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Finally, the paper considers the impact of changing geostrategic circumstances on regional security relationships. Rapidly moving events in the last few months have reduced regional tensions considerably and the way seems open for the superpowers to return the Indian Ocean area to its former low level of strategic interest in their relations. It is argued that the time is ripe for a return to bilateral discussions aimed at limiting the superpower's naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the ultimate end of the Iran-Iraq war, will present new opportunities for greater superpower cooperation in maintaining stability in the region. The resolution of these conflicts coincides with an increased strategic involvement in the affairs of the region by certain littoral states. Therefore, the Indian Ocean will remain strategically significant to the superpowers, but the