

for all the subsequent foreign policy failures of the Carter administration. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser, provided the most melodramatic interpretation of the importance of the crisis in the Horn: "SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden."³⁰

The Ogaden crisis is rightly considered as a major test of the foreign policy acumen of the Carter administration but it is important to note, for the purposes of this study, that it also marks a change in the focus of superpower attention in the Indian Ocean. It was the beginning of an emphasis on strategic issues between the superpowers in the Indian Ocean. Whereas the superpowers had previously, almost exclusively, aimed at securing influence in the littoral states, now they were explicitly pursuing a strategic advantage over their rival.³¹ Following the Ogaden War, the United States was given a brief scare with a "mini-crisis" in the Yemens and then suffered a major geopolitical defeat when the Shah of Iran was overthrown. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in December 1979, was widely regarded as the proof that the Soviets had a master plan to surround the crucial Gulf area with forces hostile to the United States. President Carter made clear his feelings regarding Soviet activities in the region, and raised the strategic stakes, with his State of the Union address on 23 January 1980:

³⁰ See: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983, pp. 178-190.

³¹ Harish Kapur, "Great Powers and the Indian Ocean," Round Table, January 1986, pp. 51-52.