

has been likened to the effect the Cuban missile crisis had on Soviet strategic policy.⁶ India's pride was severely bruised by the US action, which blemished its attainment of regional dominance at the precise moment of victory. Without a doubt the incident has had a direct bearing on India's naval expansion programme and Indian strategic commentators regularly refer to it as proof positive of the security threat India faces from the Indian Ocean.⁷ This is entirely in keeping with the central argument of India's security ethos: that India faces a growing external threat. Of more significance, the Enterprise incident served as a catalyst for change in Indian strategic thinking. It focused attention in New Delhi on the Indian Ocean as a third strategic arena just as the Americans and Soviets were beginning to challenge each other in the Indian Ocean. Since that time, the presence of foreign naval forces in the Indian Ocean has repeatedly been given as justification for New Delhi's major investment in naval power.⁸

The growing superpower naval rivalry coincided with regional efforts to have the Indian Ocean declared a Zone of Peace. This movement had been building since the late 1960s when the Soviets began regular deployments into the ocean and the United States entered into its agreement with the British to establish a base on the island of Diego Garcia. The Zone of Peace proposal was drafted at the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Lusaka in 1970 and introduced by Sri Lanka in the United Nations General Assembly in October 1971. The vote on the resolution took place, interestingly, on 16 December 1971 -- the day after the Enterprise

⁶ After the Cuban Missile Crisis was over, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov reportedly told an adviser to President Kennedy: "We will not let you do this to us again." See: McKinley, Michael. "At Anarchy's Rim: Australia and the Indian Ocean," 8 December, 1988, Unpublished, p. 16.

⁷ See: Mansingh, Surjit. "India And The Superpowers: 1966-1984." *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. XX11, 3-4 (1987) p. 273. According to an Indian Navy officer involved in planning the expansion program, one of its goals is to make it too risky by the year 2000 for either superpower to act in a hostile manner in the northern Indian Ocean. See: Munro, Ross H. "Superpower Rising," *Time*, April 3, 1989, p. 13.

⁸ According to one analyst, the Indian naval build-up has "the sole objective of contending with the ingress of superpower navies into the Indian Ocean region." Marwah, Onkar. "India's Strategic Perspectives On The Indian Ocean." in William Lee Dowdy and Russell Trood (Eds.) *The Indian Ocean: Perspectives On A Strategic Arena*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985. p. 315.