pace of economic reforms, has further deteriorated these conditions. This has led to the enormous cuts on defence spending, including naval infrastructure build up. Later on, the economic measures that were taken after 1991, hit the Russian naval developments badly. Manpower has been substantially reduced, sea-time has been drastically cut, and no warships are deployed in the

Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Simultaneously, the length of conscriptive service has been reduced to two years.

Both the fleets - the Black Sea and the Pacific Ocean - have faced different problems during the last three years. This restricted their operational viability. As discussed above, the Black Sea Fleet has been facing crisis of loyalty and sovereignty. Both Russia and Ukraine are involved in a serious conflict over the possession of this fleet. Even the Sevastopol base of the fleet is a bone of contention between the two new states. Under such conditions, it is very difficult to evolve an effective strategic doctrine or to hold any successful operational exercise by the commander of the fleet. The condition of the Pacific Ocean fleet is not different from that of the fleet in the Black Sea. It is reported that conditions of soldiers serving in this fleet are very bad and even they are facing death due to malnutrition. Widespread publicity has been given to such deaths which resulted in the dismissal of the Commander-in-Chief and some senior officers. Besides, reports also indicate that many ships of the Pacific Ocean fleet, including the aircraft carrier, are unfit to go to sea.

Another problem faced by Russia's navy presently has been the disposal of de-commissioned ships which are outdated and are not fit for use. A large number of such ships await disposal in Russia these days. The most worrying aspect of this is the problem of disposing off the nuclear reactors which powered many of the submarines. At present, there is no apparent method available other than to continue dumping them in the sea which is very hazardous for future.

If the naval developments of Russia since 1991 are analyzed, it will be evident that asymmetrical situation exists regarding the addition of new ships and de-commissioning of the old ones. In 1992, no new construction of ships has been started and work on about half the 130 ships under construction has been halted. The number of older ships

taken out of service has been more than a few new ships added during this period.

The Military Balance, 1992-93 has summed up the Russian naval developments of the said period as : one *Oscar*-class SSGN has been retired; all six high-speed titanium-hulled *Alfa*-class SSN have been prematurely retired after only 15 years service; *Juliet*-class and the last 20 *Whiskey*-class diesel-powered submarines have also been paid off; virtually, all non-nuclear submarines are kept in store have been sold off for scrap.⁵⁶

Besides these, the *Kuznetsov* aircraft carrier was transferred from the Black Sea fleet to the Northern fleet in December 1991. The carrier *Kiev* has been prematurely retired from the Pacific fleet and a second carrier of the class is in the process of refit since long. Two large carriers are under construction in the Niloyayev South shipyard in Ukraine, which are unlikely to be completed now. It appears that work on fitting out the *Varyag* (launched in late 1988) has been suspended awaiting funds from hypothetical foreign sale. Work on the large *Ulyanovsk* (laid down in 1988) has stopped and dismantling has commenced. All *Yak-38* V/STOL aircrafts have been withdrawn from service, leaving the *Kuznetsov* as the only carrier capable of operating fixed with aircraft.⁵⁷

The situation in regard to surface combatants was also in no way better. More than 30 such combatants have been retired, during 1992-93 including: one *Moskva*-class, one *Admiral Zozulya*-class and three *Kronshstadt*-class cruisers, plus 6 destroyers and 20 frigates. The replacement was very meagre, i.e., one *Udaloy*-class guided cruiser (may be scrapped after a serious fire), a seventh *Krivak-III* large patrol vessel for service with the border forces, and two more *Ropucha*-class LST.⁵⁸

56. *The Military Balance, 1992-1993*, (London, 1992), p. 91.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*, pp.91-92.

The condition of Russian navy did not improve even in 1993-94, rather the situation deteriorated further. According to *Military Balance, 1993-94*, only five new submarines have been commissioned and thirty-five have been retired.⁵⁹ The *Kiev*-class aircraft carrier is not considered to be operational either. No new cruisers have been commissioned, but four *Kronshstadt*-class have been retired. One *Sovermennyy*-class destroyer has been commissioned, while three destroyers and fifteen frigates have been retired.⁶⁰ These retirements have seriously affected both the Black and the Pacific Ocean fleets sea-borne capabilities.

A comparative analysis of the available naval infrastructure will make this phenomenon more apparent. Russia's possession of the naval infrastructure is on a gradual decline. This is manifest from Table 1.

Thus, the disarray in economic situation, asymmetry regarding the commissioning of new ships, and declining naval infrastructure of Russia's navy have prevented from playing a great power role in the far off oceans. But the available resources and infrastructure, however, can not be ignored. It still can play an important role in the Indian Ocean region as presently the confrontationist attitude towards the USA no longer exists. This may make its task easier. Despite these declining trends of naval capabilities, the existing facilities are enough for its recognition as a naval power of consequence in the Indian Ocean region. But the use of this naval capability will be a part of its overall foreign policy outlook of in the post-Cold War era. The present foreign policy gestures of Russia, however, ruled out its naval projections in the far off oceans.

59. Five new submarines commissioned were : one *Oscar*-class SSGN two *Akula*-class SSN, and two *Kilo*-class SS; whereas the fifty-five submarines retired were : nine SSGN, eleven SSN, three SSG, and 12 SS.

60. *The Military Balance, 1993-94* (London, 1993), p. 97. Also see, *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter, 1994*, Annual Reference edition, December 1993/January 1994, pp. 97-98.

Table -1⁶¹ Comparative Position of Russian Naval Infrastructure

Types of Infrastructure	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
1. Naval Personnel	4,50,000	3,20,000	3,00,000
2. Submarines	317	250	219
3. Strategic Submarines	60	55	52
4. Tactical Submarines	221	183	153
(i) SSGN	44	36	28
(ii) SSN	65	59	50
(iii) SSG	15	8	5
(iv) SS	97	80	70
5. Principal Surface Combatants	218	192	169
6. Carriers	5	4	2
7. Cruisers	38	33	29
8. Destroyers	29	26	24
9. Frigates	146	129	114
10. Patrol & Coastal Combatants	382	305	163
11. Mine Warfare	292	218	211
12. Minelayers	3	3	3
13. Mine Countermeasures	289	215	208
14. Amphibious	80	78	75
15. Support & Miscellaneous	732	685	650

VI

If Russia's Indian Ocean policy is analyzed in the light of the above discussion, one would find that it is entirely different from that of the former USSR. During the Soviet period and even prior to that since its entry into the Indian ocean in 1968, its main contention was "threat to its security from the West". Security at that time was not

61. *The Military Balance 1991-92* (London, 1991), pp. 38-40; *The Military Balance 1991-92* (London, 1992), pp. 93-95; and *The Military Balance 1993-94* (London, 1993), pp. 100-102.

considered merely a physical threat to its boundaries but a threat to its global interests which necessitated its global role. Now the situation is quite different. The USA is considered as its partner in regional and global matters and Russia is aligned to it in fulfilling the task of peace and security in the emerging new world order. The Russian specialists have tried to sum up this policy as:

Russian-American relations are gaining momentum and proceeding to a partnership, with the least possibility of frictions about the new order in the region. Moscow's explicit preparedness to proceed to the *alliance* with the United States, mirrors the *rapprochement* of their positions in the *global and regional matters* and hence, their perceptions of the new international order.⁶²

Sometimes, the Russian elites have to speak the language in favour of making Russia a "great power" and pretend to perform an independent role in foreign affairs including its policy towards the Indian Ocean region under domestic compulsions. But in reality, it has accepted the role of an ally of the United States. This is more explicit by the passive role played by Russia in Iraq, Somalia, Angola, and in other areas. Now America works as the guarantor of threats to its security from the Indian Ocean region and beyond.

So far as its relations with China regarding Indian Ocean are concerned, it must be admitted that roles of both the states have undergone transformation. China has given up its support to the revolutionary movements. The emerging Sino-Russian understanding has removed this factor from Indian Ocean politics. China's main concern in this region now may be to focus on Southeast Asia. Here too Russia would not like to entangle itself directly, rather it would resolve such issues through its partner - the USA.

Another important dimension of Soviet policy used to be its orientation towards the countries of the Indian Ocean region. This was

62. Titarenko and Yakovlev, n. 54, p. 108 (emphasis added)

inculcated through its support to the national liberation movements and by concluding the treaties of friendship and cooperation. Presently, the question of support for liberation movements has become obsolete with the de-idealization in Moscow's policy since Gorbachev's time.⁶³ The change was manifested further by the alliance with the West on such issues. After 1991, only one treaty of friendship and cooperation was renewed with India. But even in this case the security clause of earlier treaty was discarded.⁶⁴ Whatever little orientation it has towards these countries presently, that is based on the pragmatic consideration of trade, economic cooperation and selling arms to them.⁶⁵

On the issues relating to peace and security in the Indian Ocean, earlier it used to adopt a strong postures in favour of littoral states of this region. Whether it is question of bases, or of peace zone, or of militarization of the area, the former USSR used to be in the forefront

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63. Gorbachev's this policy was explicit in the debate, "The USSR and the Third World", *International Studies* (Moscow), No. 2, December 1988, pp. 133-46. For critical comment on this policy see, Devendra Kaushik, "Gorbachev's New Thinking: Implications for the Third World", *Strategic Studies Journal*, Vol.2, No. 1, 1989, pp. 31-41. Also see his "Soviet Perspective on Third World: Ideological Retreat or Refinement?", *Non-Aligned World*, Vol. 1, No.1, January-March 1983. Also see, Arvind Gupta, *Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy: Lenin to Gorbachev* (New Delhi, 1993), pp. 177-198.
64. Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed with India during President Yeltsin's visit to New Delhi on 28 January 1993. See, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Vol. 39, No. 1, January 1993, p. 39270.
65. Various attempts to sell arms were made by Russia to different countries of the Indian Ocean, such as: Russian delegates visited countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to find out the possibilities of their arms sale (May 1992); it has supplied three submarines to Iran (1992); Concluded military cooperation accord with India (January 1993); Russian defence minister visited Abu Dhabi (UAE) to explore the possibility of arm transfer (January 1993); Russian armed manufacturers joined arms trade fair at Abu Dhabi and expected to sell arms worth £ 5 billion (February 1993); Concluded arms deal with Malaysia (March 1993). For details see, *Asian Recorder 1992 and 1993*; and, *Keesing's Record of World Events 1992 and 1993*.

to oppose any imperialist design. But now Russia's thrust is oriented towards its economic rather than military policies. It is more pragmatic than ideological and more adjusting towards the Western perceptions. Hence, Russian policy towards the Indian Ocean is one of reversal of role that pursued by the former Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991. Though due to the assertion of nationalistic forces and opposition of the communists, it sometimes proclaims to play a role of great power and independent role in the countries adjoining Russia, this assertive policy is more superficial than real. Russia's policy in the Persian Gulf, Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia is a symptom of its weak position in terms of its economic, military and political capabilities. Intractable internal problems have also affected it. Until its domestic scenario improves and Russia develops an independent foreign policy posture, the adoption of an effective Indian Ocean policy supporting the just world order by it could be ruled out for the present.