

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**SECURITY PROBLEMS OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING  
STATES (SIDS)  
(with particular reference to the Indian Ocean)**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

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by

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**Dedicated to Hon. Ali Umar Maniku  
(with all my gratitude)**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADSU	Anti-Drug Special Unit
ANZUS	Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
CAM	Comite d'Action Musulman
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
DOM	Departement d'Outre Mer
DWFN	Distant Water Fishing Nations
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FAC	Fast Attack Craft
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IFB	Independent Forward Block
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOS	Indian Ocean Small Island Developing States
IOZP	Indian Ocean Zone of Peace
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climatic Change
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
MLP	Mauritian Labour Party
MMM	Mauritian Militant Movement
MSM	Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien
NSS	National Security Service
OAU	Organisation of African Unity

OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OPV	Offshore Patrol Vessel
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
PMSD	Parti Mauricien Socialiste Democrate
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSM	Parti Socialiste Mauricien
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SDP	Seychelles Democratic Party
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPEC	South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation
SPPF	Seychelles Peoples Progressive Front
SPUP	Seychelles Peoples United Party
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples Organisation
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Convention on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WHO	World Health Organisation

## INTRODUCTION

"A standing army? We don't even have a sitting army", H.E. Hussain Manikufan, The Permanent Representative (former) of the Maldives to the UN, when asked about the strength of the country's armed forces.<sup>1</sup>

In a world where all states are seemingly equal on the basis of their sovereignty, all states are expected to participate as equal members of the international community. In this respect, Small Island Developing States or SIDS are no different. However, in their attempt to find footage in the international arena they often have to confront special problems and difficulties, especially with regard to security concerns. These issues were, nevertheless, relegated to the background of independence and there was no acceptance that these SIDS needed special attention to their problems. It is only fairly recently that the international community has placed the dilemmas faced by these states on its agenda and seriously addressed the problems of their smallest members. It was the US invasion of Grenada that first highlighted the vulnerability of these states and brought the issue on to the forefront of international politics. Since then they have become the subject of various types of research from their developmental problems to their military vulnerability. However, most of the research undertaken concentrates on the SIDS of the Caribbean and the South Pacific. This is no surprise as most of the world's SIDS are located in these two regions. However, there are four SIDS located in the Indian Ocean: Comoros, the Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles. As far as I am aware there has been no research undertaken on the security of the SIDS in this region. Therefore, the focus of this research will be on the SIDS of the Indian Ocean. It attempts to identify and assess the various security problems confronted by the SIDS of the Indian Ocean and the strategies and responses that are available to them to achieve a measure of security. This thesis however, concentrates on only three of the Indian Ocean SIDS.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Asiaweek* 18 November 1988, p.38

Research on Comoros had to be sacrificed at an early stage due to the lack of material available in Britain. Furthermore, due to financial reasons, research on the security problems of Mauritius and the Seychelles had to be restricted to Britain. Nevertheless, extensive interviews were carried out with the officials at the High Commissions of both countries in London supplemented with information from various institutions such as the Commonwealth, the United Nations and from the government departments of both countries. A period of six months was spent in the Maldives where in-depth interviews were conducted. While the focus of this thesis will be on the security problems faced by individual states, it is a fundamental tenet of this research that the security problems of SIDS cannot be analysed or understood in isolation from their regional security environment. Therefore it also attempts to analyse the security problems in relation to their regional security environment, in this case the Indian Ocean.

A fundamental axiom of this research is that the SIDS have special attributes that condition their security and therefore the security problems of SIDS are substantially different from those of larger states. The main issues raised are:

1. What are the security problems faced by SIDS in general?
2. What are the security problems faced by the SIDS in the Indian Ocean?
3. Are the security problems faced by the SIDS in the Indian Ocean due to the fact that they are small island developing states or Indian Ocean states?
4. What are the strategies and responses available to these SIDS?

It is hoped that the research undertaken will provide insights into the above issues.

### Organisation of the work

In succeeding chapters it will be argued that the characteristics of SIDS results in their security problems being substantially different to those of larger states. Chapter one seeks to provide the background information about international interest in small states in general and deals with the difficult issue of defining 'smallness'. It

also reviews the existing theories of security and applies these theories to SIDS. Although no attempt will be made to give an alternative 'definition' of security it nevertheless attempts to outline security in relation to SIDS. Chapter two examines the concept of vulnerability and seeks to identify the different areas where SIDS are vulnerable. It also strives to identify the special attributes of SIDS pertaining to these states that makes their security environment different to small continental states. This is followed by Chapter three in which the threats confronting the SIDS are presented drawing insights from the Caribbean and the Pacific. Using examples from these two regions various types of threats are identified in the following: areas: military, political, economical, societal and environmental. Chapter four is devoted to the security scenario of the Indian Ocean. It analyses how the Indian Ocean geopolitics affect the Indian Ocean SIDS, especially the regional security scenario and in the various sub-systems in which the Indian Ocean SIDS are located. It also attempts to identify the changing security pattern of the Indian Ocean from the Cold War setting to the present day.

Chapters five, six and seven are case studies of the Maldives, the Seychelles and Mauritius respectively. They attempt to give an in-depth analysis of the security problems of these states. Each chapter starts with a brief insight into the physical, historical and socio-cultural background of the countries. Next, it analyses the security problems as perceived by the leadership of these countries. It goes on to identify the security capabilities that exist in these countries. Finally, it attempts to identify the current security problems while differentiating security threats into real, potential and latent threats. Chapter eight is divided into two parts. The first part is a comparative analysis of the security problems faced by the three Indian Ocean SIDS. It deals with national, regional and international dimensions of the problems and tries to draw out the similarities and the differences between the three states and why they are so. The second part deals with the responses to the security problems of the SIDS. It identifies existing strategies and responses at various levels: Domestic, Regional and International. It also attempts to identify measures that the SIDS could undertake

to enhance their security. Chapter Nine is a brief summary of the findings of this research.

### Significant Findings

With regard to the Indian Ocean SIDS (IOS), the result of the research shows that these SIDS have security problems that are considerably different to those of larger states; and that these problems are attributable to the characteristics arising out of their smallness and their islandness. Furthermore, the research clearly strengthens the view that there is very little that the SIDS can do to enhance their security. While the geo-politics of the Indian Ocean did influence the security problems faced by these SIDS in the past and still does so to a certain extent, the majority of the problems faced by the Indian Ocean SIDS are due to the fact that they are small and island developing states rather than SIDS located in the Indian Ocean. As such there does not seem to be a common Indian Ocean security problem. On the basis of this, there is very little ground for an Indian Ocean response to the security problems faced by these IOS.

## Chapter I

### SMALLNESS AND SECURITY OF SIDS

This chapter reviews briefly the current interest in small states. It also studies the difficulties in finding a satisfactory definition of smallness and analyses why size is important in the overall analysis of security in relation to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Further, it will review the existing theories of security and attempts to demonstrate why it is necessary to modify these theories in relation to the security problems of SIDS. Although no attempt will be made to give an alternative definition of security it nevertheless attempts to give a framework within which security in relation to SIDS can be identified.

#### **The International Interest in Small States**

Previously, the small states that existed were mainly in Europe. The Greek city states and the Italian city states are often quoted as evidence for the existence of small states in the past. They have had an interesting role in the history of political thinking in Europe and have influenced political philosophers to analyse their situation.<sup>1</sup> Of the European small states only a handful remains today (i.e. Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican). With the inception of many new smaller states in various parts of the globe the issue of the small size of states has received considerable attention in recent years. Numerous empirical studies have been conducted regarding the 'smallness' of these states and how it affect them.<sup>2</sup>

The current interest in the small states originated in the 1950s and the 1960s when many small territories began to throw off their colonial yokes. This resulted in the creation of small independent states in large numbers. The Conference of the

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<sup>1</sup> Niels Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts", *Co-operation and Conflict*, Vol.1, 1976, pp. 163-182

<sup>2</sup> See Burton Benedict (ed.), *Problems of smaller territories*, (Athlone Press, London, 1965); United Nations Institute for Training And Research, *Small States and Territories: Status and Problems*, (Arno Press, New York, 1971); R.T. Shand (ed.) *The island states of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean: an anatomy of development*, (Australian National University, 1980)

International Economic Association in Lisbon, in 1957, took up the question of the importance of the size of the country, although the small states used by the Conference as case studies would not be under the category of small states today (i.e. Switzerland and Belgium). The problems of small states were first taken up by the seminar of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, in 1963, on problems of smaller territories. It was followed by Burton Benedict in 1967, who gave the first in-depth political, economic and sociological analysis relating to the small states trying to identify the various characteristics associated with smallness in these areas. In 1966, UNITAR produced a comprehensive study on very small states and territories, concentrating on their role in international relations and recommending a number of options. The issue of the security of small states was initiated by the Commonwealth much more vigorously in the late 1970s and 1980s, especially after the US intervention in Grenada. In 1979, the Development Studies Centre of the Australian National University organised a conference on the small island states of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean analysing the various developmental problems faced by these states. The UNCTAD Conference on 'problems and policies of small economies' gave its attention to the economic problems of small states in 1981. The Commonwealth has made several attempts to identify the special characteristics of small states but acknowledges that although they share similarities, they also share considerable differences based on their geopolitical situation as well as their physical features.<sup>3</sup> Among the more recent work on small states is the book by Hintjens and Newitt on small island states. They base their cases on the problems associated with how the problem of smallness adds a separate dimension to island states.<sup>4</sup>

### **Problems of defining small states**

The influx of small states into the international community in the 1960s and 1970s brought with itself a flood of definitions; the very terms used to refer to them

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<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, (Commonwealth Secretariat, London 1985), p. 11

<sup>4</sup> Helen M. Hintjens and Malyn D. D. Newitt (eds.), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands: The Importance of being Small*, (University of Exeter Press, 1992)



as well as the criteria used to measure their smallness was wide and varied. 'Mini states', 'micro states' and 'very small states' have been used by various authors in referring to small states. Terminological confusion is further compounded by alternating the terms, although in the recent years these expressions are gradually being replaced by 'small states'. The yardsticks used to measure smallness included the size and density of their population to the strength of their defence forces.<sup>5</sup> Amstrup identifies six different approaches to the definition namely, those who do not seek the relevance of a definition; those who use population, territorial size, and GNP as the main parameters; those who envisage a systemic approach to the problem relating to variables such as the role of the international system and the domestic political system; a fourth approach that prefers a perceptual explanation; those who restrict the definition to specific situations; and finally those who rely on differentiation of the size concept.<sup>6</sup> Those who are interested in the developmental aspect of the small states subscribe to one based on the economic situation claiming that "it is a situation of limited development options".<sup>7</sup> They claim that small states are resource poor with limited agricultural potential. They have small domestic markets and few opportunities for employment that limit their scope for development.<sup>8</sup> Others who seek to analyse the security of small states from purely a military view point define a small state as one "with a very low conventional war capability".<sup>9</sup> War making capability in this case is identified by looking at potential war power and its preparedness for war. Maniruzzaman measures these two quantitatively by the GNP of the state and its military budget and ranks states according to their military capability by giving the value of 100 points to the highest GNP and 50 points to the highest military budget. In such a ranking system 99 states had a score of less than one and therefore he claims that since the highest total score was 150 for the United States, "the categorisation of those states each having a score

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<sup>5</sup> See Talkuder Maniruzzaman, *The security of small states in the Third World*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 25, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1982)

<sup>6</sup> Amstrup, "The Perennial Problems of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts", pp. 163 - 182

<sup>7</sup> Swinburne Lestrade, "Economic Issues affecting the Development of Small Island States" in VSO and Royal Commonwealth Society, *Small Island States - Aid problems and practicalities*, 1987, p. 8

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 8

<sup>9</sup> Maniruzzaman, *The security of small states in the Third World*, 1982, p. 14

of less than one as 'small' states would not seem unreasonable".<sup>10</sup> However, the difficulty in using such definitions is that smallness is measured with respect to a certain situation viz. economic or military and therefore it is difficult to apply to all aspects of security. This problem of defining a small state has also resulted in some discarding the relevance of the small state as an analytical tool arguing that the present large number could disappear quickly.<sup>11</sup> Yet, there is no evidence for this at present.

The reason why the problem of measuring smallness has resulted in so much controversy is no real surprise. It is the same problem that one would face if one is to identify the criteria necessary to measure how large a state is. The difficulty is that size, whether small or large, is subjective. Something is either big or small compared to something else. Consequently, it is difficult to find one that will apply to the varying objectives of studies undertaken. Most writers, however, appear to have reached consensus on at least some of the criteria that are necessary to measure smallness, i.e. the size of the territory, Gross National Product and the size of the population or a combination of these variables. In many instances, these three variables are often highly correlated; i.e. states with small population have small land area as well as low GNP.

Those who advocate the need to identify smallness on the basis of territory claim that territorial size places special problems on these states that are considerably different from other larger states. When dealing with traditional security issues, the example most frequently quoted is that they will have no place to withdraw in the case of an armed attack. It is true that small land area will result in special problems for these states in many spheres. Nonetheless, the problem with relying on territorial size alone is that it discounts other characteristics of smallness associated with most small countries. If we rely on territorial size alone, then Singapore will have to be considered as a small state. However, the characteristics and problems faced by

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. pp. 4 - 14

<sup>11</sup> Peter R Baehr, "Small states: A tool for analysis? ", Review Article, *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No.3, 1975, p. 458

Singapore, ranked among the 'high-income' group by the World Bank, might be considerably different from those of a developing country like the Maldives or the Seychelles. Using Gross National Product as a yardstick creates a problem of a different kind. It is an economic indicator rather than a social or a political indicator. When the concept of security is used on a much wider scale than it is traditionally utilised, this criterion then becomes a rather one-sided approach to the subject.

The most common parameter used today is the size of the population. This interpretation of small, on the basis of population, has had its opponents who criticise it for being too simple. Nonetheless the simplistic model often provides the best explanation. The use of the size of the population for classifying small states has obvious advantages. Firstly, population is considered as one of the main components necessary for a state to exist. It is the population of the state that provides for its defence force, its government, its work force and its society. Thus, the size of its human resources affects the overall capacity of the state to function effectively.<sup>12</sup> A small population often means that the pool of available human resources for its defence will be small (although a large security force does not necessarily mean the country is more secure). Economically, it means a small domestic market and a small work force. Politically, a small population means limited human resources for the management of its government machinery; although it does not necessarily mean a small political system.<sup>13</sup> In the case of any hardship the majority will bear the brunt of any ill effect whereas in a larger state this may only affect a minute section of the population. While population appears to be the most useful parameter in measuring smallness, it still raises the question of the cut-off point. Should it be 500,000, one million, or five million or what? Whatever figure we use, the difficulty is to offer a logical explanation of why we chose that particular figure. The United Nations and the Commonwealth, organisations that take keen interest in the affairs of small states, have relied on the one million mark. Still, the UNITAR study on small states claims

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<sup>12</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, pp. 8 - 9

<sup>13</sup> Paul Sutton, "Political Aspects" in Colin Clarke and Anthony Payne (eds) *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, (Allen and Unwin, London, 1987), p. 7

that there is no 'magical value' attached to the figure and the Commonwealth also concedes that there is no reason to consider a state with a population of one and a half million as not being small.<sup>14</sup> Although there is no obvious justification for the use of the one million cut-off point, there may be a case for it when the states of the international community are ranked according to the size of their population. When all the independent states are ranked according to the size of their population there are 42 states that fall into this category. If all the developing states in this category are grouped together, there are certain similarities one could identify although it would most probably be the same for states with a population of one to two million. Thus, this research will include states with over one million population as small states (for example Mauritius) as long as the main characteristics of smallness apply to them.\*

The need to classify small states as a separate category is thus based on the importance of size (in this case based on population) for the security of the state. Size does, in effect, influence the overall functions of a state, although it may not be enough to explain all the problems faced by the state. Smallness generates certain special characteristics that contribute to the vulnerability of the state, and in doing so effect the overall security environment of the state. Small size sets limits to the state's capacity to create a security framework as well as making that security framework somewhat different from that found in larger states. It results in limited ability to influence, adjust, manage, deter and defend. However, there are three points that need to be clarified. Firstly, smallness does not always have negative impacts. There are both advantages and disadvantages. Secondly, smallness itself is not a security problem to these states. Although some claim that "small size has attracted gangster and other undesirable elements who seek small islands as admirable bases for their operations", it is hard to accept that it is the size that attracted them rather than the inherent weakness of the state due to its small size.<sup>15</sup> Even if security is used in its

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Institute for Training And Research, *Small States and Territories: Status and Problems*, (Arno Press, New York, 1971); see also Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*

\* For a list of SIDS see Appendix A

<sup>15</sup> Tony Thorndike, "Antigua and Barbuda", in Clarke and Payne (eds) *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, p. 110

most conventional form, this proves to be the situation. For example, larger and more powerful states do not seek to control small states just because they are small but because there are other incentives to do so.<sup>16</sup> These so-called other incentives may be derived from the smallness of the states but the smallness itself may not form part of the incentive. Secondly, the trap to claim that all small states have the same characteristics and therefore they confront the same security problems must be avoided. There are other determinants that influence small states such as the physical composition of the state as well as its geopolitical setting. Hence the need to separate small island states from small states that are part of a larger continent. When the small developing states of the international community (i.e. those that are independent) are ranked according to their size, it is often the case that the many of them are island states; many are remote and located in isolated areas in terms of geographical nearness, and some are enclaves. Each of these variables in turn contributes to the security environment.

### **Security Paradigms**

The Traditional Model: In international relations, security has been defined and re-defined by both academics and politicians alike. The classical writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and others have been much concerned with the insecurity of sovereign states. Following the Second World War the issue of national security gained special momentum, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, when doctrinal debates were carried out analysing 'national security'. Among some of those who have propounded definitions of national security are Walter Lippmann, who defines security as "a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war"<sup>17</sup> and Arnold Wolfers, who linked security to "the ability of a nation to deter an attack or to defeat it".<sup>18</sup> Ian Bellamy

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<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Alford, "Security Dilemmas of Small States", *The Round Table*, 292, 1984, pp. 377 - 382

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*, 2nd edition, (Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991), p. 16

<sup>18</sup> Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: essays on international politics*, (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1962) p. 150

claimed in 1981 that "security itself is a relative freedom, from war coupled with relatively high expectations that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur".<sup>19</sup> Although many international security theorists have attempted to define security, there is no agreed definition of the concept. However, these interpretations of security reflect a common assumption based on the realist tradition that the nation-state is the main unitary actor in an anarchic world and that all states seek, or would have to seek, to enhance their power. In this 'billiard ball' scenario, security is very much a capabilities' concept inevitably linked to power. As Buzan states, "Realists tend to see security as a derivative of power."<sup>20</sup> Although power is a difficult concept to define in this context it is safe to assume that power is linked to some kind of military action or military influence. National security is therefore defined in terms of military power. The state that is powerful in relation to others, or is perceived to be powerful, will have achieved, or is on its way to achieve, security. Similarly, the security problem of a state is the problem of physical protection of the state from external military threats from other states. Thus, as far as traditional realism goes, security relates to the actual security of the state qua state, mainly from external threats. This approach may have been relevant in the aftermath of two world wars but security is a dynamic concept and there have been changes since then.

The Third World Approach: In the 1960s and 1970s a new trend emerged that questioned the relevance of the application of the traditional definition of security to the developing countries. Third World security analysts argue that for Third World countries it is not just military security problems arising from external threats that was their immediate problem but security threats arising from within their own national boundaries.<sup>21</sup> They argue that the main problems faced by Third World countries are due to non-military threats such as domestic unrest, ethnic strife,

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<sup>19</sup> Ian Bellamy, "Towards a theory of international security", *Political Studies*, Vol. 29 No. 1, 1981, p. 102

<sup>20</sup> Buzan, *People, State and Fear*, p. 2

<sup>21</sup> See Jasjit Singh and Thomas Bernauer (eds), *Security of the Third World Countries*, UN Institute for Disarmament and Research, (Dartmouth Publishing Co. Limited, 1993); also Brian L. Job (ed), *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder and London, 1992); also Caroline Thomas, "New directions in thinking about security in the Third World" in Ken Booth (ed.), *New thinking about strategy and international security*, (HarperCollins Academic, London, 1991), pp. 175 - 197

economic underdevelopment, etc. Further, Azar and Moon have also challenged traditional thinking by identifying a different set of parameters that makes the traditional definition of security difficult to apply to Third World developing countries. According to them, the security conditions in the Third World differ from the West on two counts: their political cohesion and their security environments.<sup>22</sup> These states are caught in a complex of local, regional, and previously, superpower rivalry, such that their external security environment is substantially different from those faced by the developed world. Added to this, they are resource poor and lack the means to accumulate the power needed for their physical defence. Domestically, they have fragile political systems. These attributes have differentiated these states from the more developed world.<sup>23</sup> Hence, their conception of national security may be somewhat different from that of the developed world. For these states, their core interests and values are not restricted to the specific security of the state, but the domain of security is much broader. Their struggle for economic development has meant that economic security forms a vital part of their problem. The economic role of security is also vital due to "its extensive spill-over effects on other national values" such as social harmony and political stability.<sup>24</sup> Thus, together with political and territorial security, other areas such as the economy and society play an important role in the national security of these developing states. Yezid Sayigh, in his paper on security in the developing countries, subscribes to this view. He too highlights the distinctive attributes of developing countries and their contribution to the concept of security. They include social and economic criteria, the conflict between the nation and the state, the vulnerability and the penetrability of the political and economic systems, their self perception and the perception of others and their position within the international community.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Edward Azar and Chung-in Moon (eds), *National Security in the Third World: The Management of Internal and External Threats*, (Edward Elgar, London, 1988)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 279

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 281

<sup>25</sup> Yezid Sayigh, "Confronting the 1990s: Security in the Developing Countries", *Adelphi Papers* 251, (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1990), p. 6

## Application of theories to SIDS

In the case of SIDS, it is extremely difficult to apply the 'traditional model' of security based on the realist paradigm. When it comes to power politics the SIDS do not fit into the pattern of states that sees international politics as a 'struggle for power'. For SIDS, security may mean protection of its territory from external threats but it is not the sole underlying purpose. SIDS do not possess the power or the concept of power as used by these theorists. As such, enhancing power in relation to others to enhance their security does not easily fall within their capabilities. Thus, in the traditional approach the SIDS represent power vacuums. As for the Third World model, SIDS are a part of the Third World. They share common attributes of underdevelopment. Most of these small states are extremely exposed in many areas. Militarily, they are weak and sometimes rely on some kind of patron-client relationship often with their former colonialist masters. Their economies are highly dependent on external sources, both for trade as well as aid, and peripheral. However, their size and their physical make-up, being islands, have also added another set of variables to those of the developing countries in general. The size of the state generates certain characteristics that can indirectly and in some cases directly become a causative factor in creating security problems. Even in the traditional military sense, the smallness of small states sets limits to the capacity of the state to acquire a large military force. A limited population also restricts the number of people available for the political administration; therefore, the resulting pool of talent for the purpose of governing and policy making bodies is limited. It also leads to limited numbers available for economic activities. They have limited natural resources and often rely on one or two primary products for exports. Their domestic markets are extremely narrow and skilled labour in short supply.<sup>26</sup> Politics is carried out on a rather personal level with the role of individuals taking a forefront.<sup>27</sup> Their political system is highly susceptible to outside interference and pressure. At the same time, the societies of small states are fairly coherent and often homogenous ethnically.

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<sup>26</sup> Percy Selwyn (ed.), *Development Policy in Small Countries*, (Croom Helm, London, 1975)

<sup>27</sup> Colin Clarke, "Third World small states: fragile and dependent", *Third World Affairs*, 1987, pp. 207-215



Lowenthal identifies three socio-cultural traits found in small states viz., conservatism and adherence to tradition; the careful management of enforced intimacy, and a pervasive concern with autonomy.<sup>28</sup> However, in multi-racial states, there is often social tension among the members of the society. Thus, there are certain attributes associated with these states and they are not all scaled down versions of larger developing states. Even in such a case, the fact that these states are small magnifies the features and makes them more prominent. As Clarke puts it, "Smallness simply makes the pluses and minuses more crucial, more obvious".<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, not everything that happens in large developing states happens in a minor version in small states. On the contrary, they often have far more in common with small territories that are not independent states.<sup>30</sup> This has resulted in small independent states and small territories that have yet to gain their independence being grouped together. However, one must be careful in doing so, especially when dealing with security issues. They may have common characteristics on the basis of their smallness, but quite often the security environment of small independent states is substantially different from the small dependent territories. This is so because the latter are under the security umbrella of a metropolitan power while the former usually have to manage their problems on their own. The Falklands crisis is a clear example. Some may claim that some independent small states do in fact have defence agreements with some larger power, such as the Comoros with France. This is, again, narrowing the concept of security. Although these small states may have military security contracts with another, and therefore may be in the same boat as a small dependent territory, there are other areas of security that will have to be taken into consideration, e.g. political and economic aspects of security. In such cases the situation in dependent territories is often quite different.

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<sup>28</sup> See David Lowenthal, "Social Features", in Clarke and Payne (eds) *Politics, Security and Development in Small States* p. 35

<sup>29</sup> See Clarke "Third World small states: fragile and dependent"; also Barry Shaw "Smallness, Islandness, Remoteness and Resources: An analytical framework", *Regional Development Dialogue*, Special Issue, 1982

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Besides, the fact that SIDS are islands adds another dimension to their security. Although the influence of physical parameters on security is not unique to islands (mountain ranges and rivers can equally affect the physical security of any state), the islandness of SIDS does not relate just to the physical concept of security. Island states, and specially archipelagic states, by the very nature of physical separation of different parts of the country by water, have certain attributes that, in themselves, are unique to them. Each island society is physically separate and has created a sense of belonging to these separate blocks of land. Thus, the remoteness of these islands in many cases, their maritime features, their insularity and their environmental fragility adds to the wider concept of security problems faced by other developing countries. This last feature is especially true of SIDS. Environmental security forms an important part of their security and is not just linked to their economic development. In certain cases, such as in the low lying island countries like the Maldives and Kiribati, their very existence is threatened by the problems of global warming and the subsequent sea-level rise. For these SIDS environmental security forms a very significant part of their overall security scenario. Therefore, the domain of security and its application in relation to SIDS are probably different from those that are advocated by the followers of the Third World model.

### **Contemporary thinking on security**

In the 1970s and 1980s the concept of security underwent some change to include the economic aspects of security. Economic security became a part of the security concept, especially after the oil shocks of the 1970s. This is no surprise as economic security influences the country's ability to defend itself in the traditional sense. Furthermore, economic policy instruments can be used for aggressive purposes such as trade boycotts and economic sanctions.<sup>31</sup> Some have indeed expanded security threats to "include internal rebellions, from blockades and boycotts to raw material shortages and devastating 'natural' disasters such as decimating epidemics, catastrophic floods, or massive and pervasive droughts".<sup>32</sup> However, with the end of

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<sup>31</sup> See Vincent Cable, "What is international economic security?", *International Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 1995, pp. 305 - 324

<sup>32</sup> Richard H. Ullman, "Redefining security", *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1983, p.133

the Cold War the desire to broaden the scope of security has gained momentum among security analysts.<sup>33</sup> It is based on the assumption that the concept based on the traditional model or indeed, expanded to include economic security, is still too narrow. Rosenau claims that, "As human affairs become ever more complex and interdependent, security is no longer a simple matter of maintaining military readiness or effective international alliances".<sup>34</sup> The emerging trend is to include other issues "which is not synonymous with military problems but which encompasses a broad agenda of threats (economic, environmental and human rights) which prevent people and groups living full and free lives".<sup>35</sup> Some of these include threats from narcotics and narco-terrorism, organised crime, overpopulation, poverty, environmental problems, etc.<sup>36</sup> The main difference in this broadening of the concept is that unlike the traditional concept these threats often do not arise from one state against another. Some are within national boundaries, some threats come from non-state actors such as drug cartels, and some transcend national boundaries such as environmental problems. Issues such as overpopulation and poverty may at first seem to be confined to national boundaries. However, impoverished people can lead to political instability and violence that often have spill-over effects across the boundaries, especially in the form of refugees. The threat from narcotics has its affect on the societies as well as the economies of the states. Additionally, environmental security issues have gained currency among security analysts.<sup>37</sup> They argue that environmental issues affect the concept of security directly as a source of conflict as well as that international conflicts affect the environment. Among the environmental threats include ozone depletion, global warming and the subsequent sea level rise,

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<sup>33</sup> See Buzan, *People, States and Fear*; also J. Ann Tucker, "Re-visioning security" in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theory Today*, (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995), pp. 175 - 197; also Seyom Brown, "World interests and the changing dimensions of security", in Michael T. Klare and Daniel C. Thomas (eds), *World Security: Challenges for a new century*, 2nd edition, (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994), pp. 10 - 26

<sup>34</sup> J. N. Rosenau, "New dimensions of security: The interaction of globalising and localising dynamics", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1994, p. 255

<sup>35</sup> Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler, "Contending Philosophies about security in Europe" in Colin McInnes (ed), *Security and Strategy in the New Europe*, (Routledge, London, 1992), p. 4

<sup>36</sup> See K. Subramanyam, "Non-Military threats to security" in Singh and Bernauer (eds), *Security of Third World Countries*, pp. 37 - 55

<sup>37</sup> See Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "On the threshold: Environmental changes as causes of acute conflict", *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1991, pp. 76 - 116; also Lothar Brock, "Security through defending the environment: an illusion?" in Elise Boulding (ed.), *New agendas for peace research: Conflict and security re-examined*, (Lynne Reinner Publishers, Boulder and London, 1992), pp. 79 - 102

decline of renewable resources, pollution, soil degradation, etc. Environmental degradation affects almost all aspects of life and transcends national boundaries. Although environmental issues have directly led to occasional conflicts, Jessica Tuchman Mathews states that “its impact on the nation’s security is felt in the downward pull on economic performance, and, therefore, on political stability”.<sup>38</sup> As such, there is growing consensus that the concept of security needs to be applied on a wider scale.

### **The concept of security in relation to SIDS**

As such, the attempt to broaden the definition of security is vital when it comes to the security of SIDS. For SIDS, the scope of security covers a wide area and not just military or developmental issues. Political, societal and environmental aspects are equally important for SIDS as security issues. This is also true of small states in general. SIDS are almost always on the receiving end of security problems and this has raised issues such as the viability of these states. Many have questioned the very existence of small states and, indeed, whether they should or can exist.<sup>39</sup> The answer to the above is that the issue has now gone beyond this hypothesis. Small states have existed in the past and they do so now. Therefore, the question of viability does not form part of the security of these states as it is used here. Small states, and in this case SIDS, are very much part of the international community and therefore the analysis is based on the security or rather security problems of the existing sovereign states.

Once more, the attempt to define security in relation to SIDS, or rather small states, has resulted in many definitions being brought forward. The Commonwealth Consultative Committee in its report on the vulnerability of small states resorts to a working definition of security as,

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<sup>38</sup> Jessica Tuchman Mathews, "Redefining security" in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.68, No.2, 1989, p.166

<sup>39</sup> See Mike Faber, "Island Micro-States: Problems of Viability", *The Round Table*, 292, 1984, pp. 372 - 376

"The absence of threat to the capacity to govern, protect, preserve, and advance the state and its people consistent with the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states."<sup>40</sup>

The main argument against such a definition is that security in this case cannot be achieved until there are no threats. Roberto Espindola in his attempt to formulate a definition of security more appropriate to the small states suggested security "as the ability of a state to avoid or overcome any violent threat to its territorial integrity, politico-economic independence or institutional arrangements".<sup>41</sup> The main problem with both these definitions is that they emphasise just one element of security, e.g. the threat factor. It is not in question that 'threats', both actual and perceived, form a vital part of a security problem. The question is 'threat to what'? From what? From the various interpretations of security it can be understood that the 'threat to what' is to some basic core-values or core-interests that exist within the state. Although security may be interpreted in this sense, the underlying significance of the concept relates to core values and core interests of the nation-state. Values imply the normative underpinning of the existing social and political order while interests are what is deemed essential to the preservation and advancement of the state. Whether the threat be to its existence as a sovereign body, to its independence and territorial integrity, to its polity, economy, society, or environment, the core-values and core-interests that exist within these areas have to be protected and preserved. What the threat is from is more difficult to comprehend. The most common source cited is that of external sources, yet the threat to the security of the state very often come from within the state. This is often the case in SIDS. In the traditional sense, threats are very much military threats from outside where one state uses armed aggression against the other. While many have outlined the strategic importance of islands, it is very rarely that another power has invaded a SIDS in recent times. This is not to say that no external threats exist as far as SIDS are concerned. They do and the Grenada experience highlights this fact. However, the issue is not the total absence of

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<sup>40</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability : small states in the global society*, p.7

<sup>41</sup> Roberto Espindola "Security dilemmas" in Clarke and Payne (eds), *Politics, Security and Development in small states*, p. 64

external threats but that domestic threats may be more often and common. The domestic political systems are open and a wide range of issues such as corruption and lack of political legitimacy in the face of ethnic and social problems can become security threats. However, it must be stressed that the external and internal threats can often be linked and as such, in many cases, are difficult to categorise as specifically domestic or foreign. Similarly, security threats that exist in military, political, economic, societal and environmental areas could apply to more than one area. For example, a problem such as a group of mercenaries trying to overthrow the government with the backing of a neighbouring state could very easily be military as well as political in nature. This has also raised the issue of differentiating between economic security and developmental aspects. Developmental issues pertinent to these states may on the surface relate to the issue of security if it is applied on a wider basis. Indeed, it is difficult to separate the developmental problems faced by these states and the security of these states, especially in relation to their economic security. The concept of economic security in its broadest sense covers a vast area, from the individual access to the means to satisfy his/her basic needs to the state's access to resources for its development. Economic security problems are thus very easily synonymous with developmental issues and as such it is absolutely essential to draw a clear distinction between them if the concept of security is to have any useful analytical meaning and if one wants to avoid being dragged into the wider issue of development. One way of overcoming the problem is to analyse the economic vulnerability of the state and the threats to its economy without going into the details of the wider developmental issue.

or of what

Another major question in the analysis of security is the question of security to whom? There is no agreed consensus as to what is the unit of analysis in the case of security. Is it security for the state as a separate body from the individuals who constitute the state, or is it security for the individuals, or is it for those governing the state, or maybe a combination of all the above? In many instances, especially in the developing world, national security has been synonymous with regime security.

Many times the mantle of national security has been used to protect the actions of the regime in power and, in certain cases, threats to national security have been fabricated in order to carry out unpopular policies to keep the regime in power. This has attracted criticism from Western security analysts and, in some cases, rightly so. In SIDS, however, the situation is more difficult to differentiate. Threats to the regime in power in many cases can affect the security of the country as a whole. For example, a coup that is aimed to overthrow the government in power can affect the rest of the country even though its objective may be otherwise. Due to their small population, and in many instances close-knit communities, the people rely on the government for most things. A problem for those in power can ultimately become a problem for the people and create political and social disharmony among the general public. However, this may not be the outcome in each and every case, and therefore, in analysing threats, each case needs careful examination.

The threat factor is not the only element of a security problem. There is a second element that appears to be of equal significance, i.e. vulnerability. If the state is inherently vulnerable then it could drastically add to its security problems. The ability of the state to withstand threats (internal as well as external) will depend not only on how serious the threat is but also on how vulnerable the state is to that particular threat. For example, if a society is made up of different ethnic groups and there is no unity and harmony among them, then the society could be very vulnerable to say, outside influence. Any threat from outside sources could very easily disturb and disrupt the social fabric of the particular state. It is the combination of both threat and vulnerability that lead to the creation of security problems. Although the concepts of threat and vulnerability form the major components of a security problem, it is unlikely that a state exists without any threats facing it or that it is totally without any vulnerabilities. Therefore, some are more vulnerable than others and some face more threats than others. The correlation between threats and vulnerability can be outlined in the following four scenarios.

State A:

Low vulnerability

Low threats

∴ Minimal security problems

State B: High vulnerability

Low threats

∴ Latent or potential security problems which are more systemic than specific

State C: Low vulnerability

High threats

∴ Specific security problems which relate most to the nature of threats

State D: High vulnerability

High threats

∴ Total security problems

#### VULNERABILITIES

	HIGH	LOW
T H R E A T S	<u>State D</u> Total Security Problems	<u>State C</u> Specific Security Problems
	<u>State B</u> Systemic Security Problems	<u>State A</u> Minimal Security Problems

From the above, the ideal situation to be is that of A. However, it is rare that any state will find itself in this position at all times. In the case of B, the problem is more systemic. The state is vulnerable but actual threats are low. Thus the security problems are more potential than specific. Therefore, to enhance its security it needs to reduce its vulnerability. In the case of C, the state is not vulnerable but faces actual threats. The problems are there but the state is capable of standing up to the threats



due to low vulnerability. The worst case scenario is that of D. High vulnerability and multiple threats mean that it has problems that are both systemic and actual. In the case of the SIDS they are both vulnerable and they face threats. However, the security of any individual SIDS needs to be analysed in its various domains before one can categorise it into any particular scenario. As security problems are never static, states can move from one scenario to the other as their vulnerabilities and threats as well as their perception of the problems change with time.

As such, in an international community no longer dominated with just the physical existence of sovereign states it is vital that the concept of security is applied on a broader basis, especially with regard to SIDS. However, security problems cannot be analysed without careful examination of its main components i.e. vulnerability and threat. In many instances, it is these two elements that make up the whole of the problem. The following two chapters will analyse the vulnerabilities of SIDS and the threats confronting them.

## Chapter II

### VULNERABILITY

The security problems of any state consist of two major components, i.e. vulnerabilities and threats. The concept of vulnerability is difficult to measure or to quantify. Yet, in order to identify and analyse their security problems it is vital to be able to identify the vulnerabilities, assess the relationship between vulnerabilities and threats and, even more importantly, to examine the root cause of vulnerabilities in relation to the characteristics of SIDS. This chapter will attempt to identify such vulnerabilities for SIDS and will attempt to explain why they are so.

#### **Identifying Vulnerabilities**

Vulnerability in its simplest form means the state is without protection, i.e. easy to attack, damage and destroy; that it could also be easily influenced and manipulated; and it may have to rely on others to carry out the functions that it is normally expected to do on its own. Most of the literature on SIDS stresses their vulnerability or rather, vulnerabilities. All of them, more or less, agree that small states, let alone island developing states, are extremely vulnerable. However, like all propositions they are not without their sceptics who question the seriousness of the vulnerabilities faced by SIDS. Lemon argues that although they are vulnerable, their vulnerabilities are "derived more from the realities of the past", than the present situation.<sup>1</sup> While commenting on the Grenada crisis, he questions whether their sovereignty is "actually infringed more often and more seriously" than that of larger states.<sup>2</sup> However, he misses a point there. Vulnerable states are not just those whose sovereignty has been "infringed" or might be infringed. Vulnerabilities of SIDS are not exclusive to their sovereignty, but it also covers the whole military, political, economic, societal and environmental sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Lemon, "Political and Security Issues of Small Island States", in D. G. Lockhart, D. Drakakis-Smith, J. Schembri, (eds) *The Development Process in Small Island States*, (Routledge, London, 1993), pp. 48-54

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In order to identify and assess the vulnerabilities of SIDS, UNCTAD has attempted to create an index for ranking states according to their economic vulnerability. It attempts to measure the "lack of economic resilience arising from the relative inability of a country to shelter itself from forces outside its control".<sup>3</sup> The index was created using three variables: exposure to foreign economic conditions, insularity and remoteness, and proneness to natural disasters. The exposure to foreign economic conditions is derived from the degree to which an economy depends on foreign trade (imports and exports) and the degree to which an economy depends on a narrow range of exports. Insularity and remoteness are measured by using two variables; the ratios of FOB/CIF and the ratio of freight costs to exports proceeds. Disaster proneness is measured in terms of financial costs in relation to the GDP.<sup>4</sup> However, the index is of limited use since it identifies only economic vulnerabilities. It is an extremely complicated task to measure vulnerabilities in the other sectors. For example, how does one measure military or political vulnerability? They are difficult to quantify. Another framework has been proposed by Sutton and Payne, of which the major characteristics of smallness that pertain to SIDS are identified as islandness, weakness, openness and dependence.<sup>5</sup> This framework will be used as a basis to identify the vulnerabilities of SIDS but will be applied to different sectors of the state i.e. its military, political, economic and social systems.

### **Islandness and SIDS**

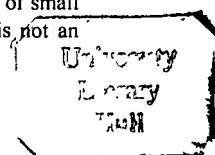
For many of us, islands have always conjured up images of paradise. However, reality can be different, especially if you happen to be an inhabitant of one. And when it comes to the definition of an island there does not appear to be a satisfactory one. Islands are usually described as "an area of land completely surrounded by water."<sup>6</sup> If so, there is no reason to categorise Greenland as one and

<sup>3</sup> UNCTAD, *Preliminary Study on the Construction of an index for ranking countries according to their economic vulnerability*, Group of Experts on Island Developing Countries, (Geneva, 1992)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See P. Sutton and A. Payne, "Lilliput under Threat: The Security Problems of Small Island and Enclave Developing States" in *Political Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4, December 1993. They also include enclaveness and resilience as characteristics of small states. However, these two features are omitted as enclaveness is outside the scope of this thesis and resilience is not an example of vulnerability.

<sup>6</sup> John B. Wittow, *The Penguin Dictionary of Physical Geography*, (Penguin Books Ltd., London 1984), p.281



exclude Australia or even Antarctica. In such a situation the only way to stop from getting into terminological confusion is by agreeing with the common thinking that everyone knows an island when they see one. However, today an island is more than just a physical concept. In international law an island has a specific place. According to Article 121 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), an island is a "naturally formed area of land surrounded by water which is above water at high tide".<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the UN system has identified island states as a separate category. Additionally, in 1992, UNCTAD carried out a research regarding the specific problems of island developing states. UNCTAD identifies island developing countries as "a diverse group of countries with different natural resource endowments, different geographical situations in relation to major markets and different land and sea areas".<sup>8</sup> Today, island states, or rather SIDS are recognised by the international community for some purposes as a separate category of states.<sup>9</sup>

Although islands or rather island states have been accepted as a separate category by major international bodies, some among the international elite, especially those in the field of development analysis, are rather sceptical of the value of islands as a separate category in their analyses. It has been claimed by many that islands or 'islandness' is not a useful analytical concept. Their argument is based on the hypothesis that characteristics that pertain to SIDS arise mainly from their smallness rather than their islandness.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the vulnerabilities of SIDS are a result of the fact that they are small states and not island states. This school of thought is mainly concerned with the development problems of SIDS and therefore the characteristics of islands listed conform to their interests and agendas. The main characteristics of islands are stated as diseconomies of scale, limitations in natural resource endowments, dependence on a very narrow range of tropical agricultural

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<sup>7</sup> Article 46(a) and (b) of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

<sup>8</sup> UNCTAD, "*Specific Problems of Island Developing Countries*" - Working Paper, Group of Experts on Island Developing Countries, (Geneva, 1992)

<sup>9</sup> Agenda 21 of UNCED, also the Programme of Action, Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Barbados

<sup>10</sup> Edward Dommen, "Some distinguishing characteristic of island states", *World Development*, Vol. 8, No. 12, December 1980, pp. 932 - 944. See also David Pitt, "Sociology, Islands and Boundaries", *World Development*, Vol. 8, No. 12, December 1980, pp. 1051 - 1059; Barry Shaw, "Smallness, Islandness, Remoteness and Resources: an analytical framework", *Regional Development Dialogue* (Special Issue) 1982, pp. 95 - 109

products, distance from markets and high external transport costs, serious balance of payments' problems, narrow range of local skills, limited access to capital markets, heavy dependence on aid and external institutions, proneness to certain types of natural disasters and a highly fragile natural ecology.<sup>11</sup> Diseconomies of scale exist as a result of small domestic markets, low incomes and low purchasing power. It is further exacerbated by the remoteness of many SIDS. Dolman states, "In small islands diseconomies of scale are not linear but increase exponentially as a consequence of isolation".<sup>12</sup> The natural resource base of islands is extremely narrow and their economies are often dependent on one or two primary products. This has further led to a heavy dependence on imports. In some cases even the most basic products have to be imported. Furthermore, the attempt at economic development has often led to severe depletion of non-renewable resources, for example, phosphates in Nauru. The isolation of many SIDS has also led to high transport costs. This is also true of inter-island transport in archipelagic states. Additionally, they often lack access to capital markets and have difficulties in obtaining finance. This creates heavy dependence on aid and assistance from outside. It is true that many of these features could be found in small developing states and, therefore, are not necessarily exclusive to island states. Thus Selwyn in his work on islandness concluded that, "The biological peculiarities of islands are an insufficient foundation for any plausible social or economic theory."<sup>13</sup> Dolman subscribes to this view and claims that "what makes the small island different is the concentration and severity of the constraints".<sup>14</sup> If there is a case for "islandness" or something that is exclusive to islands that helps to analyse the vulnerability of island states, then the argument for it is rather weak on the surface. Even if one regards the physical nature of islands there are many variations. They differ in size; some have large surface areas while others are mere

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<sup>11</sup> Antony J. Dolman, "Paradise lost? The past performance and future prospects of small island developing countries" in E. Dommen and P. Hein (eds), *States, Microstates and Islands*, (Croom Helm, 1985), p.41 - 42

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.42

<sup>13</sup> Selwyn compares physical and economic features of Mauritius with Swaziland in "Smallness and Islandness", *World Development*, Vol. 8, December 1980, p. 950

<sup>14</sup> Dolman, "Paradise lost? The past performance and future prospects of small island developing countries" p. 42

sand cays. Some islands are volcanic whereas there are others that are coralline and barely rising more than a few metres above sea level. Some are single islands while others form part of an archipelago spreading over tens of thousand square kilometres. The political status of the islands is different as well. There are 26 independent SIDS based on the one million cut-off mark while there are others that are dependencies, some others belong to continental powers and some are uninhabited. Thus it is very difficult to claim the concept "islands" or "islandness" as pertaining to all the types of islands. Nevertheless, it is vital that we seek common ground on the basis of "islandness" if 'islands' are to have any analytical value. (For the purpose of this thesis the concept of islands as a separate category will be restricted to small inhabited islands as large island states such as Indonesia may have different attributes to small ones.) Under these circumstances there could be certain features common to small islands that does not necessarily arise from their smallness or their underdevelopment. They are remoteness, maritime features, environmental fragility and insularity.

### Remoteness

Many SIDS are remote. They are remote in terms of distance in kilometres as well as in terms of communication and transport links. So by virtue of their geography many SIDS are near to nowhere. Remoteness creates a dependence on transport and communication that has a rather high position on the list of priorities for these states whereas in a small continental state this may not be the case. Markets are therefore distant in terms of kilometres as well as transport links. Unlike small continental states, everything from outside has to arrive by sea or by air leading to huge expenses. Thus remoteness increases the cost of transportation. For example, in Sao Tome and Principe, from 1982 and 1984, transport costs accounted for 31 % of the value of imports.<sup>15</sup> Besides, the growth of container and bulk transport have increased the expenses as the volume of trade in SIDS is rather small. This is more

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<sup>15</sup> Philippe Hein, "Economic Problems and Prospects of Small Islands", in W. Beller, P. d'Ayala and P. Hein (eds) *Sustainable Development and Environmental Management of Small Islands*, Man and the Biosphere Series, (UNESCO, Paris and The Parthenon Publishing Group, 1990), p. 39

prominent in independent SIDS than dependent territories that do not have geographical proximity to their metropolitan powers as the resources of the metropolitan power are often utilised to assist and develop the dependent islands rather than the islanders bearing the costs. For example, the government of France supports and finances major developmental projects in Reunion. However, that is not the major issue. The fact that many of these islands are remote creates vulnerabilities that have, in many cases, become a dominant feature of these states, especially in their security environment. Furthermore, international gatherings may be inaccessible to the SIDS in terms of the costs that has to be incurred in reaching them. Even their calls for assistance in emergencies can occasionally delay in being answered and help to reach them. Remoteness has also brought a certain strategic value to small islands. They have been venues for testing of weapons of mass destruction or of noxious chemicals; for example nuclear weapon tests in Bikini, Muruora, Eniwetok, etc. Further, islands are convenient for the situation of satellite and other electronic transmission receiving stations. They have been used for bulk handling and refining, transshipments and treating of noxious or dangerous fuels as in the Canary Islands. Islands have been used for other purposes as well such as for preservation of plant and animal species, e.g. nature reserve in Norfolk Islands, bird sanctuary on Henderson Island in the Pitcairn group and Aldabra in the Seychelles group. Remoteness often affects the very status on these states. While remoteness may create certain problems for these states, it is paradoxical that it also may contribute greatly to their separate sovereign existence. If they had been contiguous to large states many of the small island states might not exist as sovereign entities today; for example Zanzibar which is now part of Tanzania.

### Maritime Features

The most distinguishing feature of islands is the pervasiveness of the ocean. This has resulted in these states having a high dependency on the seas for their livelihood as well as transport. Under the new UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, many small islands have acquired exclusive economic rights over vast areas of

ocean, some in excess of 500,000 square kilometres. The implications of these rights are numerous. They have brought potential new resources to these islands. Among them are fisheries and other living resources, marine minerals such as placers, polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphates, phosphorite nodules and marine energy resources such as offshore oil and gas, and other forms of power.<sup>16</sup> However, new problems have been created with it. Firstly, the exploitation of the sea and seabed requires high levels of capital, technology and expertise. These are not available to the majority, if not all, of these SIDS. Secondly, it has added to the problem of monitoring and surveillance. Although the surveillance of the territory of a small state may not be such a formidable task or even that of the land area of a small island, the situation is somewhat different in the case of the surrounding waters. One could argue that this will be true of coastal small states yet the difference is that island states are totally surrounded by water and not on one or two sides. The SIDS often lack the technology and other resources to monitor and protect these extensive maritime areas. Therefore, it is often the case that while these SIDS cannot realise the advantages of exploiting their own resources, other states often do so at their expense. Poaching in their EEZ is one such example. .

Maritime features affect them politically and militarily too. Unlike continental states they have no common land borders with their neighbours. They are distanced by the sea from the political events of neighbouring state. As such, in certain cases, it is an advantage. However, in some cases islands provide the ideal location to establish naval bases of larger powers. Although today foreign naval bases are hardly found in independent small island states they are still located in dependent territories, some which have created substantial controversy, e.g. the US military base in Diego Garcia where the island population was expelled to set up the base. In this situation it is not the smallness of Diego Garcia that led to the establishment of the US naval facilities even at the expense of expelling its population. Although the strategic position of Diego Garcia does influence the establishment of the base, the

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<sup>16</sup> Antony J. Dolman, *Small Island Developing Countries and the developmental potential of the Exclusive Economic Zones*, UNCTAD/ST/LDC/7, 27 March 1986



foremost consideration was undoubtedly that of being an island or rather a group of islands where the fleet could have easy access. Even in the case of armed aggression by foreign sources SIDS are highly difficult to defend. They cannot withdraw inside their territory and maritime defence becomes a priority. Many SIDS do not have a large army or a navy and have to rely on small coast guard units for coastal protection. .

### Environmental fragility

Island environments are different from mainland states. They are extremely fragile and islands are open to waves on all sides. Many are prone to natural disasters. Cyclones and hurricanes are common to many SIDS. According to the working paper by UNCTAD on Specific Problems of Island Developing Countries 13 among the 25 most disaster-prone countries in the period January 1970 to 1989 were island developing states.<sup>17</sup> The impact from such natural disasters is devastating for islands. They cause extensive material damage and in certain cases human lives are lost. For example in 1982, a hurricane in Tonga destroyed 90% of the banana crop, the main export product. Moreover, SIDS prone to natural disasters have extremely high insurance costs.

Other environmental concerns include the saline intrusion into freshwater lenses. The limited water retaining capacity of islands makes many of them sensitive to drought. The negative effects of ground water toxicity due to nitrification may assume particular significance in islands because of the small size of freshwater supplies and the rapid movement of water within them. Their people, their tropical flora and fauna are often vulnerable to outside forces. This has often resulted in catastrophic results as in the case of Mauritius in the 1860s when one fifth of the population was killed when malaria was introduced.<sup>18</sup> Many endemic species have vanished. Coconut plantations were damaged with the introduction of the rhinoceros

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<sup>17</sup> UNCTAD, *Specific Problems of island developing states*, Group of experts on Island Developing Countries, 14 - 15 July, 1992

<sup>18</sup> Philippe L. Hein, "Between Aldabra and Nauru", in Beller et al (eds) *Sustainable Development and Environmental Management of Small Islands*, p.58

beetle. An epidemic of swine fever wiped out the entire pig population in Sao Tome and Principe in 1978.<sup>19</sup> Besides, waste treatment and disposal are a serious problem in many small islands where it affects the marine environment and aquatic resources on which the economy depends. The islands lack the space and effective measures to dispose of garbage and sewage which often leads to pollution of their beaches and rivers. Further, the 'crown of thorn' starfish has led to the depletion of coral on many coral reefs. Even among the volcanic islands soil erosion is a serious problem. Low lying island states are extremely vulnerable to climatic change and the predicted rise in sea level due to global warming could result in the disappearance of some of these states such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Maldives. The Administrator of UNDP, James Gustave Speth, warned that, "The risks associated with global climate change and sea level rise are very real and, if current patterns of energy use continue, these risks will move from projection to reality in the decades ahead."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, this could also lead to an increase in the frequency of storms.

### Insularity

One of the most disputed features connected with SIDS is their insularity. Those who advocate this as a unique characteristic of SIDS claim that due to their geographical, political and cultural isolation the inhabitants of these islands have evolved a unique sense of 'belonging' to the islands and thus retain a strong sense of allegiance to their islands that is not found elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> They are keen to maintain their traditions and culture. Doumenge claims that unlike continental areas, where it is aimed to improve geographical integration, the situation is the opposite in the case of islands "with the increasing number of barriers and partitions being raised in order to preserve a particular environment which is unique from the physical, biological and human points of view", and goes on to add that the inhabitants of island are

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.59

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Geoffrey Lean, "Early Warnings from Small Islands", *Choices: The Human Development magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September, 1994

<sup>21</sup> See Stanley A. de Smith, *Microstates and Micronesia: Problems of America's Pacific Islands and Other Minute Territories*, (New York University Press, New York, 1970), p. 57

always keen to assert that they are "completely different" from their neighbours.<sup>22</sup> This view is reinforced by Lowenthal, "I see islands as special and different, unlike continental areas in their societal, cultural and psychological make-up".<sup>23</sup> Additionally, Patrick Nunn claims that "Many islanders regards islands differently. Island societies are commonly more tightly knit and self-contained, indeed more insular, than their continental counterparts."<sup>24</sup>

This hypothesis is challenged by its opponents who claim that 'social islands' can exist in continental areas as "small groups of people who consider themselves in important symbolic and behavioural indicators separate from other groups".<sup>25</sup> Sceptics assert that when it does exist the 'separateness' of islanders is no different from that found in other small communities elsewhere. They further dispute it by claiming that this 'separateness' of islanders does not hold ground when applied to many island dependencies where there is a lack of nationalist demand for independence. However, the insular nature of islands does not necessarily have to mean that all island dependencies have to desire independence from their metropolitan powers. In the case of the Netherlands Antilles none of the five islands wants independence from Netherlands but at the same time there has been fragmentation among the Federation. It is more of a psychological concept than a political one. Although insularity may not be an element of vulnerability on the surface this psychological distinctness has often found its way into the political system and fuelled separatist tendencies, especially in archipelagic states. Although 'islands' may be found in continental countries where the communities are divided by intervening land masses, insularity can be much more pronounced when the physical separation of land is by water masses. This may be due to the existence of clearly defined boundaries and therefore the feeling that "I belong to this particular territory" unlike continental areas, where although the territory may be

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<sup>22</sup> Francois Doumenge, "The viability of intertropical islands", in Dommen and Hein (eds) *States, Microstates and Islands*, p.102

<sup>23</sup> David Lowenthal "Small Tropical Islands: A General Overview" in Hintjens and Newitt (eds) *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands: The Importance of being Small*, p.19

<sup>24</sup> Patrick D. Nunn, *Oceanic Islands*, (Blackwell, Oxford, UK and Cambridge, US), 1994, preface

<sup>25</sup> David Pitt, "Sociology, Islands and Boundaries", *World Development*, Vol. 8, No. 12, December 1980

separated by say a mountain range, there are no clear cut-boundaries and therefore no particular physical border where one 'island' stops and the other begins.

### Archipelagic States:

The vulnerabilities of island states are further compounded in archipelagic states. An archipelago is defined by the UNCLOS as,

"A group of islands, including parts of islands, interconnecting waters and other natural features which are so closely interrelated that such islands, waters and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, or which historically have been regarded as such."<sup>26</sup>

An archipelagic state is described in UNCLOS as "a state constituted wholly by one or more archipelagos and may include other islands".<sup>27</sup> Within an archipelago, islands could be scattered over a vast expanse of water; for example the islands of Kiribati spread over five million square kilometres. Consequently, transport and communication links are often rather difficult, even within these states. In many instances it may be relatively easier to travel from the island capital of a state to a neighbouring state than from the outer islands to the capital. Remoteness also lends itself not just to high transport costs but also to problems of national integration within archipelagic states.<sup>28</sup> It is often the case that the outer islands or the periphery is so difficult to reach that the inhabitants often feel that they do not really belong to one country, resulting in their loyalty being devoted to their individual island rather than the nation as whole. Closer economic ties are difficult to achieve between islands due to this sense of what Fred Constant has termed "island chauvinism".<sup>29</sup> Besides, in archipelagic states the electricity and water distribution networks have to be established separately for each island, incurring heavy costs.

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<sup>26</sup> UNCLOS, Part 4, Article 46(b)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Article 4(a)

<sup>28</sup> See David Hamilton-Jones, "Problems of inter-island shipping in archipelagic small island countries" in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, pp. 200 - 222

<sup>29</sup> Fred Constant, "Alternative forms of decolonisation in the East Caribbean: The Comparative Politics of the Non-Sovereign Islands", in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, p. 61

Archipelagic states often have huge EEZs. This adds to the problem of monitoring and surveillance. Furthermore, it also adds to military problems as in the case of archipelagos it is almost impossible to station troops on most of the islands or even atolls. The insular nature of island societies is felt strongly in archipelagic states. Lack of unity among the various islands has led not only to a sense of being physically separate from other island communities but also to a distinct feeling of being 'different' from others. It is highly probable that it is this sense of separateness that has had a very strong influence in the secessionist tendencies so common to island states. Examples are the separation of Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) and Ellice Islands (Tuvalu), the breakaway of Anguilla from St. Kitts and Nevis, Mayotte from Comoros, and the disintegration of the Federated States of Micronesia. Other attempted secessions include the Espiritu Santo experience in Vanuatu prior to its independence, the attempted breakaway of the Suvadiv atolls in the Maldives and Rotuma in Fiji. Furthermore, Rodrigues voted against independence as part of Mauritius and tensions between Trinidad and Tobago are further examples. Some assert that in most cases these islands are ethnically and culturally different and that they may have been brought together because of their colonial past; and thus their secessionist tendencies are no different from those found in other multi-ethnic countries. In the case of the Maldives, the Suvadiv atolls are ethnically similar to the rest of the country and have always been so. There may be an economic motive to secede behind many of these attempted secessions but in many instances this acts as a catalyst to the already existing lack of unity and cohesiveness between the various islands and the sense of distinctness felt by the people of individual islands.

### **Weakness, Openness and Dependence of SIDS**

Weakness in a state is traditionally associated with military capacity and this factor is often used to denote weak power. A weak power or militarily weak state could be identified by its lack of capability to defend itself from threats without outside assistance.<sup>30</sup> At the very least, defence denotes planning and a readiness for

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, (Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1981), p. 53

action against an offensive and at the most, planning for pre-emptive action against all foreseeable threats.<sup>31</sup> It is the limited nature of their power that separates weak states from strong ones. Power, itself, is a rather elusive concept. Military power has often been referred to as 'the capacity to kill, maim, coerce and destroy', but in the case of SIDS it is not the projection of power abroad that forms the crucial basis of military power but the capability to defend themselves.<sup>32</sup> In many cases, power is simply taken to be the sum total of the state's capabilities.<sup>33</sup> In the case of SIDS, it is clearly the lack of military capability that creates security problems for the majority of them.

The core of any defence structure is composed of human resources, hardware, and command and control (or in other words organisational capability). It is the human resources that provide the personnel for its armed forces and all its support facilities, i.e. intelligence gathering, etc. The hardware is not just the military weaponry but it also includes defence establishment and infrastructure. The command and control are one of the essential parts of a defence strategy. Even if a state possesses a large fully equipped armed force, it still needs to be organised and controlled, and effective defence policy-making is crucial. In SIDS all three are limited. Even though a large armed force is not necessarily a guarantee of security, a small population, nevertheless, means limited and more importantly, exhaustible numbers available for the armed forces. Some only maintain a small police force or para-militaries for domestic crises. It also means that the personnel recruited into the military may be required for other areas such as economic development. SIDS also find it difficult to train their forces from their own resources due to the lack of necessary means. Other factors such as low-levels of education hinder the effective

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<sup>31</sup> Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p.297

<sup>32</sup> John Garnett, "The role of military power", in Richard Little and Michael Smith (eds) *Perspectives on World Politics*, (2nd ed), (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 69

<sup>33</sup> John Stoessinger, "The anatomy of the nation-state and the nature of power", in Little and Smith (eds), *Perspectives on World Politics*, p. 27

development of their armed forces and thus, eventually, the forces are not only minuscule but ill-trained. The forces have to carry out a number of tasks themselves and cannot be specialised in any particular field. In many instances, the armed forces are lumped together and cannot be divided into the traditional divisions found in developed countries. While this may or may not be what is necessary for small island developing states, the multiple tasks that have to be carried out by a small group ultimately result in them having to be jacks of all trades but masters of none. While this may be true of the majority of the small states, in the case of archipelagic states it adds another dimension to the problem. They cannot have a military presence on every inhabited island or even on the majority of the islands.

Due to their limited financial and technological resources it is impossible for these states to produce their own weapons. Similarly, they find it extremely difficult to purchase modern up to date equipment and they also face difficulties in finding spares for the limited amounts they have. Besides, foreign weapons are designed for the producers own needs and may not be suitable for the SIDS. Military establishments are costly to construct and maintain and the few that exist are usually concentrated in their capitals. Compared to small states, this is an added problem to island states, especially archipelagic states where the military establishments may be concentrated on one or few islands and the rest of the islands may have to depend on mobile units for their defence. In island states their security area is not just limited to a small land area. Their maritime zones increase their security spheres and stress their limited forces. They lack the means to defend their territorial waters and often rely on a few coast guard vessels that are also involved in search and rescue of lost parties at sea. Maritime security capability is costly. Fast patrol vessels necessary for effective policing of their waters are expensive to purchase and maintain and so are often beyond the means of SIDS. Their skies are open and violations of their air zones cannot be prevented apart from warning the violators. In many instances this is not done, especially if it is by a larger power as the case often is. The weakness of SIDS also lies in their difficulties in forming effective defence policies and strategies.

How threats are perceived, detected and assessed, resources allocated and mobilised, and responses selected and implemented form a vital part of the security system. The defence policies of SIDS are often reactionary. Due to the lack of trained personnel they often have to rely on foreign expertise to train and organise their defence forces. The danger of using foreign experts lies in the state being unable to command the loyalties of outsiders. While friendly states often provide assistance in this field, their ulterior motives are often difficult to assess.

The defence capability of a state is also influenced by the geographical terrain it has to defend. In SIDS they lack the space to trade for time. However, this is not unique to island states but all states of small territorial size. In the case of island states it has been claimed that geography works to their advantage as it is very difficult to "gobble up islands".<sup>34</sup> However, this may not be the case in archipelagic states. In such situations, the outer islands are often highly dependent on the capital city or capital island. Hypothetically, once the capital falls the domino theory could apply to the rest; they could follow through without a shot being fired. All these assumptions, of course, depend on the aggressor, which in this situation is taken to be another more powerful state or aggressors sponsored by another state. The question of the probability of this happening, i.e. the threat factor, will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. The question of SIDS having to defend themselves against other SIDS is a different issue. The probability of this situation may be minuscule as their war-making capability is even more limited than their defence capability.

One of the most cited threats to SIDS is that of coup attempts led by mercenaries. In his analysis of the vulnerability of states to such type of armed aggression, Gerry Thomas identifies certain characteristics among which he includes a) a geography favourable to quick strike, i.e. small territory with a capital city easily accessible from the ocean and b) ill-trained, inadequate and poorly-equipped

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<sup>34</sup> Jonathon Alford, "Security Dilemmas of small states", *The Round Table*, 292, 1984, pp. 377-382



armed forces.<sup>35</sup> Thus, SIDS appear to have an extremely conducive environment for this type of military problems. The other characteristics include the strategic importance of the state to a larger power, a rich overseas population, and control of the political system by one or few. These other characteristics, which will be discussed later, are also not alien to SIDS. The possibility of this threat factor will be analysed in the following chapter.

Weakness is not only associated with the military in SIDS. They are weak politically too. Political weakness is difficult to quantify. It is hard to find a common yardstick to measure the weakness or the strength of the political system. Political weakness of SIDS is associated with their open political systems and is commonly analogous with their dependence on other states. Therefore, in their political systems, all the three determinants operate. The necessary conditions for the successful existence of a political system are difficult to delineate. However, it has been suggested that there are certain essential preconditions. They are that there should be sufficient 'qualified' people to provide a parliamentary government and opposition, the existence of sufficient financial and human resources to maintain a competent and impartial bureaucracy, diplomatic representation abroad and for its defence and it should 'be of sufficient size to ensure a voice' in international affairs.<sup>36</sup>

However, it is still a complex task to identify what constitutes 'sufficient qualified people, resources and size'. The majority of the political systems of existing SIDS have evolved out of colonial experience intertwined with local peculiarities. Many follow a Western parliamentary system modelled to suit their own particular needs. The Commonwealth Caribbean has adapted this system and the Queen is the Head of State of eight of them. In the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, the Westminster model is again followed by many as a basis of their political systems with their own adjustments. Some continue on a more traditionalist pattern of

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<sup>35</sup> Gerry Thomas, *Mercenary Forces in Modern Africa*, (Westview, Boulder, Co., 1984), pp. 125-127

<sup>36</sup> R. J. May and S. Tupounina, "The politics of small island states", in R. T. Shand (ed.), *The island states of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean: anatomy of development*, Development Studies Monograph, No. 23, (Australian National University, Canberra, 1980), pp. 419 - 435

governing their states e.g. Maldives, Western Samoa, Tonga, etc. In some cases the absence of an organised opposition is noteworthy. Those who have opted out of multi party systems have appeared to have done so for differing reasons. For example, the political situation of the Seychelles was different from the Maldives in the sense that the latter is a parliamentary democracy where the members are elected to the parliament as individuals, while the former has been a one party socialist state until 1992. Others with no parties include Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu.

While at a first glance the SIDS may appear to be politically rather different, there are certain weaknesses and openness of their political systems that are common to all or majority of the states. The main characteristics are (a) lack of human and financial resources for the government to carry out their political functions, (b) personalisation of the politics, (c) national needs appear to be more important than national interests, (d) low levels of national identity and (e) inability to influence events outside their own territories

Due to the small population, manpower for the management of the government structure is limited, especially trained personnel. The lack of suitable people results in a few individuals having to assume multiple roles. The political leadership itself consists of a small number of people having to perform different roles in various departments. They are brought into constant contact with each other in their numerous roles. In such cases rational policy evaluation is difficult to achieve. Conflicts of interest and overwork are the main threats that may affect their work. This often affects the wider security role. The capacity and the ability to make rational and effective policy making forms a vital element of security.<sup>37</sup> Threats to the security need to be detected, information needs to be gathered, and resources and capabilities to counter the threats need to be mobilised and allocated. However, in SIDS it could be difficult to undertake the above processes effectively thus increasing their vulnerability.

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<sup>37</sup> Azar and Moon, (eds), *National Security in the Third World: The Management of Internal and External Threats*, (Edward Elgar, London, 1988)

In SIDS it is not surprising that a few dominate politics. Politics and the government become associated with the few people at the top, or in a multi-party state, an "all-embracing Party dominance".<sup>38</sup> In small states this personalisation of politics has also resulted in rigid social and political ascription. The smallness of the population results in people having to be in close contact with each other constantly and intensifies the divisions. As Thorndike cites from the Antiguan experience between 1967 and 1981, "Antiguan was pitted against Antiguan, household against household, resulting in an extraordinary degree of polarisation".<sup>39</sup> It is also the case that the few who dominate the political scene tend to stay there. This may not always be due to a strong desire to consolidate their power but also due to the fact that they may be the few 'qualified' people capable of ruling the state; or rather spreads this belief among the local population that they are a necessary part of the political system that might collapse without them. The lack of political parties based on strong convictions and principles rather than individual personalities tend to assist those in power.<sup>40</sup> In some cases, this has led to the non-existence of opposition parties or even if they do exist the practice of joining the system by the opposition leaders could occur. In many cases the SIDS declare themselves as democracies, but often the process of democracy is tailored to suit their own particular needs. An example is the election of the President in the Maldives where no party system exists. The members of parliament, who are elected as individuals (apart from eight members nominated by the President), nominate the President by secret ballot but no campaigning is allowed and the members are barred from discussing about their choice of candidate for the presidency. It is hardly surprising that in such a situation they all appear to vote for the same individual every time (almost 99% in the elections up to 1993), the incumbent President, a method that can, perhaps, best be called 'election by divine inspiration'.

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<sup>38</sup> Tony Thorndike, "Antigua and Barbuda", in Clarke and Payne (eds), *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, p.110

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.104

<sup>40</sup> See C. E. Diggins, "The problems of small states", *The Round Table*, No. 295, 1984, pp. 191 - 205

The lack of personnel has also resulted in close links between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Although they may exist as separate institutions the ultimate decisions may be made by the same few at the top. Lack of political legitimacy can and does undermine the overall security situation. This domination of the leadership by few individuals, and the difficulties associated with bringing change, may become an active ingredient in the recipe for violence. The political climate becomes conducive for coups, assassination attempts and the notorious use of mercenaries. This is not to say that there is violence and political turmoil in all SIDS. On the contrary, the majority of them appear to be politically rather stable. However, the reality behind this political stability may be rather deceiving. In most SIDS, stability is achieved more due to the acceptance of the system because of the desire to avoid open confrontation rather than the legitimacy of the politics; what Lowenthal calls "managed intimacy".<sup>41</sup> It is claimed that the people of small states learn to live together in harmony whether they like it or not and attempt to minimise overt conflict, mute hostilities and contain disagreements. Even in the case of the opponents of the government, they are often reluctant to openly contradict those in power as they may be linked to each other in myriad of other relationships, including familial. Besides, the government can exert pressure on its opponents by numerous indirect means as it is often the case that everyone is dependent on the government for something.

Another phenomenon in SIDS which contributes to vulnerability is that very often their national needs play a more crucial role than their national interests. National needs are used here to denote the essential necessities that a state has to provide and fulfil. This dominance of needs over interests has resulted in the SIDS having to turn to the outside for help. For example, in order to overcome their domestic vulnerabilities, many have turned to foreign expertise and help. Short term consultants are brought in to fill in for local shortages and this does benefit the state; but the danger of unscrupulous elements coming into the state cannot be halted.

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<sup>41</sup> David Lowenthal, "Social Features", in Clarke and Paynes, (eds), *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, p.39

Individuals or organisations of dubious nature could exert a lot of influence that may not always be beneficial to the state. Even if the assistance is sought from other states and international organisations, conflict of interest could occur and the SIDS may be unable to promote their own interests and desires. In such circumstances, the political weakness is not just domestic but more so in relation to other states. They find themselves dependent on their neighbours and friends and even international and non-governmental bodies for aid and assistance and thus unable to influence them. Their political system becomes penetrated, i.e. others participate directly in the "allocation of its values or the mobilisation of support on behalf of its goals".<sup>42</sup> In the extremes of circumstances, their own sovereign independence becomes questionable as they become more and more dependent on their allies; as in the case of the Comoros where the French have even paid the salaries of the Comoran civil servants. In such situations their political systems appear completely penetrated and they are forced to make decisions as if a "foreign state were participating in its decision-making process".<sup>43</sup> Although some may question whether some of these entities should be states with full sovereign powers this is not the main issue. The fact is that these states are sovereign and the aim should be to reduce their vulnerability so that they can be less dependent on their allies; that their political systems cannot and need not be penetrated by foreign powers.

In multi-island states and states with ethnic minorities, national identity and national character could play a secondary role to local and tribal identities and loyalties. Integration could become a problem and increases the political openness and weakness of the state. Integration of diverse social groups into a "unified political force" forms a vital part of the security infrastructure of a state as disintegration and disunity invite threats.<sup>44</sup> In relation to SIDS, this issue is rather two sided. On the one hand, inhabitants of SIDS are fiercely independent and cling strongly to their independence. This however, extends to the individual islands and ethnic groups.

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<sup>42</sup> James A. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, (Frances Pinter, London, 1980), pp. 147 - 48

<sup>43</sup> Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, p. 136

<sup>44</sup> Azar and Moon, (ed.), *National Security in the third world*; See also Norman MacQueen, "Island South Pacific in a changing world", *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1993

Many SIDS have been forced by colonialism to accommodate diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious groups. Commonly shared national values play a secondary role and each island or ethnic community acquires their own identity and values that becomes predominant over national values and loyalties. Vanuatu for example, has more languages per capita than any other state among a population of 150,000 scattered on forty islands over an area of 12,190 square kilometres; and among the Cape Verdeans it has been claimed that anyone who knows "more than two islands are rare".<sup>45</sup> It is not just colonial legacy that has enhanced this problem. In order to stimulate investment from abroad many of the states have given citizenship to foreign nationals while others face the daunting problem of the illegal sale of their passports which brings unscrupulous individuals into their territory. Even in the so-called ethnically homogenous states such as the Maldives, this effect of "islandness" is common.

Furthermore, their inexperience in dealing with foreign affairs and, in general, the international community contributes to their weakness and dependence. Due to their small size and isolation the ability to determine their international environment is almost non-existent and they are at the mercy of others, both allies and adversaries. Even if they wish to play an active role, their capabilities will determine the range of activity they can engage in. This in most cases is rather limited. They lack the human and financial resources to establish and maintain diplomatic missions in many countries and, even when they are represented in international organisations, their influence is rather limited. Even in their own countries, the foreign affairs establishment is often unable to cope with the wide range of international events. The diplomats often lack experience and training and are unlikely to relate back to the government with accurate and useful information about the events in the countries they are stationed in. In the case of those states that are remote and insular, the physical distance often has a bearing upon their policy-making, reflecting their "distance" from other international events. Thus, their role in the international

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<sup>45</sup> Cited in John Connell, *Sovereignty and Survival: Island Microstates in the third world*, (University of Sydney, 1988), p.4

community is directly linked to their size as well as, in certain cases, their remoteness and insularity. The literature on the foreign policy making process of SIDS all stress their weakness and inability to influence the international environment. According to Searwar, in a preliminary study of the small CARICOM states their "high degree of permeability and the existence of elements of penetrated sovereignty" are evident.<sup>46</sup> They become more objects than actors in the international arena.<sup>47</sup> This inability contributes to their vulnerability to outside threats as maintaining a high reputation or usefulness to the international community may raise the political costs to an aggressor. In such a scenario, the security of the country also becomes a function of its usefulness to the outside.<sup>48</sup>

In general, a politically weak, open and dependent state may lack the organisational capability, strength and momentum to withstand political threats and pressure. With regard to external relations, the system is easily penetrable by undesirable elements, be they from foreign governments or non-governmental bodies. Political fragmentation exists not just within the government structure but among the society as well. National identity and national character could play a secondary role to local and tribal identities and loyalties. Their political institutions have limited capabilities both domestically and externally.

Weakness, openness and dependence therefore appear to be key factors that contribute to the vulnerability of SIDS. Yet, it is not their military or their political systems where the effect is most seriously felt. It is in the economy of the state. Their economic vulnerability often forms the basis of their vulnerability in the other sectors.<sup>49</sup> UNCTAD identifies a vulnerable economy as one that is exposed to external vicissitudes that cannot be contained and has little resilience or capacity to

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<sup>46</sup> Lloyd Searwar, *Studies in the management of the foreign policy of the small states - An analytical framework*, University of West Indies, Trinidad, 1988, p.12

<sup>47</sup> See K. J. Holsti, "National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1970, pp. 233 - 309

<sup>48</sup> See Johan Galtung, "There are Alternatives: Four Roads to Peace and Security", *Spokesman*, 1984

<sup>49</sup> See Roberto Espindola, "Security dilemmas", in Clarke and Payne, (eds), *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*, p. 65

absorb the detriment caused by the shocks.<sup>50</sup> However, a vulnerable economy can also be one that is exposed to domestic upheavals and difficulties and not just exposed to external stimuli. The economic role in national security cannot be over emphasised, as the survival of every nation involves its economic security. Persistent economic problems affect national values and morale and trigger unrest, domestic disintegration and disunity. This could aggravate the security environment by precipitating aggression by adversaries.<sup>51</sup> As far as traditional economic theories go, the size of the territory and the domestic market affect the state's economic performance. Thus, SIDS with their small populations (potential domestic market) and small land areas are at a disadvantage. Islands have limited space and, due to their small territorial size, their natural resource base is extremely narrow. They depend on a few primary commodities with a high degree of specialisation. Agricultural economies produce one or two primary export products such as sugar in Mauritius, ylang-ylang in the Comoros, vanilla in Tonga, etc. While many do enjoy special advantages through bilateral and multilateral agreements, it also depends on the type of crop produced. Sugar producers such Fiji and Mauritius enjoy favourably priced contracts while copra producers have few advantages.<sup>52</sup> While a service industry such as tourism may, at first glance, seem ideal to SIDS with their naturally beautiful beaches, warm climates, etc. it still depends on other factors such as domestic stability and more on factors beyond their control. For example, recessions in the states where the tourists come from could seriously diminish the arrival of tourists. They also have to take into consideration factors such as environmental changes that may result directly from tourism itself, such as erosion of reefs due to careless scuba diving, etc. Small size also means dependency on others unless there are locational advantages that can be exploited which, in certain cases, can be enhanced by infrastructure. The fact that they are island states (single or multi-island) and because many of them are remote adds to the costs of transportation. In addition

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<sup>50</sup> See UNCTAD, *Preliminary Study on the Construction of an index for ranking countries according to their economic vulnerability*, Group of Experts on Island Developing Countries, Geneva, 1992

<sup>51</sup> Azar and Moon, (ed.), *National Security in the Third World: The Management of Internal and External Threats*, p.281

<sup>52</sup> See John Connell, "Island Microstates - Development, autonomy and the ties that bind", in Lockhart et al, *The Development Process in Small Island States*, pp. 117 - 147



to these, islands are often extremely exposed to natural disasters and they suffer from environmental degradation.

One of the most common features of SIDS is the openness of their economies. Openness of the economy can be measured by the ratio of imports to GDP. Other factors that reflect the exposure include the degree to which the economy depends on a narrow range of exports, imported technologies and how much of a price-taker the economy is.<sup>53</sup> A high degree of reliance on foreign trade, thus, makes them extremely exposed. While almost all SIDS have some sort of preferential access to international markets, they are still sensitive to price fluctuations and cannot influence the international markets. They have to "cultivate the goodwill" of their partners.<sup>54</sup> Because they export few commodities to few states, it becomes very easy for the importing state to impose on the SIDS in other areas as well. In order to overcome their economic problems they have to rely heavily on developmental aid. Developmental aid is available to most SIDS. Dependence on aid as well as trade from abroad adds another dimension to their security. The SIDS cannot afford to antagonise their donors as well as trading partners. In many cases the aid is tied to the donors' interests. Growing dependency on other states eventually means some loss of their independence.

## Summary

SIDS appear to be extremely vulnerable. However, there are states that have been able to maximise locational advantages by following pragmatic policies to reduce their vulnerabilities such as Singapore. The above framework is useful in identifying their vulnerabilities. However, it does not measure how vulnerable the states are. While an economic vulnerability index has been formulated by the UNCTAD, military and political vulnerabilities are difficult to measure. Militarily, four areas have been underlined that are relevant to the vulnerability of SIDS. The

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<sup>53</sup> UNCTAD, *Preliminary Study on the Construction of an index for ranking countries according to their economic vulnerability*, Group of Experts on Island Developing Countries, Geneva, 1992

<sup>54</sup> Edward Dommen, "Reflections on the security of small island countries", *Journal of World Trade Law*, Vol.20, No. 1, 1986, pp. 110 - 117

strength of the armed forces and the number of military establishments and equipment can be quantified. However, the level of training, of morale within the armed forces, command and control, and the effects of the geographical terrain, are difficult to measure. Hypothetically, one could argue that to monitor and secure a certain area of territory, for example, maritime areas, the state will require a certain number of armed forces and equipment. For example, according to Harden, for effective policing of the EEZ, the state requires surveillance aircraft, patrol vessels and fast armed craft for interception and arrest. For the sake of argument, one can put a minimum figure on them based on the territorial size they have to survey. However, how effective or ineffective the forces are in carrying out their tasks cannot be standardised. Similarly, political vulnerability is equally, if not, more difficult to measure even if the threat scenario is used. While incidents of coups d'état or political unrest and civil strife can be quantified during a given period of time, other types of political threats are difficult to identify, especially when it involves other states. Uncertainty in this sense adds to their insecurity and confirms vulnerability.

## Chapter III

### THE THREAT SCENARIO

(With insights into the Caribbean and the South Pacific)

Many have sought to identify threats to the security of SIDS in numerous forms. International institutions, governments and individuals, all have identified different types of threats to SIDS. The question is how far are these threats real? Are they relying too much on history in predicting threats to the SIDS? Or have they identified merely potential threats that may or may not become actual threats some time in the future? Among the international bodies concerned with the security of small states, the Commonwealth is one organisation that takes an active role in bringing the problems on to the international agenda. The Commonwealth has 24 SIDS among its member states and therefore, is rather concerned with the security and survival of these states. The Commonwealth identifies three basic types of threat to the SIDS viz. military, political and economic threats.<sup>1</sup> The UN, in its turn, have specifically identified threats relating to mercenary attacks and foreign interference in the UN General Assembly Resolution 44/51 on Protection and Security of Small States that was adopted in December 1989. Another study on small state security, one by the David Davies Memorial Institute, also emphasises the threats from mercenaries and subversive elements, coups and instability, threats to maritime security as well as threats from superpower rivalries.<sup>2</sup> In order to create a basic framework, these threats could be categorised using a framework of security relating to military, political, economic, societal and environmental sectors, and these threats can be analysed drawing insights from the situation in the Caribbean and the South Pacific. However, only threats, potential and actual, will be discussed and vulnerabilities of the states will be mentioned only where necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> See Commonwealth Consultative Group *Vulnerability: Small states in the Global Society*

<sup>2</sup> See Sheila Harden, *Small is dangerous: micro-states in a macro-world* (Frances Pinter, London, 1985)

The Caribbean and the South Pacific are the two regions that have the highest concentration of SIDS. There are ten SIDS in the Caribbean and nine SIDS in the South Pacific, if one includes Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the South Pacific. Although Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and PNG are not SIDS, if the one million population limit is applied, nevertheless they will be included when analysing the SIDS due to their regional identification with the other Caribbean and South Pacific island countries.

In the Caribbean, the similar colonial history and close geographical proximity of the SIDS has enabled them to form a separate Caribbean identity. However, the security environment of the SIDS is dominated by the influence of the US. Many regional bodies have been established to address the problems of the SIDS, among which include CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and the OECS (Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States). In the South Pacific, the islands are remote and relatively distant from one another with the result that some outer islands may be closer to neighbouring states than to their own capitals. The islands can be divided into three main ethnic groups; the Polynesian, Micronesian and Melanesian. Although they appear to be widely dispersed, they have created a regional identity due to ethnic similarities and colonial experiences. They have fostered links through regional groupings among which the most important is the South Pacific Forum that includes their two larger neighbours, Australia and New Zealand. The South Pacific Forum acts as a meeting place to discuss common problems on an annual basis. Its administrative branch, the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation (SPEC) provides economic and legal services. Other regional groupings include the South Pacific Commission and the Forum Fisheries Agency. While they do not relate directly to security, they nevertheless provide a place for the SIDS to voice their concerns.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific*, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, (Australian Government publishing service, March 1989) p. 156

## Identifying Threats

### **1. Military threats**

Military threats will be defined as those events that involve armed aggression or those instigated by military sources such as the armed forces. Military aggression threatens all components of the state. It can effect the physical and sovereign existence of the state, with high costs in terms of economic and human resources. Military threats can be categorised into two groups; those involving outside forces, i.e. other states and non-state actors; and those which are purely domestic in nature i.e., military coups and domestic unrest involving the armed forces of the state. Nevertheless, in many cases, armed aggression that may appear to be purely domestic in nature can have an external source supporting it. Similarly, an overthrow of the government may also involve military forces, although actual armed aggression may not take place.

#### a) Armed invasion or aggression by other states:

The most dangerous military threat to any state, SIDS or otherwise, is that of armed aggression from another state that violates its territorial sovereignty. Military occupation by an aggressor, even if it is only for a limited period of time, can cripple the state, both physically and mentally, destroying the physical infrastructure of the state as well as destroying and disrupting the lives of the people. The Commonwealth Secretariat claims that military occupation or "territorial violations" can arise "from territorial claims or the pursuit of hegemonial ambitions or spheres of influence by a superpower, regional power or neighbouring power".<sup>4</sup> This may seem quite real in the wake of the Grenada crisis in 1983. As outlined in the previous chapter, SIDS have limited means of defending themselves militarily. In such a situation, it will not be difficult for another power to invade and occupy SIDS or a part of it, on purely military grounds. It has been claimed that islands, due to their remoteness and the fact that they are surrounded by water, are difficult to approach. However, their capability to monitor their maritime zones are rather limited and it

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<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in the Global Society*, p.24

might take only a few vessels or a few planes of the invading air force to bring them to their heels.

It was the US invasion of Grenada in 1983 that highlighted the security problems of SIDS and which brought it onto the international agenda for the first time. Fortunately, it is the only incident of its kind in the Caribbean in the last twenty years and the 6000 US troops, supported by token support from six of the SIDS in the Caribbean, was categorised as a rescue mission by the people of Grenada. Yet, the rest of the world watched sceptically at this use of force by the United States against one of the smallest states in the international community. The defence forces of the Caribbean SIDS are small although many maintain some form of a security service. Grenada has a considerable force relative to other SIDS and, in Barbados, attempts have been made to fully train their military and para-military forces.<sup>5</sup> However, in most SIDS, the armed forces' main objective is to police their maritime zones and to maintain domestic law and order.

Fortunately, there has been no Grenadian equivalent in the South Pacific. At present, an unprovoked attack on any of the SIDS by an external power is rather slight and none is foreseen. However, in the unlikely event of an attack, the defence capabilities of the Pacific SIDS are limited. Only PNG, Fiji and Tonga maintain defence forces (3200 on PNG, 2500 in Fiji and 250 in Tonga.)<sup>6</sup> Vanuatu maintains a small para-military force and the rest have only police forces to maintain domestic law and order as well as coast guard units. Australia and New Zealand maintain defence arrangements with the various SIDS although none is in the form of a formal agreement.<sup>7</sup> The main component of this is the Defence Co-operation Programme under which training and other assistance are given to the SIDS. New Zealand has defence agreements with Western Samoa and Fiji under which training and advice

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<sup>5</sup> On the military strength of the states, see Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, *The quest for security in the Caribbean: problems and promises in subordinate states*, (M E Sharpe, Inc., New York, 1993) pp. 50-80

<sup>6</sup> *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific*, p. 150

<sup>7</sup> See Steve Hoadley, *Security Co-operation in the South Pacific*, Working paper No.41, (Peace Research Institute, Australian National University, Canberra)

are given. Australia and New Zealand also carries out reconnaissance flights over the South Pacific as part of detecting possible problems.

b) Armed aggression by non-state actors, i.e. mercenaries, terrorists etc..

In SIDS, this type of military threat appears to be more real than aggression by other states. Both the Commonwealth and the UN highlight the danger of mercenaries to SIDS. Many have, indeed, experienced aggression involving outside forces such as mercenaries, backed by local dissidents as well as foreign powers. Most literature on SIDS stresses the danger of mercenaries and terrorists who could over-run their defence forces without great difficulty due to their military as well as political vulnerability.<sup>8</sup> As the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth commented, "It takes only twelve men in a boat to put some of those governments out of business".<sup>9</sup> Roberto Espindola claimed that a small island state can easily succumb to "a well-armed, company sized group of trained guerrillas or mercenaries".<sup>10</sup>

Hypothetically, the situation appears grim. Militarily, the SIDS are in a difficult position to defend themselves on their own. A well-organised mercenary force with modern equipment and training can be a serious menace. In most cases, the attack takes place against the government and due to the personalised nature of the politics in SIDS, once the Head of Government goes, the whole government may well fall. While it is common that importance is often given to the personal security of the Head of State or Government in the SIDS, the quality of the security provided falls below par with the kind of security provided for the Heads of States in most countries. Many claim that islands have a natural protection due to the surrounding waters, and it "is less easy for outsiders to infiltrate or invade them than it would be with countries that have land frontiers".<sup>11</sup> In reality, this is somewhat exaggerated. In

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<sup>8</sup> See Roberto Espindola, "Security Dilemmas" in Clarke and Payne (eds), *Politics, security and development in small states*

<sup>9</sup> Sir Sridath Ramphal, former Secretary General, Speech given at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference at New Delhi, 1983

<sup>10</sup> Op.cit

<sup>11</sup> Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, p. 7

fact, SIDS can be easily approached by sea, especially as many of them lack proper surveillance of their maritime zones. For a group of mercenaries to land on an island and gain a beachhead may not be too difficult, especially if it has some local backing. Mercenaries were successful in overthrowing the government of the Comoros in 1978 and again in 1989, and numerous unsuccessful attempts were also undertaken.<sup>5</sup> 'Mercenarism' was experienced by Sao Tome in 1988 when forty-six armed men landed by canoes and fishing boats, and in the Maldives in 1988 when the invading forces approached the islands, once again, by boat. In the case of Dominica in 1981, US federal agents arrested the mercenaries before they could sail to the island. The organisers of the 1981 attack on the Seychelles had originally planned to arrive by sea but the plan was later abandoned due to lack of sufficient funding. In many instances, importing of weapons into these countries appears to be relatively easy task. Customs officials are poorly trained and many lack the modern equipment used in the developed world to detect contraband. Similarly, an advance group may get into the country through lawful means as many SIDS openly welcome tourists from most parts of the world. Both the immigration and the customs officials are often extremely generous and welcoming to tourists in order to attract more. Further, experience shows that terrorism may be a similar problem. Due to the limited nature of the security services, international terrorists may find it easy to operate on SIDS, and use them as a base to carry out their operations elsewhere.

Although mercenary involvement has been low in the Caribbean, it has not totally escaped. Two mercenary threats were uncovered in Barbados in 1976 and 1978, both of which were dealt with effectively before they could take place, with the assistance of intelligence sources from France and Britain. In 1979, allegations were made that mercenary support was being sought to restore the ousted Grenadian Prime Minister Eric Gairy. In Dominica, in March 1981, the government announced the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government involving American and Canadian mercenaries. The plan, which was code-named "Operation Red Dog", involved the

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<sup>5</sup> On mercenary attacks in Comoros and Sao Tome see Malyn D D Newitt, "The political perils of being a microstate: Sao Tome and Comoros since independence", in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*



overthrow of the Prime Minister as well as installing some of the mercenaries in the government.<sup>13</sup> Terrorist incidence has also been relatively low. One of the main incidents occurred in 1976 when a Cuban airliner was blown up soon after take-off from Barbados by an anti-Castro terrorist group. However, this incident bore no relationship to the fact the Barbados was a SIDS and it could have happened in a larger state. Domestic incidents include the political killing of people by the Gairy regime in Grenada. Other types of subversion are often linked to the drug traffickers. Finger-pointing has also been directed towards other groups linked with Cuba, Libya and even the CIA but so far no real evidence has been found. In the South Pacific, 'mercenarism' is yet to affect the SIDS. There are no known cases where mercenaries were involved either in the overthrow of a government or on behalf of external actors. The Fijian coups were purely a domestic affair and even in the recent Bougainville secessionist attempt, there is no evidence that any mercenaries were involved in the fighting.

#### c) Presence of Foreign Military bases:

Some have also identified the presence of foreign military and naval bases on the territory of SIDS as a threat to these countries. They claim that this would be a particular threat "if the facility serves a nuclear purpose".<sup>6</sup> It is claimed that because of their strategic locations, SIDS are very attractive to foreign powers as military bases for their air and naval fleets or as monitoring stations. Even though the presence of a foreign military power could at times act as a deterrent to potential aggressors, it could also result in the SIDS being drawn into the conflicts of the foreign power. In any case, the presence of a foreign power could lead to all sorts of difficulties; they may try and influence a political decision if they believe it is hostile to them.

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<sup>13</sup> See Griffith, *The quest for security in the Carribean: problems and promises in subordinate states*, pp. 124-125

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in the Global Society*, p. 24

#### d) Excessive militarisation:

The military in SIDS can become a security threat in certain circumstances. As Sheila Harden concluded, "small states are particularly susceptible to this form of political instability".<sup>7</sup> In SIDS, coups have often involved the armed forces in one way or the other. Some SIDS prefer not to have armed forces of any sort apart from police forces for domestic security. Yet in some cases, SIDS attempt to face their security problems by building up and strengthening their defence system. However, the attempt to strengthen their defence forces sometimes results in "old risks being merely replaced by new ones".<sup>8</sup> Militarism in SIDS relate to the military becoming too powerful in relation to other sectors, based on the resources given to it as well as the status and kind of positions held by its officers, and its role in the decision making process and therefore decides to involve itself in the governing of the country usually by replacing the existing government by force. This danger of militarisation was highlighted by the Prime Minister of St. Vincent in 1984 when he stated that, "the more arms we have available in the country, the greater will be the temptation to solve our problems with a coup".<sup>9</sup> It could result in a military hegemony affecting the political as well as the social structures of these island societies. Among the extreme end is the Comoros, a country that has survived countless number of coup attempts by the military, the latest being in October 1992. In the Caribbean, the danger of excessive militarisation was prominent in Grenada. The Fijian coup by Col. Rabuka is the only case of overt military involvement in the politics of the South Pacific.

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<sup>7</sup> Harden, *Small is dangerous: micro-states in a macro-world*, p. 76

<sup>8</sup> 'Smallness and vulnerability of small states', paper presented by H.E. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maldives, at the 'Workshop on security of small states' Giraavaru, Maldives, May 1991

<sup>9</sup> An interview with G.Brana-Shute, "An Eastern Caribbean Centrist", *Caribbean Review*, Vol.4, No.4, 1985 cited in Paul Sutton, "The politics of small state security in the Caribbean", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993, p.15; on militarisation see also chapters 4-6, in Jorge R Beruff, J P Figueroa, and J E Greene (eds), *Conflict, Peace and Development in the Caribbean*, (Macmillan, London, 1991)

## 2. Political Threats

Political threats involve those that affect both the political independence and those that affect the organisational stability of the state. Political threats, like military threats, could have an internal and external element. Internally, it relates to domestic political crises such as coups, instability, secessions, etc., problems that could disrupt the peace and harmony in the state and in some instances affect the domestic sovereign structure of the state. Externally, political threats can emanate from foreign influences and interference. Among such political threats are political pressure for policy changes exercised by larger states, subversion attempts by larger states, and attempts at extra-territorial jurisdiction.<sup>10</sup> In many cases political threats can arise from political dissidents abroad and therefore may be 'external' but these will be categorised under internal threats as the underlying nature of the problem in most cases relates to domestic political arrangements.

### a) Coups:

One of the common domestic political threats is extra-legal regime changes i.e. coup d'état and revolutions. A coup d'état, as defined by Steven David, means,

"the sudden, forcible overthrow of a government by a small group. In its simplest form, a coup consists of a few individuals who conspire together to try to remove the head of state".<sup>11</sup>

A revolution can be identified as one that is backed by the masses. However, in the case of SIDS, it is difficult to separate the two. The coup might be carried by a few, but in fact the majority might support it, even if they actively do not participate. One of the key issues is how far is an unlawful overthrow of the government a threat to the state? This leads us onto the important question of differentiating threats to the state and threats to the government. In SIDS, it appears to be safe to assume that this

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. pp. 25 - 26

<sup>11</sup> Steven R. David, *Third World Coups d'Etat and International Security*, (John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore), 1987, p. 7

type of threat, that may be on the surface a threat to the government, is a threat to the state as any political upheaval in the country can effect all sectors of society due to the small nature of the state. Even a bloodless coup can disrupt the values and beliefs of the people and create chaos and disharmony.

Coups in the Caribbean and the Pacific have involved both military and civilian elements. Nevertheless, in general, the military involvement in the government has been rare and so are non-military coups in the Caribbean. The most notorious cases have been the one in Grenada in 1979 that overthrew the regime of Gairy and again in 1983 the coup by the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement. The first coup was supported by much of the population, faced ineffectual military resistance and had a low death toll. However, the second one resulted in the murder of more than fifty people including the Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. Dominica experienced two of them in 1981, one involving members of the Ku Klux Klan and the other involving former Defence Force members (who had been disarmed earlier as a result of reports that weapons were being traded for marijuana). In recent times, the onset of political stability in the region was once again disrupted by the attempted coup in Trinidad where 114 fundamentalist Muslims stormed the government buildings and took the Prime Minister and his cabinet as hostages. However, they had no popular support from the masses and surrendered after five days.<sup>12</sup>

Just as the US invasion of Grenada in the Caribbean brought vulnerability and outside intervention in SIDS onto the international agenda, Fiji in the South Pacific highlighted the dangers of military coups in SIDS. The two military coups led by Col. Rabuka in Fiji shocked the whole region. While it is not necessary to go into the details of the coups, it is sufficient to say that this involvement of the armed forces in the politics of the state created fear among the other SIDS that a similar situation might follow; especially when there was

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<sup>12</sup> See Bishnu Ragoonath, "The Failure of the Abu Bakr Coup: The plural society, cultural traditions and political development in Trinidad", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993

political instability as in PNG and Vanuatu. However, it was not just political instability that led to the coups. It was, rather, a mixture of racial and ethnic tension between the native Fijians and the Indians combined with economic resource disparities as well as lack of political legitimacy and leadership that led to the coups. The PNG also faced a coup attempt in March 1990 although this was nothing serious. Rather it was a half-hearted attempt made by the Commissioner of Police to overthrow the government, more notoriously known as the Bar-B-Coup, named after the function that got the Commissioner rather drunk before his attempt.<sup>13</sup>

#### b) Political instability:

Political instability can affect the state in many ways. Ivelaw Griffith underlines certain elements as part of political stability.<sup>14</sup> These are the authority of the government, whereby the people accept the rule of the government and the government undertake the management of the political system; the equality and participation that relates to the rights of the citizens to participate in the politics of the state and their ability to do so; and political legitimacy, which requires those in power to have the ability and the right to govern. It is the lack of any of the above elements or some of them, which leads to political instability. SIDS have different types of political systems. However, the much favoured version is a democratic one, often modelled to include their traditional peculiarities. The abuse of power by the regime can result in irregularities in transition of power, corruption, nepotism and other forms of undesirable behaviour that can create instability and disharmony among the citizens. Due to the personalised nature of politics, the majority of the political regimes in SIDS do not accept any criticisms from the opposition even if they are constructive criticisms. Everything is taken at a personal level. This could create a climate of tension and strain in the country. While most SIDS do enjoy democratic transitions of power, the legitimacy of the government may be questioned

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<sup>13</sup> Anthony Payne, "Small State security in the South Pacific", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993

<sup>14</sup> Griffith, *The quest for security in the Caribbean: problems and promises in subordinate states*, p.6

on the grounds of abuse of power. Unlike military threats and coups, political instability as a threat in itself is difficult to delineate. It could also act as a catalyst to other types of threats, such as foreign military interventions and coups.

In the Caribbean, almost all the SIDS adhere to a parliamentary democracy. Elections are held on a regular basis and are fairly peaceful affairs. Nevertheless, factional politics is a prominent feature and political instabilities arise mainly from abuse of power by those governing the state. The Grenada crisis emphasises this problem. In 1983 the former Foreign Minister and the then Prime Minister of the PNG, Rabbie Namaliu claimed that domestic internal threats are the greatest security risks to the South Pacific states.<sup>15</sup> The South Pacific consists of a diversity of political systems ranging from a kingdom, republics, to non-independent states and freely associated states. In the past, the South Pacific's record on political stability has been fairly good. Coups and political violence, as well as discord have been rare. Peaceful change of government has been the norm in most SIDS. However, it has not embraced all islands. The Solomon Islands and the PNG have confronted frequent changes of government and shifting alliances based on controversial methods of attaining power. Vanuatu suffers from chronic parliamentary instability.<sup>16</sup> In 1988, serious rioting occurred in the capital in protest at the government's decision to abolish a local land corporation. Both Australia and New Zealand guaranteed their support and the dispatch of special security police if the situation worsened. Tonga may also face instability due to the growing discontent against power being concentrated in the hands of a few nobles. The worst political problems are faced by the PNG. The Bougainville secessionist movement and a border conflict with Indonesia have continued to influence political stability in the country.

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific*, p. 149

<sup>16</sup> See Luella S Christopher, *CRS Report for Congress, Pacific Island Nations: Overview of trends and problems in the South and West Pacific*, July 1990, p. 11

### c) Secessions:

Island states are extremely vulnerable to secessionist tendencies. The 'islandness' factor, as discussed in the previous chapter, appears to be the key ingredient in secessionist tendencies although it is rare that this factor alone creates the desire to secede. There are other factors such as uneven distribution of wealth or abuse of political power that can contribute to secessionist attempts. A political system dominated by a few people, usually from one particular island or region of the island, can result in an extreme sense of frustration by the others.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the sudden enrichment of a particular island or group of islands could encourage the people to break away from the parent territory if they have no desire to share their wealth as happened in the three southern atolls of the Maldives during the late 1950s. In the Caribbean, in the run up to their independence many of the colonies separated to form sovereign states of their own rather than join each other. Some have now incorporated the possibility of secession into their constitutions. Thus, the chance of secessionist rebellions has been reduced. However, the SIDS of the Caribbean have not escaped from secessionist attempts.<sup>18</sup> The breakaway of Anguilla from St. Kitts and Nevis is one such example. In 1979 in St. Vincent, a group of Rastafarians tried to take control of the Union Island. However, this was not a serious attempt but a rather minor insurrection.

Secessionist attempts have not escaped the islands of the South Pacific either. The most notorious is the attempted secession of Espiritu Santo from Vanuatu at the time of its independence. In 1980, the leader of the Na-Griamel declared the independence of Espiritu Santo from the rest of the New Hebrides as the independent state of Vemarana. The rebels were allegedly backed by the French *colons* and US business interests. Kiribati (formerly Gilbert Islands) and Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands) had faced similar problems prior to independence. They were under the British as the Gilbert and Ellice Island Colony (GIEC) and in a referendum held in

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<sup>17</sup> see Harden, *Small is dangerous: micro-states in a macro-world*, pp. 80 - 88

<sup>18</sup> See Gladstone E Mills, "Politics and Administration: Outstanding Issues related to Peace and Security" in A T Bryan, J E Greene and T M Bradshaw (eds), *Peace, Development and Security in the Caribbean*, (The Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1990)

the Ellice Islands in 1974 more than 90% of the voters favoured a separate status distinct from the Gilbert Islands. Even though this is not a classic case of one island attempting to secede from the main island group, it nevertheless reflects the separateness felt by islanders in comparison to other islanders. Further, in 1975, an independence movement was formed by the people of Ocean Island (Banaba). This again was instigated by the fact that they refused to accept the British Government's argument that the phosphate revenues from the island should be distributed over the whole territory of the Gilbert islands. Fiji, too, faced a secessionist crisis in 1988 when the island group of Rotuma declared their independence. However, the rebellion was soon quelled by Fijian troops.

However, secessionist attempts have been drastically reduced now. The only thorn in the South Pacific is the Bougainville secessionists from PNG. PNG consists of a loose knit group of diverse ethnic communities. PNG also accused the Solomon Islands of assisting the secessionists. According to PNG, the Solomon Islands have been supporting the Bougainville secessionist movement in PNG. The Solomon islands alleged that PNG has carried out commando raids on parts of the Solomon Islands on the basis of their accusations.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, the islandness factor is exacerbated by the fact that this island is rich in copper compared to the rest of the country. Dissatisfaction that the share of the resources, combined with the tension between the indigenous black population of the Bougainville and the 'redskins' from other parts of PNG who work in the mines, led to the crisis.

#### d) Coercive Diplomacy:

Pressure from abroad has been identified as one of the major political threats both by international institutions and SIDS themselves. This kind of coercive diplomacy can be applied directly as well as indirectly. It has been defined as a continuing process, "With actions ranging from statements and limited economic measures at the low end of the spectrum to full-fledged invasions at the high end."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, March 1992, p. 38818.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Nye, Jr., "What new world order", *Foreign Affairs* 71, Spring 1992, p. 92



SIDS located near larger powers are extremely vulnerable to this kind of threat. Unscrupulous interference in the domestic affairs of states by foreign powers is not restricted only to small states, but for a small country this is especially a problem of considerable concern. It has been claimed that many of the SIDS, because of their strategic position, "could easily become pawns in the game of international power politics".<sup>21</sup>

In the Caribbean the United States is the key actor. The region is considered as a US sphere of interest and the US policy towards the Caribbean is based on the prevention of other actors becoming a threat to the US in the region as well as enhancing the global power of the US through demonstrating its power in the region.<sup>22</sup> In this sense it has been said that the Caribbean is an American lake. US intervention in the region was brought to the forefront by the invasion of Grenada. Prior to that, the US had carried out a campaign of destabilisation in the country, to discourage tourism and affect the political stance of the regime in power. There was even an exercise in 'gunboat diplomacy' in 1981 when the US navy carried out military exercises outside Grenada. The Bahamas has also faced severe pressure from the US. The US has conducted anti-drug operations in the Bahamas without the knowledge of the government and has pressured the governments of other SIDS to give into their demands, especially in relation to selection of local personnel participating in the Drug Enforcement Units. It has also interfered in the election in the Bahamas in 1987, attempting to halt the return of the incumbent Prime Minister, by spreading disinformation. Other powers in the Caribbean included the Soviet Union in the past. The main ally of the Soviet Union was Cuba where there was a Soviet military presence as part of its Cold War strategy. The Soviet Union also had close contacts with other SIDS such as Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana but the overall influence of the Soviet Union on the Caribbean SIDS was rather limited. Britain, France and the Netherlands also have interests in the region. Britain has dependent

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<sup>21</sup> Harden, *Small is dangerous: micro-states in a macro-world*, pp. 80 - 88

<sup>22</sup> See Paul Sutton, "The politics of small state security in the Caribbean", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993 p.3

territories in the Caribbean. It also maintained a military presence in Belize and the Commonwealth Caribbean countries receive assistance from Britain, "the preferred option for military co-operation".<sup>23</sup> The French presence in the Caribbean is also by virtue of territorial possession but the French territories are an integral part of France and not just dependent territories. There are around 9,000 French troops in the Caribbean mainly to protect French interests. France also has a naval base in Guadeloupe. The Caribbean is also important for France as it has the European Space Centre in French Guiana. The Netherlands also possess territory in the Caribbean, the Netherlands Antilles, and is committed to its defence. Canada also plays an important role in the Caribbean as a major investor and trade partner and by providing aid and assistance to the Caribbean countries although it does not have any territorial possessions in the region. However, Canada has not applied unwanted pressure on the Caribbean SIDS unlike the United States.

In the South Pacific, Australia is a dominant actor and thus its actions can have severe ramification for the SIDS. Australia has been criticised as trying to play the 'big brother' role towards the SIDS, "seeking to impose on the Pacific, the Western viewpoint identifying with the US interests rather than with the Pacific concerns".<sup>24</sup> Kiribati, in particular, was worried about Australia's criticisms about its fishing deal with the Soviet Union in 1985. However, Australia has moved closer to the South Pacific stance in recent years. It has put pressure on the US to negotiate tuna fishing agreements with the region and supports the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. New Zealand is another regional power. Eighty per cent of New Zealand's bilateral aid goes to the South Pacific. France is also a country that plays an important role in the region. Its approach to decolonisation of the French Pacific territories has had a worrying influence in the region, especially with Vanuatu.<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>24</sup> *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific*; See also J H A Hoyle, *The Security of Small Island States*, Conference on the ANZAC Connection, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, May 1984); Richard W Baker, *The International Relations of the Southwest Pacific: New Visions and Voices*, Occasional paper 4, (International Relations Program, East-West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1992)

<sup>25</sup> See David Hegarty, *Small State security in the South Pacific*, (Australian National University Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Working Paper No.126, Canberra, 1987)

tension is mainly due to Vanuatu's continued support for the Kanak separatists in New Caledonia. The French ambassador was expelled twice from Vanuatu, in 1981 and 1987, the second time for allegedly providing financial assistance to Vanuatu's opposition parties.<sup>26</sup> However, relations improved later on. French refusal to halt nuclear testing in the region is another major issue of contention between France and the South Pacific SIDS. It has caused a severe straining of relations, especially in recent times with France continuing to carry on with nuclear testing in the Mururoa atoll.

The Soviet Union had increased its role and activity in the region, supporting the region's Nuclear Free Zone treaty that was opposed by the United States. Diplomatic relations were established with many states and fishing agreements were signed with Kiribati in 1985 and Vanuatu in 1987. After Gorbachev's Vladivostock speech in July 1986, asserting that the Soviet Union was to be a Pacific power, Soviet influence increased considerably. However, it was still rather low-key and is not significant. With the end of the Cold War the role of Russia has been even more limited. The influence of Libya in some of the SIDS caused considerable panic in the region in the 1980s. Libya provided assistance to a small number of Kanak separatists in New Caledonia and established relations with Vanuatu. However, it is doubtful whether the Libyan threat was real, as the Australian Foreign Minister claimed that it was more "potential than actual". The other powers that play an important role in the region are Japan, Taiwan and China. Japan is now the largest aid donor to the islands. Their role in the South Pacific has put many of the SIDS in a 'Catch-22' situation. On the one hand, their fishing fleets continue to operate in their EEZs, and their continuation can lead to disastrous results to the countries economically. Yet, on the other hand, they are major aid donors and provide the islands with vital aid necessary for their economic development. Western Samoa accepted a major loan for port development in 1989 and the Solomon Islands were given a contract to construct a new fishing project by Japan; while Tonga was given a

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<sup>26</sup> See *Europa Yearbook 1990*, p. 2901

loan from Taiwan to build a sports stadium and Fiji received Taiwanese cars. This was at the same time as the meetings about the problem of drift net fishing by these countries in the South Pacific. Foreign interference in the domestic affairs of SIDS may not always be from larger powers. In the South Pacific, the SIDS themselves accuse one another of interference. In 1989, allegations were made by Western Samoa that the government of Nauru had secretly contributed campaign funds to the opposition in Western Samoa prior to the general election in 1988. This led to a serious deterioration in relations between the two countries including the recall of the Nauruan consul and the sale of all Nauruan assets in Western Samoa.

#### e) Violation of territorial zones:

The illegal use of their territorial zones, especially their maritime zones, can be a major threat to SIDS in numerous ways. Territorial violations can occur for a number of reasons, among which are included attempts to land subversive elements, smuggling, piracy, illegal fishing and exploitation of other natural resources, and dumping of hazardous wastes.<sup>27</sup> Such events can threaten not just the military aspect of their security but also political, economic and environmental security. In the Caribbean, territorial violations are incurred for the purposes of drug trafficking, money laundering and smuggling among others. Antigua has experienced several of the above including the use of Antiguan territory for illegal export of arms to South Africa in 1978-79 and to Colombian drug barons in 1989. In the South Pacific the main territorial violations are those related unlawful fishing in the EEZ.

### **3. Economic Threats**

Economic threats have been outlined as one of the most serious problems faced by the SIDS. The Commonwealth includes economic shocks, bilateralism, influence of foreign business firms and illegal fishing in the EEZ as among the major economic threats faced by SIDS.<sup>28</sup> Economic threats are invariably linked with the

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<sup>27</sup>See Harden, *Small is dangerous: micro-states in a macro-world*, pp. 80 - 88.

<sup>28</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in the Global Society*

economic vulnerability of the SIDS. Thus, unlike military threats or some political threats, it is difficult to identify when an economic threat begins and ends. It appears to be more of a continuing process.

a) Resource Piracy:

One of the major threats that affects economic and political security comes from the security of their maritime zones. The importance of their surrounding waters to island states, be they single island or archipelagic, cannot be overemphasised. Among the possible threats to their maritime areas are the trespassing of the maritime zones of the SIDS, poaching by foreign registered fishing vessels in these areas, and illegal exploitation of other natural resources. As the traditional law of the three mile territorial sea became obsolete, the maritime zones grew wider with states claiming zones such as the Exclusive Economic Zone and fishing zones. These claims were reinforced, internationally, by the Law of the Sea Conventions of 1982. However, it was often the case that, not only did their claims to a 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zones prove to be a benefit to these small territories economically, but it also increased their duties to protect these maritime areas as well. It often proved beyond their ability to exploit the living and non-living resources that exist in these areas, and at the same time provide adequate facilities to patrol and safeguard their patrimonial seas. Foreign fleets continuously exploit these areas, poaching among other things, so depriving the local fishermen of their natural livelihood. Such poaching could contribute to loss of revenue as well as depletion of fish stocks.<sup>29</sup> These foreign fleets are equipped with some of the more sophisticated tracking and fishing equipment that the SIDS could not themselves afford. This is a real threat faced by the majority of the SIDS and one that still continues.

The above is a problem faced by many of the SIDS in the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Although there have been instances of poaching in the Caribbean it is not as much of a problem as the South Pacific due to the small size of the Caribbean

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<sup>29</sup> Op. cit. pp 80 - 88.

Sea, as well as the pervasive presence of the United States. However, in the South Pacific, poaching in maritime zones is a considerable problem and to some extent it still is. None of the SIDS have the capability for effective surveillance of their EEZs. Even PNG stated that the cost of minimal surveillance of their EEZ will cost more than the return from fishing licence fees and royalties.<sup>30</sup> The most obvious problem related to that was of tuna fishing by the US fishermen in the EEZ of the South Pacific SIDS. The United States regards fishing in the EEZ of other states as lawful due to the migratory nature of the tuna. Therefore, when the SIDS intercept any US fishing vessels, the United States threatened to apply a trade embargo under the Magnuson Act. This happened when the Solomon Islands seized the *Jeanette Diana* for unlicensed fishing in its EEZ and the US responded by applying a trade embargo, banning all fisheries export from the Solomon Islands, affecting the economy of the islands. However, in April 1987, the United States signed an accord with the South Pacific. Yet the threat continues from the fishing fleets of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, who also use drift net fishing which can result in swift depletion of all kinds of fish stocks. The South Pacific countries adopted the Tarawa Declaration in 1989, banning drift net fishing in the region and calling upon the countries to stop using drift nets and banned all port calls and refuelling and supplying of vessels. Japan has now agreed to this after considerable pressure but Taiwan still continues to resist.<sup>31</sup> The SIDS have received assistance from Australia regarding maritime surveillance under the Pacific Boat project (participated in by seven countries) launched in 1983. Apart from it, Australia provides funding to Western Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands to help in purchasing fuel and equipment for their vessels. However, the SIDS have criticised the design of the vessels claiming that it is not suitable to their own requirements. As such, maritime surveillance to stop unlawful fishing and other territorial violation continues to be a problem to the SIDS.

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<sup>30</sup> See Hegarty, *Small State security in the South Pacific*,

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Payne, "Small State Security in the South Pacific", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993

## b) Influence of foreign business interests:

The Commonwealth has identified the influence exercised by foreign business interest as a possible threat to the SIDS in some cases. As SIDS are usually economically weak, they try to attract as much foreign investment as possible. This might prove beneficial to their economies but it could also lead to the foreign economic conglomerates "exerting considerable pressure" on the internal affairs of the small island states.<sup>32</sup> Due to the weakness of their administration system and power, these business interests can encourage fraud, corruption and commercial crime.<sup>33</sup> These multinational companies have at their disposal resources that these small states could never afford. Local governments are often too weak to resist the "gifts and onslaught of international finance".<sup>34</sup> One extreme case of interference in domestic politics by foreign companies is the case of Abaco in the Bahamas where the Abaco Islands were seized by military force by a group of businessmen and the islanders were encouraged to call for the status of self-governing territory "in order to further the conspirators' plans".<sup>35</sup> The Caribbean SIDS encourage the growth of off-shore banking facilities, tax havens and casinos to enhance their weak economies. Nevertheless, in many cases this can become a threat in itself. Many of these SIDS, among which are included Antigua, the Bahamas, Barbados and St. Vincent, have attracted dubious business interests who use them for money laundering and to evade taxes. The SIDS of the South Pacific have not escaped the influence of foreign business interests. In the late 1970s, in Tuvalu, a US real estate agent made off with the country's consolidated revenue of one million dollars, with the Prime Minister's approval, apparently to invest in the US. Tuvalu took more than ten years to recover from this loss.<sup>36</sup> Even in Espiritu Santo the rebel leader was sponsored by The Phoenix Foundation of America "which supposedly had a good deal of money"<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> 'Smallness and vulnerability of small states', Paper presented by H.E. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, May 1991

<sup>33</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, p. 35

<sup>34</sup> Robin Cohen (ed), *African islands and enclaves*, (Sage, London, 1983) pp. 11 - 13

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Hegarty, *Small State security in the South Pacific*, p. 16; On economic security of the South Pacific, see also Robert C. Kiste, *Economic security issues in the South Pacific*, prepared for Symposium on Pacific Basin Security: Economic Dimension, (National Defense University, Washington DC, February 1986)

<sup>37</sup> Cohen (ed), *African islands and enclaves*, pp. 11 - 13

#### 4. Societal Threats

##### a) Ethnic, religious and cultural problems:

Many of the SIDS are multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural. Their past colonial masters have often brought different races together and currently many of the SIDS are trying to work out a formula that will suit all communities. However, in reality, many are fragmented societies and the unity of these communities is extremely delicate and fragile. Ethnic problems could disrupt the lives of all members of the society. Due to their small size ethnic problems affect all parts of the society. Ethnic insecurity contributes to political instability, secessionism and invariably affects the economic sector. Religious fundamentalism can also become a major threat to these societies. The Jamaat Al Muslimeen, the black Muslim group that attempted to overthrow the government of Trinidad is just one example. The Fijian coups also had their basis in the ethnic divisions of Fijian society. Cultural penetration could also be regarded as a threat to the SIDS. Due to foreign cultural influences, these societies could lose their own identities and values. The development of the media and the associated technological advances have enabled the international media to reach remote parts of the world. Radio and satellite television go beyond the control of the state.

Most Caribbean states have a significant multi-racial population. The societies are further fragmented by divisions along class lines. It can and does affect political groupings as well as the security forces. Parties are often based on ethnic lines and the civil servants and security forces can be dominated by one group of people, as in the case of Trinidad, by the Afro-Caribbeans. However, ethnic problems are kept under control as the societies have developed patterns of peaceful co-existence for over a century. The main cultural threats to the SIDS come from the US. With the expansion of the media in these states, with cable and satellite communications, US programmes have increased considerably, penetrating domestic households.<sup>38</sup> The dangerous aspect of such cultural penetration lies in the SIDS

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<sup>38</sup> See Rex Nettleford, "Threats to National and Cultural Identity", in Bryan et al (eds), *Peace, Development and Security in the Caribbean*



losing their own cultures and values. In the South Pacific, the Fijian coup of 1987 highlighted the ethnic problems that exist on the island between the ethnic Fijians (Melanesians) and the Indian Fijians. The population is evenly divided between both communities. Ethnic tension had always existed between the two communities as there had been little integration. The military is mainly dominated by ethnic Fijians. However, in the past, there had been no direct confrontation until the problems erupted in 1987. Many Indians have since left the country. Vanuatu is another of the states in the South Pacific that faces mounting problems based on different islands. Regional tensions exist between the northern and southern islands and cultural problems exist between the francophone and anglophone elements.

#### b) Narcotics:

Drug traffickers and smuggling operations often favour island countries where it is almost impossible for the national security services to maintain an effective patrolling service for every tiny island. This is especially true of archipelagic states where the islands are scattered over a large area and the economy is too weak to bear the brunt of transport and communication costs. The illegal trading of drugs and its attendant problems can effect security by destabilising small island states. In some cases, it leads not only to the breakdown of law and order but also to corruption and the loss of social values ultimately affecting the political system itself. It undermines the credibility of the government and effects the functioning of the government structure. This is a sizeable problem in the island states of the Caribbean where a large scale drug trade was developed to meet the demands of the tourist and then slowly took a grip on the islanders themselves. Marijuana is a sizeable crop in some of the islands and the region is also used as a transshipment point to North America and Europe. The problem facing SIDS regarding such issues is that "in smaller countries the problems have a greater impact because the populations are smaller and far fewer resources are available to meet the awesome challenge posed by the narcotic trade".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ron Sanders, "Narcotics, corruption and development", *Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 3, No 1, Jan-March 1990, p. 83

In the Caribbean this is a serious threat to the SIDS. The islands are used as suppliers to others, intermediaries for trafficking and as consumers. This has led to an increase in crime associated with drug abuse. Although, apart from Jamaica, none of the other SIDS produce drugs on a large scale, they still act as excellent transshipment points from the South American drug producing countries, especially Brazil and Colombia, to the United States. The Bahamas, with its numerous cays and islets facing the Florida coastline, has been categorised as the state that takes the bulk of the cargo. In July 1992 more than 908 kilos of marijuana was seized in Barbados, and 26.5 kilos was seized in Trinidad and Tobago bound from Venezuela.<sup>40</sup> Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados are also used for transshipment. It has been alleged that the majority of the drugs pass undetected.<sup>41</sup> Cocaine abuse is high in the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago. In the South Pacific, the problem of drugs is still small. However, drug traffickers have made inroads into the region. In 1989, heroin was seized in Vanuatu for the first time. The country was being used as a transshipment point between Hong Kong and Sydney. While the threat of drugs is still small, it is nevertheless a potential problem given the number of small islands in the region that could be used as transshipment points.<sup>42</sup>

c) Demographic threats:

Many states in the Caribbean face the daunting task of accommodating a growing population far beyond their economic capacity. The increase in the labour force can lead to severe pressures on their economies. It can lead not just to economic difficulties but also to political problems as the governments become unable to provide the growing masses with job opportunities, in turn leading to frustration of the people. This could threaten the political stability of these states.

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<sup>40</sup> Ivelaw L. Griffith, "Drug and Security in the Commonwealth Caribbean", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993; See also Griffith, *The quest for security in the Caribbean: problems and promises in subordinate states*, pp. 243-271

<sup>41</sup> Paul Sutton, "The politics of small state security in the Caribbean", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Payne, "Small State Security in the South Pacific", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1993

Added to this, illegal immigrants can also threaten the economies of these countries. In the Bahamas in recent years Haitian refugees are causing considerable problems. It has been estimated that the figure could be as high as 10,000. In the South Pacific there is a serious refugee problem in PNG where more than 10,000 Irianese from Irian Jaya in Indonesia have crossed the border.

## **5. Environmental Threats**

Security in its traditional sense may not include environmental security. Nevertheless, environmental threats can and do affect all aspects of security. Among the most dangerous environmental threats to SIDS are those associated with climatic change. Global warming and the subsequent sea level rise have threatened many low lying areas. Among them the most vulnerable are low lying islands. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) claims that due to the greenhouse effect the average surface temperature of the earth could increase by 1.5° C to 4.5° C during the next 100 years. This could raise the sea level by melting the polar ice caps and glaciers and through the thermal expansion of the water in the oceans. They claim that unless attempts are made to slow down this process it could lead to a sea level rise by 65 cm by the year 2100. While there is no consensus among the scientific community about the rate of the rise in the sea level, even a slight change can affect the low lying island states. Erosion of the islands will reduce their capacity to support their population through loss of territory. Loss of elevation has also increased their vulnerability to storms. Increase in the salinity of the freshwater lens in many low lying SIDS has created economic difficulties adding to their burdens. The worst case scenario is that the people of these low lying SIDS may end up as environmental refugees. Both the size and the fact that they are low lying islands contribute to enhancing the danger of such threats. The dumping of nuclear waste and other hazardous material could also threaten their natural environments. As for those SIDS that are unfortunate enough to be situated near the major oil routes, oil tankers are a continuous hazard that pollute their waters by cleaning their tanks and damaging their unspoiled beaches. An oil spillage of even a small size could be of national proportion

to such states whose seas and beaches are a major asset as they are often dependent on tourism as their mainstay. Further, as these SIDS progressed economically, there is a growing threat from their own industrial waste. Garbage and sewage disposal is a real problem for the SIDS and the threat of polluting their beaches and rivers are real problems that the SIDS need to deal with.

The Caribbean is hurricane prone. All the SIDS have faced considerable problems due to the devastating nature of the hurricanes that pass through the region. Although effective monitoring of the weather had minimised the risk of the loss of human lives, the economic costs are extremely high. Three hurricanes (Hurricane Allen in 1980, Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, and Hurricane Hugo in 1989) that passed through the region in the 1980s were quite severe and caused severe damage to property;<sup>43</sup> for example, St. Lucia lost sixty per cent of its coconut and seventy-five per cent of its banana harvest in 1980.<sup>44</sup> Other environmental threats include volcanic eruptions in St. Vincent and erosion of soil in Barbados and Jamaica. The Caribbean SIDS are mainly volcanic but there are low-lying islands and cays in the Bahamas that may also be threatened by global warming and the subsequent rise in the sea level. Further, the SIDS have also faced problems due to oil spillage, refinery discharges and tanker collisions.

In 1989, a UN report on the 'greenhouse effect' listed four islands of the South Pacific which would completely disappear beneath the sea in the next century unless drastic actions were taken. They are Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu and Western Samoa. Many SIDS of the South Pacific are also cyclone prone and many have felt the devastating effects of cyclones. Among them include Cyclone Isaac in 1982 that caused substantial damage to Tonga. Later in 1988, a tornado struck the capital Nuku'alofa causing severe damage. In February 1990 Tuvalu was struck by a cyclone that destroyed crops and wrecked buildings, especially on Vaitupu atoll where 370

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<sup>43</sup> Op. cit. p.21

<sup>44</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, p. 19

people were made homeless. The same cyclone struck Western Samoa causing several deaths as well as destroying crops and buildings.

## Conclusions

The threats to the security of SIDS appear to be numerous. Firstly, SIDS appear to be extremely vulnerable to military threats. Yet, how far are they real? Military threats can be separated between real and potential threats by evaluating the range of the threat and how distant the threat is in time. Although it is difficult to predict the exact possibility of such a threat it can nevertheless be assessed based on certain preconditions. For example, in the case of direct military intervention or invasion by an external power, it has to be assessed who would be willing to undertake such an event and for what reasons? Are there any adversaries or would-be aggressors in the neighbouring region? How is the relationship of the state with both its allies and adversaries? What benefit would a larger power gain from armed aggression? What capabilities does a small island developing state possess to face such a threat on its own? Or would it be able to get assistance from others?

Assessing the situation in the Caribbean and the South Pacific, it must be said that in most cases direct invasion appears to be a worst case scenario. As far as recent history goes, it is very rare that these "small and apparently non-viable states have been taken over by direct conquest".<sup>45</sup> Apart from the Grenada crisis, this situation has not risen in a small island developing state in the last ten years. Although ten years may seem too limited a time period to discard the threat of invasion by another power, the security environment of most SIDS, especially those in the Caribbean and the South Pacific, lend favour to this hypothesis. This is likely, not because foreign powers may not have a vested interest in the small island developing state, but because they could invariably influence the small state and achieve their objectives without actual territorial incursions. As Diggins claims, most of the island states are "simply not worth the trouble, cost and international

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<sup>45</sup> Jonathon Alford, "Security dilemmas of small states", *The Round Table*, 292, 1984, pp. 377 - 382

odium" that these states would get by 'hijacking' them.<sup>46</sup> Most of the SIDS have good relations with the neighbouring larger powers. Apart from the Grenada crises, territorial violations have not occurred among the SIDS of the Caribbean and the South Pacific in recent times. Yet, for any state, territorial violations will always be perceived as a serious potential threat, especially given the important role that territory plays in defining the sovereign independence of a state. Even though international law has outlawed the use of force except in self-defence, there are still some states willing to employ force to enhance their interests. The Grenada episode brought this factor to the limelight and emphasised the fact that political instability in even a small island state could become a global issue. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990 is another more recent example. Thus, this type of threat cannot be ignored in its entirety. However, looking at recent history for most of the SIDS, it appears that there is some discrepancy between the theoretical possibility and the execution in practice.

As regards mercenaries, they appear to be a threat to the security of small, vulnerable states. However, the possibility of a successful mercenary-led attack against a small island developing state remains remote. In many instances, the mercenary-led attacks have been foiled in their embryonic stages by the assistance of friendly powers. In other cases, where the attacks have taken place, it has been successfully defeated, again with outside assistance. Since 1970, eleven SIDS have faced the threat of possible mercenary-led attacks and four states experienced an actual attack; two in the Comoros in 1978 and 1989, one in the Seychelles in 1981, one in Sao Tome in 1988 and one in the Maldives in 1988. Out of these, only in Comoros were the mercenaries successful. In the Comoros the mercenaries did not have to face any outside intervention against them. In fact, there is enough evidence to support the involvement of two third party states on the side of the mercenaries; South Africa and France. It has been alleged that the mercenary leader Bob Denard did not attempt the first attack in 1978 until the French government gave the green

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<sup>46</sup> C.E.Digginis, "The problems of small states", *The Round Table*, 295, 1984, pp. 195-205

light to go ahead.<sup>47</sup> Besides, the second attempt was welcomed by the people of Comoros and the mercenaries were "greeted as national heroes". However, where mercenaries are concerned, the real issue is that as long as ex-soldiers are willing to take up arms for material reasons, the threat of mercenarism will remain not just against SIDS but in other areas as well. The number of mercenaries allegedly involved in the current Bosnian conflict provides enough evidence that mercenarism still exists despite the claims by sceptics that the heyday of mercenarism has long gone. The stereotype white ex-servicemen from the Western armies who carried out the major operations in the African continent in the 1960s and 1970s were the pioneers of mercenarism in the modern day. However, they may have lost the chance they once had to overthrow governments in the Third World as the demand for ordinary foot soldiers may have diminished. In the current atmosphere, people want specialised skills and experience and "not cannon fodder looking for excitement" as Taulbee and Head claim.<sup>48</sup> While the typical mercenary of the 1960s may not be playing such a vigilant role in the 1990s, there are other groups of people who may be equally willing. In Antigua-Barbuda, a plot was uncovered in 1990 whereby attempts had been made to establish a mercenary training establishment involving the Israelis. According to the organisers, the aim was to establish a central civilian security school to train 'corporate security experts' in executive and operational levels to bring them to the 'highest professional capacity in order to confront and defuse any possible threat'.<sup>49</sup> However, according to Louis Blom-Cooper, the jurist who led the inquiry, "To any one with slightest knowledge of armed forces it was obvious that the training school proffered by Spearhead Ltd., was intended, among other things, to train mercenaries in assault techniques and assassination".<sup>50</sup> As such, the heyday of the white mercenary may be over but there are others from the Third World willing to step into their shoes. In the case of the Maldives in 1988, it was Tamil separatists fighting a guerrilla war in Sri Lanka who were hired. As such, mercenaries remain a

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<sup>47</sup> See Gerry Thomas, *Mercenary Troops in Modern Africa*, (Westview, Boulder, 1984)

<sup>48</sup> James L Taulbee and David A Head, "Mercenary Commando Coup Operations:Theory versus practice", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.16, No.1, March 1993, pp. 109 - 121

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Griffith , *The quest for security in the Carribean: problems and promises in subordinate states* p.262

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

potential threat to the SIDS. Another equally important issue is not the success rate of armed aggression, be they by other states or mercenaries. It is the deep marks they leave on the people and even the structure of the state. In the majority of the SIDS, apart from mercenary-prone Comoros, violence is comparatively low. In such a society, an armed attack can disrupt the lives of the people and create instability and disorder even if it is unsuccessful in the end. Thus the consequences and the aftermath of the attack are as much of a problem as the actual armed aggression.

As regards the presence of foreign military bases, it is rather difficult to comprehend how this could be an actual threat given the international political climate today. With the end of the Cold War, the chance of a nuclear war appears to be rather remote in the current climate. Besides, the presence of a foreign military base can actually act as a deterrent to would-be aggressors. As regards the question of foreign influence, it is true that it will be difficult for the smaller state to go against the wishes of the foreign power whose base is on its soil. Especially in a situation of domestic instability it may be difficult for it to prevent the foreign power from interfering if it has its own citizens on the territory of the small island developing state. As in the case of Grenada, the US claimed that it sent its forces to protect US citizens. However, the reality is that that was the excuse rather than the *raison d'être* of US intervention. No doubt if there were no US citizens in Grenada at the time, it would have given another one. Besides, the larger powers do not need gun boat diplomacy to influence SIDS. If a larger power wishes to interfere it can do so by numerous means, the most frequently used method being economic. In general, these are all possibilities. The real situation is that there are very few SIDS that have a foreign military presence on their territories. France has a military presence in Mayotte, a part of the Comoros archipelago that the Comoros government has continually claimed as part of the state, but is still under French rule. The status of the US military base in Diego Garcia is also questionable as it is still considered part of the British Indian Ocean Territory even though Mauritius has continued its claim for sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago.



Many of the SIDS enjoy greater political stability than many of the large continental states. The evidence for the above, as claimed by some, is based on the limited number of successful coups in SIDS; only in four SIDS have they been successful in the last twenty years. They are the Comoros (1975, 1978, and 1989), Seychelles (1977), Grenada (1979, 1983) and Fiji (May and September 1987).<sup>51</sup> However, as in the case of armed aggression from external elements, the threat from political coups does not depend solely on the success rate. An unsuccessful coup attempt can still affect all sectors of the state. Depending on the nature of the attempt, it can cause both human and material losses, affecting the political system, society and the economy. These damages may be hard to confront even if the coup is defeated eventually. It can affect the political culture of the state where political violence may have been rarely experienced. It can affect people's beliefs and values. Further, if it involves any form of violence, it can damage property and government buildings and the state might find it difficult to meet the losses. As in Trinidad where even the prosecution of the perpetrators of the 1990 coup cost the state TT \$4 million.<sup>52</sup> Thus the security problems from political coups do not end if they do not succeed. The threat from attempted coups can equally affect the SIDS. The problems of coups have also added another dimension to the politics of SIDS. The governments of SIDS have often used the threat of coups and mercenary attacks to dismantle opposition factions and parties. Or it has been used as an excuse to proceed with unfavourable policies. As for political instability, for many of the SIDS the changing domestic environment and the emergence of a new generation could create domestic upheavals and problems unless adjustments are made in the political systems to accommodate the changes. Nearly all SIDS are experiencing a demand for more political openness and democratic practices and for more freedom for the citizens. Old political traditions and values have been challenged by new ideas. While many have sought to adjust to these demands, the task has not been an easy

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<sup>51</sup> Anthony Lemon, "Political and Security Issues of Small Island States", in D G Lockhart, D Drakakis-Smith, and J Schembri (eds) *The Development Process in Small Island States*. (Routledge, London, 1993) p. 45

<sup>52</sup> Griffith, *The quest for security in the Carribean: problems and promises in subordinate states*, p. 32

one. Economic difficulties add to political difficulties as the gap between aspirations and desire for improved living standards widens, imposing additional constraints on the government structure.

Secessionism appears to remain a potential threat to multi-island SIDS. Physical separateness of islands contributes to their "strong sense of separate identity" despite the improvement in transport and communication.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this factor of 'islandness' can instigate separatist tendencies on its own. It is the onset of other factors, such as economic deprivation or economic growth, political discrimination, etc. that fuel the feeling of islandness and lead to actual secessionist movements. At present there are only two SIDS that face immediate secessionist threats. One is PNG and the Bougainville secessionist movement and the other is the Comoros where Mayotte has continually voted to remain under the French and the Moheli islanders indicate their wish to secede from the Comoros. This marginalisation of outer islands by the capital can contribute to future secessionist tendencies.

States use coercive diplomacy for a variety of reasons. It has been claimed that it is the strategic attractiveness of islands that has acted as a catalyst for unwanted influence and pressure by larger powers. While some SIDS may have lost some of their traditional attractiveness in terms of providing military bases to larger states, they still command a lot of attention from larger states.(see Chapter two). As such, foreign influence and pressure will always remain a threat. It is, however, difficult to identify exactly every form of pressure or unwanted influence during a given period of time. Due to the nature of coercive diplomacy itself, larger states often influence smaller ones through various means while denying, in most cases, that it is so. It is also hard to identify when exactly coercive diplomacy began and ended as it may continue in various forms from direct acts of influence to action through proxies, etc.

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<sup>53</sup> Hintjens and Newitt (eds) *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, p. 11

Territorial violations, especially the violations of their maritime zones, can be considered an actual threat to the SIDS, although in different states the violations might take place for different reasons. In the South Pacific and other SIDS that have rich fishing grounds, it may be mainly for the reasons of fishing. While SIDS can overcome such threats by negotiating fishing agreements with those countries poaching in their EEZ, they still would find it difficult to stop everyone. In the Caribbean violations have more to do with the shipment of drugs or counter movements to stop the drug traffic. The lack of capabilities for surveillance and search has meant that this is a continuing problem. For effective patrolling of the EEZ the SIDS need fast attack craft (FACs) and off-shore patrol craft (OPV). They also require maritime reconnaissance aircraft. According to an article on the surveillance of EEZs in the Asian Defence Journal, the answer for surveillance is the OPV "where the large hull allows greater range, speed, endurance and ability to accommodate advanced weapons and defences".<sup>54</sup> However, these are clearly beyond the resources of the SIDS. According to a survey of Caribbean maritime capabilities carried out by Michael A. Morris only the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago have multi-mission coast guards but even these have limited capabilities in the EEZ.<sup>55</sup> In the South Pacific only Fiji and PNG have navies but these are also relatively small. Most of the South Pacific SIDS have one or two patrol boats under the Pacific Patrol Boat Programme. However, providing the SIDS with patrol craft only solved part of the problem as many lacked the necessary financial resources to operate the boats effectively. In the case of Tuvalu it needed full funding from Australia to keep its *Pacific* patrol boat operational.<sup>56</sup> Threats of territorial violations of SIDS and their consequences are difficult to quantify during a given period of time. The number of vessels caught acting unlawfully in their maritime zones can be totalled during a

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<sup>54</sup> Stewart Walters, "Anti-ship missiles: The vital pieces in a three dimensional chess game" in the *Asian Defence Journal*, April 1995, pp. 37 - 38

<sup>55</sup> Michael A. Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, (Macmillan, London, 1994) pp. 27- 30

<sup>56</sup> Peter Lewis Young, "The EEZ Patrol Problem: Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Nations", *Asian Defence Journal*, June 1995, pp.20 - 27

certain time period but there is the difficulty in finding out how many have done so without being detected.

The influence and pressure from foreign economic interests also remain a threat to the SIDS as they are forced to encourage foreign investment to boost their economic development. Foreign economic conglomerates often attempt to overcome their own difficulties in operating on foreign territory by offering attractive 'incentives' to bureaucrats who then find it difficult to refuse them, often due to the harsh economic conditions in which many of them have to live. Allegations of corruption are, therefore, common in many of the SIDS. Such unethical behaviour by the officials as well as the influence wielded by the foreign business interests in SIDS can often lead to political instability and internal conflicts. Further, fraud and commercial crime are other problems that are sometimes associated with foreign firms.

Societal threats such as ethnic and religious problems are not unique to SIDS. However, when there are a limited number of people living on a small territory, these types of threats can be felt much more greatly than in larger countries and affect the whole population. Ethnic problems are mainly due to the failure of integration of diverse communities to form a national identity. This is especially difficult to achieve in archipelagic SIDS where communication and transport links are often poor. In most cases, ethnic problems are latent but even a single incident could have disastrous results. As far as the threat from narcotic drugs is concerned, it is a real threat for many SIDS. The smallness of the SIDS results in the rapid spread of drug abuse, especially among the youth. Drug-money often finds its way into the pockets of government officials with meagre salaries who are tempted by the prospect of enhancing their financial situation. This type of corruption affects the credibility of those in power and affects their status in the eyes of others. Besides, the spread of drug abuse has a draining effect on the vulnerable economies of the SIDS. Furthermore, in the case of archipelagic SIDS the existence of numerous islands and

cays are often favourable to those attempting to cultivate drugs and to traffickers seeking transshipment. However, the widespread dispersal of islands and the existence of transport difficulties also means that the spread of drug abuse may be limited to some islands unlike in a continental small state. The main problem in dealing with the threat from narcotics is that for SIDS the burden of eradication is almost always impossible to bear on their own. They lack the facilities for effective policing and law enforcement or rehabilitation of abusers, and so need external assistance to deal with the problems. As such, the threat from narcotics unfortunately remains real for many SIDS.

Environmental threats are major threats to the SIDS that are beyond their control. Although with improved technology they can receive warnings about cyclones and hurricanes etc., they cannot stop them from causing extensive damage to their resources, both human and material. One of the main problems with natural disasters is that they not only cause extensive damage but they also raise the cost of insurance that is often beyond the means of the SIDS. Further, the SIDS often lack the expertise in dealing with natural disasters after they occur. The measures undertaken are nearly always short-term and disaster-preparedness is frequently lacking. As for climatic change, if the scientific predictions of global warming and the subsequent sea level rise are true then this is a major threat facing the SIDS. Especially the low lying SIDS are facing dire consequences. Even if the disappearance of an island is a worst-case scenario there are other real problems such as damage to reefs, increase in the frequency and the intensity of storms and the intrusion of salt water into fresh water supplies which can be a serious health hazard. Further, this problem is often exacerbated in multi-island SIDS by growing population densities, especially with internal migration from the outer islands to the capital island.

The threats to the security of SIDS cannot, however, be examined properly by basing the study on SIDS alone. There is an added dimension that is extremely

important and heavily influences the threat scenario. It is the security environment of the SIDS. The security environment consists of the geographical location of the state and its relationship with the other states in the region, especially the larger and more powerful states, as well as between the main actors. As security is a relative term, the security problems of any state cannot be analysed in isolation without reference to the regional security pattern. In other words, the geopolitics of the region also shapes and influences the security environment of the SIDS. This is especially true in the Caribbean and the South Pacific. In the Caribbean regional influences from larger powers such as the United States are extremely active in defining the security environment of the SIDS. As Sutton claims, US actions "... set the parameters within which the Caribbean (SIDS) operate".<sup>57</sup> This is also true of the South Pacific. Australia and New Zealand are the two larger powers in the region and they are also members of the South Pacific Forum. Although there are other states influencing the security environment of the region such as the US and France, it is these two countries who take the most active role and influence in determining the security context of the region. Geopolitical influences are strong in these two regions. This is not to say that it is all negative and they always lead to problems for the SIDS. However, in many instances, geopolitics not only shapes the nature of problems in all areas but also limits the options available to the SIDS in dealing with them. As it is some times in the case of security in the South Pacific, "the interests of the (SIDS) and their would-be protectors (Australia and New Zealand) are not necessarily congruent on such matters".<sup>58</sup> In this context, it is important to examine the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean in order to understand the security problems facing the Indian Ocean SIDS.

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<sup>57</sup> See Sutton, "The politics of small state security in the Carribbean ", pp. 2 - 3

<sup>58</sup> See Payne, "The politics of small state security in the South Pacific", p.105

## Chapter IV

### **THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE INDIAN OCEAN**

This chapter will look at the geo-politics of the Indian Ocean in recent times and analyse the effect it has had on the Indian Ocean SIDS (IOS). Firstly, an overview of the Indian Ocean will be given. Secondly, it identifies the role of the superpowers in the Indian Ocean. It also briefly analyses the movement to create an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace and why this has been so difficult to achieve. Thirdly, it identifies the main actors in the Indian Ocean and how their relationships with the IOS contribute to the overall security environment of the IOS. Finally, the role of the regional organisations in the sub-regions of the Indian Ocean where the IOS are located will be analysed.

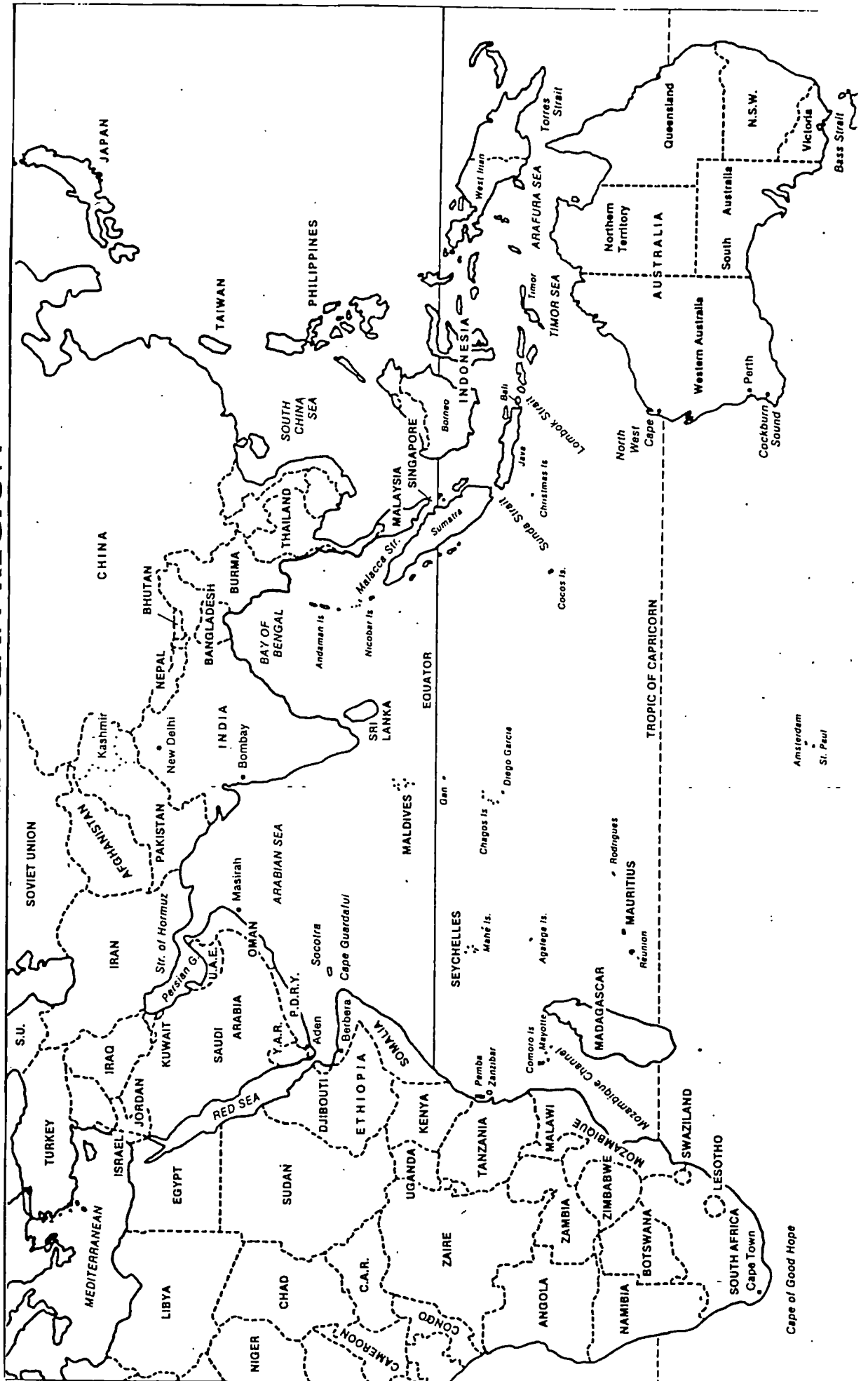
#### **Background**

The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean in the world comprising more than twenty-eight million square miles and over forty eight states, littoral and hinterland.\* Apart from regional neighbours it has been also traversed by the Arabs, Persians and the Chinese, and by the western world since the day Vasco da Gama sailed into the ocean in the 15th century. The attractiveness of the Indian Ocean grew in terms of needs of the great powers to maintain open sea lanes and to prevent others from gaining access to key areas and strategic terrain. Geographically, it has strong boundaries that often divides the region into sub-groupings. It is marked by Antarctica in the south, and it is flanked by three continents, Africa in the west, Australia in the east and Asia in the centre. India projects itself into the centre of the ocean cutting off both sides of the ocean into two huge areas, the Arabian Sea in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east. The Red Sea in the north-east connects the

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\* Hinterland states are those states with primary maritime access through littoral states of the Indian Ocean.

# THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION





Indian Ocean to Europe acting as a "vast river".<sup>1</sup> The Indian Ocean is accessible through the Suez and the Cape of Good Hope and in the east through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, or the Timor Sea. Other strategic narrow straits in the Indian Ocean include the Lombok Strait (in the vicinity of the Indonesian archipelago), Makassar Strait (between Borneo and Sulawesi), Sunda Strait (between Sumatra and Java), and the Great Channel (between Nicobar Islands and Sumatra), which connects the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. The others include the One and a Half degree channel and the Eight degree channel (in the vicinity of the Maldives). In the north west lies the Straits of Hormuz (the entrance of the Persian Gulf), the Bab el Mandeb (between Saudi Arabia and Africa), the Straits of Tiran and Jubal and in the west, the Mozambique Channel (between Madagascar and Africa).<sup>2</sup> More than 60,000 ships navigate through these waterways annually and the Strait of Hormuz is one of the most strategic straits in the Indian Ocean as no other straits carry as much tanker traffic. Almost sixty per cent of the global oil trade passes through the Straits of Hormuz.<sup>3</sup>

The strategic attractiveness of the Indian Ocean was stated by Alfred Thayer Mahan when he claimed that "Asia will belong to the power which will achieve control over the Indian Ocean, and the future of the world will be decided in its waters".<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, the Indian Ocean was the main 'spice route' to the West that was taken over and dominated by oil in the mid-twentieth century. Sixty per cent of world's oil reserves are located in the Persian Gulf. The Indian Ocean coastal states produce more than forty per cent of the world's off shore oil production. Over sixty per cent of the oil consumed by Western Europe and ninety per cent by Japan is supplied through the ocean by oil tankers. Over a quarter of the world's trade cargo are handled in the ports in the Indian Ocean and more than 60,000 vessels traverse it

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<sup>1</sup> Philip M. Allen, *Security and Nationalism in the Indian Ocean: Lessons from the Latin Quarter Islands*, (Westview Press, Boulder, 1987), p.7

<sup>2</sup> Viv L. Forbes, "Of Sealanes, Straits and (Military) Services: Indian Ocean Region", *The Indian Ocean Review*, June, 1988, pp. 12 - 13

<sup>3</sup> On the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, see Rouhullah K. Ramzani, "The Strait of Hormuz: The Global Choke Point " in Larry Bowman and Ian Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, (Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1981), pp. 7 - 20

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, (Little, Brown, Boston, 1919)

annually. While oil is the most important commodity located in the region there are also other vital commodities produced in the region. More than sixty five per cent of the earth's uranium are in the area and forty per cent of the gold reserves.<sup>5</sup> South Africa possesses much of the world's gold as well as platinum, manganese and chromium. At the other end, Australia is the largest producer of bauxite; as well as iron, lead, zinc and nickel. India has large reserves of iron ore, manganese and titanium; with Malaysia being the world's largest producer of tin. The ocean is also rich in fisheries resources. The Indian Ocean also contains large quantities of manganese nodules, which also contain nickel, cobalt, copper and iron.

The Indian Ocean is also unique in the sense it is almost entirely made up of developing countries apart from Australia and arguably South Africa. Some of these states are developing fast and are under the category of newly industrialised countries; for example Singapore and Malaysia. Some are rich on the basis of natural resources, especially the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. Among the rest are included some of the poorest countries of the world. Almost all share a history of colonialism and almost all are independent today. The majority of the states claim non-aligned status although some of them had established extremely cordial relations with one or the other superpower.

The existence of a single Indian Ocean region in relation to security remains a moot point. A region in security terms does not relate only to geographical proximity but other elements such as the relationships among states, how their friendship and rivalry affect their relationships, as well as their perceptions of each other.<sup>6</sup> Although many have referred to the Indian Ocean region as a whole, the singularity of the region exists only as far as geography goes. While almost all the states share a colonial history, there are no common cultural links between the states; rather different sub-regions exist which share cultural values and traditions,

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<sup>5</sup> N B K Reddy, "The emerging geopolitical patterns of the Indian Ocean region", in Alex Kerr (ed.) *The Indian Ocean region: resources and development*, (University of Western Australia Press, 1981), p. 217;  
See also Allen, *Security and Nationalism in the Indian Ocean: Lessons from the Latin Quarter Islands*

<sup>6</sup> Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, p.188

institutions and levels of development. Besides, there are no economic ties among the region as a whole. The lack of a regional grouping, especially among the SIDS in the Indian Ocean, was recognised by the Commonwealth report on the vulnerability of small states. The report notes that, "Given the vast distances separating Mauritius, the Maldives and the Seychelles, they form a regional grouping only in a nominal sense..".<sup>7</sup> Although it is generally agreed that the Indian Ocean is divided into various sub-systems there is no consensus on the number of sub-systems located within the Indian Ocean. A regional security subsystem has been defined as a system whereby relationships of enmity and amity are confined to a specific geographical area.<sup>8</sup> Although the Indian Ocean could be divided into numerous sub-systems based on the above, most divide the Indian Ocean into five sub-systems. These regional sub-systems forms security complexes on their own right. The five are the African region, Middle East and the Persian Gulf, South Asia, South East Asia, and Australia at the far eastern corner of the ocean. Each sub-region or security complex has various separate elements affecting the security environment of that particular sub-region. At the same time it is difficult to draw strict lines separating the sub-regions. For example, the African region itself can be further sub-divided into north and south sub-regions. Besides, influences in the ocean as a whole can and do effect all parts of the ocean though not at the same level.

The African region comprises countries like South Africa and other coastal states of East Africa, as well as island states of Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius and the French territories of Reunion and Mayotte. This sub-region is rich in mineral resources such as gold, diamond, coal, nickel, chromium and uranium. It controls the south east entrance to the region. At the northern end it also shares the control of the entrance into the region from the Red Sea. The Middle East and the Persian Gulf is an important sub-region. The importance of the Middle East and Persian Gulf is immense to the rest of the Indian Ocean littorals as to the rest of the

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<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in a global society*, p. 13

<sup>8</sup> Barry Buzan, "A framework for regional security analysis", in Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizwi (eds) *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers*, (The Macmillan Press Ltd., Hampshire, 1986), pp. 3 -36

world. Their vast oil resources place them in an important position in the world that cannot be over emphasised. At the same time this sub-region is extremely volatile and has seen a number of wars in recent decades. The strategic importance of this sub-region to the West was demonstrated by the reaction of the West to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent war that followed. However, its relationship with the rest of the Indian Ocean is somewhat different compared to some of the other sub-systems. In this sense, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf sub-region can be considered a separate region rather than a sub-region of the Indian Ocean and as such will be considered so. The South Asian sub-region includes Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Some also include Myanmar in this sub-region. Bangladesh, India and Pakistan together makes up for the two-thirds of the population of the whole ocean. India occupies a pivotal position in the ocean and with her resources and manpower, and by geographical location, occupies an important position in the region. The South East Asian sub-region also has large mineral resources such as tin, iron-ore and petroleum; and the existence of the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok Straits at the entrance to the ocean from the Pacific makes it a strategic location. The states of south-east Asia are now politically stable compared to other sub-regions of the Indian Ocean and they form a regional grouping, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for mutual security and defence. Australia is considered by some as the fifth sub-region of the Indian Ocean although it has always been regarded as a Pacific country and is very much so. However, in recent years Australia has projected a westward policy towards the Indian Ocean and South East Asia. Australia has increased its involvement in the affairs of the Indian Ocean and is a firm advocate of developing regional co-operation among the Indian Ocean littorals.

The three case studies of this thesis, the Maldives, the Seychelles and Mauritius, fall into two of those sub-regions; in the case of the Maldives it is South Asia and in the case of the Seychelles and Mauritius it is the African region. Thus it appears that where the IOS are concerned the security environment of the Indian

Ocean has to be analysed giving importance to the sub-systems where the SIDS are located rather than the whole Indian Ocean. Therefore, other areas will only be touched upon briefly and where relevant to the security of the IOS.

### **Superpowers in the Indian Ocean**

United States: The United States first sent a military task force into the Indian Ocean in 1949 when it established the Middle East Force in the Persian Gulf (MIDEASTFOR). However, the increase in the military presence of the United States in the Indian Ocean in the 1960s has been predicated on the 'vacuum' theory. It was based on the hypothesis that the British withdrawal of its forces from east of Suez would create a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean and if it was not occupied by a western power, the Soviet Union would do so.<sup>9</sup> Besides, it had other vital stakes in the region from economic motives to ensure freedom of the maritime routes, to transport oil, etc. The US imports 77 per cent of its natural rubber, 28 per cent of its manganese, and 80 per cent of its tin from the region. Besides, the Gulf region has proved to be a valuable market for its products, especially military weapons.

The US military involvement in the Indian Ocean increased in three stages. The first was in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War when a carrier task force was dispatched to the Arabian Sea in November 1973. The second was at the end of the 1970s, after the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These events led the United States to create a 60,000 strong Rapid Deployment Force. The then US national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski declared in 1979,

"An arc of crisis stretches along the shores of the Indian Ocean, with fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us threatened with fragmentation. The resulting political chaos could well be filled by elements hostile to our values and sympathetic to our adversaries."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For US strategy in the Indian Ocean see Rasul B Rais, "An appraisal of US strategy in the Indian Ocean", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No.9, September 1993, pp. 1043 - 1050

<sup>10</sup> *Time*, January 15, 1979, p. 4

The Carter Doctrine emphasised the importance given by the US to the Indian Ocean, especially the north-western littoral, the Persian Gulf. In 1980, President Carter claimed that,

"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on the vital interest of the United States of America."<sup>11</sup>

The third was after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The US has concluded military co-operation agreements with several of the Middle Eastern states such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The US also has a Joint Task Force in the Middle East with forces in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.<sup>12</sup> The United States is also part of the Asia-Pacific group, including Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand in the Indian Ocean littoral, that agreed in June 1993 to establish a new advisory regional body, the Council for Security Co-operation. The Council would allow military experts to meet in private capacity to draw up proposals on settling disputes and confidence building measures.<sup>13</sup> The current American interest appears to be in the Middle East and South East Asia, although its main military presence in the Indian Ocean is based on its military base in Diego Garcia in the Chagos archipelago. Diego Garcia is a full-fledged military base with a 12,000 foot runway, a deep water port facility and storage facilities for fuel, oil and weapons.<sup>14</sup> Diego Garcia is at a strategic location in the centre of the Indian Ocean; yet away from international straits. Besides, the fact that the indigenous population of the archipelago has been totally removed makes it easy for the United States to maintain it. It is also outside the 'cyclone belt'. Apart from Diego Garcia, the US has naval access to ports in Kenya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Singapore and Australia. The presence of the US forces in the Indian Ocean as well as the Soviet Union sparked off a desire by the

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<sup>11</sup> Carter's State of the Union Address, 1980, *Time*, 4 February, 1980, pp. 9 - 10

<sup>12</sup> *The Military Balance, 1993-1994*, Brassey's (UK) Ltd. for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1993, p. 28

<sup>13</sup> *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, June 1993, pp. 39516

<sup>14</sup> Admiral M P Awati, "The geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Islands", in S Chandra, B Arunachalam, S V Suryanarayan (eds) *The Indian Ocean and its islands: Strategic, Scientific and Historical Perspectives*, (Sage, New Delhi, 1993); See also Brojendra Nath Banerjee, *Indian Ocean - A Whirlpool of Unrest*, (Paribus Publishing Distributors, New Delhi, 1984), pp. 215- 227

Indian Ocean littorals to remove them from the Indian Ocean as is discussed later in the chapter.

Soviet Union/Russia: By virtue of its geography, the Soviet Union had a lot of interest in the Indian Ocean. It was a link between the Western Soviet Union to the Eastern Soviet Union by water and provided an alternate route of transportation of commodities between the two regions. It had an interest in the ocean to protect its maritime communication routes. It also had interest in assisting friendly regimes among the Indian Ocean littorals. However, it was a late entrant into the region and Soviet naval power was not substantially deployed in the region until the late 1960s. The Soviets maintained a continuing presence in the Indian Ocean from 1968. In 1968, a Soviet flotilla visited ports in India, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Somalia and South Yemen and the naval build-up in the Indian Ocean began. The main Soviet strategy in the Indian Ocean appeared to be defensive against the American SSBN's and to counter Chinese influence in the region; while assisting friendly regimes and to increase Soviet political influence in the littoral states.<sup>15</sup> Even before its major naval presence in the ocean it has made contacts with the Arab world. It had also developed relations with several other states in the region such as Afghanistan, India, Sudan, and Somalia. The Soviet Union had access to port facilities in Ethiopia, India, Sri Lanka, South Yemen, North Yemen, Mozambique, Madagascar, the Andaman Islands and Djibouti; and tracking and communications facilities in Asmara (Ethiopia) and Socotra Island.

The Soviet Union's main ally in the South Asian region was India. Fear of a common adversary, China, brought the two together and in 1971 the Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed. In the western Indian Ocean, the Soviets were close to Somalia initially, and was forced into the Ethiopian-Somali wars until, under a major shift in policy, the Soviets withdrew from Somalia in 1977 and started

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<sup>15</sup> Geoffery Jukes, "Soviet naval policy in the Indian Ocean", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, pp. 173-187; see also Walter K Anderson, "Soviets in the Indian Ocean: Much ado about Something - but what?", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 9, September 1984, pp. 910 - 930

to extend military aid to Ethiopia in 1978. They also provided aid to liberation movements in Africa such as the South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) and the African National Congress in South Africa. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 proved its interest in the region. In Afghanistan, the Soviet forces were only about four hundred miles from the oil resources of the Gulf. Although it has not involved itself directly in any crises, apart from Afghanistan, its role in the major sub-regional crises such as the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971, had demonstrated its desire to increase its influence in the region. The Soviet Union approached the Maldives in 1977 to lease-out the former British base at Gan island. Gan, which is just over 400 kilometres north of the US base in Diego Garcia, could have become an equivalent of the American base. The Soviets also maintained good relations with the Seychelles. Military assistance in the form of arms and training was provided and Soviet advisers were sent to the Seychelles. The Seychelles took a relatively tolerant approach to the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Soviet relations with Mauritius were less extensive. Although an agreement was signed between Mauritius and the Soviet Union providing facilities for the Soviet fishing fleet, and several scholarships were offered in Soviet universities, its relationship was never as cordial as that with the Seychelles.

### **The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (IOZP)**

The presence of superpowers in the ocean was not officially welcomed by the majority of the states in the Indian Ocean, including the IOS, and they pressed for the implementation of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace process. The IOZP concept was proposed at the height of the Cold War and was mainly aimed at the removal of the military power of the non-littoral states from the Indian Ocean. The concept was first proposed at the 1970 Non-aligned meeting at Lusaka and was later introduced at the UN. The original proposal by Sri Lanka was aimed at removing all forces from the ocean, both littoral and outside. However, it was revised and the IOZP resolution of 1971 was based on the elimination "from the Indian Ocean of all bases, military installation, logistical support facilities, disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons



of mass destruction, and any military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great power rivalry".<sup>16</sup> Its main aim was the withdrawal of the superpowers from the Indian Ocean. Although it was first rejected by the US and the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union later on supported the resolution. The basis for this may have been that the resolution called for the withdrawal of the naval forces and bases from the Ocean and that mostly affects the United States, especially after the Soviet Union was expelled from Berbera in Somalia. From 1977 to 1979, it appeared that the United States was willing to go along with it. President Carter announced in March 1977 that the United States had proposed to the Soviets that the Indian Ocean should be "completely demilitarised".<sup>17</sup> However, this approach was reversed when he told the United Nations that, "We will seek.. to establish Soviet willingness to each agreement with us on mutual military restraint in the Indian Ocean."<sup>18</sup> This was most likely due to the fact that the Soviets had lost their facilities in Berbera and therefore the US had an advantage in maintaining the status quo in the Indian Ocean. However, even from the beginning the IOZP concept was flawed for several reasons. Firstly, the withdrawal of a military presence by the US and the Soviet Union would not have automatically made the Indian Ocean into a peace zone because, while the presence of the superpowers did cause a certain amount of tension, it was problems among the Indian Ocean littoral states that caused instability in the region. Secondly, the IOZP concept was based mainly on the removal of naval deployments and it does not take into consideration the military contacts the superpowers had with the littorals. Thus, even if naval deployment was withdrawn, the superpowers still could have had enormous influence in the region through their allies. Besides, it is a much more effective way for the superpowers to support their allies in the region by supplying them with arms and 'advisers' rather than involve their naval forces. Thirdly, the Indian Ocean littorals themselves are divided over the application of the

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<sup>16</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 2832 (XXVI), 12 December 1971. For the IOZP resolution see Appendix B

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Philip Towle, "The United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean: Blind Alley or Zone of Peace", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, p 208

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

concept. Many had alliances with one or the other superpowers although claiming non-aligned status. Thus, they did not want to antagonise their allies.<sup>19</sup>

Although the IOS supported the IOZP, they also maintained a traditional balance of power strategy between the superpowers. The Maldives did face some pressure from the Soviet Union, especially in 1977 when the Soviets wanted the Maldives to lease them the former British base at Gan. The Maldives supported the IOZP resolution and often called for the withdrawal of the naval forces of outside powers from the Indian Ocean. Besides, the Maldives has excellent relations with the US and it is unlikely to view the US presence at Diego Garcia as a threat to the state or a destabilising factor in the region. In fact, when the Maldives faced a mercenary attack in 1988, it appealed to the United States for help from the US forces in Diego Garcia. The US is also one of the main trading partners of the Maldives next to Britain. The Seychelles when it was a socialist state, maintained close contact with the Soviet Union, but it also had good relation with the US. The US has a satellite tracking station in Seychelles that provides them with much-needed income. Mauritius also supported the IOZP, although somewhat reluctantly, as it enjoyed good relations with both superpowers. However, it also created a certain amount of difficulty for Mauritius as the main US presence in the Indian Ocean was at Diego Garcia, which was ceded to the British by the consent of the then Mauritian government. The Chagos was part of Mauritius but was dismembered to form the British Indian Ocean Territory with the islands of Aldabra, Farquhar and the Desroches. The latter three were returned to the Seychelles at the time of its independence but Chagos was made available to the United States on lease for a period of fifty years in 1966. Although this was done with the collaboration of the then government of Mauritius, in recent years Mauritius has pressed for the return of the Chagos to Mauritian sovereignty. This issue has been supported by India, the OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement suggesting that the recent claims to return the

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<sup>19</sup> On the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposals, see George W. Shepherd Jr., "Demilitarisation Proposals in the Indian Ocean", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, pp. 223-247; also B.Vivekanandan, "The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: Problems and Prospects", in *Asian Survey*, Vol.21, No.12, December 1981, pp. 1237-1249

Chagos may be due to a certain extent to pressure from these countries. The Prime Minister claimed in 1988, "We maintain our claim over Diego Garcia and will use all diplomatic possibilities to have the island and surrounding archipelago handed over to Mauritius".<sup>20</sup> Their anger appeared to be more rhetorical and confined to international gatherings and their grievances are directed more towards Britain than the United States. This seems likely to continue in the future. In 1992, Mauritius joined the United States' military training programme, International Military and Educational Training (IMET), after a hesitation of four years.<sup>21</sup>

### **Other powers in the Indian Ocean**

There are several middle powers operating in the Indian Ocean, some of whom are Indian Ocean coastal states and some who are user states. Among the important powers are India, Pakistan, South Africa and to a lesser extent Australia. Among the external powers are France and to a lesser extent Britain.

India: With over a population of 846,302,688 and a land area of 3,165,596 square kilometres, plus a geography in which the sub-continent juts out into the Indian Ocean with a coastline 7,693 km long, India is clearly an Indian Ocean power. In recent years it has become a high profile operator in the Indian Ocean, especially in the South Asian sub-system. India's strategic interest in the region lies in the vital security interest the ocean provides for India. India's maritime interest in the ocean can be categorised as: the desire to maintain freedom of transportation for its maritime trade; the protection of its island territories; assisting friendly regimes; force projection; the denial of the sea to its enemies; and to a lesser extent the exploitation of marine resources.<sup>22</sup> Its geographical position allows it to control four main waterways. However, Indian interest in the Indian Ocean did not materialise substantially until the British withdrawal from the region, even though in the past

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<sup>20</sup> Cited in Larry Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, (Westview press, Boulder, 1991) p.160

<sup>21</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 15 February 1992, p. 3

<sup>22</sup> Rear-Admiral Kailash K. Kohli, "India's Maritime and Geo Strategic Interests in the Indian Ocean", in S Chandra et al (eds) *The Indian Ocean and its islands: Strategic, Scientific and Historical Perspectives*, p. 66

leaders of India had commented on the vital security interest that the ocean provides for India.

Although India may have desired to play a more prominent role in the Indian Ocean its ability to do so was restricted by the presence of superpowers in the region.<sup>23</sup> However, India sought to increase its strength in the Indian Ocean slowly by two strategies. One was to increase its military capability in the region. The other was to seek ways to reduce the superpower involvement in the region, especially that of the United States, by supporting the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace resolution. The end of the superpower rivalry in the region has given India the space it had so intensely wanted to enhance itself as a regional superpower.

In recent times India's growing military strength, especially the attempts to develop a 'blue water' fleet, has caused concern among the neighbouring states. With naval bases in Bombay, Goa, Cochin, Visakapatnam, Tuticorin, Port Blair in the Andamans, and Karwar, India has strong naval capabilities in the region. It has the largest navy among the littorals of the Indian Ocean and the seventh largest in the world. When India last went to war with Pakistan, in 1971, it had four submarines. It now has more than nineteen. A nuclear powered submarine was acquired on lease from the Soviet Union which has now been returned. The editor of Jane's Fighting Ships stated that, "There is no question in any body's mind that India wishes to dominate the region. That in itself explains the size of navy that India has built up."<sup>24</sup> India's strengthening of its military base in Port Blair and the fortification of the Nicobar islands near the entrance of the Malacca Straits has worried the states of the South East Asia, especially Indonesia, which is just 80 km away from the islands at the nearest point.

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<sup>23</sup> See G.V.C. Naidu, "The Indian Navy and South East Asia", in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.13, No.1, June 1991, pp. 72 - 85; Ashley J Tellis, "The naval balance in the Indian Subcontinent: Demanding missions for the Indian Navy", *Asia Survey*, Vol.24, No.12, December 1985, pp. 1187 -1213; Robert Bruce (ed.) *The Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean: Developments and Implications*, (Centre for Indian Ocean Regional Studies, Curtin University of Technology, 1989)

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *The Indian Ocean Review*, 23 March 1989

The current security situation assists regional powers such as India to take a more dominant role in the region without being constrained by the superpowers. India has intervened in three regional crises. The first was its involvement in Bangladesh in 1971. The other two were during the 1980s when India sent a peace-keeping force to Sri Lanka to assist in the quelling of the Tamil separatists. Because of its own large Tamil population in the south (Tamil Nadu) India was a keen observer of the militant Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka. Several allegations had been made of the Indian (Tamils) assistance given to the Tamils in Sri Lanka. In 1987 India intervened formally when invited by the then Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayawardene and the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord was signed which allowed India to station troops in Sri Lanka to assist the Sri Lankan government in its attempt to halt the Tamils. It also provided India with the guarantee that the Sri Lankan base of Trincomalee will not be given to any other states in a manner prejudicial to Indian interests.<sup>25</sup> However, the mission was not a success and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) faced a lot of hardship, including the loss of several of its members in the sectarian violence. Although Indian forces eventually withdrew from Sri Lanka, it has not resulted in the cessation of the Tamil insurgency. India's intervention in the Maldives in 1988, when a group of Tamil mercenaries attempted to overthrow the government, was much more successful. India's use of its military power in Sri Lanka and the Maldives has demonstrated India's capability and, more so, its willingness to use its military muscle.

India's relationship with Seychelles and Mauritius has remained close due to a common colonial heritage as well as the presence of a large number of Indian immigrants in these countries.<sup>26</sup> Mauritius is one of the few countries apart from India that has a majority of people of Indian origin. India provides considerable aid which has continued to increase over the years. India has also provided a security advisor to Mauritius following two assassination attempts against Prime Minister

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<sup>25</sup> Jerrold Elkin, "India", in Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti (eds), *The Defense Policies of Nations: A comparative study*, 3rd edition, (The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1994), p. 466

<sup>26</sup> Dieter Braun, "New Pattern of India's relationship with the Indian Ocean Littoral States" in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, pp. 21-39

Jugnauth in 1988 and 1989.<sup>27</sup> After Indian intervention in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, it seems highly likely that India will not hesitate to provide military assistance of a similar nature to Mauritius which is closer to the sub-continent by cultural affiliation than the other two states. India has also provided military assistance to the Seychelles and helps in the training of the Seychellois armed forces. President René has been quoted as saying that Seychelles would welcome Indian intervention in the event of any future coup attempts against his regime.<sup>28</sup> For the IOS, India remains a close ally as long as they are willing to accept India's role as a regional superpower. India has given substantial assistance to these countries and is likely to continue doing so. Although India's growing military strength has caused concern among the neighbouring states, India has long term economic security interests in the region and therefore they may be misreading India's real intentions. Furthermore, the question is with its economic and financial problems can India sustain its military development?

Pakistan: Next to India, Pakistan with a population of 112,050,000 and a land area of 803,940 square kilometres, is the power to reckon with in South Asia. Bordering Iran, Afghanistan, China and India, Pakistan separates South Asia from the Persian Gulf. Pakistan's proximity to the Middle East, especially the Gulf, made Pakistan into a useful ally of the west, especially the United States, in its attempt to contain communism and protect its oil supplies in the Middle East. Pakistan has thus always relied upon the United States for its military security and assistance. Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954 and later the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in 1959. These alliances helped Pakistan to achieve a reasonable degree of security, although it did not totally free her of her fear of neighbouring India. The US interest in Pakistan was mainly to do with the defence of US interest in the Middle East, as the then Assistant Secretary of State, George

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<sup>27</sup> See Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, pp. 107-108

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in P.K.S. Namboodiri, "India and the Indian Ocean Islands: Case for a Security Framework", in Akhtar Majeed (ed), *Indian Ocean: Conflict and Regional Co-operation*, (ABC Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986), p. 103

McGhee, stated in 1951, "With Pakistan, the Middle East could be defended; without Pakistan, I don't see any way to defend the Middle East".<sup>29</sup>

However, at the end of the Cold War, its relationship with the United States has somewhat diminished, with Pakistan no longer being the useful ally it once was. Pakistan plays second fiddle to India in the Indian Ocean. While it has close contacts with the states of the Arab world in the west and China in the east, it does not have the capabilities to dominate the region the way India does. The main cause for instability in South Asia is the continuing rivalry between India and Pakistan; which has resulted in continuing military build-up between the two states. Pakistan has always been concerned about the military strength of India and, in 1978, at the UN Special Session on Disarmament, proposed that the states of the Indian Ocean should agree on measures, "such as a commitment to settle outstanding disputes by peaceful means, the renunciation of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of a reasonable military balance amongst themselves, in order to promote the conditions of security within the Indian Ocean region".<sup>30</sup> The growing strength of the Indian military forces, especially its naval forces, is a major cause for concern for Pakistan. Pakistan's navy is small compared to that of India's and its choices of naval bases are limited, (the main naval bases are at Karachi and Gwader), and without any aircraft carriers it is certainly vulnerable to any threats from India. The recent signing of an agreement between India and its other traditional adversary, China, in which both sides agreed to renounce the use of force and to reduce troops at the borders to a minimum, has also alarmed Pakistan. This will result in India having more forces available to deploy in Kashmir.<sup>31</sup> For Pakistan, China is the only regional power that could contain the dominance of India and cordial relations between India and China will not be welcomed. The intractable problem of Kashmir still remains the major thorn between the two countries and a future war will certainly endanger the security

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Anita Inder-Singh, "The Superpower Global Complex and South Asia", in Buzan and Rizwi (eds) *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers*, p. 210

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Philip Towle "The United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean: Blind Alley or Zone of Peace", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*, p. 210

<sup>31</sup> See Shekar Gupta, "Sino-Indian Relations: Vital Breakthrough", *India Today*, 30 September 1993, pp. 22 - 26

environment of the ocean, especially that of South Asia. For a state like the Maldives, which is close to Pakistan due to religious affiliation yet has closer ties with India on military and technological grounds, it is important that the status quo is maintained as any future war will make it rather difficult to maintain the delicate balance it has at the moment. Although Pakistan has maintained ties to the IOS due to Islamic minorities on these islands, its relationship is only second to that of India's. Seychelles sells the bulk of its copra to Pakistan but India is a closer ally. The same goes for Mauritius. Even the Maldives tilts slightly towards India despite the religious affiliations with Pakistan. In all the three IOS Pakistan's relationship is limited and India has a considerable stronghold.

South Africa: South Africa occupies a strategic position in the western Indian Ocean and plays an important role in the regional politics of the western Indian Ocean. With a population of 35,282,000 and a land area of 1,184,825 square kilometres and abundant in such natural resources as diamonds, gold, platinum, silver, uranium, copper, manganese and asbestos, and nearly 80% per cent of Africa's coal reserves, it is a formidable power among the smaller states of the western Indian Ocean. Its proximity to the Cape of Good Hope route which carries over 60% per cent and 20% of Western Europe and the United States' oil supplies respectively, along with a naval force of 4,500 and bases in Simonstown and Durban, gives South Africa a commanding position in the south western Indian Ocean.

South Africa's relationships with the IOS, especially the Seychelles and Mauritius, have always been, at best, precarious. On the one hand, these countries joined the rest of the world in the universal rhetoric of condemning apartheid, and for its part South Africa interfered in their domestic politics. During the height of South Africa's isolation by the international community, South Africa sought to flex its power on its small, helpless, neighbours. Its involvement in the numerous destabilisation programmes in the region includes the sponsorship of mercenaries to overthrow some of the governments in these countries. The 1981 mercenary-led coup



against President Albert René of Seychelles was sponsored by South Africa and several of the mercenaries were from South African special forces. South Africa was also involved in the Comoros and the mercenaries in Comoros led by Col. Bob Denard received financial and political support. South Africa also influenced these states by its domination of their markets and tourism. The SIDS of the western Indian Ocean came to accept the dominant role of South Africa, although somewhat grudgingly. The Seychelles and South Africa came to an agreement on the problems of the mercenaries in 1982 and six mercenaries captured by the Seychelles were returned to South Africa in return for compensation. It has been claimed that the agreement also had a secret clause in which South Africa agreed to prevent further coup attempts being organised from South African soil and guaranteed the external security of the government of Albert René.<sup>32</sup> Mauritius also maintained a dual policy against South Africa. On the one hand, it joined the rest of the African states in condemning apartheid but on the other hand, it had close economic contact with South Africa. South African investments in Mauritian tourism give South Africa a stake in the Mauritian economy and despite the pressures faced by Mauritius from the OAU, South African products found their way into the Mauritian markets. Although South Africa's 'political adventures' in Mauritius were limited compared to its involvement in the Comoros and the Seychelles, the South African connection led to tension and unease among the political leaders, especially between those who supported the severing of ties with South Africa due to its policy of apartheid and those who wanted to maintain contacts for economic reasons in spite of apartheid. Due to geographical distances, South African involvement in the Maldives has been non-existent.

France: The western Indian Ocean - A French Lake?: France is the last of the European powers to maintain a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean. France is an Indian Ocean power, especially in the western Indian Ocean, by virtue of territorial possessions. The island of Reunion is a Departement of France and Mayotte, part of

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<sup>32</sup> *Africa Confidential*, Vol.28, No.22, 4 November 1987, pp. 4 - 5

the Comoros archipelago, is administered by the French. The French connection in the Indian Ocean cannot be examined in isolation from the historical background of the IOS in the western Indian Ocean and of French policies elsewhere. Both the Seychelles and Mauritius were created by colonialism. There were no indigenous people on these islands before the arrival of the Europeans and the Creole societies typical of the islands were created as a result of colonialism. The French took over Reunion, moving from there into Mauritius in 1715 and the Seychelles in 1770. The British acquired the islands in 1809-10 although Reunion was returned to France in 1815. The British presence in the islands was never as penetrative as the French, with the result that French culture persisted and Creole (a language derived from French) is still spoken. While the British gave independence to the Seychelles and Mauritius, the French territory of Reunion was made a Departement of France in 1946 and decolonisation was achieved by integration with France; with the Reunionais voting to remain French. The French also gave independence to Comoros which had come under French rule, but retained the island of Mayotte.

Today, France maintains a military presence in both Reunion and Mayotte, and there are also French bases in Crozet, Kerguelen and Amsterdam Islands to the south of the Indian Ocean.<sup>33</sup> The bulk of the French military forces are stationed in Djibouti. Djibouti is situated on the Strait of Bab el Mandeb and, therefore, presents a convenient watch post to the Suez Canal. France has assisted Mauritius both politically and economically and was especially influential in helping Mauritius to become the first of the Commonwealth states to benefit from the Yaounde Convention of the European Common Market. France also assists Mauritius in their textile and tourism industries. Seychelles, too, gets a lot of French attention in the form of soft loans and grants for its development. A tuna canning factory was established in the Seychelles in 1990 with French assistance. The French influence in the Indian Ocean, especially the western Indian Ocean, has officially been explained as necessary to protect its shipping trade, especially the oil traffic. France is heavily

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<sup>33</sup> N B K Reddy, "The emerging geopolitical patterns of the Indian Ocean region", in Alex Kerr (ed.) *The Indian Ocean region: resources and development*, (University of Western Australia Press, 1981), p. 234

dependent on foreign sources for its energy supplies and to a certain extent this justifies its presence in this area. France also has had close commercial ties with South Africa. Another reason for French policy in this part of the Indian Ocean may be in the defence of the French language; Jean Houbert claims that the language factor is "a particularly significant aspect of the French presence" in these states.<sup>34</sup> Houbert's claim is valid to a certain extent as France maintains close cultural ties with these islands; and French television is telecasted via satellite and France assists in arts and entertainment in these SIDS, including the financing of the Indian Ocean Island Games. In October 1993, a French language summit was also held in Mauritius.<sup>35</sup> The entrance of Reunion to the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in 1985, (set up in 1982 as a forum to discuss and co-ordinate policies in the region by Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar) has enabled France to integrate herself into the community of Indian Ocean states. (Comoros was also admitted to the IOC in 1985.)

In spite of the cosy relationship France appears to enjoy with the SIDS of the western Indian Ocean, France has to maintain a delicate balance. While the SIDS of the western Indian Ocean welcome French assistance, there are certain areas which have led to problems in the past and appear to continue even today. One is the French control of Mayotte, a part of the Comoran archipelago. Mayotte is strategically placed in the Mozambique Channel. When independence was granted to the Comoros, Mayotte opted to remain under French rule. This issue of decolonisation has created a certain embarrassment for the French. The OAU has continuously accused the French of imperialism and OAU recommendations have repeatedly called for the return of Mayotte to Comoros. Although the Comoros is willing to let this issue remain thus far as only rhetoric, probably due to its heavy dependence on France, it has, nevertheless, caused difficulties with the neighbouring African states.

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<sup>34</sup> Jean Houbert, "The mascareignes, Seychelles and the Chagos, Islands with a French Connection: Security in the decolonised Indian Ocean", in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, p. 106; On French policy in the Indian Ocean see also Jean-Pierre Gomane, "France and the Indian Ocean", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*

<sup>35</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 14, November 1992, p. 3

This is exacerbated by the existence of Reunion as a Departement of France, thus allowing France a permanent place in the Indian Ocean. France claims that Reunion has been decolonised. However, the opposite view has been taken by the OAU, although the French position has never been challenged in the UN. Madagascar has also claimed the French islet of Tromelin which is also claimed by Mauritius. In recent times, Madagascar has relinquished its claim in favour of Mauritius. Mauritius is careful not to let the claim for Tromelin get out of hand and the matter is being pursued cordially. Even in the Seychelles, the relationship has had its ups and downs. In the early 1980s France was accused of assisting the coup-attempts to overthrow President Albert René and French naval advisers were ordered to leave.<sup>36</sup> However, relations have since improved. Reunion, itself has caused problems for the French. About half the population is of Tamil origins and there are growing problems that have led some Tamils to associate themselves more closely with their Asian origins than France.

Under the new Law of the Sea Convention, France now has sovereignty over 300 million square miles of EEZ in the Indian Ocean. It is unlikely that the French interest in these parts will diminish. Although the French presence is mainly in the western Indian Ocean, France also maintains good relations with the Maldives and the French navy makes occasional port visits to Malé. Military assistance to the Maldives is also provided, although not to the extent of that of the SIDS off the coast of Reunion. Although the French presence in the western Indian ocean is sometimes seen as an anachronism, the French presence in the region is welcomed by the SIDS as much for the economic advantages as for their close cultural affiliations.

Australia: Until recently Australia was more a Pacific nation than an Indian Ocean state. However, by virtue of its geography, Australia cannot ignore the Indian Ocean. A third of its coastline faces the ocean and around 50% of its overseas trade is through the Indian Ocean.<sup>37</sup> However, its traditional association with the region was

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<sup>36</sup> *Africa Confidential*, Vol.21, No.13, 18 June 1980, p. 3

<sup>37</sup> Henry S Albinski, "Australia and the Indian Ocean", in Bowman and Clark (eds), *The Indian Ocean in global politics*

limited. Until 1988, Australia had maintained an air base at Butterworth in the Malayan Peninsula, which is now controlled by the Malaysian air force. Australia considered itself a two ocean country during the 1980s. Australia has several off-shore territories in the Indian Ocean, Cocos and Christmas Islands being the most significant. The other offshore territories include Heard and MacDonal Island and Asmore and Cartier Islands in the Timor Sea. In recent years, Australia has increased its relations with other Indian Ocean countries. In June 1995, an International Forum on the Indian Ocean Region was held in Perth with delegates from 23 countries and the Australian government is to assist the setting up of an Indian Ocean Centre in Perth with an allocation of A\$ 250,000 for 1995.<sup>38</sup> Australia has also increased its aid programme to the Indian Ocean SIDS. Australian aid to Mauritius increased from around A\$600,000 in the 1970s to around 2.5 million in the 1980s.<sup>39</sup> Approximately 40,000 Mauritians have emigrated to Australia which helps to maintain contact between the two countries. Australia also assists the Maldives, especially in developmental programmes.

Britain: Until the late 1960s, the Indian Ocean was, to use the well-worn out phrase, a British lake. Britain has monopolised the region for more than one hundred and fifty years. The Maldives was a British protectorate until 1965, and the Seychelles and Mauritius were colonies until independence in 1976 and 1968 respectively. The British legacy in the Indian Ocean has had serious implications for the security of the islands. The British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) was set up in 1965 comprising the islands of Aldabra, Farquhar, Desroches (parts of the Seychelles) and the Chagos archipelago, which was administered by Mauritius. Although the islands of Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches were later returned to the Seychelles, the Chagos was leased to the United States to establish a military base. However, in 1968, following its decision to withdraw from East of Suez, the British left the ocean, creating a power vacuum almost overnight. The British role in the region is somewhat limited today. It does not have any dependencies in the region and although the Chagos is part of the

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<sup>38</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 15 July 1995, p. 2

<sup>39</sup> Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, p.147

BIOT it is the United States who mainly controls the islands. The renewal of the Mauritian claim on the Chagos did result in Britain freezing aid to Mauritius. However, relations have improved since. Although relations between the Maldives and Britain were rather limited after the British withdrawal from Gan, in recent years cordial relations have been established between the two countries. Britain is the main trading partner for the Maldives and Britain has helped in the training of the Maldivian security forces. Britain also assisted in training the coast guard of the Seychelles. Britain still has substantial interests in the region broadly defined, especially in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf as well as South East Asia. Militarily, Britain appears to be prepared to let the United States carry out the role of policing the region. In Diego Garcia, there is a naval group and one marine detachment and in the Indian Ocean there is one armilla patrol and one support ship. Britain also has troops (150) in Saudi Arabia.

### **Regional Organisations**

There is a lack of regional unity among the IOS, especially between the Maldives and the three western Indian Ocean SIDS, the Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles. There is no regional grouping comparable to the South Pacific Forum established by the states of the South Pacific or the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States in the Caribbean. The closest they have come to a regional approach is to support the IOZP resolution. This may be due as much to the vast distances that exists between the Maldives and the three SIDS of the western Indian Ocean as to the lack of common cultural, ethnic and economic ties. Besides, the Indian Ocean states in South Asia and those in the Western Indian Ocean have created organisations in their respective sub-regions to further regional co-operation although, as yet, none of these have taken the form of a security relationship between the states. In South Asia, the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC) was established in 1985 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The SAARC was set up to improve regional co-operation, especially on economic issues, and the primary aim is to target regional problems of

underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy and so on. However, the clear mistrust and reservations among the member states about each other's activities was reflected in the inaugural meeting when the then President of Sri Lanka, J. R. Jayawardene called upon India to "create among the South Asian states, by deed and words, the confidence so necessary to make a beginning".<sup>40</sup> For India's part, the then Prime Minister, the late Rajiv Gandhi stated that the states of South Asia, "had not sought to melt their bilateral relationships into a common regional identity, rather to fit South Asian co-operation into their respective foreign policies as an additional dimensions".<sup>41</sup> The fact that SAARC has agreed to remove bilateral problems from its agenda has also meant that the major conflicts in the region, such as the Kashmir issue, is outside the SAARC framework thus making it difficult for SAARC to expand its scope to include traditional security issues. The mutual distrust between India and Pakistan, and the fear by other states of Indian dominance, has prevented regional security issues from appearing on the SAARC agenda. Thus a collective SAARC defence agreement remains unlikely in the immediate future. The problem for a SIDS like the Maldives is that although the country is on equal footing as other members in SAARC there are other ways that the larger powers could exert pressure on the Maldives to follow their own agendas.

The SIDS of the western Indian Ocean, for their part, established the Indian Ocean Commission in 1982 to bolster regional co-operation. The IOC includes Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar, and membership was later extended to Reunion and Comoros. With some assistance from the European Development Fund, most of its activities are concentrated in the fields of tuna fisheries, transportation and navigation, as well as tourism.<sup>42</sup> The influence in the region of India was exposed when the then Mauritian Minister for Industry, Cassam Uteem, invited India to join the Indian Ocean Commission. However, this move was not welcomed by the French, especially when they were not consulted and they were supposed to have

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<sup>40</sup> Address by J. R. Jayawardene, President of Sri Lanka, at the first SAARC summit, Dakha, Bangladesh, December 1985

<sup>41</sup> Address by Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, at the first SAARC summit at Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 1985

<sup>42</sup> See Allen, *Security and Nationalism in the Indian Ocean: Lessons from the Latin Quarter Islands*, pp. 190-191

considered it "out of order".<sup>43</sup> While there has been no regional unity between the SIDS of the western Indian Ocean and the Maldives, attempts are being made to create some sort of a relationship. The Maldives was invited to the Indian Ocean Island Games first organised by the French in Reunion.

### **Current Trends**

The Indian Ocean in its widest sense was and still is a region of potential turmoil. The majority of the states are still engaged in either domestic instabilities or problems with neighbouring countries. Instability in the Indian Ocean is an indigenous problem. It has been caused more by the Indian Ocean littoral than due to conflict and rivalry between the superpowers. In South Asia, India and Pakistan have gone to war three times. In Sri Lanka, a separatist guerrilla war is still continuing without any sign of a peaceful settlement. Afghanistan is full of domestic instability. Iran and Iraq had fought a bloody war for more than eight years. The recent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait shows the danger of over militarisation of one country in respect of the others in the region. In the African states, both Somalia and Ethiopia are ravaged by war. In the western Indian Ocean, South Africa's return to democracy with the election of an ANC government appears to have offered stability, at least for the time being. For the IOS, their immediate security environment remains precarious and they have to maintain a delicate balance among the regional powers. This, however, is no novelty and the IOS are not new to this balancing act.

In the previous years, it was claimed that the security environment of the Indian Ocean was dominated by superpower rivalry. The Indian Ocean was claimed to be a theatre of superpower conflict and the IOS have maintained a balancing act between the superpowers. However, the situation is somewhat changing. The end of the Cold War, and the diminished interest in the region by Russia, has given the regional powers such as India a vacuum to fill. Although the American presence in the Indian Ocean still exists and they are by far the largest and most powerful state

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<sup>43</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 15 February 1992, p. 3



militarily in the Indian Ocean vis-à-vis Diego Garcia, the military build-up of the littoral states could drastically change the security environment of the whole Indian Ocean and not just their own sub-systems. Instead of the two superpowers, with their more or less opposed but clear-cut ideologies and demands, the regional powers' demands and desires are less open and less clear, making it difficult for the IOS to carry out their old balance of power policies. It has also resulted in more regional powers taking a closer interest in the ocean than they have done before. For example, the build-up of Indian military strength in the Indian Ocean has caused concern not just among the states in South Asia but also those of South East Asia. They, in turn, have attempted to increase their military strength. Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have all started to modernise their naval power, and Indonesia is also seeking to build a naval base on the coast of Sumatra.<sup>44</sup> This trend may continue as long as India's future intentions remain unclear and India fails to reassure other regional powers that its military build-up does not have any hegemonial intent. India's willingness to intervene in regional states has underlined India's perceived role as the dominant power in the region. For SIDS such as the Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius, as long as they are willing to accept this role of India as a regional superpower, India may not interfere in these states unless asked to do so. Yet any future crises involving India could have serious effects on the IOS, especially the Maldives, as unlike the Seychelles and Mauritius, the Maldives is clearly in India's immediate sphere of interest. The Maldives has to maintain a delicate balance between Pakistan and India and be careful not to take sides in any future conflicts that may arise. The United States appear to concentrate its efforts more on the Persian Gulf and South East Asia and recent US administrations appear to be willing to accept that regional powers such as India should play a more dominating role in the Indian Ocean, especially the South Asian part. In 1989, the then Assistant Secretary of Defence, Richard Armitage stated:

"It does not make sense for the US not to have a congenial relationship  
with the largest democracy and the dominant military power in the sub-continent

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<sup>44</sup> Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Indian Naval buildup and South East Asian Security: A Pakistani View", *Contemporary South East Asia*, Vol.13, No.1, June 1991, p. 98

and with a country that will clearly take its place on the world stage in the twenty-first century".<sup>45</sup>

The Indian intervention in the Maldives in 1988 was welcomed by the Reagan administration and President Reagan congratulated India for its "valuable contribution to regional stability".<sup>46</sup> The United States however; appears to be trying to ease the tension in the South Asian region by increasing its pressure on both India and Pakistan to negotiate over the Kashmir issue. It has also pressurised both states to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>47</sup> Such policies will be welcome to the IOS, especially the Maldives, as it will ease tension in their immediate system. In the western Indian Ocean, any future instability in South Africa can also seriously affect the situation of the SIDS. It is likely that South Africa's interventionist role in these SIDS will be reduced with the end of apartheid and international isolationism. Additionally, Mauritius and the Seychelles have close economic ties with South Africa and rely on foreign investment from South Africa and therefore, any political turmoil in that state that affects its economy can have serious economic set-backs for the two SIDS.

The security environment in the Indian Ocean is changing today. With the end of the Cold War the so-called superpower conflict in the Indian Ocean has come to an end. Regional states have taken this opportunity to enhance their role in the ocean. Instead of the ocean being a zone of peace without superpower rivalry, regional rivalries and tensions are contributing to the increase of military build-up in the ocean and littoral as a whole far more than it did during the Cold War. The IOS have to adjust themselves to this changing environment. They have to adapt their traditional balance of power policy between the two superpowers to regional rivalries. This may not be easy.

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<sup>45</sup> *Time*, 3 April 1989, pp. 6-13

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>47</sup> Dilip Bobb, "Indo-US relations: Turning the Screws", *India Today*, 30 November 1993, pp. 46 - 49

## Chapter V

### Case Study: THE MALDIVES

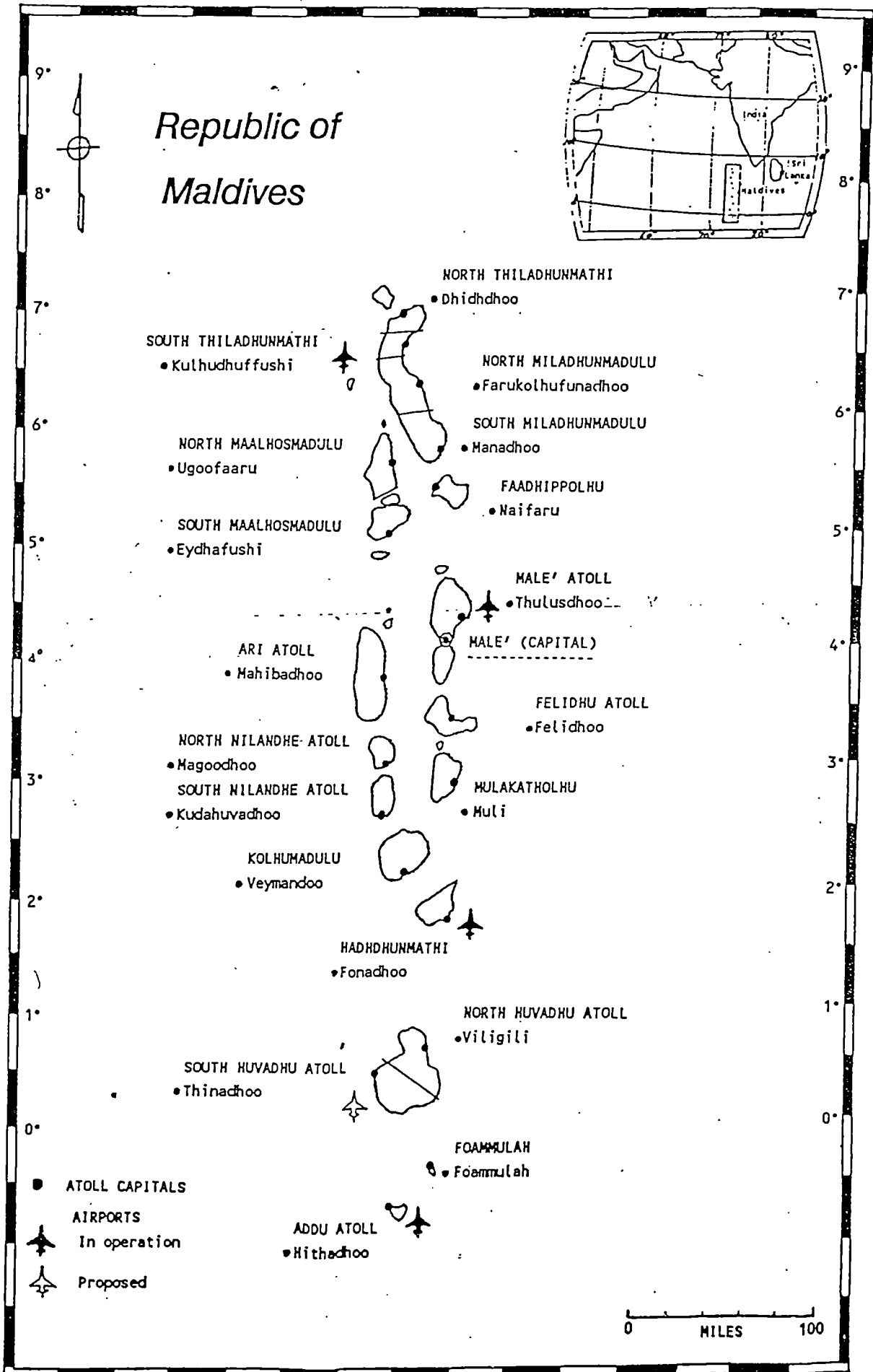
#### Background

##### Physical Environment

The Maldives consists of 1,190 islands of which 200 are inhabited. The islands are grouped into nineteen different administrative units or atolls. They spread over an area of 90,000 square kilometres including the EEZ. However, land area is estimated to be barely 300 square kilometres. The length of the archipelago is 823 kilometres while it is 130 kilometres at its greatest width. Geologically, the atolls lie on top of two submarine ridges that arise from a flat submarine plateau. The atolls vary in shape and size as do the islands themselves. The islands are extremely low-lying, the average being barely two metres above sea level. All the islands are coralline and there are no mountains, hills or rivers in the Maldives. The nearest land masses are the Indian island territory of Minicoy in the north, Sri Lanka in the north east and the British Indian Ocean Territory of Diego Garcia in the south. The environment, although fragile, is rich with many varieties of flora and fauna. In the Maldives, 113 different species of birds are found. It is assumed that there are as many as 2,000 different species of fish in the reefs and the country exports live tropical fish.<sup>1</sup> The Maldives enjoys a tropical climate with a mean annual temperature of 28°C. The existence of naturally beautiful beaches, coral reefs and unpolluted seas has led to the development of a successful tourist industry in recent years. Tourism contributes to a large part of the total GDP. The Maldives has an added advantage in that the country lies outside the cyclone belt and so damage due to tropical storms has been rare in the past. Cultivable land is fairly limited and the porous and salty nature of the soil has led to limited agriculture. Only five per cent of the land is arable. Principal food crops cultivated include finger millet and coconut. Other food crops such as sweet potato, taro, breadfruit and other vegetables are grown in small

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<sup>1</sup> See Paul Webb, *Maldives: People and Environment*, (Media Transasia, Thailand, 1988), p.83



Source: Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives

quantities. Poultry and other small livestock are reared mainly for domestic use. Mineral resources, strategic or otherwise, are almost non-existent apart from any mineral resources which may be found on the sea-bed. Surveys for oil were made by Esso and Elf Aquitaine in the 1970s and by Shell in 1991. However, no significant resources of oil or natural gas were detected. In any case, the Maldives does not have the capability to carry out any sea bed mining on its own. Due to vast areas of the EEZ, fisheries resources form an important part of the natural resource of the country. Fishing is not just important to the economic development of the country through exports but it also forms an important part of the daily diet of the people.

### Historical Background

The Maldives, or 'Dhivehi Raajje' as it is known to the inhabitants, has a long history. Although no written documents are available as to when people first came to these isolated islands, some early travellers have mentioned the Maldives in their writings. The Greek geographer, Ptolemy, (AD. 150) cites in his writings of a "multitude of islands" near Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Cosmos the Monk referred to some "small islands around Ceylon".<sup>2</sup> Even though it was widely believed that the islands were first inhabited during the fourth century BC, recent findings imply that the islands could have been inhabited as early as 1,500 BC.<sup>3</sup> Historically, the Maldives has been an independent yet isolated state except for a brief period of fifteen years under Portuguese rule in the sixteenth century and then under the Malabars of India for a few weeks in the eighteenth century. Thus the Maldives was able to distance herself from the changes that swept across her neighbours for most of the time. The British arrived in the islands in the middle of the nineteenth century and the Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887. Under the terms of the agreement concluded between the two countries, the British looked after external security and foreign policy while the Maldivians were very much left to themselves in running their domestic affairs. In 1948, a Mutual Defence Pact was signed which

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<sup>2</sup> Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, *Maldives - Winds of change in an atoll state*, (South Asian Publishers, India, 1985) pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

was later revised in 1960. Therefore, during this time, security was not a major concern. After the end of the Second World War, when colonial territories started to struggle for their independence, the Maldives was no longer content to remain under the British. Unlike many of the colonies there was no long and bitter struggle towards independence and the transfer from the status of a protectorate to a sovereign state was fairly smooth and quiet. Full independence was gained on the 26th July 1965. On attaining independence, the Maldives joined the United Nations as one of its smallest members. In 1968, the Maldives was declared a Republic for the second time. A previous experiment in 1953 resulted in the reversal to a sultanate just seven months after the first republic was declared.

### Socio-economic Background

The Maldives is categorised as one of the Least Developed Countries. However, the country has made substantial economic progress in the last decade. During the 1980s the GDP growth rate was some ten per cent per annum and GDP per capita grew from Rf 1,930 to Rf 4,360 in real terms i.e. twice the growth rate of the population.<sup>4</sup> In 1993, per capita GDP stood at 4,993 (US\$ 703.4).<sup>5</sup> The economy is heavily dependent on fishing, tourism and to a lesser extent shipping. The fisheries sector accounted for 12.4 per cent of the GDP and receipts from tourism accounted for 17.1 per cent of the GDP in 1993.<sup>6</sup> The country has no agricultural basis due to the lack of land area and poor soil conditions. In recent years attempts have been made to diversify the economic base but limited financial and human resources create a bottleneck to this development endeavour. One of the main difficulties is the poor communication and transport network because of the scattered nature of the islands. The opening of an international airport in 1981 greatly reduced the remoteness of the country to the outside world and domestic airports are currently being constructed. In the Maldives the industrial sector is two-fold; one a traditional sector and the other a modern sector. The traditional sector consists of

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<sup>4</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, Vol.1, (Malé, October 1994), p. 3

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical YearBook 1994*, (Malé, 1994), p.176

<sup>6</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, p. 22

boat building, mat-weaving, handicrafts and other such cottage industries. The modern sector includes fish canning, garment manufacturing, construction of fibre glass boats, production of PVC pipes, bottling of aerated water and furniture making. The tuna canning factory has an annual production capacity of 13,000 metric tonnes and is government owned. The total contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP is small at only 5.73 % in 1990.<sup>7</sup> A Bank of Maldives was established and the Maldives Monetary Authority acts as a central bank. There are also branches of other foreign commercial banks.

The country as a whole has seen improvement in the overall well-being of its people in recent years. Medical services are being provided to outer islands. There is a 94 bed hospital in Malé and four other small regional hospitals in the country. Infant mortality has been reduced from 121 per 1,000 in 1977 to 31 in 1992.<sup>8</sup> Certain debilitating diseases such as malaria have now been eradicated from the country. However, due to the scattered nature of the islands most of the benefits are mainly restricted to the capital Male;' and the surrounding islands. The outer island societies still rely on the sea for their daily survival. Traditional society still exists and traditional values and customs still play a major role in outlook. In most islands, education is still based on the teaching of reading and writing the Maldivian language and the Islamic religion. Although they appear to be similar in most ways there are, however, distinct differences among the islands. The differences are not so much in the physical make-up of the islands, nor in the actual customs and values of their island societies, but more in their own perception of themselves and the people from other islands. Each island society appears to view itself as somewhat different from its neighbours. The people of other islands are known as "Bee rattehin" of which a rough translation is 'somebody who does not belong to this island'.

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *National Development Plan 1991 - 1993*, Vol 1, (Malé, 1991) p.14

<sup>8</sup> Op.cit., p. 3

## Perception of security problems

The Maldives have existed in a fairly isolated status until recently. As noted earlier, the country was under foreign rule for only two brief periods of time and from 1887 the British were responsible for its external security until independence in 1965. Prior to this, the focus of security problems were more of an internal nature. In the Maldives, power was concentrated in the hands of few families and the mantle of leadership was passed within these families. There were few political problems in the past in governing the country due to the strength of traditional political culture. The Sultan was the source of all power and laws, and as such, was acknowledged by the people. However, the people had the customary power of rejecting and dethroning him and such occasions were not rare. This was mainly done by the leading figures in Malé, the capital, and by a traditional custom whereby the people gather in front of the Sultan's Palace and demand that he resigns. In most instances the problem is solved by negotiations and in some cases the reigning Sultan had resigned and another one crowned. Thus, until recent times, security problems were not a high priority issue.

Although the leadership of the Maldives has been concerned about security issues and the vulnerability of the small states, until recently most attention was given to economic vulnerability rather than any other issue. President Gayoom, in his speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the 1985 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in the Maldives, stated: "Help small states to feel ultimately secure .. ensure the means of our economic development".<sup>9</sup> The subject of security took a different turn, however, after the country experienced on 3 November 1988 a mercenary attack that shook the whole country. Subsequently, the country has attempted to draw the attention of the international community to the plight of the SIDS with regard to security issues. Although the focus of security is on the kind of threats from outside forces, especially from non-state actors such as mercenaries, (The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, "...small societies are far more

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<sup>9</sup> Address by H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting, Maldives, 1985



vulnerable and susceptible to being victims of such adventurers given the isolation of our countries, dispersal of our islands and the paucity of our resources."<sup>10</sup>) the government recognises that, "security of small states should be viewed as a multifaceted concept encompassing such factors as military, economic, social and environmental security".<sup>11</sup>

The fact that the leadership is nervous about possible aggression from non-state actors such as mercenaries is not without good cause. The country has experienced mercenary problems three times in the last fifteen years. The first mercenary threat came in 1980 when the government discovered that dissident elements had hired nine former British Special Air Services commandos to overthrow the government. The attack was foiled before it actually took place and the government imprisoned the would-be local trouble-makers. In 1983, another group of Maldivians were known to have tried to hire some mercenaries to overthrow the government. On 3 November 1988, an armed attack was actually launched against the Maldives by a foreign mercenary group, which was later identified as belonging to the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), a separatist group in Sri Lanka, with a few Maldivians involved as well.

The attack, which was launched in the early morning, took the Maldivian authorities by total surprise. The main objective of the mercenaries was to seize the National Security Service (NSS) headquarters, in an attempt to capture the President and the Ministers and establish a government that was sympathetic to the Tamil cause. According to government reports, the purpose of the attack was to provide a training base for the Tamil separatists from which they could launch subversive operations in Sri Lanka. The fighting, which lasted eighteen hours, left eighteen dead on the Maldives side with several others injured. The small defence force of the Maldives could not quell the attack without outside assistance. President Gayoom

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<sup>10</sup> H.E. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, Statement delivered at the Special Political Committee on Agenda item 69, "Protection and Security of Small States", 15 October 1991

<sup>11</sup> See Observation and suggestions of the government of the Republic of Maldives on General Assembly Resolution 46/43 of 9/12 1991, adopted under the agenda item entitled "Protection and security of small states"

appealed to several friendly countries: Sri Lanka, India, the United States, Britain and Malaysia, among others. Prompt help came from India, which sent an elite commando force with sophisticated weaponry. Meanwhile, the mercenaries left the country on a Maldivian vessel, the MV Progress Light, taking the Minister of Transport, his wife, other government officials and ordinary citizens as hostages. The saga ended when two Indian navy frigates gave chase, and finally after two days, the mercenaries surrendered. The attack shook the whole country. It was the first time such an incident had actually occurred in the normally peaceful country and showed the extreme vulnerability of the country to attacks of such nature. It was Indian assistance which helped the state to survive but the Maldives has no official defence agreements with any country, and therefore there is no commitment on the part of India or any other state to come to its rescue. The threat of mercenaries has dominated Maldivian security since and has led to a substantial increase in military resources.

As far as armed aggression by other sovereign states are concerned, the current leadership does not regard the threat of armed invasion or aggression by other states as a security threat at present or in the immediate future. The Maldives has had cordial relations with the members of the international community, especially with its neighbouring states, and therefore the possibility of an armed invasion is regarded as highly unlikely. However, the military build-up in the Indian Ocean is regarded with concern and the Maldives believes that this militarization of the area could ultimately lead to the de-stabilisation of the region, and they feel threatened. Therefore it continuously calls for the de-militarization of the Indian Ocean area and the establishment of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, as declared by a UN resolution in 1971. President Gayoom of the Maldives asserted that "as small states such as ours are vulnerable, we feel that for our own security and the security of the world the need to make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace has now become a matter of greater urgency than ever before".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Address by H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives, on the occasion of the assumption of his second term of office, Malé, 11 November 1983

Although the mercenary attack of 1988 was designed to overthrow the government, domestic political problems, especially coups and political violence, are not generally viewed as a cause for concern by the ruling elite. This may be due to the fact that such events have been fairly rare. Isolated incidents of political violence did occur in the late 1980s and especially in 1990 and 1991. There had been calls for wider freedoms, such as that of freedom of speech and the press, including the repeal of the notorious Article 38 of the Penal Code that prohibits citizens from any sort of criticism of the government. For some time there was rumoured to be an underground opposition movement known as the 'White Shark'. This movement has now disappeared, although the cause for its disappearance is still unknown; allegations were made that the government had arrested the leader, although no one appears to be certain who was behind the movement. Planting crude bombs and setting fire to property were also carried out which resulted in the arrest of some radicals. Most of the radicals appeared to be those with western education who demanded more freedom of expression. However, after the heavy clamp down by the government, the country now appears to be fairly peaceful once again.

The Maldives is an archipelagic country but secession is not regarded as a possible problem by the ruling elite; although the country did experience secessionism in the 1960s. During the Second World War the British established a military base at Gan. For the British, Gan proved to be a vital link in the strategic supply line running to the Far East and Australia, especially after the independence of Sri Lanka and the closure of the British bases in Trincomalee and Katunayake.<sup>13</sup> An agreement was concluded between Britain and the Maldives in 1956 that allowed for the use of Gan as an airfield. The nearby island of Hithadoo was established as a radio communication centre for a period of 100 years as a 'free gift'.<sup>14</sup> The Maldivian parliament, however, refused to ratify the agreement. It was widely believed among the Maldivian people that the Prime Minister of the Maldives should have

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<sup>13</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 April 1958

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 18 April 1958

demanded more from the British as rent for the base. He was, therefore, forced to resign and negotiations came to a standstill. The Maldivian government wanted to re-negotiate the treaty so it would be more favourable to the country. The original lease of Gan was for 100 years with rent at £2000 per year. The Maldivian government wanted to revise it to fifteen years with an annual rent of £100,000.<sup>15</sup> Relations worsened when the British High Commissioner arrived in a warship for further talks, which was seen by the Maldivians as open gunboat diplomacy.

The Gan negotiations reached a crucial point with the attempted break-away of the three southern atolls, Huvadu, Fua Mulaku and Addu (where Gan is located). Although the Maldives consists of a homogenous group of inhabitants (the isolated nature of the country in the past resulted in the blending of the early settlers: Aryans, Dravidians, Indians, Arabs etc.), the same isolated nature has given a distinct feeling of separateness to many of the islands. This is especially prominent in the three southern atolls. Therefore, when the British established a military base in Gan it fuelled separatist tendencies among the people of the southern atolls. This was partly due to the fact that the government halted direct travel from these islands to other countries and partly because it channelled the wages of those working in Gan through Malé which resulted in the exchange rate being favourable to the government and not to the workers. There were 500 Maldivian labourers working in Gan at the time. The people rebelled and sought to establish a separate sovereign state under the name of United Suvadiv Republic, comprising a population of 30,000, with Abdulla Afeef Didi as its President. He then appealed to the British Government to recognise the Republic "in the name of justice and humanity".<sup>16</sup>

This proved to be a critical problem for both the Maldivians and Britain. The government of the Maldives believed that the separatists had the tacit support of Britain although recognition was not accorded. There was reason for this

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<sup>15</sup> R.H.C. Steed, 'Back to first base on Gan', *Daily Telegraph*, 12 May 1959

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1959

accusation. The government had imposed a ban on the employment of unskilled labour in Gan but this request was ignored by the British. The British also brought in a company of the 1st Battalion, the Cheshire regiment based in Singapore, which further accentuated the situation. A group of journalists were also flown into Gan by the British, who were then able to interview the rebel leader Afeef Didi. Had the British government recognised the state it would have meant that not only would the Maldives have been dismembered but that the much needed foreign earnings from the base would be lost. It could also have led to other atolls demanding to join the new republic rather than the one headed by the government in Malé. On the British side it was a matter of establishing a working relationship with the rebel leaders so as not to disrupt the work on the base. The question of recognition was discussed, but discarded, because had Britain accorded recognition they might have had to face criticism at the United Nations and by the international community for dismembering a small defenceless country that was still a British protectorate. Finally, an agreement was reached in 1960 under which the lease was reduced to thirty years with considerably higher payments. However, the issue of the revolt was not resolved until three years later when the Maldivian government pardoned all the dissidents and the rebel leader was given political asylum in the Seychelles by Britain. Although the 'Addu Problem', as it is commonly known in the Maldives, had certain considerable long-term effects on the country, today secessionism is not regarded as a potential problem. Even though the Addu people were treated with contempt by the rest of the country at the time, (and this may be one of the reasons why the government was so reluctant to lease the base again once the British departed in 1976), today many Adduans have migrated to Malé and have inter-mingled with the inhabitants of Malé. Gan is now used as a holiday resort and a garment factory has been established on the island.

Gan has also created other kinds of problems for the country. Although the Maldives had tried to maintain a fairly isolated status, its strategic location was always a potential trouble factor. Once the British departed in early 1976, the fact that

the British had left a military base did not go unnoticed by the other powers of the world. In 1977 an offer was made by the Soviet Union to lease Gan for one million US dollars, to use as a base for the Soviet Union's Indian Ocean Fishing fleet. This caused considerable dilemmas for the Maldivian authorities. Money was much needed for the development of the country and one million was "enough to pay for about a third of its annual imports."<sup>17</sup> But there was reason to be suspicious about Moscow's intentions, especially since the US military base of Diego Garcia is just about 400 miles south of Gan. In fact, a Soviet base in Gan would accomplish for them what Diego Garcia has provided for the Americans. The Maldives was keen to avoid being drawn into the problems emanating from the superpower conflict (Moscow might have viewed the former British base as an ideal point from which to 'oversee' Japanese and Chinese shipping lanes from West Asia.)<sup>18</sup> At the same time the Maldivian government did not want to antagonise the Soviets.

It was a difficult choice for the Maldivian leadership as the Soviets treated the Maldivians with arrogance, their vessels turning up at the tiny harbour at Malé without any advance notice. This type of gunboat diplomacy enhances the vulnerable state of the country. However, in this particular case, the government finally decided to call the Soviets' bluff and not lease the territory. The government of the Maldives moreover declared that Gan would not be leased to any foreign power, especially for military purposes. Relations with the Soviets have since been enhanced and the Maldives signed a Scientific and Cultural Agreement with the Soviet Union in April 1980.

In the past, problems of foreign interference and pressure in the Maldives was mainly confined to the problems associated with the establishment of the military base in Gan. With Britain, the problems had occurred when the parliament of the Maldives refused to ratify the agreement concluded between the British High Commissioner and the Prime Minister of the Maldives regarding the lease of Gan.

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<sup>17</sup> *Asia Week* 25 November 1977

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 18 November 1988

Relations grew critical between the two countries from then on, and suggestions were made that British economic assistance to the Maldives would be withdrawn if the Maldives did not co-operate in the building of the base, thus creating the impression that "Britain is dangling a carrot of aid with strings attached".<sup>19</sup> Then came the attempted secession by the Southern atolls. As the British had started to build their base at Gan, the Government felt that the rebels were backed by the British. But, once the rebellion was quelled, relations improved. The Queen paid a visit to the country in 1972 and the Maldives joined the Commonwealth in 1986.

Today, the Maldives maintains fairly cordial relations with most countries and this strengthening of relations with other countries is seen to be "extremely important"<sup>20</sup>. Foreign influence, especially from neighbouring countries, is not regarded by the leadership as a serious security problem. However, unstable relations between its neighbours have, at times, created difficulties for the Maldives. It has a long and traditional relationship with Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka provided the main link between the Maldives and the rest of the world in the past. Although one author claims that a former Sri Lankan Prime Minister had supposedly talked of Sri Lanka's desire to lay claim to the Maldives, no such claim was ever made and relations remained fairly smooth.<sup>21</sup> Its relationship with its largest neighbour India, too, remained fairly close, although there was cause for concern when the current President of the Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, soon after assuming power, made a comment which was misinterpreted to the effect that the Indian island of Minicoy (sixty-seven miles from the Maldives and where the Maldivian language, Dhivehi, is spoken) was once part of the Maldives. However, this issue was soon rectified and the Maldivian Government assured India that it had no intention of laying claim to this territory. Relations with India have since improved a great deal, especially after the Indian forces assisted in putting down the armed attack in 1988 by foreign mercenaries. The relationship with India, especially the stationing for one

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<sup>19</sup> Charlie A. Gunawardene, *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 April 1958

<sup>20</sup> Address by H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives at the official meeting to mark Victory Day, 3rd November 1992

<sup>21</sup> Ranjan Gupta, *The Indian Ocean - a political geography*, (Marwah Publications, New Delhi, 1979), pp. 15 - 16.

year of Indian troops after the attack, did leave some of the local population uneasy as there are misapprehensions about India's intentions and the fear that the Maldives might become a client state of India. These fears are so far unsubstantiated. Indian influence in the Maldives, especially with regard to the position of the Maldives in foreign affairs, has also raised fears in some sceptics. However, the government of the Maldives does not regard India's close relationship as one that might exert pressure on the Maldives. When President Gayoom was asked whether India played a major role in the foreign policy of Maldives he denied it by saying, "Our foreign policy is determined by us". Nevertheless, he was quick to note that India and the Maldives "see eye to eye in most cases".<sup>22</sup> Difficulties arose for the Maldives when the relationship between India and Sri Lanka deteriorated to some extent in the 1980's after Sri Lanka made allegations that India was supporting the Tamil separatist movement in the country. The Maldives found itself in an extremely sensitive position in maintaining the balance between the two countries without taking sides as there always existed a 'subtle rivalry' between Sri Lanka and India to "develop a special neighbourliness towards the Maldives".<sup>23</sup> This is also the case between India and Pakistan, as the Maldives has close Islamic ties with Pakistan. Difficulties surfaced in 1994 when two Maldivian women (one of them a former NSS official) were arrested in India for spying on the Indian space programme and allegedly received hundreds of thousand Indian Rupees. The Deputy Director of Indian Space Research Organisation's Liquid Propulsion Centre and an Indian businessman was also arrested. This led to considerable difficulties for the Maldivian leadership as one of the accused, Mariyam Rasheeda, was labelled at first as a pro-Gayoom agent.<sup>24</sup> However, it was later alleged that the two were spying for Pakistan and not on behalf of the Maldivian government. This was vehemently denied by Pakistan.<sup>25</sup> While the Maldivian government tried to distance itself from the events, sceptics claimed that it is highly unlikely that the two could have ever

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Ministry of Information and Culture, Maldives, *Maldives News Bulletin, Yearbook 1990*, (Malé, 1990), p. 24

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> See Shekar Gupta, "The ISRO Case: The great espionage mess", *India Today*, 31 January 1995, pp. 58 - 63

<sup>25</sup> See "Pakistan denies involvement in Indian espionage case", in *Asian Defence Journal*, No.1, 1995, p. 95



been spies; and moreover accused Indian intelligence of bungling the case.<sup>26</sup> They claim that the Intelligence Bureau jumped to conclusions without checking the on the dates and the venues of the alleged meetings and they hastily arrested the 'spies' without carrying out proper surveillance. At present, the issue remains unresolved and the women remain in an Indian jail.

External security problems are seen to be more common in areas such as poaching in the EEZ by foreign fishing vessels. Due to the vast areas of the EEZ and the country's heavy dependence on fishing, the government considers monitoring and surveillance of the EEZ a high priority. Thus, the problems of poaching in its waters by foreign fishing vessels are considered a serious menace. The EEZ of the Maldives encompasses over 90,000 square kilometres but the majority of the fishermen stay within a radius of 75 miles from land.<sup>27</sup> In the last five years 48 vessels, mainly of Sri Lankan and Taiwanese origin, have been apprehended in the EEZ by the Maldivian Coast Guard.<sup>28</sup> In 1992 eight Sri Lankan registered trawlers were apprehended while poaching in the Maldivian territorial waters and a similar number in 1993.<sup>29</sup> According to the Maldivian Coast Guard poaching increases during the north east monsoon when the seas between Sri Lanka and the Maldives are calmer.

Although military security has dominated since 1988, the leadership have identified security as a multifaceted problem. It also recognises the fact that the most of the problems have their basis in economic underdevelopment. The main economic problems facing the country today are those associated with its small size and the geographical nature of the islands. Although developmental problems are outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to highlight certain economic issues facing the Maldives in order to have a clear understanding of economic vulnerability and threats facing the country. The smallness in size and the scattered nature of the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, p.18

<sup>28</sup> Information by the Coast Guard, National Security Service, Malé, Maldives

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Information and Culture, Maldives, *Maldives News Bulletin*, No.430, 13 March 1994

islands means that there is only a limited natural resource base. The country is highly dependent on two sectors of the economy, fishing and tourism. The wide dispersal of the population has also given rise to severe diseconomies of scale. The limited population has also resulted in a domestic market that is small, fragmented and constrained by low incomes and purchasing power. At the same time, there is a severe shortage of skilled manpower. The Maldives is thus, highly dependent on foreign aid. The phenomenal performance of the economy in the 1980s owes much to the assistance received from external donors.

Societal problems, especially ethnic problems, have been absent in the Maldives for the basic reason that the Maldives is a homogenous country. The existence of one religion, Islam, one culture and one language has helped to create unity. Nevertheless, in recent years religious problems have been surfacing in the country, especially in the form of Islamic fundamentalism. The government of the Maldives recognises this as a problem and the Parliament has recently passed a law banning all forms of religious preaching in the country apart from by those who have been given special permission from the Department of Religious Affairs.

In recent years the government has also given special attention to the increasing problem of drug abuse in the country. There is no written evidence that drug abuse ever existed in the country in the past except the use of opium for medicinal purposes. It is assumed that drugs were first introduced with the arrival of tourism. In the early days of tourism many of the tourists who came were 'hippies', who brought in marijuana and hashish into the country. Although the police at the time were aware of the problem, nothing much was done for the simple reason that the government did not want to discourage the arrival of tourists. In 1977, the first measures to curb the problem were introduced after an American tourist was caught with 350 grams of hashish. However, drug abuse grew fairly slowly until the last five to six years when the problems have increased dramatically. It is assumed that the recent increase of abuse, mainly by students returning from their studies abroad,

who use drugs for recreational purposes as a way of compensating for the lack of other recreational facilities available in Malé similar to those found abroad. A report from the police states that more than 25% of students who had been studying in India and Sri Lanka used or had used drugs. Today the drug scene in the country has moved onto heroin, cocaine and other hard drugs. Although previously it was the male youth population that was seen to have a drug problem, in 1993 girls too were being arrested for drug abuse. The country has also been used to tranship drugs from Thailand and India to Europe.<sup>30</sup> The government gives high priority to the control of drugs and is concerned about the spread of drug abuse and trafficking. As the Officer-commanding of the Drug Control Bureau stated, "It is not a nightmare that will go away, but a cold, harsh reality that can only be defeated when we make ourselves aware of the dire threat and danger to our society".<sup>31</sup>

Another area of concern to the government has been the high growth rate of the population and the continued migration of the people from the outer atolls to Malé. The total population of the country grew from 180,088 in 1985 to 213,215 in 1990, representing a growth of 18.9% and an annual average growth rate of 3.4%.<sup>32</sup> Among these 46.8% are under the age of 15 years. The growth of the population in Malé has created several problems, especially that of housing as Malé has barely two square kilometres. Overuse of the resources such as water has also led to severe depletion of the fresh water lens in Malé. The population share of Malé in 1974 stood at 13% but in 1990 it was 26%, with migrants accounting for 48% of the total population of Male.<sup>33</sup> Although the population has been increasing, there is a severe lack of skilled manpower in the country. Even basic labour for large projects has to be brought in from other countries. In 1993, 17,177 expatriate workers were employed in the country, mainly from South Asia.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> All Information by the Drug Control Bureau, Police Headquarters, National Security Service of the Maldives

<sup>31</sup> First Lieutenant Ibrahim Latheef, Officer Commanding, Drug Control Bureau, Police Headquarters, National Security Service, August 1994

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *National Development Plan 1991 - 1993*, p.5

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical YearBook 1994*, (Male' 1994), p.42

One of the main security concerns of the government is that of environmental security. Until recently, the lifestyle of the Maldives had little or no destructive impact on the environment of the country. However, with the socio-economic development of the country environmental degradation has increased. As President Gayoom stated, "The destruction of coral reefs, coastal erosions, hydrological problems of fresh water depletion and saline intrusion into aquifers, and the dangers of marine pollution due to improper methods of sewage and solid waste disposal are some of the issues."<sup>35</sup> Coral has been used in the country for ages as a building material but the recent increase in housing due to the growth in population and infrastructure development has led to an increase in coral mining. This has caused severe destruction of coral reefs. A study commissioned to assess the effect of coral mining, particularly in the Malé atoll, revealed that if it continues at the prevailing rate the coral reefs of the atoll will all but disappear by the year 2015.<sup>36</sup> The depletion of the fresh water aquifer has also become a cause for concern, especially in Malé. The fresh water lens of Malé is being increasingly replaced by salt water. According to a survey, the fresh water aquifer of Malé will be exhausted in the next few years.<sup>37</sup> Another major problem that has occurred of late has been the frequency of storms and high tidal swells. In 1987, three days of high tidal swells with waves up to 2.5 metres washed away and submerged areas of Male and caused substantial damage to the international airport. In 1988, tidal swells affected the southern atolls inundating cultivated fields and caused extensive damage to the causeways linking the islands. In 1991, storms again destroyed more than 190,000 trees and damaged 3,300 dwellings and 250 public buildings. These events increased the fear of the rise in sea-level. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change in its first assessment report of August 1990 estimated that the global sea level will rise probably by 20 cm by the year 2030. This would be calamitous for a country like the Maldives. President Gayoom stated, "a mean sea level rise of 2 metres would virtually

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<sup>35</sup> H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives, Statement delivered on behalf of The Group of Eminent Persons on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 21 April 1994

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *National Development Plan 1991 - 1993*, p. 161

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *State of the Environment: Maldives*, ( Malé, 1994), p23.

submerge the entire country ....That would be the death of a nation".<sup>38</sup> The threat from a rise in sea level has led to several scenarios being predicted for the Maldives from the loss of land and displacement of people to destruction of reefs and loss of fish stocks.<sup>39</sup>

## **Providing security in the Maldives**

### **Military Resources**

Although the Maldives faces numerous problems, the country is not totally without capabilities. However, the capabilities are extremely limited, especially with regard to military problems. The National Security Service (NSS) of the Maldives consists of approximately 2,000 personnel.<sup>40</sup> It has no navy or air force although a Coast Guard Unit and a Quick Reaction Force Unit have been established.\* The Maldives has no defence agreements with other states. The defence expenditure of the country is high in comparison to other sectors. In 1991, 13.9 per cent of total government expenditure was spent on security'.<sup>41</sup> The Maldives receives military help in the form of equipment and training from Britain, the United States and India. However, most of the forces are locally trained (although some have received training abroad). The island of Girifushi in Malé Atoll has been specially designated for training the NSS and up to 1993 the Girifushi Training Centre had conducted training for 20 intakes. The type of courses conducted include Task Force Training, Drill Instructor Courses, VIP Protection Courses, NCO Cadre Courses, Weapons Instructor Courses, Physical Instructor Courses and Military Diving Courses. Training courses are conducted by local officers who have received training abroad and by visiting instructors from Britain and the United States. The US recently conducted a training course to combat urban terrorism known as the Balance Metal '94. Nevertheless, the NSS still lacks the capability to match irregulars who have seen action in their own countries and

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<sup>38</sup> Address by H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives at the UN General Assembly on the issues of environment and development, New York, December 1987

<sup>39</sup> Op.cit. p.3

<sup>40</sup> See James Pringle, "Maldives: Hardliners hit back at political reforms", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 May 1990

\* For the strength of the Coast Guard see Appendix C

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical Yearbook, 1994*, p. 158

with years of experience, as proven by the 1988 attack. Another major problem facing the NSS is the difficulty in maintaining a military presence on other inhabited islands of the archipelago. The NSS is mainly concentrated in Malé. In 1993 a regional headquarters was established in Laamu Atoll. Besides, the NSS has to adapt its role in numerous circumstances and assist in many other areas. As such, its services are used in fighting fires and flooding, in the control of epidemics, and labour from the NSS is often used in public projects such as construction work etc.

### **Political Capabilities**

The Maldives is a parliamentary democracy. The Citizen's Majlis (Parliament) is the main legislative body consisting of forty eight members of which eight are nominated by the President and the rest are elected on the basis of two members from each atoll and two from Malé, the capital. The government is headed by the President who is nominated by the Citizen's Majlis and elected by a public referendum for a renewable term of five years. The President is the Head of State and the Chief Executive. He is also the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and is responsible for the protection of the religion in the country. The Maldives is a one hundred per cent Muslim country and is not secular.

Internally, political security has been maintained through out by the widespread belief in the legitimacy of the political system as well as fear of the authorities. The Maldivians by nature are peace loving people and traditionally respect the policies of their elders. This deference has been extended to those empowered with governing the country. Although isolated incidents of political instability have occurred, widespread political factionalism has never been a prominent feature in the past. Foreign political ideologies have never taken root and this may be due to the scattered nature of the country as communication is in itself a problem. The government owns the only radio station and the existence of a language unique to the Maldives, together with the lack of understanding of foreign

languages by the people, means that the chances of outside political philosophies spreading are severely limited.

Externally, the Maldives follows a policy which can be defined as 'making many friends and few enemies'. It has established diplomatic relations with over 114 countries.<sup>42</sup> However, the lack of resources means that the country has resident diplomatic missions only in Sri Lanka, Britain and the United States. Because of its geographical position its traditional allies have been the Indian Ocean states of South Asia. It has a long relationship with Sri Lanka which remains extremely cordial. The Maldives also maintains good relations with other South Asian countries, especially India and Pakistan. India has provided training facilities for Maldivians in educational and technical fields.<sup>43</sup> Its relationship with India grew especially close after Indian assistance to put down the mercenary attack in 1988. The then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi stated to the Indian Parliament, "We felt that we must respond positively and go to the aid of a friendly neighbour facing a threat to its sovereignty and democratic order."<sup>44</sup> A Joint Commission has been established to further relations and India contributes a great deal of development assistance. India has become the second largest aid donor to the Maldives.<sup>45</sup> One of the latest projects is the building of a 200 bed hospital (which will be the largest in the country) and the training of medical and para-medical staff. Another ongoing project is the building of a Vocational Training Centre. India also provides defence assistance to the Maldives and the Indian Coast Guard carry out training programmes for the Maldivian Coast Guard.<sup>46</sup>

The Maldives maintains close links with the Muslim countries of the Arab world, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as well as other Islamic states such as Malaysia and Brunei. It receives assistance, mainly for the development of religious

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<sup>42</sup> Information by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malé, Maldives

<sup>43</sup> See "Indo-Maldives Joint-Communique" *Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol 20, 1974 p.113

<sup>44</sup> Statement given in the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha by the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi on 4th November 1988, *Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol.34, No.11, November, 1988, p. 365

<sup>45</sup> UNDP, *Development Cooperation 1992 Report*, ( Malé, 1994) p.19

<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Information and Culture, Maldives, *Maldives News Bulletin, Year Book 1991*, ( Malé), p. 89

institutions, from these countries. Kuwait has also provided developmental assistance, especially in the construction of Malé International Airport through the Kuwait Fund. The Maldives supported Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion and subsequently the Emir of Kuwait paid a visit to the Maldives in 1992.

Its relationship with the Western world has also remained fairly cordial. Britain is the main trading partner of the Maldives and the fourth largest bilateral donor to the country. Britain provides educational and environmental assistance among assistance to other developmental programmes. Military aid is also provided in the form of training and military advice. In recent years, the Maldives has strengthened its relationship with the United States. Although the country has always claimed non-aligned status it appears to have a pro-American bias in its foreign policy. The United States has become the second main trading partner of the country. The US also provides military aid in the form of training and US military advisers have visited the country from time to time. In 1992, the then Secretary of State, James Baker, visited the Maldives, the first visit to the country from such a high level American official. The Commander of the US Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Stanley Arthur, paid a visit to the Maldives in February 1993, the highest US military official to visit the country.

Apart from bilateral relationships, the Maldives is a member of numerous international organisations among which are the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement.\* To enhance the security of the country the Maldives has been active in bringing the issue of the security of small states to the attention of the world organisations. The Maldives initiated the move to raise the issue of the security problems of small states in the UN General Assembly and the subsequent resolution on the Protection and Security of Small States was co-sponsored by the Seychelles and Mauritius among others. The issue was also taken up by the Maldives at the meetings of the Commonwealth. The Maldives is a party

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\* List of organisation in Appendix C



to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism under which the member states are committed to extradite or prosecute alleged terrorists thus preventing them from enjoying safe havens.

To improve its international standing, the Maldives has supported international norms such as support for the fight against apartheid and for the Palestinian people. At a regional level the country accords high priority to regional co-operation and campaigns for regional issues such as the establishment of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. In the past, the characteristic stance of the country in the external sphere came from its role of maintaining a non-aligned policy and therefore playing a minimal role in the East-West conflict during the Cold War years, together with acquiring as many friends as it could, especially in the neighbouring areas. It played a limited role in regional affairs until the early 1980s relying on isolationism to maintain its sovereignty and political integrity. However, in the 1980s it began to take a more active role in regional affairs and was one of the co-founders of the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC).

In recent years, the Maldives has increased its involvement in the international arena and enhanced its international standing by hosting international and regional conferences and seminars. Islands states appear to be a popular choice for such gatherings and the tropical climate and natural surroundings often gives a relaxed and casual outlook to these gatherings. The Maldives hosted an international conference of small states on the problem of global warming and sea level rise in 1989. In 1990 it successfully hosted the fifth SAARC summit in Malé and in 1991 it hosted a workshop on the security problems of small states attended by delegates from the Seychelles and Mauritius among other small countries. In 1992 it hosted the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Conference. This strategy appears to be a popular and effective way of making its presence felt among the members of the international community.

## Economic Resources

The Maldives lacks land-based natural resources and thus relies on its marine resources. Fishing and tourism are the two cornerstones of the economy. Both sectors have made progress in the last ten years. The fisheries sector contributed 13.5% of the GDP in 1992.<sup>47</sup> Traditionally fishing was carried out in locally built sailing boats known as 'Dhoanis'. Today, however, there are 1,609 mechanised Dhoanis. With mechanisation the total fish catch increased dramatically. In 1993, the total fish catch stood at 89,938 metric tons.<sup>48</sup> A canning plant was established in 1978 which was refurbished in 1986. It now has the capacity to produce 50 metric tonnes of canned tuna per day and 7.4 thousand metric tonnes of tuna was exported in 1992. Other exports include fresh and frozen fish, fish meal, salted fish and dried fish. The country's highest foreign exchange earner, however, is the tourism sector. With the opening of an international airport, tourist arrivals increased from 74,163 to 235,852 in 1992.<sup>49</sup> The main tourist markets are the countries of Western Europe and Japan. There are 69 tourist resorts with a bed capacity of 9061.<sup>50</sup> The government expects the bed capacity to increase to over 10,000 by the end of 1994. Earnings from tourism amounted to 17.7% of the GDP in 1992.<sup>51</sup> The government has been careful to control the development of tourism in order to protect the natural environment of the country. Strict regulations exist on the construction of hotels. Separate islands have been selected for the development of tourism and this separation of tourists from the local inhabitants has assisted in keeping cultural and social costs to a minimum. For example, many associate the growth of prostitution with the development of tourism. In the Maldives such problems have been prevented.<sup>52</sup> The geographical nature of the country has facilitated in following such policies. As the country is archipelagic, transport plays an important part in everyday life. The existing inter-island sea transport networks are limited. Although the country had

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<sup>47</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, p.22

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical Year Book, 1994* p. 92

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. pp. 257 - 258

<sup>50</sup> Ibid p. 108

<sup>51</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, p.22

<sup>52</sup> R Sathiendrakumar, "Tourism and the Economic Development of the Maldives", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1989 Vol. 16, pp. 254-269,

13,033 registered vessels, 73% are fishing vessels.<sup>53</sup> As far as internal air transport is concerned there are four domestic airports. The leadership of the Maldives is aware that the economic security of the country depends on careful planning and has attempted to formulate development plans to identify and target areas for development. Three such plans have been implemented so far. Further sustainable development in harmony with the fragile ecosystem has been given priority.<sup>54</sup>

## **Human Resources**

The total population of the Maldives was 213,215 at the last census in 1990 and the estimated population now stands at 245,910 (1994).<sup>55</sup> The population is dispersed over 200 islands, but only three of them have a population of more than 4,000 people. There are 162 islands with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants or less and 90 islands have less than 500. The population growth rate is 3.4% as mortality has been reducing due to the improvement of health services.<sup>56</sup> The country as a whole consists of Dhivehi people (as the people of the Maldives are known) and apart from foreign workers there are no minorities. Ethnically it is a homogenous country and as such is distinctive among the SIDS of the Indian Ocean. Due to the homogenous nature of the country the society as a whole remains close-knit although radical differences exist even "in the economies and lifestyles" of various islands and atolls.<sup>57</sup> Dhivehi, a mixture of old Singhalese and Arabic, is the mother tongue of all Maldivians, but different dialects are spoken, especially in the southern atolls. English is used as the medium of instruction in the schools in Malé. Due to years of isolation, the country has remained relatively untouched by political and social changes in the neighbouring countries until recent years. Migration patterns in the Maldives are mainly internal with the largest flow to Malé by the people from other atolls. The Maldives enjoys one of the highest literacy levels in South Asia with a literacy rate of 98%.<sup>58</sup> Primary education is provided free. While the Maldives has a

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<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *National Development Plan 1991 - 1993*, p.83

<sup>54</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*,

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical Year Book, 1994*, p.8

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Webb, *Maldives: People and Environment*, p. 31

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Statistical Year Book, 1994*, p.62

total of 259 educational institutions, higher education institutes are limited with GCE A' Levels the highest certificate being obtained. University education has to be received in other countries. Although vocational training institutes have been established the services are rudimentary.

The island societies are structured and disciplined. Islam is more than just a religion in the country. It is a way of life and effects all aspects of the society. Nevertheless, societal threats such as those that may arise from problems associated with drugs do exist. In order to combat the spread of drug abuse and trafficking the government has introduced a number of measures, both legal and organisational. The Law on Narcotic Drugs (Law No. 17/77) was passed in 1977 by which any person who knowingly imports, exports, uses, gives, stores, possesses or otherwise handles narcotics may be subjected from 12 to 22 years of imprisonment or banishment and/or may be fined an amount between Rf 5000 to Rf 200,000, depending on the gravity and seriousness of the crime.<sup>59</sup> Among the administrative measures include the establishment of a committee for the control of drug abuse which was set up in 1986. The main purpose of the committee is to educate and create public awareness among the people. A program was held in 1993 where all the chiefs of the atolls were given information on drugs. A Drug Control Bureau (DCB) was also established in the Ministry of Defence and National Security. The main objective of the DCB is to stop the inflow of drugs by defining the routes and securing the arrest of the traffickers and suppliers.

### **Environmental Resources**

In 1989, the government of the Maldives, with the assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), forged an environmental management plan known as the National Action Plan, the aim of which is,

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<sup>59</sup> Information by Drugs Control Bureau, Police Headquarters, National Security Service, Malé

"to help the government to maintain and improve the environment of the country, including the marine and ocean areas within the Exclusive Economic Zone, and to manage the resources therein for the collective benefit and enjoyment of future generations".<sup>60</sup>

The plan also underlines specific programmes such as the continuous assessment of the country's environment, the development and implementation of management methods, the enactment of national environmental legislation, and the strengthening of national capabilities by institutional arrangements and financial support. With regard to the above, surveys have been conducted on marine ecosystems and coral reefs and a study has been done on solid waste management for urban centres and tourist resorts. To halt the erosion of coral reefs, coral mining was at first banned and later restricted to designated areas of the atolls. The government has also reduced the import duties of building material to reduce the use of coral as a construction material. In 1993, the Citizen's Majlis approved the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act which gives the Ministry of Planning and Environment (now the Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment) statutory powers of environmental regulation and enforcement of such regulations. To combat the problem of the lack of trained personnel, the government sends employees to train overseas.

The Maldives has also attempted to bring the environmental problems of small states to the attention of the international community. It successfully hosted the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise in 1989 resulting in the Malé Declaration that called for greater international recognition of the environmental problems of small states and more assistance to such states by the international community. The Maldives also participated in numerous international conferences including the Second World Climatic Conference in 1990, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados in 1994.

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<sup>60</sup>Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *Environment Action Plan*, (Malé),

The country was instrumental in modifying the language of Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit to ensure that the concerns of the SIDS were taken into consideration. The Maldives is also a member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

### **Contemporary Problems**

Even though the country recognises that SIDS are vulnerable and security problems are multifaceted, what the country can do to ensure its security is still very limited. Almost all the characteristics of the vulnerability of SIDS are inherent in the country. In almost every area, the country is weak, open and dependent. Militarily, the country is extremely weak and unable to defend itself from external aggressors such as mercenaries let alone other states. Due to the small size of the population the number of military personnel is limited. The country also lacks the financial resources to obtain military hardware and training facilities. Further, defence policy-making is more of a reactionary nature than one of forward planning. Before 1988 the whole military structure of the country was geared to maintain law and order. However, after the 1988 mercenary attack the main objective of the military establishment today is geared to defend against another mercenary attack. One of the major constraints facing the country in organising its defence structure is the physical nature of the country. The scattered nature of the islands, with wide dispersal of population, means that at present the government cannot provide any defence for the majority of the islands apart from Malé. In the event of an armed aggression taking place in one of the outer islands it is going to take some considerable time before the NSS can reach them. This kind of situation can be further aggravated by rough seas and weather.

The political system in the Maldives has a dual personality. On one hand it is strong and relies on traditional values and norms for its legitimacy and popularity. On the other hand, it is weak, open and dependent on foreign resources. Lack of resources and qualified manpower have created numerous problems, even in the day to day running of the government. The country relies heavily on foreign expertise and

assistance. Like most of the SIDS, the political system is based on a handful of political influentials, if not just a single individual. Today, President Gayoom is synonymous with the government and vice versa, as was the case with his predecessors. Although the political system is based on 'parliamentary democracy', the concept of 'democracy' is interpreted in a different manner to that of the normal use of the word in the West. President Gayoom claimed in 1990 that the Western concept of democracy differs from the Islamic concept of democracy.<sup>61</sup> The non-existence of any political parties, and therefore an organised opposition, means that the policies of the government are carried out virtually unopposed and unquestioned. No pressure groups exist and the majority of the members of Parliament are also government employees. Besides, no political rallies or demonstrations are allowed and criticisms of government policies are not encouraged, although officially the government states that it will appreciate 'constructive criticisms'. However, some claim that the lack of political parties does not necessarily have a negative impact for the people and the country in general. This is based on the argument that if there are separate political groupings then it will divide the people and therefore a government based on a 'single strong man' may be preferable; as Azar and Moon note "National security performance may be enhanced more by 'benevolent' dictatorship with high legitimacy than by fragile and incompetent pluralist regimes with low legitimacy"<sup>62</sup>. However, the danger here is that the desire for political change among the people may not let a regime which relies on traditional values and norms for its legitimacy to remain so for a long time. As far as the role of the Maldives in the international community is concerned, it has very little influence on what goes on outside its territory. The Maldives does play some role in the SAARC, but it is still a very limited role compared to the larger members such as India and Pakistan. Vulnerability in the Maldives is most apparent in the economy of the country. It is extremely open and susceptible to outside forces. An acute shortage of natural resources means that the country's economy has to depend on fishing and tourism.

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<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Information and Culture, Maldives, *Maldives News Bulletin, Yearbook 1990*, (Malé), p. 80

<sup>62</sup> Edward E. Azar and Chung-in Moon (eds), *National Security in the Third World: The Management of Internal and External Threat*, p. 81

Almost everything that is needed has to be imported. Exports (f.o.b) stood at US\$ 66 million in 1993 whereas the imports (c.i.f) amounted to US\$218 million.<sup>63</sup> Due to the small population the domestic market is extremely limited. However, the Maldives cannot influence international markets and the main export product, tuna, is highly sensitive to the prices of the international tuna markets. Further, the tourism industry is also susceptible to foreign economic trends.

### **Threats: Potential, Latent and Manifest**

Although every country is a possible target for aggression from another one, as far as the Maldives is concerned it is highly unlikely that the country is about to be invaded by another stronger power. The Maldives lacks any strategic raw materials and though it is located in a strategic position in the Indian Ocean there is very little reason for another state to actually invade and take over the country. There are no foreign military bases in the country and it is unlikely that Gan or any other island will be leased to another country in the near future. The threat from non-state actors, however, is a potential one and one which is difficult to discard as a thing of the past. The threat of mercenaries goes together with the tensions that exist in the region. The attack of 1988 can be claimed as a spill-over effect from the conflicts in neighbouring countries. Before 1988, the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka did not affect the Maldives directly, but the easy availability of trained guerrillas was no doubt the principal factor that finally led to the coup attempt. "They are doing nothing: they have no jobs" commented a moderate PLOTE member "Anyone can recruit 100 to 200 any day".<sup>64</sup> The easy availability of arms in Sri Lanka was undoubtedly another factor. The threat of mercenaries is based on the fear that the easy availability of such mercenaries may encourage future trouble-makers to resort to similar methods to satisfy their needs.

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<sup>63</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, *Small States: Economic review and basic statistics*, (London, April 1995), p.40

<sup>64</sup> *Asiaweek* 18 November 1988, p.37



The problem is not only of a military nature and does not necessarily depend on the success rate. These kind of attacks affect the whole country and its social structure even if unsuccessful in the end. In the Maldives, where the murder rate was nil before the attack, the fact that eighteen people died left horrible marks on the society. The effects of the attack left its scars on the political structure of the country as well. It created panic and confusion among both officials and the general public. Once the people recovered from the initial shock, they began to question why such an incident happened in an otherwise peaceful country. The incident also led to a massive effort to increase the military strength of the country. It led to young students, who have just completed their schooling, being recruited directly into the military service. Further, the government incurred substantial expenses to repair the physical damage caused by the attack. There is also the fear of what could have happened had these attacks succeeded. It is almost certain that in the Maldives a puppet government would have been established and the country could have become a terrorist base, not only affecting the country itself but also with the prospect of being drawn into the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The Maldives reacted to the threat of mercenarism by strengthening its military forces. However, a strong military force can create problems by itself. Although the Maldives has yet to face an incident of this nature, the growing power of the military has created uneasy feelings among the general population. The fact that the 1988 attack led to the arrest of two army personnel, including an ex-Major of the NSS, invites the possibility of threats emanating from the military. There have been allegations that the top military officials are divided among themselves and there are several factions within the NSS. In 1989 and 1990 rumours of a possible military coup grew within the country and in 1990 the Deputy Minister of Defence was removed from his post following his sudden departure from the country. In 1991, some middle level officers were imprisoned for unknown reasons. It was alleged that they had planned a military take-over. However, today the military appears to be loyal to the President and the possibility of a military take-over appears to be remote.

Another problem that has surfaced in recent times is the distinct dislike of the military by the general public. After the 1988 mercenary attack young males who has just completed secondary school were forced to join the military. Although this policy was relaxed later on, again in 1994 around 200 students were forced to join the NSS. Under legislation passed by the Citizen's Majlis any student who has completed the tenth Grade and who has sat for GCE O' Levels is required to serve the government for a period of three years if the government demands it. Many students were forced to join the NSS and those who refused were put under house arrest. The problem is that when unwilling students are forced to join the NSS it could in itself become a security risk.

Although the country appears to be politically stable and the majority of the people appears to accept the current political system, the country has also experienced attempted political coups. Political coups or attempted ones can be identified as two types. The first is that of the traditional kind where the people of the country gathers in front of the seat of power; in the days of the Sultan it used to be his Palace, and today it is the NSS headquarters. They demand the removal of the leaders and it is more of a demonstration and usually without violence. The last one of this type took place in 1974, when a dramatic rise in food prices led to the people to plot to overthrow the government. They gathered in front of the Police Headquarters but the coup was unsuccessful and more than 400 people were arrested. The second type is new and more dangerous. That is of hiring mercenaries to overthrow the government. Although mercenaries are not a totally new phenomenon, (in 1909 some Indians were hired by a dissident to overthrow the government but the attack was quelled by the local militia), in the last 15 years there have been three instances where Maldivians have attempted to hire mercenaries to overthrow the government. Although none of these attempts were successful such an event taking place again cannot be totally ruled out. Besides, the 1988 attack had also raised certain questions as to the real power behind the attack. Although it was claimed that the members of the PLOTE wanted to acquire a training base and therefore sponsored the attack,

there are allegations that certain high level government officials knew about the attack and in some cases were responsible for financing the attack.

Although coup d'état aimed at overthrowing the government may not be common, there are changes in the country that could create problems in the future. One of the main potential problems is the growing dislike of the people of the existing political system which is highly personalised. The whole government relies solely on one person and that is the President. The Maldives has been a Republic since 1968 and the President is elected for a period of five year terms but in the last twenty nine years there have been only two Presidents. The President is extremely powerful and the ruling elite has been mainly the relatives and few close friends of the President. The problem, today, is that the younger generation of elites are educated and thus do not appear to be quite so ready to accept such a system for long. Such problems have already surfaced. In 1990 and 1991 several people, categorised by Amnesty International as Prisoners of Conscience, were imprisoned in relation to the launching of a magazine, "Sangu" (The Conch Shell), directed mainly at criticising the nepotism and corruption that was allegedly going on in the government. The problem is that although the government initially appeared to welcome such freedom of expression evidenced when President Gayoom stated in 1989, "The Maldivian people need to begin a new era of democracy and thus fresh ideas and new thoughts are in demand", the experimentation was short-lived.<sup>65</sup> There has also been constant accusations of human right violations. Although allegations of imprisonment without trials and abuse of prisoners are nothing new, in the past it has always been discussed in hushed voices and never in the open. Nevertheless, in recent years, this has attracted international interest, mainly through the works of those who have received education abroad and have foreign contacts. This has been highlighted in an Amnesty International Report which expressed its concern to the government about prisoners who were detained for long periods without trial and about certain prisoners who have been ill-treated in detention,

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in James Pringle, "Maldives: Hardlines hit back at political reforms", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 May 1990

including solitary confinement for long periods.<sup>66</sup> The problem is that although these type of allegations are not unique to the current regime in power, since they were also made about previous regimes, it is only now that the people appear to be unwilling to accept them as part and parcel of the political system.

The desire in people for change was also highlighted in the 1993 Presidential Election. For the first time in the history of the Maldives, where the incumbent President has usually received 90% of the votes cast by the Majlis, the members voted for an alternative candidate. Although President Gayoom won a majority of 28 votes, his brother-in-law Ilyas Ibrahim got 18 votes, proving that the people are not so willing to agree with the wishes of the existing government as they had done in the past.<sup>67</sup> The reaction of the government to this also created some apprehension among the public. The government accused the opposition Mr. Ibrahim of engaging the help of a local 'witch doctor' in order to attain power and of bribery and misuse of power. He was tried in absentia and sentenced to 15 years and six months banishment.<sup>68</sup> (He is currently living in Singapore in exile). Many of his supporters were also imprisoned and some sentenced to fifteen years of banishment. Thus the desire for political change by the people and the reluctance by those in office to relinquish their power can ultimately create instability in the country. The problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of those who support Mr. Ibrahim do not appear to be genuine supporters of him as a person and as a leader but are simply against the current regime. Mr. Ibrahim is seen as the man who is most likely to oust the current leadership. However, the danger is that removing one President and replacing him with another may not ultimately result in a change of the political system. And, as such, the people may soon be disenchanted with the replacement as well. However, a sudden and total upheaval of the existing system may also create problems.

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<sup>66</sup> Amnesty International, Report on the Republic of Maldives, *Prisoners of Conscience and unfair trial concerns, 1990 - 1993*, June, 1993, pp.1

<sup>67</sup> *Haveeru News Paper*, Malé, 23 August 1993

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 19 September 1993

Even though Malé is the seat of political power and the rest of the country has very little political say, it is unlikely that this will lead to secessionist tendencies in the near future. Although the Addu secessionist movement could have resulted in the dismemberment of the country, there have been no such attempts since then. The problem of secessionism can always theoretically exist in archipelagic states and the Maldives is no exception. There are individual differences among the atolls and there is no love lost between neighbouring islands let alone neighbouring atolls. However, the chance of one island declaring itself independent is highly unlikely as the majority of the islands are sparsely populated. The only remote chance of it happening is in the south again, in Addu Atoll where the people are more affluent. However, the problem is less likely now as quite a bit of integration has taken place between the Addu people and those from Malé.

Domestically, real political threats facing the country today are limited. However, the same cannot be said of threats from outside. One of the main problems is that of violation of its territorial waters and the EEZ by outside sources. Surveillance is a major problem as demonstrated by the fact that in 1988 mercenaries were able to sail into the harbour at Malé in two vessels without being detected. However, unlawful use of the Maldivian territory is mainly restricted to fishing by foreign vessels. The problem is one that is mainly associated with the geographical nature of the country. The Maldivian Coast Guard is expected to patrol and maintain surveillance over more than 90,000 square kilometres. However, it neither has the financial and technical resources nor the manpower to do so. It is not known how many Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) are operating in the EEZ of the Maldives. To overcome this problem the country needs an effective maritime capability; "a force which is capable of both surveillance and timely interception and good intelligence".<sup>69</sup> However, the limited means available provides a hindrance to this. Aircraft capable of surveillance of 200 nautical miles and beyond cost at least US \$330,000 - \$430,000 with a running cost of more the US \$ 100/= per hour.<sup>70</sup> This

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<sup>69</sup> Harden, *Small is dangerous: Micro-states in a macro-world*, p.85

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*

was an estimate in 1985 and as such there is no doubt that the cost will be much higher today. Apart from this, the country would require fast patrol boats capable of intercepting the vessels violating the maritime zones, and these type of boats are quite costly as well, even second-hand ones. The problem is much deeper than just acquiring them. The Maldivian Coast Guard now possess some vessels for these purposes. A further problem lies in the maintenance of these boats, the training of personnel etc. The unavailability of spare parts in the country means that if there is a technical breakdown of any of the parts or the vessel itself, the whole operation comes to a standstill until spares can be brought from abroad and technicians flown in. Besides, the Coast Guard also carries out rescue missions of those in distress at sea and such missions are quite common in a country where the sea is the main route for transportation. As such, in a leaflet outlining the functions of the Coast Guard, the first on the list is that of search and rescue. The problem is that the Coast Guard does not possess the resources to carry out the functions of search and rescue in a proper manner let alone the surveillance of the EEZ for unlawful poaching as well.

The Maldives has tried to maintain a non-aligned policy and attempts to distance itself from the regional turmoil that exist within the South Asian region of the Indian Ocean. Actual cases of foreign pressure are difficult to identify but the country has, from time to time, found itself in a difficult position. In 1990, the Maldives hosted the Fifth SAARC Summit. Sri Lanka also wished to host the Summit as they had been unable to do so the previous year when it was their turn due to security reasons. The Maldives found itself in an extremely delicate situation. The government wanted to have it in the Maldives yet did not want to go into a confrontation with Sri Lanka. The issue was resolved when the rest of the SAARC countries supported the Maldives claim to host the Summit. After Indian assistance in 1988, the Maldives grew extremely close to India. Sceptics fear that it is now going to be extremely difficult for the government to say 'No' to India. India can exert pressure on the Maldives if it so wishes. The problem for a country like the Maldives is that it is so heavily dependent on foreign aid and trade that it basically cannot

afford to say 'no' to the wishes of these countries. It has been claimed that Japan threatened to block Maldivian fish imports if the country refused to back the Director-General of the WHO, Nakajima of Japan.<sup>71</sup> The growing influence of the United States has also raised many questions within the country. Visits by high level officials of the US government and military have created uncertainties as to the intentions of the United States.

Although the country has made phenomenal progress in the last fifteen years the Maldives still remains in the UNDP's Least Developed Category. Economic threats in the form of economic shocks can seriously harm the economy. In the past the country depended on the export of just a single product, dried fish known as "Maldivian fish", to Sri Lanka. In 1971 Sri Lanka changed its policy and announced that it could no longer buy fish from the Maldives. This cessation of export brought the country almost to a standstill. Although it led to moves to rapid diversification and the development of tourism, initially the hardships faced by the people led to severe problems. This economic hardship, coupled with the problems of the oil crisis and world recession, led to the attempted coup in 1974. In the 1980s conflict in the Persian Gulf, together with recession in the industrialised countries and the imposition of 'third country' shipping trade, affected the Maldives shipping sector and resulted in the decline of the country's ocean freight line. Similarly, the Gulf War seriously affected the tourism industry. Although it has now recovered tourism is highly susceptible to the impact of economic problems in Europe and the Far East. According to a survey conducted with other factors being constant, "A one per cent change in the income levels of the generating markets will lead to a two per cent change in tourist arrivals in the Maldives."<sup>72</sup> The fisheries sector, too, is highly dependent of world tuna prices. Since 1990, the industry has suffered from low prices (30% decline) in export of frozen fish. Natural disasters can also threaten the economy of the country. As such, economic shocks can create serious problems for

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<sup>71</sup> *Time* 18 January 1993, pp.16

<sup>72</sup> Address by H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives at the tenth Non-Aligned Summit in Indonesia, 1992

the country not just in terms of economic development but also affecting other areas such as political stability and harmony among the people. Another form of economic threat can come from foreign business influences. In the Maldives one hundred per cent foreign owned companies can invest in the country. However, major regional and international companies are hesitant to do so due to difficulties in raising capital overseas as a consequence of the lack of a legal investment framework in the country and an international credit rating for the Maldives.<sup>73</sup> As such, at present, threats from foreign business influence are minimal.

Although ethnically and religiously the Maldives is a homogenous country, in recent years religious issues have started to divide the community. Although Islam plays a major influence in the lives of the people of the Maldives, the country has never been a traditional Muslim one. As such, Islam, although the state religion, has never been a dominating force in the political decision-making of the country. However, when the current regime took over, President Gayoom had sought to introduce a policy of 'returning back' to the Islamic way of life. However, this was far from the traditional or fundamentalist strain of Islam that is found in states such as Iran. Yet, in recent years, fundamentalism appears to be spreading in the country. More and more women are covering themselves in the fashion of those found in traditional Islamic societies. The spread of fundamentalism appears to be sponsored by Pakistan and Iran. The fundamentalists in the country argue against the sale of alcohol in tourist resorts. Although the problem is still under control if the advocates of such policies get to a position of power then the country might face many problems, especially in its developmental efforts as tourism is the main foreign exchange earner and according to leading economists the way for the Maldives to develop.

Among the societal problems facing the country, the threat from narcotic drugs is a real one. It appears to dominate Malé at the moment, but it can spread to

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<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, Maldives, *National Development Plan 1991 - 1993*, p. 66



other islands as drug abusers are often banished to other islands, and signs of this are already seen. Although illicit cultivation has been limited (it was first reported in 1978 that a group of Italians were harvesting marijuana on an uninhabited islands) the number of uninhabited islands in the country can be an attraction for others to follow suit. However, one disadvantage for those who may attempt such cultivation is the poor nature of the soil in the Maldives which make it difficult to grow any sort of plants apart from salt loving shrubs and coconut palms. Another problem associated with drugs is the existing legal framework in the country with regard to drug abuse. At the moment people are tried by the courts under Law No. 17/77. However, no rehabilitation facilities exist in the country today, and banishment of both traffickers and users to other islands may simply encourage the spread of drug abuse to other parts of the country. The problem of rehabilitation is not only due to the lack of resources needed to build such an establishment and the lack of qualified staff, but is also attributable to the Islamic nature of the country which sees the abusers as criminals rather than victims. Therefore punishment, by imprisonment in jail or banishment to other islands is seen as the proper method of dealing with the problem. As such, those who are drug dependent may continue to be so without proper rehabilitation. The main difficulty here is that however much the government tries to control the import of drugs, as long as there is a demand people will find ways and means to smuggle in supplies, especially when they are easily available in some of the neighbouring countries.

Another societal problem facing the country today is the increasing population. The population is expected to double by the year 2010 A.D. One fourth of the population dwells in Malé in an area that is barely two square kilometres. This has led to severe shortage of land and the depletion of the fresh water lens in the capital island. Other sectors such as waste disposal, electricity and roads are over-stretched. Associated with the population problem is the discovery that the Maldives has one of the highest incidence of thalassaemia, a hereditary blood disorder, in the world. One out of every six people is a carrier of thalassaemia. Children that have

the disease rarely live beyond the age of ten years without treatment. Treatment is expensive costing the government US\$6,000 per child.<sup>74</sup> The problem with such a disease is that although ante-natal diagnoses is possible abortion is an unacceptable option for the people because of the Islamic background.

Among the actual threats currently facing the country, environmental threats take top priority. Environmental fragility, together with environmental degradation, have created real problems. The main threat is undoubtedly from climatic change and the associated sea level rise. While the disappearance of the Maldives due to the rise in sea-level may be a worst case scenario, any increase in sea-level is likely to result in reduced island stability, enhanced beach erosion, land loss and reduction in the quality and quantity of ground water resources. Further, the increasing frequency of storms has had devastating effects. Even though the country is yet to suffer from a major oil spill, this presents a serious problem as the Maldives relies so much on its marine resources. It can effect the fishery resources as well as tourism. Although the country recognises the threat from environmental degradation, among other problems are the shortage of resources, human and financial, to overcome such threats. No formal in-country training programmes in environment and development exist. The absence of environmental expertise means that the Maldives has to rely on foreign expertise and assistance to formulate and carry out its environmental policies. Besides, the capacity to enforce environmental legislation is extremely weak. Further, the lack of public awareness on environmental problems increases the difficulties in carrying out policies.

## **Conclusion**

The Maldives faces numerous security problems. Militarily the country is highly vulnerable with limited military resources to provide security for a large area, most of which is the surrounding sea. Yet the actual threats facing the country are low. The possibilities of military threats from foreign invasion exist as a potential

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<sup>74</sup> Government of the Maldives, *Sustainable Human Development; Constraints, Plans and Strategies*, p.41

problem but the probabilities of such an incident occurring is extremely low. Even though the country appears to fear the threat from mercenaries it is unlikely that another attack might take place in the near future given the past high rate of failure of such attacks as well as external assistance from the outside world that may be provided. However, as long as tensions and political instability remains in the neighbouring countries it cannot be totally dismissed. Thus, militarily, the security problems of the Maldives are more systemic than actual. The same is true where political security problems are concerned. Threats in the form of political coups and political instability are latent. Economically the country is once more highly vulnerable and it faces threats which can be identified as manifest among which include the unauthorised poaching in the EEZ of the country and the uncontrolled growth of the population. Other economic threats exist as well, such as economic shocks, but these are more difficult to identify until they actually take place. Thus, problems are actual and total. Where the Maldivian society is concerned threats are once again latent apart from the problems that may arise from drug abuse and trafficking. Although threats exist the society appears to be capable of overcoming some of them. The biggest threats facing the Maldives are environmental threats. They appear to be real threats and ones that need an urgent solution. As far as environmental security problems are concerned the problems appear to be total as the country suffers from high vulnerability as well as actual threats. In general actual threats and potential threats can be identified in all areas. However, the basis for the majority of problems appears to stem from the country's vulnerability rather than the number of actual threats facing the country today. Military weakness, coupled with political and economic openness and dependence, and environmental fragility has made the country extremely vulnerable to any threats that may arise in the future as well as those that exist today. While on the whole, the Maldives faces some actual threats in certain areas and is vulnerable in general, all problems appear to have their underlying basis in the small size and the geographical nature of the country together with its underlying characteristics of islandness.

## Chapter VI

### Case Study: THE SEYCHELLES

#### Background

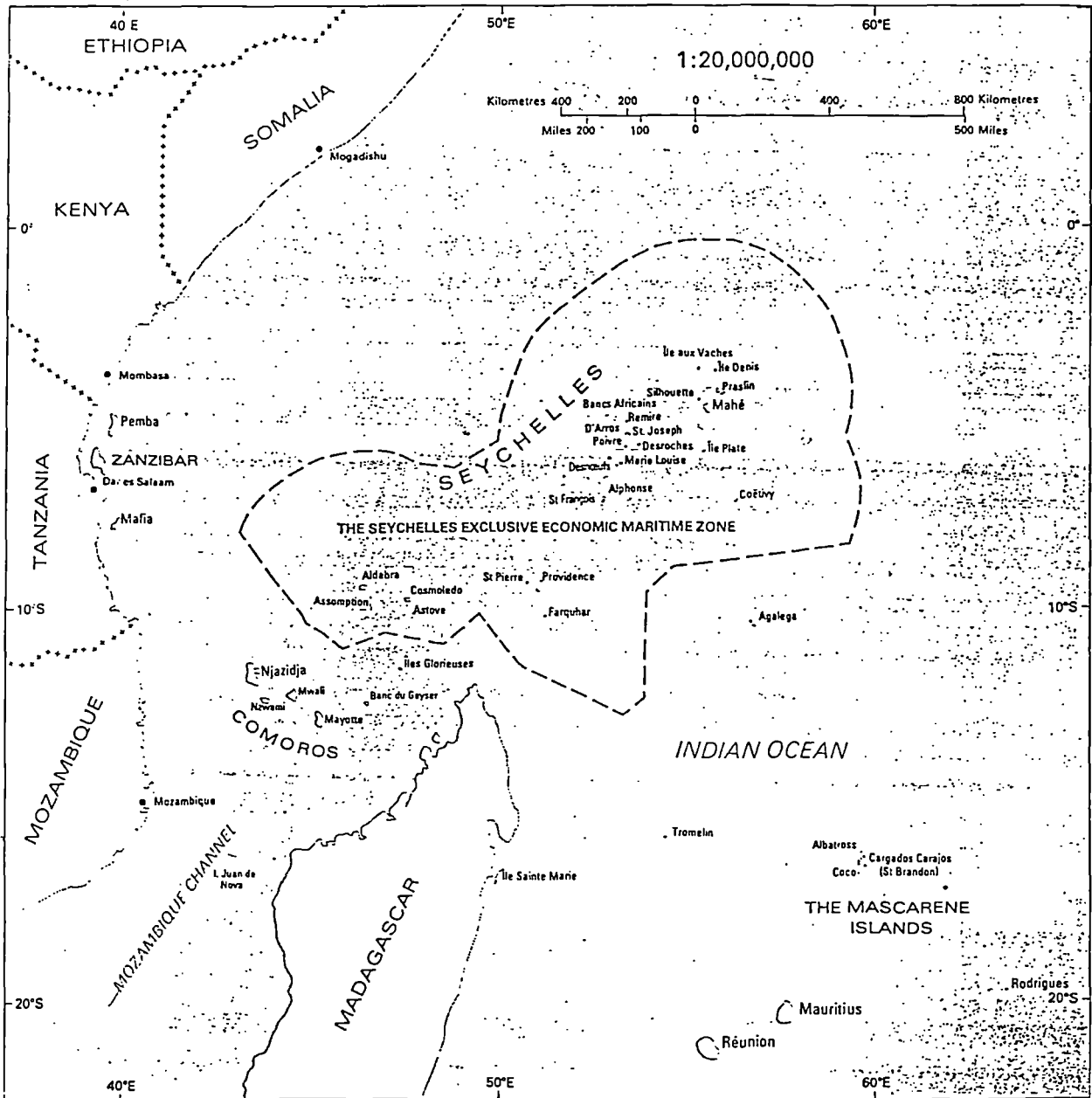
##### Physical Environment

The group of islands that comprises the Seychelles cover an aggregate land area of 444 square kilometres in the western Indian Ocean, 4° to 11° south of the equator. It is fairly remote, being 575 miles from Madagascar and 980 miles from Mauritius. There are 115 islands (excluding the tiny islets) which are located in four main groups, the Seychelles, Amirante, Farquhar and Aldabra with four smaller islands; Denis, Bird, Platte and Coetivy. The Seychelles boasts an EEZ of 1.3 million square kilometres. Some of the islands are granitic, forty-two in all. The rest are coralline. In some of the islands the land is therefore high above the sea level and the beaches fringe massive granite mountains. The highest point is Morne Seychellois, a 2,990 feet peak on the main island of Mahe'. The coralline islands are barely a few feet above the sea level and human settlements are few. The majority of the islands lie outside the cyclone belt. In the Seychelles more than 500 varieties of flora and many rare birds exist. The Black Parrot and the Paradise Fly-catcher are two birds unique to the country. The coco-de-mer is among the largest fruits in the world and is found only in the Seychelles, as are the giant tortoises from Aldabra atoll. The country has set up a number of Marine National Parks for the protection of its marine resources. The Seychelles enjoys a tropical climate lending favour to the development of tourism. The average temperature is 27°C. Although tropical vegetation is commonly found, the soil contains only 1% of organic matter, and agriculture is limited. Mineral wealth, too, is fairly limited. Exploration for oil has taken place on a small scale. The Seychelles organised a regional Indian Ocean Seminar on oil exploration in September 1992, attended by eight Indian Ocean countries, with a view to co-operate on a geological study to identify oil rich sites.<sup>1</sup> The government is investigating the possibility of processing coral into lime. A

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<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 19 September 1992, p. 6

# SEYCHELLES



Swiss Company is also involved in the quarrying of granite but in the past many such projects were abandoned due to high transport costs.<sup>2</sup>

### Historical Background

The island group of the Seychelles remained extremely isolated until fairly recently. The Arabs may have sighted and landed on the islands in their voyages to the east but the first Europeans that 'discovered' the islands may have been the Portuguese. The first documented mention of the islands was by an Englishman, John Jourdain, in 1609. He was part of an expedition which visited the islands and he describes them as, "a very good refreshing place .....without any fear or danger, except the alligators, for you cannot discern that ever any people had been there before us".<sup>3</sup> The islands were also frequented by pirates among who the most notorious was Olivier Le Vasseur, more commonly known as "La Buze", who was well known for harassing shipping in the Indian Ocean, mainly British and French. Although there appeared to be a Dutch settlement in the islands in the sixteenth century, the first permanent settlements were by those who came over from neighbouring Mauritius and Reunion and took place in the eighteenth century. It is claimed that in 1771, fifteen "blancs" (whites) and some slaves settled in Mahe'.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the French may have been among the early settlers with their slaves. The British arrived in the islands in the nineteenth century mainly from India and the colonies on the East African coast.

In the past, the Seychelles was the subject of rivalry between the French and the British and the country was more or less jostled to and fro between French and British control. In the middle of the eighteenth century two major expeditions were sent to the Seychelles by the French and in 1756 the islands were claimed by the French. The colony was named Sechelles after Vicomte Moreau de Sêchelles, a French Controller General of finance. The British acquired control of the islands in

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 23 May 1992, p. 5

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Marcus Franda, *The Seychelles: unquiet islands*, (Gower Publishing Co. Ltd, Hants, 1982), p. 7

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

1815 under the Treaty of Paris and changed the spelling to 'Seychelles'. It has been claimed that prior to this the leadership of the islands changed the flag in the port from the Union Jack to the French Tricolour depending on which country's ships were entering the port. The British control of the Seychelles was a second best as they had tried to trade the Seychelles and Mauritius for the French possessions in India but had failed to do so. The Seychelles were granted the status of a colony in 1903. In 1967 a partially elected governing council was established and in 1970 a limited self-government was established with a chief minister. The Seychelles received independence in 1976.

### Socio-economic background

Economically, the Seychelles is like many of the SIDS, dependent on a few primary industries. Tourism occupies the first place. It has expanded since the construction of an international airport in 1971. Industries in the Seychelles include a brewery, a tobacco manufacturing plant, a plastic factory, a milk production plant, and soap and detergent factories. Others on a smaller scale include boat-building, furniture making and tailoring. Although arable land is limited the climatic conditions help the growth of coconut, the main cash crop. However, the staple food, rice, and other main food products, are imported. Minor export crops include patchouli, vanilla, tea and limes. Although agriculture is limited, home grown fruits and vegetables such as bananas, mangoes, bread fruit and sweet potatoes are common. The government owns some farms, including livestock farms and some fruit and vegetable farms. The Seychelles has seen some progress in the country's economy in recent years. The GDP increased from 147 million US dollars in 1980 to 393 million in 1992.<sup>5</sup> In the Seychelles, the Central Bank of the Seychelles is the bank of issue and four foreign banks, including Barclays Bank and Banque Francais Commerciale, have branches in the capital, Victoria.

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<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, *Small States: Economic Review and basic statistics*, (Commonwealth Secretariat, London, April 1995), p. 31

The Seychelles are fortunate to be free from most of the indigenous diseases that are found on the African continent such as malaria, yellow fever and bilharzia. In 1990 there were 49 doctors and 436 hospital beds. Due to the fact that the majority of the population lives on the main island of Mahe', health services are accessible to the majority of the population. A doctor is permanently stationed on the islands of Praslin and La Digue and a midwife on the island of Silhouette.

### **Perception of Security Problems**

Security problems occupied a minor place in the history of the Seychelles until independence. Once independence was achieved and the protective umbrella of the British was removed, the Seychelles, like most of the newly independent states, found itself, as its first President, James Mancham described, "alone in a world of conflict and pressure".<sup>6</sup> At the time of independence he stated that his government would,

"try and pursue the philosophy of a small Indian Ocean Switzerland which might become an off-shore banking and financial centre, would have no armed forces, would accept no foreign bases and would have no defence agreement with Britain".<sup>7</sup>

However, after independence, far from being the Switzerland of the Indian Ocean the problems suddenly appeared to multiply. The Seychelles has been preoccupied with threats of coups that might have led to the toppling of the government, especially with the use of mercenaries. The government of James Mancham was overthrown in 1977 in a bloodless coup and his Prime Minister, France-Albert René, assumed control. The coup involved some members of the police force and 200 'militant workers'. Whilst this was done by Seychellois people and not foreign mercenaries, the deposed President accused the Soviet Union of "active agreement and connivance" and claimed that it was "part and parcel of the policy of the Soviet control of the Indian Ocean".<sup>8</sup> This was vehemently denied by the Soviet News

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<sup>6</sup> James Mancham, *Paradise raped: life, love and power in the Seychelles*, (Methuen, London, 1983) p. 158

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 12 March 1976, p. 27852

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 4 August 1977, p. 28485



Agency Tass and the new government in the Seychelles. There were also allegations that the force which carried out the coup was trained by the Tanzanians.

The history of the country since independence is replete with incidents of this nature. In 1978 the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Victoria announced the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government of René with the assistance of mercenaries. According to the government, several arms caches were found in vessel at the port of Mombasa in Kenya ready to leave for the Seychelles. Although the Kenyan authorities claimed that the only vessel fitting the description in Mombasa was an unseaworthy yacht, the Ministry of Internal Affairs alleged that several Kenyan ministers were involved in a personal capacity and that the former president James Mancham and three of his former ministers were also involved. Subsequently, 21 people were arrested and two US civilians employed at the US Airforce Tracking station were ordered to leave the country because of alleged involvement.<sup>9</sup> In 1979 the Seychelles government announced that another plot "sponsored from abroad with the co-operation of mercenaries standing ready in Durban (South Africa)" had been uncovered and 78 people were arrested.<sup>10</sup> However, the most infamous attack, which actually took place, was in 1981. This was by a group of mercenaries led by Michael Hoare, known as Colonel 'Mad Mike', and involved mainly South African mercenaries disguised as a tourist group. The discovery of weapons in their hand luggage by the Seychelles customs alerted the mercenaries and led them to start the attack earlier than planned. The Seychellois government was able to quell the attack with the help of the Tanzanian military whose men were training the Seychelles armed forces. The mercenaries escaped to South Africa by hijacking an Air India plane which happened to land while the fighting was still going on. In December 1982, another 'plot' was discovered, first reported by The Sunday Times. It alleged that the plot was to be carried out first by de-stabilising the islands through a series of bombings of public buildings and then by the invasion of 300 South African

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 30 June 1978, p. 29059

<sup>10</sup> President France Albert René, 16 November 1979, Quoted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 30 May 1980, p.30273

mercenaries.<sup>11</sup> In September 1986, there was once again allegations of another plot with the help of the army as well as mercenaries. This resulted in the dismissal of three senior military officers and a reshuffle of the Council of Ministers.<sup>12</sup> As such, the early years of independence in the Seychelles was threatened by coups, real and imaginary.

With respect to threats from external sources, the continuous military build-up in the Indian Ocean did create anxiety among the leadership. President René claimed that the Seychelles had already taken measures to discourage the growth of the military arsenal in the region and that it "will not grant facilities for the establishment of any foreign military bases" within its territory.<sup>13</sup> However, an actual invasion by a foreign military power is not regarded as a possible threat. Although the government of President René took a pro-Soviet stance, especially in his early days, the Seychelles was able to withstand the influence and pressure from the superpowers by playing one against the other. The United States had established a satellite tracking station in 1963, which "repairs and gives instructions to satellites in order to keep them in orbit and on track", bringing in much needed foreign currency.<sup>14</sup> The number of personnel in the Soviet Embassy in Victoria was increased substantially after the Socialist government came into power and, after the Seychelles suffered from the mercenary attack in 1981, the Soviet Union despatched two naval ships, a cruiser and a frigate, to the port of Victoria within two days of the attack, which according to some symbolised the "strategic upper hand that Moscow seems to have gained in this part of the Indian Ocean".<sup>15</sup> However, in a radio broadcast on 5 October 1984 the President denied allegations that the Seychelles was permitting the establishment of Soviet military facilities and declared that the Seychelles welcomed Soviet military aid because "it was free and would welcome

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<sup>11</sup> See *The Sunday Times*, 24 October 1982

<sup>12</sup> *Africa Confidential*, Vol.27, No. 20, 1 October 1986, p. 1

<sup>13</sup> Address by H.E. France Albert René, the President of the Seychelles, at the opening seminar on regional co-operation by ACP states of East Africa and the Indian Ocean, 17 April 1980

<sup>14</sup> Franda, *The Seychelles: unquiet islands*, pp. 69 - 72, 118

<sup>15</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 11 December 1981

free military aid from other countries".<sup>16</sup> Thus the Seychelles manoeuvred between both sides. The Americans maintained their tracking station and relations improved considerably in the 1980s. In February 1983, a US \$ 3,000,000 aid agreement was ratified. The Seychelles government continued to express concern about the military build-up of the Indian Ocean and declared that, although it would welcome warships from any state into the tiny port of Mahe', they would have to declare that they were not carrying any nuclear weapons on board. This offer was taken up by the Soviet Union but not by the United States in accordance with their policy of not declaring whether the vessel carried any nuclear weapons.

Although the Seychelles maintained close relations with its two former colonial masters, the relationship was fairly rocky at times. Initially, its relations with the British were cordial. Although the British had detached three islands, Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches from the Seychelles in 1965 to form the British Indian Ocean Territory, these were later returned to the Seychelles at the time of its independence. With the establishment of a Socialist government in 1978 relations grew cool between the Seychelles and Britain and France. Seychelles accused France of collaborating with some persons attempting to overthrow the government in 1979 and two French diplomats were declared *persona non grata*. However, relations improved afterwards and following the 1981 mercenary attack, the French sent a warship to Victoria the very next day. In recent years Britain and France have put considerable pressure on the Seychelles leadership to reform its political system and President René, in his public addresses, constantly attacked this 'conspiracy' to force him to make political changes.<sup>17</sup>

When President René came to power relations with the OAU were strengthened and close ties were established with Tanzania. Tanzania provided the Seychelles with 'advisors' and assisted in training the newly established Seychellois

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, January 1985

<sup>17</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 20 July 1991, p. 3

armed forces. The difficulties with this kind of 'big brother' relationship for the SIDS is to distance themselves from any conflict in which the 'big brother' might get involved. Such was the case for the Seychelles when Tanzania went to war with Uganda. The Seychelles described this incident as "something very serious" and, admitting the dependency of Seychelles on Tanzanian military aid, President René claimed that "there is a possibility that our enemies ... may decide that while our brothers are busy with their problems they can come and attack us".<sup>18</sup>

In recent years, the Seychelles' biggest dilemma with regard to its neighbours was with South Africa. Relations with South Africa were more or less double-edged. Externally, relations had been quite hostile even though economic relations were continued. No formal diplomatic relations were maintained in the past and the policy of apartheid was widely condemned. Relations with South Africa deteriorated after it was accused several times of helping with the numerous attempts to overthrow the government of René, especially the 1981 mercenary attack. Allegations were made that the attack was supported by the South African authorities who allegedly supplied them with arms. Although this was vehemently denied by South Africa, later evidence revealed it to be the case. A number of the mercenaries were reservists in the South African defence forces and the manner in which they were treated once they returned to South Africa shows that South Africa must have had some connection with them. Although Mike Hoare and a few others were imprisoned, most of the others were released. Louis Le Grange, the South African Minister of Police, claimed that thirty-nine of the mercenaries were released because "they only shot out some windows and ran around in the bush".<sup>19</sup> The United Nations Commission which was set up to investigate the attack stated that "we find it difficult to believe that the South African authorities did not at least have knowledge of the preparations in this matter".<sup>20</sup> The mercenary leader himself later claimed that the South African

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<sup>18</sup> *Nation* (Victoria Daily) 6 November 1978

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Ministry of Education and Information, Seychelles, *The White paper on aggression of 25 November 1981 against the Seychelles*, (Seychelles, 1982)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

authorities supported the attack and provided them with weaponry.<sup>21</sup> South Africa later admitted responsibility and in July 1992, the government of the Seychelles announced the receipt of R8,000,000 from the South African government as compensation for the attempted coup.<sup>22</sup> While South Africa was accused of interfering in the domestic politics of the Seychelles, economic contacts were maintained discreetly, which gradually led to the decrease of South African involvement on the political front. In 1982 an agreement was reached between the Seychelles and South Africa under which the Seychelles released the mercenaries captured by the security forces in the 1981 attack. According to some sources it also included a secret clause under which the South African government agreed to prevent further coup attempts developing in South Africa.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the truth of this the Seychelles has subsequently been accused of assisting South Africa in breaking the arms embargo and in aiding the sale of South African oil.<sup>23a</sup>

Relations with Kenya too came to a head after the 1981 armed attack. Allegations were made that Kenya helped the organisers of the attack. One of the captured mercenaries claimed that the Kenyan government had "agreed to provide two planes which would fly Kenyan soldiers and policemen to replace Tanzanian troops" and that a new government would be 'flown in from Kenya'.<sup>24</sup> President René, in a press conference held soon after the attack, claimed that "some members of the Kenyan government do not like Seychelles and its present government".<sup>25</sup> But Kenya categorically denied any involvement. Relationships with its smaller neighbours are more or less friendly as it has cultural affinities with both Mauritius and Reunion. However, the relationship with Mauritius is complicated by a territorial dispute over the oceanic banks of Saya de Malha, which are considered by the Seychelles to be an extension of its continental

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Hoare, *The Seychelles Affair*, (Bantam Press, London, 1986), pp. 19, 48 - 56

<sup>22</sup> *Keating's Contemporary Archives*, July 1992

<sup>23</sup> See *Africa Confidential*, Vol.28, No.22, 4 November 1987, pp.4 - 5

<sup>23a</sup> See *The Independent* 9 June 1992

<sup>24</sup> *Keating's Contemporary Archives*, May 1982

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education and Information, Seychelles, *White paper on aggression of 25 November 1981 against the Seychelles*

shelf but are also claimed by Mauritius. In addition to this, Seychelles' ties with the socialist Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM) have not been welcomed by Mauritius which accused Seychelles of interfering in its domestic affairs by financing the MMM.

Domestically, security problems have been seen by the leadership in the terms of threats to itself from those advocating democratic policies in the country. Domestic problems had existed even prior to independence. The relations between the two political parties that existed at the time, the Seychelles Democratic Party (SDP) led by James Mancham and the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP) led by Albert René, were quite hostile, and they constantly accused each other of activities aimed at disrupting the peace and stability of the country. Sporadic terrorist incidents occurred before and after independence, although at the time of independence the two parties had called a truce. But the unstable nature of the internal situation was revealed in full when the government of Mancham was overthrown by the supporters of the SPUP. Soon after assuming power the new leadership announced the establishment of a National Youth Service, which led to considerable opposition by students and parents alike. Violent demonstrations by the people led to schools being closed for one week. The President claimed that they were trying to instigate "a counter-revolutionary situation".<sup>26</sup> The establishment of a one-party state was also opposed by some factions of the society, and led to the creation of resistance groups abroad, some of which were accused of being behind the various attempted coups in the Seychelles. Among those who led the call for the return of democracy to the Seychelles through multi-party politics was the former President James Mancham who launched an organisation known as 'Crusade for Democracy in the Seychelles'. They inundated the Seychelles with political messages through the fax machine. Religious organisations were also viewed as a problem by the leadership, especially the main Christian organisations which were critical of the regime. Ever since Albert René assumed power the government and the Church has

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 30 May 1980, p. 30237

been at loggerheads. The Church was openly critical of the political system and often called for the establishment of a democratic system, accusing the government of corruption and embezzlement of state funds and criticising its human rights record, especially the treatment of political prisoners.<sup>27</sup> The government lashed back vigorously at the Church and President René once stated that he wonders whether one Reverend's accusations were "in the name of God, or of the former President James Mancham, or a political party."<sup>28</sup>

The Seychelles has also faced problems from its military. At the time of independence the country had no armed forces. However, the Seychelles People's Militia was created shortly afterwards and a military establishment was completed in 1980. On 17 August 1982, a group of soldiers from the Seychelles Peoples Defence Force (SPDF) took over key installations in Victoria, including the radio and police stations, the telegraph office and the Union-Vale army camp, and demanded changes from the government. These demands were somewhat uncertain with some demanding the resignation of the government while others only wanted the removal of the senior military leaders. Nine people were reported to have been killed in the attack. The rebellion was suppressed with the aid of some 100 Tanzanians troops who had remained on Seychelles after the 1981 armed attack, demonstrating the need for external assistance. Another case of military involvement came in 1986. The attempted coup against President René at this time was apparently led by the Minister of Defence. However, at present the military appears to be loyal to the leadership and therefore it is unlikely to be seen as a potential trouble-maker.

The Seychelles is fortunate that so far it has not experienced any separatist incidents so that secession is not regarded as a potential problem by the government. The absence of secessionist tendencies may be due to the fact that there were no indigenous people and all Seychellois are ethnically of 'foreign' origin. Besides, the smallness of the population may have helped in the assimilation of the community as

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<sup>27</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 27 October 1990, p. 5; also 15 December 1990, p. 4

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 27 October 1990, p.5

the need for co-operation and reliance on each other becomes greater. Besides, the majority of the people live on the capital island of Mahe'.

The problems relating to the protection and surveillance of its territorial zones are acknowledged to be a potential problem by the leadership. The Seychelles possess the largest maritime zone in the Indian Ocean apart from India and France. It has jurisdiction over 1.3 million square kilometres. This problem is prominent in the Seychelles as the islands are far apart from each other and the majority of the people live only on three islands. Although it does license foreign fleets from certain countries to fish in its EEZ, such as the countries of the EC and the former Soviet Union, several South Korean ships have been shipwrecked on islands carrying tons of fish. The difficulty is that, like most SIDS, the Seychelles has no way of proving that these vessels had been fishing in its EEZ. In the early 1980s a Japanese fishing vessel was caught poaching and the government seized the ship with its catch. Efficient surveillance of the EEZ is vital not just for the protection of the fish stocks from unlawful fishing but also in watching out for contraband. Moreover, with the numerous threats the Seychelles has experienced from mercenaries this is also a main concern. Although a sea-borne invasion did not actually happen in the Seychelles, the mercenary leader, Mike Hoare, claimed that the original plan for the 1981 attack included the use of boats and inflatable landing craft, but the plan had to be abandoned due to the unavailability of funds.<sup>29</sup> President René claimed soon afterwards that the maritime surveillance unit in the Seychelles "is a very effective one" and that, "if once in a while we can bring in a culprit, someone who has in fact been exploiting resources in our area of control, that is sufficient to deter others from doing it because the cost to them is very high".<sup>30</sup> The violation of their maritime zones and the airspace is not only carried out by would-be terrorists or fishing vessels. Even other states sometimes use their waters as if it were part of the high seas and their airspace as part of the global commons. In December 1981, soon after the mercenary attack, an aircraft was sighted in the Seychelles' airspace which was

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<sup>29</sup> Hoare, *The Seychelles Affair*, p. 41

<sup>30</sup> In an interview with Third World Media Services, March, 1982



not identified. The Seychelles warned foreign missions in diplomatic notes that "any such further violations will entail the shooting down of all aircraft involved without prior warning".<sup>31</sup> However, it has no capability to carry out such actions.

Societal threats do exist to some extent in the form of those associated with the trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs, but, overall, the leadership does not see the society as facing major security problems although the threat from narcotic drugs is acknowledged as a potential one. It first arose in the country in the early 1980s when there was a large infiltration of drugs into the country. President René declared in 1982 that, "They have even come into the country inside settees, from which foam has been removed and replaced by drugs."<sup>32</sup> Cannabis is the most common drug found on the islands and is grown there. In September 1994, after attending a regional conference on combating drug trafficking, the Police Commissioner acknowledged that it is vital that the ships in transit at Port Victoria are thoroughly checked for drugs.<sup>33</sup> The police have also seized several consignments of dangerous drugs, some allegedly brought in from Madagascar, and the anti-drug squad has raided several plantations of cannabis.

Although the current leadership has been pre-occupied with security problems that may arise from mercenary attacks or threats to itself from political opponents favouring a democratic form of governing, the leadership recognises that the main problems faced by the country are in the economic sector.<sup>34</sup> The small size of the country has created many bottle-necks in its economic development. The country is highly dependent on tourism and although economic diversification has taken place to a certain extent, it still has a lot to achieve. Although the small population has led to a high GDP per capita in comparison with some other SIDS, the limited population has also resulted in a limited domestic market. Among the main economic

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<sup>31</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 1 December 1991.

<sup>32</sup> H.E. Albert René, President of the Seychelles, speech delivered at the SPPF branch meeting at Mont Fleuri, Seychelles, on 19 September 1982.

<sup>33</sup> *Seychelles Nation*, No.157, 1 September 1994 p.1

<sup>34</sup> Interview with H.E. John P. Mascarenhas, the High Commissioner of the Seychelles to the United Kingdom, 12 December 1994

problems facing the country today, the government argues, are the problems of financial aid in the form of grants and loans. The government claims that the main problem here is that the financing agencies, bilateral and multilateral, rely on a single development indicator -per capita GNP- as the basis for providing grants. They state that, "failure to mobilise grants and loans on sufficiently concessionary terms remains the single largest threat to Seychelles' ability to deal with its high degree of vulnerability".<sup>35</sup>

The leadership also recognises the problems of environmental degradation and argues that for the Seychelles " 'environmental threat' has an immediate meaning as well as long term significance"<sup>36</sup>. The Seychelles is fortunate that the main islands are granitic and, as such, the problems of global warming and sea level rise is not a major threat. However, due to its small area Seychelles' ecology is highly susceptible to the destruction of trees and vegetation on steep slopes and along beaches, and to improper disposal of domestic and industrial waste. Among those problems that have been highlighted as needing urgent attention include the problem of marine pollution. High levels of pollution have been building up, especially near the Victoria harbour. Beach erosion is also a considerable concern to the government. It has reached an advanced stage in many areas on the main island. The other area of major concern is the disposal of domestic and industrial waste.<sup>37</sup> Oil spills, forest fires and land slides have also been identified as "significant threats".<sup>38</sup>

## **Providing Security in the Seychelles**

### **Military Resources**

At the time of independence the Seychelles was without a defence force. A small force was created soon afterwards which grew in strength in the following years. However, today the total armed forces of the Seychelles consist of 300

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<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Planning and External Relations, Seychelles, *National Development Plan 1990-94*, Vol 1, (Victoria, Mahe, 1990), p. 22

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. pp. 44 - 64

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 48

personnel in the army, 1,000 personnel in the national guard and the coast guard has 300 personnel. The army has one infantry battalion, one artillery company and a support unit and is based in Mahe'. The main strategy of the armed forces appears to be to prevent small interventions by mercenaries or domestic dissidents. The Seychelles spent 6% of its GDP ( US\$ 12 million) on defence expenditure in 1990. However, the defence budget has been cut down to US\$ 9.6 million in 1995.<sup>39</sup> Although the Seychelles has no defence agreement with another power it has received military assistance from several countries among which are France, Tanzania, India, North Korea and the Soviet Union. Indian military assistance has been in the form of equipment and training. Tanzania also helped to establish and train the Seychelles People's Liberation Army and it was with the assistance of Tanzanian troops that the 1981 mercenary attack was put down. The Tanzanian troops have now left and so have the North Korean military advisors. In 1988 a coast guard delegation from the Seychelles visited India as guests of the Indian Navy and a statement from the Indian side declared that they looked forward to 'substantial' discussions on enhancing co-operation between the navies of the two countries. President René also praised the Indian intervention in the Maldives in 1988 saying that it was "the responsibility of the best equipped neighbouring countries to come to the assistance of threatened nations which do not have the means to defend themselves".<sup>40</sup> The Seychelles have also sought assistance from the United States in recent years. The first joint military exercise by the two armed forces, known as Balance Scale 95 - 1, was held in July 1995 and involved 60 members of the Seychelles' Peoples Defence Force (SPDF) and 90 members of the US Armed Forces.<sup>41</sup>

### **Political capabilities**

Seychelles was a one-party state from 1979 to until recently. In 1992, multi party elections were held for the first time for a 23 member commission to draft a

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<sup>39</sup> *The Military Balance 1995/96*, (Oxford University Press for International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), p.254

<sup>40</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 12 November 1988

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 1 July 1995, p. 3

new constitution. Although the constitution failed to gain the necessary 60% votes at the referendum in November 1992, an amended constitution was adopted in 1993. Under the new constitution multi-party politics was institutionalised and currently there are nine political parties. A National Assembly of thirty three members was also established. Among the members 22 are elected directly and 11 seats are allocated on a proportional basis. The government is headed by the President who is elected every five years. The President is the Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. In the first multi-party Presidential elections held in June 1993 after the abolition of the one-party system, President René was re-elected with 59.5 % of the vote; his party, the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) gained 27 seats to the opposition's five seats. The former President James Mancham received 36.7% of the votes and his party the Democratic Party has four seats in the parliament.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Seychelles has faced numerous political problems, mainly in the form of attempts to overthrow the government, the country is relatively stable. One of the reasons for this may be that those who dared to voice their criticisms against the government or those who attempted to deviate from the official line have been severely reprimanded in the past. According to some a person could lose his job and his house for dissenting against the official view and phones have been regularly tapped.<sup>43</sup> It appears that this has resulted in high levels of fear by the public of those in power, and consequently, low levels of political participation. Further, the majority of those who opposed the government of President René were based abroad, either of their own will or having been forced to flee the country. For those Seychellois living at home, despite the curtailment of political freedom, the economic and social well-being and the standard of living have been improving considerably in recent years. Under the René government the standard of social welfare provisions have been high

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<sup>42</sup> *Africa South of the Sahara*, 24th ed., (Europa Publications Limited, London, 1994), p.795

<sup>43</sup> *The Independent*, 9 June 1992

and many have benefited from the system. Therefore, many local people appeared to be content with the then existing system of one party politics.

Externally, the Seychelles has followed a strong non-aligned policy that is described by the René government as positive non-alignment. This means that the country although following the path pursued by the more radical members of the Non-Aligned Movement, who had the tendency to lean slightly towards the Socialist bloc, also attempted to maintain good relations with the West. Despite having a socialist government in the past, it has maintained good relations with both the US and the Soviet Union and this policy appears to continue. The lease for the US satellite tracking station was extended until September of the year 2000. President René paid a visit to the United States in 1989 and in 1991 the commander of the US AirForce Space Command made a three day visit to the Seychelles.<sup>44</sup> The Seychelles has strong cultural links with France. France is the main trading partner and almost half of domestic products are exported to France. It is also the largest aid donor to the Seychelles. It maintains close contact directly and through the French Departement of Reunion. In 1990 France assisted the Seychelles in setting up a tuna canning factory and it also gives assistance to numerous other sectors such as education. French interest in the Seychelles can also be seen as part of the wider role of France in promoting and maintaining its language abroad.<sup>45</sup> Free television programmes in French are shown and French assistance is given to cultural centres that promotes the language and French culture.

The Seychelles also plays an active role within its immediate environment, maintaining contacts with neighbouring states. In 1983 the Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius formed the Indian Ocean Commission to increase co-operation in the region. The Seychelles and Mauritius have also established a Joint Commission for fostering relations under which agreements have been signed for co-operation in

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<sup>44</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, March 23, 1991, p.4

<sup>45</sup> Jean Houbert, "The Mascareignes, the Seychelles and the Chagos Islands with a French Connection: Security in a decolonised Indian Ocean", in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, pp. 93 - 111

various sectors, including the exchange of expertise in different sectors. In 1988 the Seychelles established diplomatic relations with Comoros and Mauritius. In 1989 diplomatic relations were established with Morocco, Madagascar and Cote d'Ivoire and in 1990 with Kenya. Formal relations were established with South Africa in 1992. Although diplomatic relations have been established with many countries very few Embassies and High Commissions have been established overseas due to the lack of necessary finances. In the Seychelles there are diplomatic representations from Belgium, China, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, India, Mauritius, Madagascar, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Britain and the United States.<sup>46</sup> The Seychelles has also joined several international organisations in order to promote its interests including the United Nations and the Commonwealth.\* It has also been active in bringing to the attention of the international community the plight of small states and was one of the co-sponsors of the UN General Assembly resolution on protection and security of small states. It also actively campaigned for the establishment of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace and the removal of the military arsenal from the Indian Ocean.

### **Economic Resources**

The Seychelles has a narrow economic base and relies heavily on few industries, especially tourism. Tourism has made reasonable progress in the last decade but the threats from mercenary attacks did lead to occasional drops in tourist arrivals. The number of tourist arrivals increased from 3,175 in 1971 to 98,547 in 1992.<sup>47</sup> Most tourists come from Europe. Tourism employs around 20% of the total employment providing directly 16.7% of the country's GNP.<sup>48</sup> Tourism is heavily regulated by the government and standards of hygiene and health for hotels are enforced. Construction industries boomed during the early days of tourism. The current regime has stressed the importance of fisheries resources. Although fish was

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<sup>46</sup> Information: The High Commission of the Seychelles in the United Kingdom. For diplomatic missions accredited to the Seychelles and Honorary Consulates of the Seychelles see Appendix D

\* See Appendix D

<sup>47</sup> Information: Department of Tourism and Transport, Tourism Division, Republic of Seychelles.

<sup>48</sup> Tourism Division, Dept. of Tourism and Transport *The Evolution of Tourism in Seychelles*, (Mahe' November 1992).

a major source of the daily intake of protein for the people in the past, fishing was never carried out on a large scale and for the majority it was mainly a supplementary source of income. However, today exports of fish and fish products accounts for around 90% of all domestic exports. The government established the Seychelles National Fishing Company and has constructed a cannery. The Seychelles Fishing Authority is responsible for managing the marine resources. The Seychelles also receives revenue from licensing foreign fishing. Among them is a protocol concluded with the EC in January 1990 for a three-year period that allows forty tuna trawlers' access to the EEZ of the Seychelles. The Seychelles government stands to benefit by 6.9 million ECUs per annum on top of 20 ECUs per tonne of fish caught.<sup>49</sup> The main port at Victoria can accommodate up to eight ocean-going vessels at any one time. In 1990 the gross tonnage of goods loaded and unloaded in the port of Victoria amounted to 11,200 and 347,700 tonnes respectively.<sup>50</sup> Inter-island sea transport is mainly carried out by private owners and operators although the government operate scheduled passenger services by air to outer islands. A number of institutions have also been set up to assist the country in its economic development. The Seychelles Monetary Authority was converted to a central bank in 1983 and the Development Bank of Seychelles was set up in 1978. To enhance trade within the region there has been discussions within the neighbouring states about setting up a new trade bloc. This idea of an 'Indian Ocean Rim' has been warmly supported by the Seychelles and according to the government the Seychelles intend to fully exploit its location in becoming a transshipment centre.<sup>51</sup>

## **Human resources**

The population of the Seychelles is around 72,000 and is divided among the three main islands; Mahe' (64,000), Praslin (6,000) and La Digue (2,000). Although the islands have been inhabited by various groups of people, among them Africans, Chinese, Indians and French, interbreeding has led to the development of a group

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<sup>49</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 27 January 1990, p.6

<sup>50</sup> *The Europa World Yearbook 1993*, Vol. II, (Europa Publications Ltd, London, 1993), p. 2492

<sup>51</sup> Information: Seychelles High Commission, London, 12 December 1994

that today identifies itself as ethnically Seychellois. The majority of the population are Roman Catholics, (around 90% with 8% Anglican and other 2%).<sup>52</sup> Creole is the main language in use by the public, although French and English are widely used. English is the official language of the National Assembly. Despite the growth in population, emigration has always affected the country. The main reason for emigration appears to be economic as well as political, although with the improvement of the economy the trend has diminished slightly in recent years. The literacy level for the Seychelles stands at 85 per cent.<sup>53</sup> However, there is a lack of higher training institutes. In the Polytechnic, where students study for A' levels, 1,604 students were being educated in 1991.<sup>54</sup> Higher education is obtained abroad, mainly in Britain.<sup>55</sup>

Domestically, social strength derives from the natural existence of close-knit ties. Although the Seychelles is a multi-ethnic society, apart from the average day-to-day tensions, very few racial or religious problems exist. The leadership also recognises the dangers of social unrest to the country, especially with the successful development of tourism, and has attempted to minimise the problems, stating that "the failure to address matters of social development, equity, social stability and national unity could pose an immediate threat for a small tourist-oriented country".<sup>56</sup> Although societal security problems may be low, threats from the infiltration and trafficking of narcotic drugs are recognised, and certain measures have been put in place to meet such problems. In August 1994, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1990 was amended under which stiffer sentences for trafficking were introduced. A national task force has been set up to study the problem, to make recommendations and to review legislation. The Seychelles' police have also set up a telephone hotline for those who want to give information on drugs and other related crimes.<sup>57</sup> Regional

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<sup>52</sup> *Africa South of the Sahara 1994*, 23rd edition, (Europa Publications Limited, London, 1993), p.754

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Planning and External Relations, Seychelles, *National Development Plan 1990- 1994*, Vol. 1

<sup>54</sup> *Africa, South of the Sahara 1995*, p.802

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of Planning and External Relations, Seychelles, *National Development Plan 1990- 1994*, Vol. 11, p.24

<sup>57</sup> *Nation*, Vol.15, No.138, 4 August 1994



assistance is also being sought from countries such as South Africa in an attempt to combat drug trafficking.

### **Environmental Resources**

The Seychelles has always attempted to protect its natural environment and many policies and plans have been implemented in order to do so. Nature parks and reserves occupy more than 40% of the land area of the country. Five oceanic areas have been designated as marine parks. In 1989 the Environmental Protection Act was initiated and a Department of Environment was established, the Executive head of which reports directly to the President. A series of workshops and seminars have been conducted and following the inter-ministerial workshops a list of priorities has been outlined. The Seychelles has also formulated an Environmental Management Plan 1990-2000. The measures proposed are:

- 1) Protection of health and environment: among which include the setting and monitoring of water quality standards; both domestic and coastal; the preparation of local and regional oil spill contingency plans; etc.
- 2) Management of natural resources on a sustainable basis: among which include the improvement of water supply and allocation system, the prevention of vegetation loss, and combating soil erosion on mountain slopes and coastal erosion;
- 3) Preservation of the Seychelles Natural Heritage and Biological Diversity: among which the main targets are the improvement of facilities at the Curieuse National Park, the Aldabra World Heritage site and the monitoring and protection of endangered tortoises and turtles;
- 4) Strengthening of Decision-making, Laws and Institutions: among which include the preparation of guidelines for agriculture, construction, chemicals, forestry and outer island development, the completion of the review of environmental legislation and the presentation of environmental audits with the annual budget requests.
- 5) Environmental Information, Education and Training: the publishing of periodical reports of the state of the environment, and creating awareness among the public, in schools etc.

6) International co-operation and law: under which the Seychelles will help the preparation of an international contingency plan for responding to major marine oil spills in the East African region.

Apart from the above, the Seychelles has also taken an active role in other regional and international programmes. The plan also proposes joint action with Kenya, Mauritius and Tanzania in the recently grouped East African Task Force on the implication of climatic change. The Seychelles also initiated a proposal for a whale sanctuary in the Indian Ocean and played a key part in the International Whaling Commission in guiding the policy. It also plays an active role in the UNEP. The Seychelles is also party to several international agreements. In 1985 it signed the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region and in 1988 the Seychelles signed the International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Case of Oil Pollution Casualties.

### **Contemporary Problems**

The Seychelles has faced numerous problems, both in the form of vulnerabilities as well as threats. While some of the former problems may have now disappeared the country is still small and weak, open to external pressure and dependent of foreign resources in almost every aspect. Militarily the country has few resources and little strength to defend itself in the case of armed aggression. Although the leadership claims that the armed forces successfully defeated the mercenary attack of 1981, it was undoubtedly the presence of the Tanzanian troops and the assistance the local armed forces received from them that proved decisive. Given the size of the population there is obviously a limit to the number of persons that could be drafted into the armed services and though the percentage of the armed forces amounts to around 2% of the population it is still extremely small. It is unlikely that it can defend itself from an attack from another country even if the country arms all of its citizens. Besides, as more people are drafted into the armed forces the fewer are people available for other activities such as those that are needed

for the economic and social development of the country. Moreover, the Seychelles is a country scattered over a large area and although the majority of the people live on Mahe' island, it is going to be extremely difficult for the armed forces to provide a reasonable amount of security to the other areas of the country.

In the past, the political system in the Seychelles appeared to be extremely strong, at least domestically. For almost fourteen years the leadership has resisted any change to the system and therefore appeared to have a total grip on the country. Yet when analysed the above view is false. Political vulnerability has always existed. Lack of human and financial resources has led to the 'importation' of foreign expertise and help. The whole political system was extremely personalised even before the establishment of a one party state. Previously, the former President James Mancham was the sole leader and 'father figure', the position later occupied by President René. This has led to the reliance on one person for almost everything. The existence of a one-party state in the past meant that the government was able to carry out their policies without any resistance. Although the Seychelles appeared to resist all forms of pressure to change to a democratic political system the lack of political legitimacy of the system eventually created all sorts of problems. The domination of the leadership by one individual or one party was the main influence for the numerous coup attempts and mercenary threats. Besides, however much the Seychelles resisted outside pressure, and although President René claimed that the changes that were happening elsewhere in the world, especially the changes in the Eastern Bloc and in South Africa did not have an impact on the Seychelles, it appears that foreign pressure was the key influence in the recent change to democratic politics and that the restoration of democracy in other areas did indeed have some effect. Besides, the need for external assistance and aid finally overtook the need to promote their own political interest by the leadership. In short, it is the dependence on countries such as France and Britain for aid and assistance that made the leadership bow down to the wishes of these countries to change from a one party state to multi-party politics. Under these circumstances, and however much the Seychellois

leadership had resisted the change, it appears that the political system was indeed weak and penetrated. It also lacks the ability to influence events abroad and international participation is limited.

The country is most vulnerable economically. The economy is small, open and influenced by prices abroad. In 1993 exports (f.o.b) stood at US\$ 75 million while imports (c.i.f) were US\$ 234.<sup>58</sup> Limited population has also led to limited markets and limited domestic spending power. Most of the products are imported and there are no substitutes for these products domestically. Besides, the isolated nature of the country has led to high transport costs and has discouraged several would-be investors. Due to heavy reliance on foreign aid and trade the foreign debt of the country is high. Although in recent years the economy has grown it has also led to the decrease of foreign aid and assistance. The Seychelles needs more assistance if it is to sustain growth and development. However, as the economy improves and the per capita income rises it in turn limits the willingness of the donor countries to provide aid, claiming that the Seychelles no longer needs such assistance as before, therefore putting the country in a catch-22 situation. The government's record of its own achievements in developing the Seychelles from a poor country to the status of a middle-income country has become a considerable concern for future growth and economic security.<sup>59</sup> The country also has a severe shortage of skilled and qualified personnel.

### **Threats: Potential, Latent and Manifest**

The Seychelles faces threats but it is unlikely, even with the vulnerable nature of the country, that an armed invasion by another power is about to take place. It has very little strategic material and although located near the oil routes of the Indian Ocean it has few or no enemies today. However, threats from foreign elements such as mercenaries cannot be totally disregarded given the number of incidents

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<sup>58</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, *Small States: Economic Review and basic statistics*, p.41

<sup>59</sup> See Roger De Backer, "Seychelles: Recognising the writing on the wall," *The Courier*, No.134, July-August 1992, pp. 31-34

involving mercenaries. The problem with mercenaries is that as long as they remain for hire there will be people willing to pay them to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of SIDS, so these states cannot relax totally. The mercenary attack on the Seychelles in 1981 was carried out for a surprisingly small sum. Michael Hoare claims that the assault on Seychelles was carried out for only US\$ 300,000.<sup>60</sup> The problem posed by such activities are not only of a military nature. These kinds of attacks affect the whole country and its social structure. In the case of the Seychelles, the armed attack in 1981 proved to be disastrous, especially economically. The government estimated that the total cost of the attack to the state was US \$ 17.6 million.<sup>61</sup> The Seychelles' only international airport was badly damaged, and repairing the airport was estimated at a cost of Seychelles Rupees (SR)8.3 million.<sup>62</sup> The attack also led to a substantial decrease in tourism. The net result was an estimated SR 13 million loss to tourism in December that year.<sup>63</sup> Rumours of further coups had also resulted in the drop of tourist arrivals in the past. However, today the majority of the underlying causes that led to the threats from mercenaries have now been reversed, among which include the abolition of the one-party state, the return or the freedom to return for the large population in exile who were opposed to the current regime, and more significantly the improvement of relations with South Africa who had given some sort of approval to the involvement of mercenaries in the numerous attempt to overthrow the government of President René. The Seychelles now has a close relationship with South Africa, and with a democratic government in power and with acceptance into the international community, it is less likely that South Africa will be so keen to follow an adventurist policy with regard to its smaller neighbours. Besides, the Seychelles is keen to further its newly established relationship with South Africa. President René recently stated that, "South Africa's new position in the region and international community will give it a key role," .... and that "the Seychelles have recognised this and we have

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<sup>60</sup> Hoare, *The Seychelles Affair*, p. 37

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Education and Information, Seychelles *The White paper on aggression of 25 November 1981 against the Seychelles*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

already taken bold steps as a small nation to join hands with South Africa for there is a lot we can do if we join hands together".<sup>64</sup>

Threats from foreign pressure are real ones and the Seychelles has experienced foreign interference in its domestic affairs from time to time. The majority of the problems that it has faced came from France and South Africa. Although France is the main aid donor to the Seychelles its relationship with France can best be described as 'precarious'. The relationship has brought many advantages to the country but the role of France as the 'gendarme' of this part of the world is less welcomed. The Seychelles has also at times regarded French policy in the Western Indian Ocean as 'imperialist'. It has accused France of trying to disrupt the economic independence of the SIDS in the area. The Seychelles has also been critical of the French military presence in this region, especially in Reunion and Mayotte, and President René has at times claimed that the French military presence was an "illegal occupation" .<sup>65</sup> Although the French President, Francois Mitterrand, visited the Seychelles in 1990 the visit was carried out as a very low-key affair.<sup>66</sup> In the recent past, both France and Britain have put considerable pressure on the current regime to bring political reform, and this pressure was a major influence in the return of the Seychelles to multi-party democracy in 1993. Britain and France both cut back aid and at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, Britain insisted that future aid will be tied to progress on the democratic front.<sup>67</sup> Although this form of coercive diplomacy may be welcomed by those advocating democratic practices, it is still a problem for SIDS such as the Seychelles. The difficulty here is that while theoretically foreign pressures should cease now that the country has established a multi-party democracy, it is often the case that in reality the foreign influence could continue in other areas as long as the Seychelles has to depend on these countries for financial and other assistance. Besides, the traditional role of France in this area is being challenged by South Africa and it has been

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<sup>64</sup> *Seychelles Nation*, Vol.XIX, No.83, 16 April 1994, p.2

<sup>65</sup> See "Indian Ocean: Outcast of the islands", *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 30, No.23, 17 November 1989, pp. 2 - 4

<sup>66</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 16 June 1990, p. 2

<sup>67</sup> *The Guardian*, 24 December 1991, p. 8

claimed that certain officials in the French government would like to see the strengthening of France's relationship with the Indian Ocean SIDS as a counter measure against the developing role of South Africa.<sup>68</sup> This may increase French involvement in the Seychelles.

The pre-occupation of the leadership with the threat that may arise from mercenaries has led to the entire armed forces being geared to meet that threat. The reinforcement of the armed forces created problems in the past. However, the government of the Seychelles now appears to be keen to cut down their power and reduce costs now that the country no longer sees an armed threat as likely in the near future. In September 1994, the Minister for Defence, James Michel, announced that the Seychelles Peoples' Defence Force (SPDF) was to be re-organised involving the combination of certain services. He stated that in the current environment the threat from armed aggressors has been reduced and that, "consequently, we have to review our priorities and adopt a new strategy".<sup>69</sup> Therefore, with the scaling down of the armed forces it appears unlikely that the country would face a serious military threat from its own forces in the near future. Although the current leadership claims that the Seychellois coast guard is effective, the problem of protection and surveillance of their waters is a real one. This is especially so in the case of unlawful fishing and detecting contraband. Foreign vessels poaching in the EEZ are continuously sighted and in July 1994 a Taiwanese vessel was apprehended while fishing in a restricted zone.<sup>70</sup> As such, in these circumstances, it is vital for the Seychelles that they maintain an effective surveillance of their maritime areas. With the restructuring of the military services more emphasis is to be given to enhance the capabilities of the coast guard. As the Minister for Defence stated, "One of the priorities is to protect the marine resources".<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 30 May 1992, pp. 1, 5

<sup>69</sup> *Seychelles Nation*, Vol.XIX, No.167, 15 September 1994, p.1

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. XIX, No. 139, 5 August 1994.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* Vol.XIX, No.167, 15 September 1994, p.1

As noted earlier, the country has experienced some political problems and unrest from time to time. This was mainly due to the desire for change by certain groups of people coupled with the determination of the leadership to resist change for as long as possible. The desire for change came more from those residing overseas than those living at home. This may be due to the autocratic nature of the regime in power which at times has resorted to extraordinary methods to silence those against the government. In November 1986, Gerard Hoareau, the Seychellois leader of the opposition, who was in exile in London, was assassinated by an unknown assailant. Although the Seychelles' government unequivocally denied any involvement it, nevertheless, raised suspicions as also in 1987 when three British nationals were convicted in London for illegally tapping Mr. Hoareau's phone they claimed that they were hired by the Seychelles' government for the job. It was also reported that in September 1985, the congress of the ruling party had sanctioned an appeal by the President which would enable him to carry out whatever actions were deemed necessary against the "enemies of the revolution".<sup>72</sup> Therefore, there appears to be reason to doubt the government's denial of involvement in the assassination. There have been other allegations that others have had strange accidents or have 'disappeared'. Even the recent elections were labelled by the opposition as being 'rigged', although Commonwealth observers claimed that it was fair and free. Allegations of corruption and misuse of state funds are also common. The opposition accused the government of directly bribing the voters and although there is no real evidence of bribery the government announced gratuity payments for all long serving public employees just before the elections. Furthermore, while the government claimed that it is prepared to "listen to criticism from sincere people", in the past this was severely curtailed. The establishment of a multiparty democracy may reduce such problems. The government appears to be willing to normalise its relationship with the religious organisations which had voiced their concerns about the undemocratic practices by the leadership. However, it may take some time before the current leadership rids itself of some of its autocratic ways after fourteen years

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<sup>72</sup> *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, April 1986, reported by *Le Monde*, December 3, 1985



of one party rule, and therefore problems of domestic unrest may still surface in the future. As such, although the system may have changed from a one party system to a multi-party one, the underlying situation appears not to have changed. President René is still very much in control of politics. However, it must be noted that in many SIDS this 'one strong man politics' is a common phenomenon, whether in the form of a one party system, no party system or even in a multi-party system. The public tend to associate the party with its leader and not the other way round.

The Seychelles in its attempt to enhance its economic development has encouraged investment as an off-shore tax haven. However, this has led to actual problems and may continue to do so in the future. Fraud, corruption and commercial crime have been identified as practices brought in by foreign companies. A tax haven is very attractive to foreign firms as they are not obliged to publish any accounts, so making it virtually impossible to trace their activities, sales and profits, as well as their share holders. As such, it is extremely difficult to find the real business of these firms and many scandals have surfaced regarding off-shore firms based in the islands. In 1986, during the trial of a Lebanese businessmen, it was discovered that through his firm based in the Seychelles and known as Bis Electronics, he was running a lucrative business trafficking arms.<sup>73</sup> Besides, the Seychelles tax haven is the only 'private' tax haven run by the Seychelles Trust Company (SETCO), now owned by a firm whose owner is an Italian businessmen and who, according to some, "is the real manager of the Seychelles tax haven".<sup>74</sup> An investigative documentary by French television in 1991 alleged that the Seychelles International Bank based in Switzerland was used as a money laundering venture by an Italian businessmen. However, in 1992, the Seychelles government increased the cost of registration of foreign firms from SR 1,500 to 2.5 million. According to the government the aim is to discourage foreign business firms from entering into "dishonest business" and it acknowledged that some firms have been involved in "illegal activities".<sup>75</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 6 July 1991, p.3

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 7 March 1992, p. 7

problem is that the government has no control over the tax haven and therefore it will be very difficult for them to monitor the foreign firms. Further, the problem for SIDS such as the Seychelles is that they lack the capability to effectively monitor tax havens. Potential economic threats may also arise in the form of economic shocks. The Gulf War hit the country's tourism badly and tourist arrivals from Europe dropped by around 40%.<sup>76</sup> Further problems may occur in the industry if recession hits the European markets. Besides, it faces increasing competition from other SIDS in the Indian Ocean such as the Maldives and Mauritius. Its external debt also has continued to rise. Further, as economic progress is made in some areas the threat of donors cutting back economic assistance has become a real one. The United States has already cut down economic assistance from US\$ 3 million to a mere US\$ 220,000 in 1994.<sup>77</sup>

Although drugs have found their way into the Seychelles, at present the problem remains minimal in the sense that, so far, it has not managed to penetrate the socio-political structure of the country; unlike some states the drug lords have not influenced the politics of the state. Currently, the government appears to be successful to a certain extent in trying to control the drug problem. Only 16 people were arrested in 1988-89 for drug offences. However, it must be noted that the control of this problem is a very difficult task. The country's population is fairly young and over 45% of the population is under the age of nineteen. It has been reported that the drug problem is growing in schools and more and more young people are getting involved. However, the main threat is not just from the young generation. In June 1994, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Seychelles resigned after admitting that he tried to grow marijuana.<sup>78</sup> Thus the problem, although limited, may still be a potential threat in the future. It is likely that the government could control the smuggling of drugs through the airport but it is very difficult for them to stop a

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<sup>76</sup> Roger De Backer, "Seychelles: thriving on tourism", *The Courier*, No.134, July-August, 1992, p.41

<sup>77</sup> *The Seychelles Independent*, Vol.2, No.37, 29 September 1994, p.5

<sup>78</sup> *The Guardian*, 1 June 1994, p.10

ship from dumping its cargo of narcotics on one of the outlying islands or prevent people from attempting to grow hallucinogenic plants in the islands.

Environmental problems are both actual and potential; those that exist today and those that may become serious threats if no action is taken now. Yet the main concern is not just the existence of such threats as beach erosion, but also the lack of the means to meet these problems. The Seychelles, like most SIDS, has limited resources to meet their environmental concerns and among them are included the lack of qualified manpower and technical expertise. There are only a handful of local scientists. The lack of financial resources has increased not only the need for foreign assistance but also a constant dependence on overseas resources. However, there are other areas that may threaten the real issue at stake, that of the protection of its environment. It has been claimed that SIDS often uses the environmental issue as a means of attracting foreign aid. In fact, the Seychelles Minister for Environment admitted that the government does use the environment as a tool to attract foreign aid.<sup>79</sup> As such, this may result in the funds not being diverted to the real cause.<sup>80</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Seychelles is a vulnerable country and it has faced numerous threats in the past. It had experienced military threats in the form of armed aggression involving mercenaries. However, security is never static and the security scenario in the Seychelles has changed in recent times. As such military threats appear to be low today. Therefore, military security problems appear to be more systemic than actual. The main security problems in the past appear to be related to the political problems of the Seychelles. Its experience with socialism and the one party state appears to have brought a whole range of problems to the country. It is still difficult to discount political disturbances and unrest as a thing of the past, although the establishment of a multi-party democracy may give a sense of peace and stability. With more freedom

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<sup>79</sup> Charges cited in *The Seychelles Independent*, Vol.2, No. 37, 29 September 1994, p.5

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

of expression and a range of political parties to lead their concerns, political upheaval may continue for some time yet. This is compounded by the smallness of the society which will give the range of separate political groupings platforms where it will be very difficult for the public to remain as apolitical as in the past. Therefore,  
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political security problems, especially on the domestic front, may yet threaten the country. As for potential security problems from external sources, much depends on the relationship between the Seychelles and South Africa and the role that the latter develops in the western Indian Ocean together with the role of the French. Although the traditional role of the French in the area may not be in harmony with the desire of SIDS like the Seychelles to entice more involvement and co-operation from South Africa, the Seychelles has been playing the balancing act quite well, and so it may be able to continue to do so. As long as this can be maintained the Seychelles may be able to escape the attendant problems from these states, especially in the form of foreign pressure and interference. However, any delicate upset can lead to potential problems for the Seychelles as both countries try to enhance their individual roles in the area. Economic vulnerability is one of the main features of the country. Threats are there in the form of economic shocks, unlawful economic ventures by foreign business firms, and poaching in the EEZ, among others. Although it may appear that with the establishment of multi-party democracy its former donors may once again be willing to assist in the development of the country, the growth of the economy has led to disadvantages in the form of decreased foreign assistance. Even though the Seychelles have introduced several policy plans, such as the Public Sector Investment Program, an investment program aimed at decentralisation and the shift from government control of the key economic sectors to more private ownership; and the Human Resources Development Programme, which covers the years from 1994-2000, and is aimed at addressing such issues as training of staff and job creation, it still requires considerable assistance from its overseas donors in order to carry out and implement these programmes. Societal threats such as ethnic problems and religious issues found in other states are minimal, although the infiltration of narcotic drugs is a potential problem that could become manifest if uncontrolled. Environmental threats do exist and they are a problem, but with assistance from abroad the Seychelles appears to be sufficiently geared to meet such threats in the future. Although the Seychelles appears to have minimised most of the threats that it had faced in the past, especially on the political front, security problems exist in the

form of vulnerabilities in almost all areas and potential threats in many of them. Nevertheless, the main problem facing the Seychelles today appears to be the vulnerable nature of its economy. Although the country is attempting to build democratic politics and a capitalist form of system, the economy is weak, open and dependent on foreign resources. It requires overseas assistance to continue on the path of development and without substantial assistance from abroad it may not be able to do so. The establishment of democracy might bring positive changes to the Seychelles. A large number of people had believed that, although the country had developed under the socialist government, democracy will arrive in the country at some point of time and the numerous threats of coups and mercenary attacks will disappear. A former Minister has claimed that development without democracy is impossible in the long term.<sup>80</sup> However, it may also be the case that democracy without further development may be difficult to sustain in the long term. In the Seychelles economic insecurity is a potential problem and together with weakness and dependence on the political front, could manifest itself in returning the country to instability.

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted in De Backer, "Seychelles: recognising the writing on the wall", p.34

## Chapter VI

### Case Study: MAURITIUS

#### **Background**

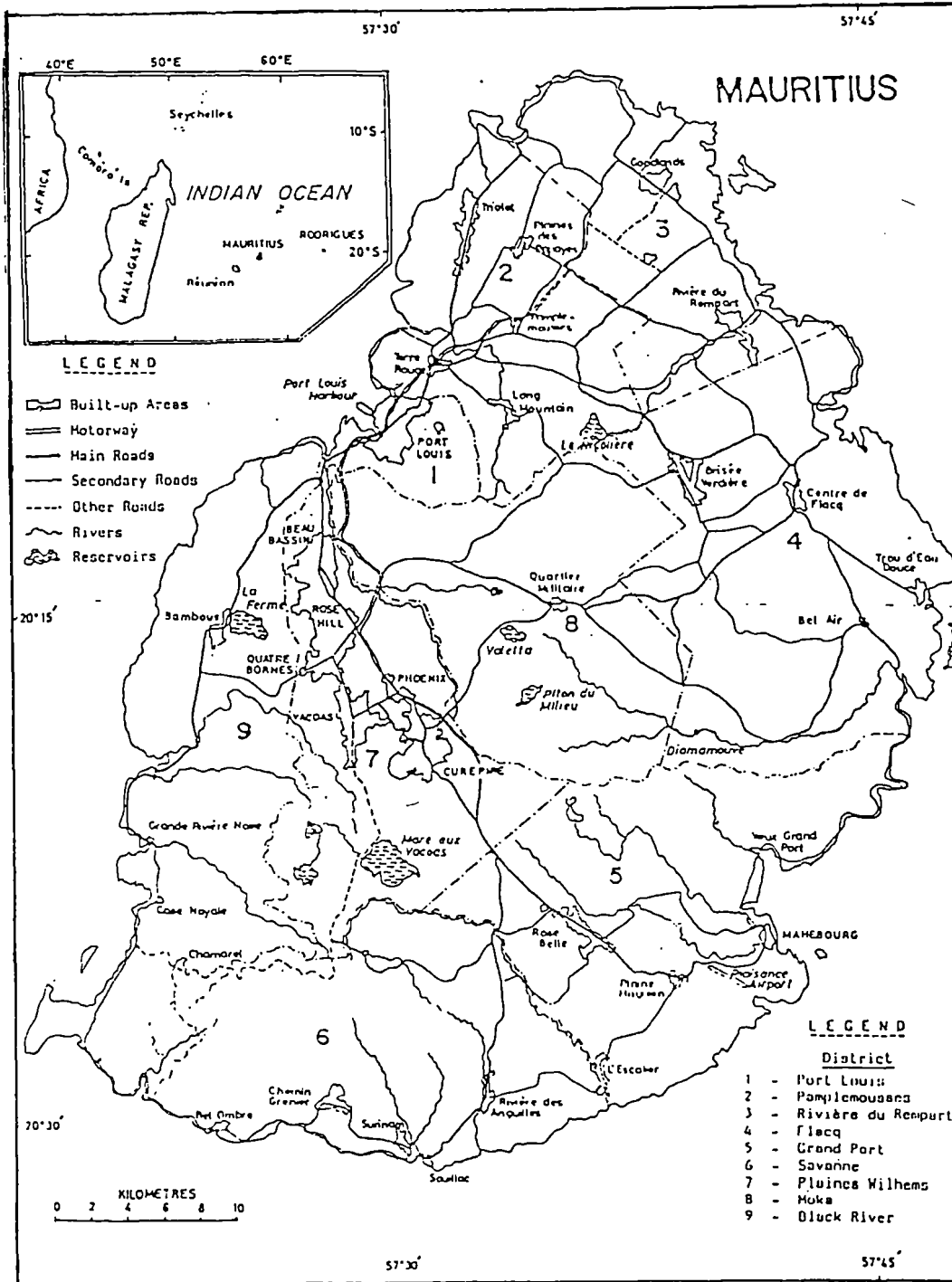
##### **Physical Environment**

The Republic of Mauritius consists of the island of Mauritius, covering a land area of 1,864 square kilometres, Rodrigues, a volcanic island about 104 square kilometres and its two dependencies, the Agalega (two islands) and the Cargados Carajos Shoals (also known as St. Brandon Islands) that comprise of 22 islets which are uninhabited.<sup>1</sup> Including the other islands, Mauritius covers a land area of 2,040 square kilometres in total and has an EEZ of around 1.7 million square kilometres. Mauritius also seeks the return of the Chagos Archipelago (once administered by Mauritius but made part of the British Indian Ocean Territory in 1965) which is a coral atoll situated about 1,930 kilometres to the north east. Mauritius also claims sovereignty over Tromelin situated 556 kilometres to the north west, a claim disputed by France. Situated in the south west Indian Ocean, Mauritius is about 190 kilometres north east of Reunion, 800 kilometres east of Madagascar and 2,000 kilometres from the east coast of Africa. The island of Mauritius is 61 kilometres long and 47 kilometres wide. The island is volcanic consisting of an undulating plain rising to form a plateau. There are three main groups of mountains with the highest one being the Piton de la Riviere Noire at 815 metres. There are several short non-navigable rivers some of which are used to generate hydro-electricity. The island is encircled by coral reefs and the existence of lagoons and white beaches have led to a flourishing tourist industry. The climate of Mauritius is sub-tropical with two seasons. The islands are vulnerable to cyclones, especially from December to March, and in the past cyclones have caused considerable devastation to the country. However, the land is arable and sugar cane is grown on 87% of arable land. Tea is also grown in the highlands and tobacco is also grown as a cash crop. The island is

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<sup>1</sup> *Africa: South of the Sahara* 1995, 24th edition, (Europa Publications Limited, London, 1994), p.615

# MAURITIUS



Source: Ministry of Information, Mauritius



almost self sufficient in vegetables. Maize, vanilla, rice and ground nuts are also grown. Mineral wealth, however, is limited.

### Historical Background

Mauritius appears to have been first 'discovered' by the Arab sailors. The Portuguese seemed to have visited the island in the past but Mauritius was given its present name after Prince Maurice of Nassau by the Dutch who visited in 1598 and from 1638 to 1710 held the island as a small Dutch colony. However, it appears that the island was first permanently inhabited by French settlers and slaves were later brought in from Madagascar and East Africa. The French arrived in 1715 but no settlement took place until 1721. The islands were administered by the French East India Company until 1767 when it was administered by French officials appointed by the French government. The islands were captured by the British in 1810 and were formally ceded to Britain in 1814 by the Treaty of Paris. Under the British administration, slavery was abolished and indentured labour was brought in from India, especially to cultivate sugar cane. This was later to change the islands' social history. From 1810 to 1903, Mauritius was administered by the British as a single colony with the Seychelles. When the Seychelles became a separate colony Mauritius received its independence in 1968 within the Commonwealth. In 1992, it became a republic remaining within the Commonwealth.

### Socio-economic Background

Economically, Mauritius is now categorised as one of the fast developing countries. It has experienced a steady growth rate and the per capita GDP stood at US\$ 2,566 in 1992.<sup>2</sup> The economy of the country is based on the sugar industry, manufacturing and tourism. Previously most of the sugar was sold to Britain. Today most of it is sold to Britain under the preferential terms of the Sugar Protocol. Other agricultural products include tea, potatoes, coconuts, tomatoes, tobacco, groundnuts

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<sup>2</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, *Small States: Economic Review and Basic Statistics*, (Commonwealth Secretariat, London, April 1995), p. 30

and maize. Livestock farming is also carried out and Mauritius is almost self-sufficient in poultry, meat and eggs. Fishing is not a main industry, although in recent years attempts have been made to improve it. One of the main income generating economic activities is the industrial production of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ). Textiles and clothing account for 80% of the EPZ export. Other products include electronic components, toys, razor blades, industrial chemicals and so on. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner. After initial growth the economy floundered a little bit in the late 1970s. However from 1983 it has improved and from 1984-1987 the country experienced a growth rate of 7%.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the socio-economic well-being of the island has greatly improved since independence. The country is free from most of the tropical diseases found in Africa such as malaria. A national health service provides free medical services to all. There are 11 hospitals and primary health care services are provided by 14 health centres, 38 primary health care units and 47 community health centres. Life expectancy is 64 for men and 71 for women.

### **Perception of Security Problems**

At the 44th UN General Assembly in October 1989 the Mauritian delegate stated that,

"small nations and in particular small island states encounter considerable difficulties, through lack of resources, in building up a wider operating environment likely to overcome geographical, economic, financial or political objectives. Stability and security is therefore essential to the development of small states whose territory must be preserved from the threats of military or nuclear conflicts".<sup>4</sup>

Yet security problems, as regarded by the Mauritian leadership, have been minimal as far as actual external military threats are concerned. Unlike the Maldives and the Seychelles, Mauritius is so far free from the threat of mercenaries. It has

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<sup>3</sup> The Ministry of Information, Mauritius, *The Mauritius Handbook*, (Port Louis, Mauritius, 1989), p.15

<sup>4</sup> Statement by the delegation of Mauritius to the Special Political Committee on Agenda Item 150 - Protection and Security of Small States, United Nations, October 1989

cordial relations with its neighbours and most of the states in the international community so that an external armed threat is not envisaged. The only concern of Mauritius in this area has been the growing militarisation of the Indian Ocean, especially in the 1970s. Mauritius has been an ardent supporter of the movement to establish a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. As far as foreign interference and pressure are concerned, in the past Mauritius has encountered difficulties regarding its policy towards South Africa. Mauritius had followed the policy of the majority of the countries in condemning apartheid in South Africa. Yet at the same time it had economic ties with South Africa. The then Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, claimed that "We hate apartheid just like any other African country. But business is, of course, a different matter".<sup>5</sup> This policy caused considerable problems for the country, especially with its African neighbours. In 1988 the Liberation Committee of the OAU accused Mauritius of being one of the countries which had close contacts with South Africa. Nonetheless, with the establishment of democracy in South Africa this problem is now in the past and today Mauritius is comfortable with its South African contacts. South Africa is its third largest trading partner after Britain and France.

Mauritius also claims Tromelin, a sand bank 500 kilometres to the east of Madagascar. The island is also claimed by the French who maintains a meteorology station there. Although Mauritius has raised its claim from time to time this issue is not seen as one of serious importance. Mauritius views its traditional friendship and close ties with France as more significant than seriously raising the issue of Tromelin and jeopardising its relationship. Mauritius has also had certain problems involving Libya. In the early 1980s, the Libyan government through the Libyan 'People's Bureau' in Mauritius privately funded religious institutions and organisations, often without prior approval from the Mauritian government. Despite warnings from the Mauritian government, their activities continued and in 1983 the mayor of Port Louis and some councillors visited Tripoli where funds were donated to the council.

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Larry Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, (Westview press, Boulder, 1991) p. 155

This was quite worrying for the government as there were quite a number of Gaddafi supporters among the Muslim community. The government feared that if Libya was allowed to continue it could lead to divisions within the society. In 1984, Mauritius expelled the Libyans, although formal diplomatic ties were not severed.

For Mauritius the main thorn in its political history is the problem of Diego Garcia. The problems associated with Diego Garcia are two-fold. Firstly, the actual detachment of Diego Garcia from Mauritius by Britain, the circumstances surrounding the creation of the BIOT, and the question of sovereignty of the islands. Secondly, the question of what happened to its former inhabitants.

Diego Garcia: In 1965, the British Indian Ocean Territory was established from the islands of Desroches, Aldabra, Farquhar and the Chagos Archipelago. The former three islands were previously under the administration of the Seychelles and were later returned to it. The Chagos Archipelago consists of a total land area of 60 square kilometres and the surrounding area spreads over 54,400 square kilometres.<sup>6</sup> It was administered by Mauritius and is 1,930 kilometres north-east of the country.<sup>7</sup> The BIOT (currently the Chagos archipelago including the atoll of Diego Garcia) was created to meet the defence requirements of Britain and the United States in the Indian Ocean. At the time it was formed Britain undertook to return the Chagos to Mauritius when it was no longer needed for this purpose. Diego Garcia is strategically located in the Indian Ocean occupying a central location, 2,000 miles from East Africa and 1,200 miles from the coast of India. In 1966 Britain and the USA concluded an agreement which provided for the territory to be used by both states for an initial period of 50 years, with the option of further extension for 20 years. The lease does not expire till the year 2025. It was later discovered that the US had given Britain around £5 million by way of excluding research and development surcharges from the cost of the Polaris missile system in exchange for the use of the

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<sup>6</sup> *Africa: South of the Sahara* 1995, p. 632

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 632

territory.<sup>8</sup> The United States at first established a communication base which was later expanded to a naval support facility. Today, it is a fully fledged naval and air base. It has a 12,000 foot runway and a lagoon that can accommodate carrier task group ships and submarines.<sup>9</sup>

The problems associated with Diego Garcia is linked to the conditions surrounding the independence of Mauritius and cannot be analysed in isolation. Historically, the Chagos has been inhabited since 1776. Initially it was a leper colony from Mauritius. There were inhabitants not just on Diego Garcia but also on some of the other islands of the archipelago- Peros, Banhos and Salomon. At the time of establishment of the BIOT there were around 1,200 people on the island known as the Ilois. The main economic activity was fishing and the production of copra. The coconut plantations were owned by a private company, Chagos Agalega. In 1967 the BIOT bought the company and copra production was gradually wound down. The people were told to leave and the British Foreign Office claimed that they went willingly and that no coercion was used.<sup>10</sup> However, this was not the case according to its former inhabitants. They claim they were given just two weeks to leave.<sup>11</sup> The inhabitants were resettled in Mauritius and a few in the Seychelles. They had no jobs and it has been claimed that there was little sympathy from the government of Mauritius at the time. There was no compensation for the people and the British government continued to claim that there had been no indigenous population on the island. The case of the Ilois people was raised with subsequent British governments and in 1973 a sum of £650,000 was allocated by the British but no money was handed out until 1978. When Mauritius began more vociferously to claim its sovereignty over Diego Garcia in the early 1980s a sum of £ 4 million was given by the British government in 1982 as a final compensation.

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<sup>8</sup> See John Madely, "Diego Garcia: An Indian Ocean storm-centre", in *The Round Table*, 1981, Vol. 283, pp. 253 - 257

<sup>9</sup> See Admiral M.P. Awati, "The geo-political and geo-strategic importance of the Islands of the Indian Ocean" in Satish Chandra et al (eds) *The Indian Ocean and its islands: Strategic, Scientific and Historical Perspectives*, p.75; also "Diego Garcia: Its role in the US Gulf Security policy" in *The Asian Defence Journal*, July 1992, pp. 20 - 25; also John Madely, *Diego Garcia: A contrast to the Falklands*, Minority Rights Group, (London, 1985)

<sup>10</sup> See Madely, *Diego Garcia: A contrast to the Falklands*, p.5

<sup>11</sup> See Ram Mannick, *Diego Garcia: Victims of imperialism or Mauritian muddle*, (Mauritian Educational Association, London), p.14

The role of the Mauritian government at the time is less clear. It was claimed that Diego Garcia was 'sold' by Mauritius for US\$ 8 million, paid to the government of Mauritius then headed by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.<sup>12</sup> According to the British the Mauritian delegation did little to resist the transfer of Diego Garcia. However, it was later claimed by the Mauritian government that, "It was blackmail. Britain told us that we had to give up Diego Garcia or we would not get independence. We were in no position to refuse".<sup>13</sup> The reality of the situation lay to some extent in the ethnic composition of Mauritius. According to some, the majority of the ruling elite in Mauritius at the time was of Indian origin and for them what happened to the Ilois people was a low price to pay for independence.<sup>14</sup> Although the elite of Indian origin themselves were initially not too keen about breaking away from Britain it also meant that they would be the ones to acquire power once an independent state was set up. The issue of the Ilois people and what happened to the US\$ 8 million was a cause of embarrassment for the government of Mauritius at the time. Mauritius has since called for the return of the islands to Mauritius. This call has been supported by the OAU as well as other countries such as India. Mauritius also took the issue of Diego Garcia to the United Nations, first raising it in 1980 at the 35th General Assembly. The then Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam stated, "It is necessary for me to emphasise that Mauritius.....has already at the last meeting of the Organisation of African Unity reaffirmed its claim on Diego Garcia.."<sup>15</sup> However, it is unlikely that Britain is willing to return the Chagos to Mauritius. The very next day after Ramgoolam's speech the then British Ambassador to the United Nations claimed that Britain had sovereignty over the islands.<sup>16</sup> This was reiterated in November 1991 by the British Ambassador to Mauritius, Michael Howell, who declared that British sovereignty over the Chagos was not negotiable.<sup>17</sup> The issue of Diego Garcia is seen

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<sup>12</sup> Jooneed Khan., "Diego Garcia: The militarization of an Indian Ocean Island" in Robin Cohen (ed.) *African Islands and Enclaves*, Sage Series on African Modernisation and Development, Vol. 7, (Sage Publications, 1983) pp. 168 - 169.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See Jean Houbert, "The Mascareignes, the Seychelles and the Chagos; Islands with a French Connection: Security in a decolonised Indian Ocean" in Hintjens and Newitt (eds), *The Political Economy of Small Tropical Islands*, p.98

<sup>15</sup> Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius (former) Address to the 35th General Assembly at the United Nations, October 1980

<sup>16</sup> Khan., "Diego Garcia: The militarization of an Indian Ocean Island" p.180

<sup>17</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 23 November 1991, p.5

by the leadership of Mauritius as a "delicate" one.<sup>18</sup> Even though Mauritius would like to see the return of Diego Garcia it is not seen as an issue which should jeopardise its relationship with Britain too much. In January 1994, a fisheries agreement was signed between Mauritius and Britain and the British-Mauritian Fisheries Commission was established under the terms of the agreement, "to promote, facilitate and co-ordinate administration, conservation and scientific research in the maritime zone of the Chagos archipelago".<sup>19</sup>

External security problems appear to emanate more from non-governmental sources such as poaching in the EEZ by foreign fishing vessels. Mauritius has a huge EEZ and finds it difficult to effectively monitor the vast area. Poaching is mainly carried out by Korean and Japanese registered fishing vessels and according to Babooram Mahadoo, the High Commissioner of Mauritius to Britain, "this is a problem".<sup>20</sup> Mauritius has a coast guard unit 600 strong and is keen to introduce the idea of joint patrolling of the EEZs by the members of the Indian Ocean Commission.

Although Mauritius is a country that contains more than one island the government of Mauritius do not see secession as a major problem. The majority of the people live on the main island of Mauritius. However, at the time of independence there were secessionist tendencies in Rodrigues.<sup>21</sup> The island voted unanimously against independence as part of Mauritius. The majority of the people in Rodrigues are Creoles and the economy of the island is not based on the sugar plantation, as was the main island of Mauritius at the time of independence. Even today, the people of Rodrigues resent rule from Mauritius to a certain extent, but the

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<sup>18</sup> H.E. Babooram Mahadoo, High Commissioner of Mauritius to the United Kingdom, Interview at the High Commission of Mauritius in London, 26 May 1995

<sup>19</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 30 April 1994, p.3

<sup>20</sup> H.E. Babooram Mahadoo, High Commissioner of Mauritius to the United Kingdom, Interview at the High Commission of Mauritius in London, 26 May 1995

<sup>21</sup> Houbert, "The Mascareignes, the Seychelles and the Chagos; Islands with a French Connection: Security in a decolonised Indian Ocean", p.108; also "France in the islands of the South West Indian Ocean", in the International Peace Academy Report, *The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, Workshop on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace*, (International Peace Academy, New York and Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster, 1986), pp. 114-115

island is dependent on Mauritius for almost everything. To create unity among the islands, telecommunications are being improved and there are regular weekly flights.

Domestically, security problems in the form of coups are not perceived to be a problem by the leadership. Political security problems are more in the nature of crises within the government and ruling coalition parties. Political instability is also more a product of shifting coalition politics than political violence or instability involving the people on the whole. Domestic security problems, as perceived by the leadership, cannot be understood on their own without first analysing the political environment of Mauritius. Internal politics in Mauritius has been a volatile process, yet one carried out by democratic means. The numerous political parties have an element of racial and ethnic fragmentation. However, the uniqueness of Mauritian politics is that problems have existed not just between the parties but within parties that has resulted in much factionalism and alliances within and between the political parties. Therefore, alliance politics remains the main feature of politics in Mauritius and has been the main strength as well as the main problem for the leadership. No single party has won an overall majority since 1959.

To review alliance politics in a historical context, in 1936 the Mauritian Labour Party (MLP) was formed and is today mainly dominated by the Hindus. The Franco-Mauritian population meanwhile grouped themselves under the banner of Ralliement Mauricien which later became the Parti-Mauricien Social-Democrate (PMSD). The Muslims of Mauritius rallied under the Comite d'Action Musulman (CAM) and a fourth party was organised by the Hindus in the rural areas known as Independent Forward Block (IFB). At the time of independence a newly formed coalition led by Seewoosagur Ramgoolam won the majority of the seats. The government then invited the PMSD into the government forming a coalition of all groups.



In the early days of independence the main political problems for the leadership arose from the Movement Militant Mauricien (MMM) led by a Franco-Mauritian, Paul Berenger. The MMM had close contacts with three of the major unions and in 1971 the dockers union went on strike. The government then declared a state of emergency and arrested Berenger and his supporters. The state of emergency continued until 1972 and public meetings were banned. In the 1976 election the MMM won 32 seats. However, the uniqueness of Mauritian politics was highlighted by the fact that the Independent Party (IP) immediately formed a new alliance with the PMSD to form a majority political group. This led to severe unrest in the country and strikes and clashes between the members of the MMM and the police became common. Some of the MMM members were arrested. However, in the 1982 elections a coalition led by the MMM and the Parti Socialiste Mauricien (PSM) won the elections, winning all 60 of the elective seats of Mauritius island. Aneerood Jugnauth became the Prime Minister and Paul Berenger was the Minister of Finance. Yet the alliance was short lived and in 1983 Berenger and 11 other ministers resigned and Jugnauth formed a new party, the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (MSM). The PSM was later dissolved and incorporated into the MSM. In August 1983, general elections were held and a coalition by the MSM, the MLP, and the PMSD won 41 seats and Jugnauth remained as Prime Minister. They now faced several problems within the alliance and the MLP withdrew from the coalition in 1984, but the government managed to hold on despite reducing their majority. At the next elections in 1987 a coalition was once again formed between the MSM, MLP and PMSD and won 39 of the seats. The MMM fought the election forming an alliance with two smaller parties. The elections in August 1991, however, were fought with the MSM forming a coalition with its former opponents the MMM as well as the MTD (Mouvement des Traaillistes Democrates). They won 57 seats and the alliance of the MLP and the PMSD won only three seats. The current government has claimed that it will serve out the remainder of the political term until the next general election which is due in 1996. The shifting alliances of political parties in government has therefore led to a lot of in-fighting and has created

difficulties in the smooth governing of the country. However, the holding of elections at regular intervals and the underlying acceptance of democratic practices by the political parties have also led to the opposition parties acknowledging democratic means of acquiring power. This is accepted as the norm by all political parties and the electorate and therefore has reduced the threat of unconstitutional seizures of power. However, this has not rid Mauritius of all threats. There were two assassination attempts on the Prime Minister, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, one in 1988 and one in 1989. In November 1988, the Prime Minister was threatened by a Hindu priest.<sup>22</sup> The Prime Minister was attending a religious ceremony at a Hindu temple when the priest suddenly stepped forward and thrust a .38 revolver at him, claiming that he had six bullets and if anyone made a move he would kill the Prime Minister. The priest claimed that he wanted 'justice' and would like to speak to the Prime Minister alone. The drama ended when a former prison warden flung himself at the priest and brought him down. No one was harmed. However, this incident highlighted that there are still underlying problems in Mauritius despite the attempts to bring the various religious communities together and in conducting democratic politics. The man, who was later identified as the former president of the temple, blamed the Prime Minister for his failure to get re-elected at the temple elections. Another attempt was made on Jugnauth on 3 March 1989, again while attending a religious ceremony. A man attempted to attack the Prime Minister with a knife. He was seized by the Prime Minister's bodyguards and arrested. The Prime Minister later claimed that the attempts were made by those associated with drug traffickers and that he had received several death threats from them.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, there are problems of other kinds. Internally the politics of Mauritius is full of allegations of corruption and nepotism which is a considerable problem to those in power. In 1982 it led to the downfall of the Labour government and allegations of corruption also created severe problems between the coalition partners during the years 1983 to 1987. In 1989, there was an allegation regarding the

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<sup>22</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 12 November 1988, p.1,

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1989, p.5

sale of Mauritian passports. The leader of the PSM, Harish Boodhoo, accused the wife of a Mauritian minister of being involved in the sale of Mauritian passports. This led to the arrest of Mr. Boodhoo by the government although he was soon released. In 1990 the Minister of Health, Jugdish Goburdhun, was accused of having used public funds to finance a co-operative in which he is the company secretary. It was alleged that Rs. 20 million (US\$ 1.4 million) was granted to the co-operative by a fund dependent on the Ministry of Health and was used in the construction of a building on government land which was leased to the co-operative.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Prime Minister, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, has also been accused of nepotism, especially when a new bank note was issued in April 1992 that depicted his wife.

Economically, Mauritius confronts few of the problems that are commonly found in other SIDS. There has been extensive diversification and therefore, today, the Mauritian economy appears to be rather strong. Nevertheless, the Mauritian economy is sensitive to international price fluctuations. This is especially so in the case of sugar. The sugar industry is also vulnerable to the weather and because Mauritius lies within the cyclone belt this is a considerable concern to the government. Due to unfavourable weather conditions sugar output fell in 1987 and 1988 to 691,134 and 568,000 respectively from 707,000 tons in 1986.<sup>25</sup> Further, cyclones in January and April 1989 affected the sugar harvest badly. Although the Mauritian economy is relatively healthy, economic shocks can hit the economy as was seen during the Gulf War when hotel bookings slumped heavily and the tourism industry was affected. The Export Processing Zone of Mauritius also faces difficulties with shortages of labour.

Societal threats, such as those that arise from narcotics, have also emerged and this is seen as a considerable problem. Marijuana is grown in the country and other drugs smuggled into the country include heroin in the form of Brown Sugar. Mauritius is also used as a transshipment point. The majority of drugs appears to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 15 September 1990, p.3

<sup>25</sup> Donald L. Sparks, "Economy"(Mauritius) in *Africa: South of the Sahara*, 1995, p. 618

enter the country through the international airport mainly from India and Pakistan. The level of drug trafficking in Port Louis reached an alarming state in 1984-85 and in recent years the situation has worsened, especially the trafficking of heroin from India.<sup>26</sup> In the first few months of 1994 alone drug traffickers were arrested carrying more than three kilograms of heroin. However, according to reports this is less than 2% of the drugs imported annually.<sup>27</sup> It is also associated with those at the highest level. In December 1985 four Mauritians were arrested at Amsterdam airport, allegedly with £700,000 worth of heroin in their luggage. They were later found to be Members of Parliament and one of them, Ismael Nawoor, was a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee set up to examine the problem of drugs in the country. Although three of them, including Nawoor, were later released this led to a serious crisis within the government. A Drugs Commission was set up to investigate the problem. The Commission claimed that several high ranking officers in the police force were involved in the drug trade including the former head of the Anti-Drug Special Unit (ADSU). It recommended several measures to curb the growth of the narcotics trade. The crisis led to the resignation of four cabinet ministers and the Vice-Prime Minister who was also implicated by the Commission. Another incident occurred in 1988 when the son of the Mauritian High Commissioner to London was arrested in New York for drug trafficking offences. Although the High Commissioner himself was not involved, he was suspended from his duties. In 1989 he was arrested in London for allegedly laundering the 'narco-dollars' on behalf of his son.<sup>28</sup> Although Mauritius has tried to institute measures to rid itself of the threat from drugs, the problem still continues.

Like most SIDS, Mauritius has a fragile environment and several native species have become extinct in the past. Mauritius is also within the cyclone belt and this has caused problems. Cyclones are frequent and one in 1989 led to severe damage to food crop production, especially sugar. Some 125 homes were destroyed

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<sup>26</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1995, p.11418

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Kevin Shillington, *Aneerood Jugnauth: Prime Minister of Mauritius*, (Macmillan Educational Limited, London and Basingstoke, 1991), pp. 181-182; *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 4 March 1989, p.3

and the overall cost was estimated around Rs 900 million.\* In 1994, Cyclone Hollanda led to the death of two people and to 1,400 people being homeless. Sixty per cent of the electricity transmission grid was damaged. Buildings were destroyed and the damage was estimated at 25 million Mauritian Rupees.<sup>29</sup> Further, 80% of food crop was lost. The total cost from the cyclone including rehabilitation amounts to 1.5 billion Rupees.<sup>30</sup> Further, global warming and the sea level rise could also threaten the country, especially the low lying areas. The former Minister for the Environment and Quality of Life, Dr. Swaley Kasenally, has claimed, "Mauritius is genuinely concerned by such issues as global warming - as an island we could, so as to speak, be on the receiving end".<sup>31</sup> Beach erosion is becoming more common and in recent years there has been an increase in the frequency of storms. The normal rainy season in Mauritius is from December to March but in the last four to five years this has started from November and continued well into April. These heavy storms have also caused damage to homes and industries and led to heavy flooding. One of the other major environmental concerns of Mauritius is the problem of waste management. Due to its industrial development the disposal of industrial waste, as well as domestic waste, has created difficulties. Another environmental concern is the unplanned growth of the tourist industry that has led to the pollution of several beaches due to inadequate sewage treatment. The threat of pollution from oil spills also exists as Mauritius is close to the major oil routes along the east coast of Africa.

### **Providing security in Mauritius**

#### **Military Resources**

The Mauritian defence force is not divided into an army, navy or airforce. Its internal security is maintained by the paramilitary Special Mobile Force, Special Support Units and a regular police force. These forces are under the command of the Commissioner of Police. The total number of personnel in the Special Mobile Force

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\* Exchange Rate: US\$ 1= 17.86 Rupees (31 March 1994)

<sup>29</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 19 February 1994, p.7

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 19 February 1994, p. 7

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Roger De Backer, "Mauritius: Going for Gold again" in *The Courier*, No. 135, September-October, 1992, p. 28

is 1,300.<sup>32</sup> There is a Coast Guard Unit with 600 personnel, equipped with patrol crafts.<sup>33</sup> The Coast Guard Unit is based in Port Louis but they also have twelve other manned coast guard stations. A Dornier aircraft is also used for maritime patrol equipped with a search radar. The forces are generally well-disciplined although allegations of abuse of power by the police are on the increase. Defence expenditure was Rs. 167.3 million in 1991/92. This amounts to 1.4% of total expenditure.<sup>34</sup> The 1995 budget was estimated at Rs. 224.5 million.<sup>35</sup>

There are no defence agreements with other countries at present. A previous defence agreement with Britain expired in 1975 and was not renewed. No foreign bases are allowed. Mauritius is fortunate in that it has not faced any terrorist or mercenary threats. However, in the event of a well organised attack it will not be able to defend itself and will have to resort to outside help. The most likely sources of help would be France and India. France has close contact with Mauritius as part of the French presence in the Indian Ocean. As the majority of the population in Mauritius are of Indian origin, India too has close contact with the country and has helped train its forces. Indian help is also envisaged due to the regional security role it undertakes in the Indian Ocean. India also provided Mauritius with a security adviser following the two assassination attempts on the Prime Minister in 1989 and 1990. Mauritius also receives military assistance from other countries, including the United States. Mauritius joined the United States' military training programme, International Military and Educational Training (IMET) in 1992.

### **Political Capabilities**

Until 1992 Mauritius was a state within the Commonwealth with the Queen as its Head of State. On 12 March 1992 Mauritius became a Republic. It is a parliamentary democracy with a legislature consisting of 70 members of whom 62

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<sup>32</sup> *The Military Balance*, 1995-96, (Oxford University Press, 1995), p.249

<sup>33</sup> Capt. Richard Sharpe OBE RN (ed.), *Jane's Fighting Ships 1995-96*, 98th edition, (Jane's Information Group Limited, Surrey, 1995),; See also Appendix E

<sup>34</sup> Estimate given by *The Military Balance*, 1993-94, (Basseys UK Ltd, London) p.231

<sup>35</sup> *The Military Balance*, 1995-96, p.294

are elected members and eight seats are allocated to the 'best losers'. The members of parliament are elected for a period of five years by universal suffrage. The country is divided into 21 multimember constituencies with three members each and two from the island of Rodrigues. The Constitution protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people. All Mauritians over the age of 18 have the right to vote. Since its independence in 1968, Mauritius has maintained a fairly stable political system. Recently a republican system has been adopted with a President as the Head of State. However, the role of the President is largely ceremonial and executive power is vested in the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party in the Parliament and appoints the Council of Ministers. Unlike many of the developing countries, elections and transfers of power from one political regime to another are fairly smooth and peaceful. Elections are regularly held in an orderly and fair manner. The political stability of Mauritius relies on many factors: constitutional safeguards that protect the citizen and accommodate ethnic groupings; eight seats allocated to the best losers thereby ensuring no section of the population is alienated; a wide acceptance of the legality of the political system by the people; and the democratic election of leaders.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the judicial system in Mauritius is truly separate from the political system and not just in name like some other states. It consists of a Supreme Court that has appellate powers, and lower courts.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Mauritians believe that their justice system is fair to all.

Externally, Mauritius claims that its "foreign policy is dictated by the concepts of non-alignment, the protection of territorial integrity and national sovereignty".<sup>38</sup> It also claims that "In international fora ... Mauritius strives for the strengthening and maintenance of world peace and security, the promotion of friendship among nations, the furtherance of international co-operation for a just and equitable world order".<sup>39</sup> Mauritius participates in international affairs as best as it

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<sup>36</sup> Eliphas G. Mukonoweshuro, "Containing political instability in a poly-ethnic society: the case of Mauritius", in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April 1991 pp. 199 - 222

<sup>37</sup> The Ministry of Information, Mauritius, *The Mauritius Handbook*, pp. 4 - 5

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 62

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 62

can and is a member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth. Although Mauritius has attempted to maintain a non-aligned status it is closer to the Western world in reality. There are ten resident embassies in Mauritius and Mauritius has twelve diplomatic missions abroad.\* While the issue of Diego Garcia remains a problem the United States maintains cordial relations with Mauritius, closer for example, than the relationship that existed between Mauritius and the Soviet Union. According to the US government the Diego Garcia affair is a matter for Britain and Mauritius and they are only there at the invitation of Britain. The Soviet Union did sign a fisheries agreement with Mauritius and had offered educational assistance in the form of scholarships, but these were as far as it went. Mauritius plays an active role in the region and pays lip service to routine issues of importance to the Non-Aligned Movement such as apartheid and the Palestine issue. Because of the numerous ethnic groups it has close contacts with various countries such as France, India, and the Islamic world.

Mauritius' relationship with its former colonial master, Britain, has always been cordial. It had a defence agreement with Britain (the Anglo-Mauritian Defence Agreement) which guaranteed security, but this was terminated in 1975. In 1984 the Prime Minister Sir Aneerood Jugnauth stated that, "Britain has a special place in the hearts of all our Mauritian citizens".<sup>40</sup> However, the issue of Diego Garcia has led to tensions between the two states from time to time. Its relationship with France is somewhat different. The underlying basis for its close ties with France are cultural links. French is widely spoken and despite the British period of colonial rule French culture never diminished. France provides generous financial aid to Mauritius in technical assistance, educational aid, rural development and also in the health sector. However, one of the main areas where French assistance is prominent is the promotion of the French language, especially in schools and the use of French in broadcasting. Besides, France is closer to Mauritius territorially vis-à-vis the French Departement d'Outre Mer of Reunion. The French presence in the Indian

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\* See Appendix E

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, p. 144



Ocean is welcomed by Mauritius. In their turn, France assisted Mauritius to become a member of the African-Malagasy Common Organisation (OCAM). Mauritius was the first Commonwealth country to gain Yaounde status in the EEC. In 1990 the French President, Francois Mitterrand, paid a visit to the country.

One of the closest allies of Mauritius is India. This is no surprise as two-thirds of the Mauritian population is ethnically of Indian origin. An Indo-Mauritian Joint Commission was set up in 1979 and regular sessions are held.<sup>41</sup> Besides, both countries have stressed the importance of close ties and state visits are frequent at the highest level. The late Indira Gandhi and the late Rajiv Gandhi visited Mauritius; Indira Gandhi in 1970, 1976, 1982 and Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. Financial aid has always been generously provided by India, especially in the field of technical assistance, credit agreements and educational and cultural programmes. India also provides security advisors. Mauritius also has close contact with China and the countries of South East Asia. There are many immigrants of Chinese origin in Mauritius. A joint commission has been established and a technical co-operation and economic agreement was signed between the two countries in December 1990. Assistance from Beijing includes the construction of an air terminal at the international airport and of a sports stadium among others. Investments from Hong Kong form a major part in the EPZ investments.

Mauritius also has close relations with its neighbouring states. It has concluded a cultural, scientific and technical co-operation agreement with Madagascar and Mauritius assists Madagascar in its attempt to industrialise by transfer of technology.<sup>42</sup> Mauritius has also established a joint commission with the Seychelles to co-operate on improving ties, especially economic co-operation. However, Mauritius' relationship with the countries of the African mainland remains somewhat indifferent. Although Mauritius claims to be an African state and hosted

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<sup>41</sup> *Foreign Affairs Record*, Vol. XXXV, No.3, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, March 1989, pp. 79 - 80

<sup>42</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 24 March 1990, p. 2

an OAU summit in 1976, it has very little trade contact with the countries of Africa apart from South Africa. Mauritius is also one of the main advocates in attempting to establish a regional forum 'the Indian Ocean Rim' for promoting economic co-operation among the Indian Ocean littoral. The Mauritian Finance Minister claimed that, "The Indian Ocean is thus becoming increasingly conspicuous as the only region without an official organisation to promote economic co-operation".<sup>43</sup> Although a member of the Indian Ocean Commission, he argues that, "the smallness of the IOC seriously limits its ability to fully explore trade, investment and other economic possibilities among member nations and to make more efficient use of the region's resources".<sup>44</sup> As such, Mauritius hosted the first official meeting of those keen to establish an Indian Ocean Rim group. They are India, Australia, Kenya, Oman, Singapore and South Africa and the meeting took place in Port Louis on 31 March 1995.<sup>45</sup> In order to enhance its international standing such international gatherings are often hosted by Mauritius. An OCAM summit was held in Mauritius in 1973 and a parliamentary conference of Francophone states in 1975.<sup>46</sup> However, in general, Mauritius has gained international recognition through its maintenance of democracy, especially compared to its neighbouring SIDS of the Seychelles and Comoros; and for its human rights record and social stability among many diverse ethnic groups.<sup>47</sup>

### **Economic Resources**

The land and climate are good for agricultural development, especially the cultivation of sugar-cane. Under the Sugar Protocol the guaranteed quota for Mauritius stands at 507,000 tonnes.<sup>48</sup> Other important markets are the United States, Canada and New Zealand. All manufactured sugar is marketed by the Mauritian Sugar Syndicate. Various measures have been taken by the government to strengthen the industry, including the establishment of a bulk sugar terminal in 1980 that is the

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<sup>43</sup> Hon. Ramakrishna Sithanen, The Minister of Finance of Mauritius, Speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the meeting of experts on the Indian Ocean Rim initiative, Grand Baie, Mauritius, 29 March 1995

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts, 3rd Series, Asia-Pacific, Part 3, 6 April 1995

<sup>46</sup> Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, p.145

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p.142

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Information, Mauritius, *The Mauritius Handbook*, p. 24

third largest in the world and capable of containing 350,000 metric tons. In all, in 1987 the agricultural sector contributed 15% of GDP and 41% of total foreign exchange earnings.<sup>49</sup>

Although it was totally dependent on sugar at the time of its independence, there has been diversification from sugar to manufacturing and tourism. The Export Processing Zone set up in 1971 has been extremely successful. The EPZ consists mainly of firms engaged in the manufacturing of garments, electrical and electronic goods, toys, razor blades, industrial detergents etc. Today, Mauritius has become the third largest exporter of new woollen goods in the world.<sup>50</sup> Of the investment in the EPZ around 60% is locally owned. The EPZ exports rose from Rs.3.9 million in 1971 to Rs.4,959.6 million in 1986, thus replacing sugar as the main export product.<sup>51</sup>

Tourism is the third most important foreign exchange earner. Mauritius is blessed with beautiful beaches, ideal for the development of tourism. Tourist arrivals increased from 27,650 in 1970 to 375,000 in 1993.<sup>52</sup> The majority of the tourists come from the neighbouring French DOM of Reunion. Others include French from mainland France, South Africans, Germans, British and Italian tourists. However, care is taken to diversify the markets and open Mauritius to the people of the Far East. The government has attempted to boost the tourism industry by setting up schemes for property development (The Development Certificate Scheme) and for hotel management and marketing services (The Hotel Management Certificate), which provide several concessions that include corporate tax rebates, tax free dividend for ten years etc. Further, certain zones have been selected for hotel development in order to avoid congestion on the beaches. Mauritius also has an excellent international credit rating. Unlike many of the SIDS, fishing has never been a strong economic activity (most of the fish consumed in Mauritius is

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p.23

<sup>50</sup> Donal L Sparks, "Economy" (*Mauritius*), *Africa: South of the Sahara*, 1995, p. 619

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 619

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 620

imported) but now it is being given considerable importance with assistance received from Australia and Japan. Mauritius has an EEZ of around 1.7 million square kilometres and off-shore fishing licences have been granted to vessels from Japan, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea. A Mauritius Tuna Fishing and Canning Enterprise Limited was established with a processing capacity of 8,000 tonnes of tuna and a second plant was opened in 1988 with a 10,000 ton initial capacity.<sup>53</sup> Two purse seiners are also used in the south west Indian Ocean. Mauritius also participates with Comoros, Reunion and Madagascar in a regional tuna fishing project that carries out biological studies and collect fishery statistics. The port at Port Louis harbour acts as the main terminal for imports and exports.

Mauritius has also set up institutions to fuel economic growth. A Bank of Mauritius was set up in 1966 and acts as a central bank controlling the activities of the commercial banks. Altogether 14 commercial banks operate in Mauritius. The Development Bank of Mauritius also co-ordinates the effort to develop the country economically. It provides loans for industrial and agricultural development and also assists small enterprises. The legislative framework in Mauritius is modern and ideal for off-shore investments. Further, international investors favour Mauritius due to the zero-tax regime and tax treaties exist with Britain, France, Germany, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Sweden, Italy and Zimbabwe.

### **Human Resources**

The total population of Mauritius was estimated at 1,084,000 in 1992.<sup>54</sup> The original immigrants were mostly slaves and indentured labourers. Three ethnic groups can be identified:- Indo-Mauritians, Sino-Mauritians and the third group, known as the General Population. The Indo-Mauritians are further divided into Hindus and Muslims. Other important sub-divisions include the Indo-Mauritians by caste and mother tongue. The Indo-Mauritians are the largest group (about two-thirds of the population). The Sino-Mauritians are a small community. The General

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 619

<sup>54</sup> "Mauritius: Physical and Social Geography", *Africa: South of the Sahara*, 1995., p. 615

Population are the Mauritians of European (mainly French) descent and the Creoles (descendants of African slaves). The European community is the smallest among all the communities. The Creoles make-up the second largest community. The ethnic composition of Mauritius is important in the sense that it covers links with the Western Europe through France as well as Asia through the Indian sub-continent. Due to the various linguistic groups Mauritius has been called a modern day Tower of Babel. Twenty-two languages were being spoken on the island according to a census in 1983. However, Creole is universally spoken and used as a medium of communication by many Mauritians. English and French are also widely used. While there are linguistic, religious and cultural diversities, the extensive use of Creole has become a national cultural bond.<sup>55</sup> One other important factor that has contributed to harmony within such a diverse society can be attributed to the fact that residence is not divided on communal lines. There is no specific geographical territory dominated by any one ethnic group.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, there is no official state religion although Hindus form a majority. All religious institutions receive subsidies from the state based on the strength of their membership. There are 281 primary schools, 123 secondary schools and 19 vocational and technical training centres.<sup>57</sup> There is also a polytechnic and a university that had 2161 students enrolled in 1993.<sup>58</sup>

Although Mauritius faces surprisingly little in the way of societal security problems such as ethnic problems, it has had to combat problems that have risen from the narcotic trade, and several measures have been introduced by the government. In December 1984 a Select Committee of the Parliament was set up to investigate and examine the drug problem. The committee reported that drug abuse was on the increase and the main drugs used were cannabis, which was locally grown, and heroin. It also found that heroin was introduced into the country in 1982 but it had become common within period of less than three years. A Drugs

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<sup>55</sup> See also Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Linguistic diversity and the quest for national identity: the case of Mauritius", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1990, p. 1 - 24

<sup>56</sup> John Addison and K. Hazareesingh, *A New History of Mauritius*, (Macmillan Publishers, London and Basingstoke, 1984), p. 75

<sup>57</sup> *Africa: South of the Sahara* 1995, p.626

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Commission was set up and the Parliament passed the Dangerous Drug Act on 11 June 1986 in the wake of the drug crisis involving some members of the Parliament. Among the measures recommended by the Commission included the setting up of a Drug Intelligence Unit within the ADSU and furthering co-operation with India which is where the majority of the drugs come from. Further, the Prime Minister promised that security will be tightened at the docks and airport to prevent the smuggling of drugs into the country and that all VIP luggage will be searched at the airport. Currently the Mauritian Parliament is attempting to revise the anti-drug legislation to introduce tough measures, including the introduction of the death penalty for traffickers. Mauritius has also attempted to co-operate with its neighbours. On 15 March 1990, Mauritius and Madagascar signed an agreement for "mutual administrative assistance" with a view to "preventing, seeking and punishing" the infraction of customs regulation and drug trafficking.<sup>59</sup> Under the agreement customs officers of both states will have a communications system permanently linked. It will enable them to transfer information regarding the above issue.

### **Environmental Resources**

In order to protect the natural environment the government of Mauritius has taken several steps. Since 1983 a legal framework has been created via The Forest and Reserves Act and the Wild Life Act to regulate the management of the natural environment. In 1985, a White Paper was published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources on a 'National Conservation Strategy' the main objective of which has been outlined as "to maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems on which human survival and development depend". A Nature Reserve Board was established and a national committee on afforestation created. Mauritius also participates at the international level to protect the environment and is a participant in the United Nations Environment Programme, the

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<sup>59</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 24 March 1990, p. 2

World Wild Life Protection Trust and the International Council for Bird Protection.<sup>60</sup> In 1989, Mauritius received US\$90 million in the form of grants and loans at a donors meeting to finance an Environmental Investment Programme.<sup>61</sup> This was secured after a World Bank Report on the environmental situation in Mauritius called for urgent action to prevent environmental deterioration. Mauritius also participated in the UN Conference on Environment and Development and is also a member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

### **Contemporary Problems**

#### **Threats: Potential, Latent and Manifest**

Security problems facing Mauritius are mainly in the area of vulnerability rather than actual threats. Militarily the Mauritian armed force is extremely small and therefore the country is open to military threats. Although there are more resources available to Mauritius, both in terms of economic and human resources than there is for the Maldives, it has chosen to limit its defence force. Therefore, any kind of military threat is a danger to the country as the country is virtually defenceless. However, it is unlikely that at the moment the country faces any actual military threats. By virtue of good relations with its neighbours, institutionalised democratic practice, and the lack of any dissatisfied overseas population who seek the overthrow of the government, it has managed to stay clear of the threats from coups, mercenaries and political instability that have plagued the other SIDS of the Indian Ocean.

On the external front, Mauritius is vulnerable to external pressures. The vulnerability of Mauritius to the influence of larger powers, especially in the past, can be clearly seen in the case of Diego Garcia. It was unable to stop the detachment of Diego Garcia and the rest of the Chagos archipelago to create the BIOT and indeed in some way went along with it trading a part of their territory for

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<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Information, Mauritius, *The Mauritius Handbook*, pp. 93 - 94

<sup>61</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 28 January 1989, p. 6

independence. The vulnerability and dependence of SIDS like Mauritius and the difficulties they encounter in balancing what they see as 'international duties' against the reality of economic problems was also seen in the past in the relationship of Mauritius with South Africa. According to a Mauritian civil servant "If (Mauritius) were to boycott South Africa and import from elsewhere the cost of living in Mauritius would go up by 30% overnight."<sup>62</sup> However, today Mauritius is in a much better position to withstand foreign pressure. This is not to say that it is not vulnerable. Because Mauritius is dependent on the West for its trade and its continued economic development, it is still vulnerable to the domination of the West. This is seen today in its relationship with Britain over the issue of Diego Garcia. Mauritius wants Diego Garcia back and is willing to take up the issue at various international gatherings, yet it appears that it does not want to antagonise Britain too much simply because Mauritius depends heavily on the EC as a market for its exports, especially sugar. Therefore, although it is in a better position to withstand foreign influence and has the capacity to pursue its own interests in the international community, nevertheless there are areas where it is still vulnerable.

Politically the country appears to be relatively stable. The ability of the various political parties to form alliances with each other has enabled the internal situation in Mauritius to remain on a democratic footing. At the same time, it has also muted ideological differences. Elections are held regularly and the majority of the people support the existing political system. The threats of coups or the use of mercenaries to overthrow the government is almost non-existent. However, the two assassination attempts on the Prime Minister demonstrated that certain types of threats still remain. More than anything else the two incidents disturbed the otherwise peaceful society where political violence is minimal. Furthermore, corruption and nepotism still continues and could create political tension and instability in the future. Although Mauritius appears to be a country relatively free from most kinds of domestic political threats faced by other SIDS of the Indian

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<sup>62</sup> Bowman, *Mauritius: Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*, p. 155



Ocean, there are still underlying vulnerabilities. The political system is highly personalised. Individuals dominate politics and political parties rather than ideologies. Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam was the dominant figure in the 1960s and 1970s and it was he as a person who commanded the respect of the people rather than his party in general. Today, he is regarded as the 'father of the nation'. Currently, this role is being held by the Prime Minister Sir Aneerood Jugnauth. Further, parties are often divided on ethnic lines, although once again Mauritius has managed to reduce the possibility of alienating ethnic minorities by introducing the 'best loser system' in the Parliament.

On the economic front, vulnerabilities and threats may seem minimal. However, the economy is still vulnerable to external shocks. Its main product, sugar, is susceptible to the vagaries of the climate. Cyclones can damage crops and it also increases the cost of insurance. Additionally, a fall in world prices as well as any change in the Sugar Protocol arrangements can hit the industry badly. Moreover, the sugar industry has been on the decline in recent years. Other problems facing the industry include falling world prices and ageing machinery. The establishment of the EPZ greatly contributed to the growth of the economy. However, many of the industries faced difficulties in the early 1980s and many were forced to close down. Furthermore, the EPZ is dominated by the textile and clothing industry (80% of total EPZ exports). This domination of a single industry makes the EPZ vulnerable to import quotas and other protectionist measures by the importing countries. Besides, the EPZ now faces a shortage of labour, the availability of which helped the rapid growth of the EPZ in the first place. While the off-shore business sector is thriving it is also vulnerable due to its high concentration on just one country, India. Although there is a bilateral double taxation agreement in place between Mauritius and India, if India moves to change the treaty it could lead to a lot of problems and could affect the industry seriously.<sup>63</sup> Even the tourism industry is not without its problems. Rising wages, high taxes and unfair competition from unregistered operators are some of the

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<sup>63</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 22 July 1995, p. 6

problems facing the tourism industry.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the high rate of population growth could also lead to considerable strains on the economy in the future. Nevertheless, in general, the country's economy appears to be in better position to withstand some shocks that could cripple the economies of other SIDS.

Societal threats are also minimal as far as ethnic problems are concerned. Mauritius has managed to accommodate the numerous ethnic groups, although attempts to create a Mauritian identity is still in its infant stages. Ethnic divisions remain strong and there is potential for ethnic problems to surface. Ethnic communities identify with their original homelands and religions. Additionally, custom and practice reproduces within the Indian community divisions along the caste system. The main societal threat confronted by Mauritius is the growing influence of the drug traffickers. According to a report presented to the US Congress by the US State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Affairs in March 1995, the major problem in Mauritius appears to be the "trafficking of heroin brought into the country from Bombay by couriers via commercial airlines".<sup>65</sup> It went on to say that the United States was willing to assist Mauritius in limiting the "very real potential for growth in narcotics transshipment and money laundering".<sup>66</sup> One of the biggest difficulties in dealing with the problem of narcotic drugs is that certain people in the government hierarchy seem to be involved with the problem. Further, the ineffectiveness of the ADSU have also led to difficulties in prosecuting the traffickers. According to reports in 1993, sixteen packets of hard drugs and 175,000 rupees (US\$9,500), which represented key evidence for a trial, simply 'disappeared' while in the headquarters of the ADSU. Moreover, in February 1994, it was discovered that 46 grams of heroin that also represented key evidence had 'turned' into cocoa beans while at the premises of the ADSU.<sup>67</sup> Another hindrance is the difficulty in detecting drugs being brought into the country through the airport. Being dependent on tourism, it is difficult for

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<sup>64</sup> See De Backer, "Mauritius: Going for Gold again" p. 28

<sup>65</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 25 March 1995, p. 5

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 April 1994, p. 2

Mauritius to be too strict in the search of luggage of those entering the country, especially the luggage of tourists. As the Drug Commission suggested, "That might damage the reputation of (our) country as a gracious and hospitable land".<sup>68</sup> Mauritius also acknowledges the difficulty of detecting smugglers using the numerous bays and inlets on the islands to dump their cargoes. As such, although the country attempts to fight the threat from the narcotic trade, the problem is a real one. Environmental threats do exist and are real threats. The country is vulnerable to the weather, especially the agricultural sector. Industrial pollution due to the lack of proper treatment is also a problem that could adversely affect the development of tourism. But again Mauritius is in a better position to meet the threats. Although it can do nothing to prevent cyclones from harming the sugar crop or stop global warming, Mauritius has put certain measures in place and earmarked resources to encounter these difficulties.

## **Conclusion**

Mauritius appears to be relatively secure. The country has managed to minimise potential threats and it has relied on a democratic system that is accepted by the society as a whole. It has established good relations with most of the international community. Even where problems exist, such as the issue of the Chagos Archipelago, it has proceeded cautiously in order not to let the issue alienate the country from Britain and the United States. It is obvious that Mauritius seeks the return of the Chagos. Although Mauritius may claim that the Indian Ocean should be free from military weapons its claim on the Chagos appears to be directed more towards the return of the islands so that it can benefit from leasing Diego Garcia to the US rather than Britain doing so.<sup>69</sup> It is unlikely that the issue will be resolved soon. Britain has expressed no interest in returning the islands at present and Mauritius is cautious in its demand for the return of the islands. Although Mauritius has raised the issue at the United Nations in the past, the Mauritian Prime Minister in

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<sup>68</sup> *Findings of the Commission of Enquiry on Drugs*, (Government Printers, Mauritius, June 1987), p. 39

<sup>69</sup> See *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 3 February 1990, p.2

his address to the 49th session of the General Assembly mentioned it only briefly saying that, "...we have continued to pursue positive dialogue with Britain and some progress has been registered".<sup>70</sup> However, this issue could create problems in the future if any future government of Mauritius change its stance.

At present, Mauritius seems to have taken the necessary steps to maintain its low threat scenario. By maintaining close relationships and handling conflicting issues such as the problem of Diego Garcia in a friendly manner, Mauritius seems distant from external threats. Domestically, the political system is valued with institutionalised democratic practices accepted by all. Economically, it is developing strongly. As far as societal threats are concerned it has so far minimised the potential risk of such problems surfacing in the country. Environmentally, it has established means to deal with at least some of the threats. As such, on the surface, Mauritius faces very few of the threats that are faced by the SIDS in general. However, it could also be that Mauritius may be moving out of the category of the SIDS. If the one million cut-off point is imposed strictly, then Mauritius is not one of the SIDS. However, it is not this fact that has made Mauritius face fewer threats. It is also because it should no longer be considered strictly as a 'developing' island state. At the time of independence Mauritius was a country totally dependent on agriculture; yet today it is considered as one of the newly industrialising countries. While this may seem the ideal path for other SIDS to follow there are two historical aspects in the Mauritian story that have contributed to its success. Firstly, from the time Mauritius was colonised there were no indigenous institutions hampering the development of a modern state system, capitalism and a market economy. As Jean Houbert claims, "the modern state and the market economy found virgin soil in Mauritius. There were no pre-colonial institutions in the way: no 'tribal' structure, no 'Asiatic Despotism', to hamper the establishment of modern rule; no pre-colonial modes of production standing in the path of capitalism".<sup>71</sup> Although this could be true of some of the other SIDS such as the Seychelles, a second factor ensured that

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<sup>70</sup> Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, address to the 49th session of the UNGA, 5 October 1994

<sup>71</sup> Jean Houbert, "Globalisation and Mauritius", *The Indian Ocean Review*, March 1995, p.26

this establishment of a modern state and market economy continued. This goes back to the time of independence when its political leaders chose to continue democratic practices and safeguard the rights of businessmen and the sugar producers. The people themselves accepted that this was the right path and therefore a modern state based on democratic practices, and an economy based on capitalism, became institutionalised in Mauritius, respected by all. Unlike many of the states who received independence from colonial powers there was no nationalisation of industries in Mauritius. Furthermore, future governments have continued this policy and there is consensus among the political parties on the type of development policies chosen. There is also a third aspect to the success of Mauritius which lies partly in the geo-politics of the Indian Ocean and partly in the ethnic composition of Mauritius. Mauritius has been able to make use of the fact that Britain is in possession of part of its territory. By maintaining close contacts with Britain it has been able to gain aid and assistance from Britain which is keen to keep the Diego Garcia issue in the background. Furthermore, Mauritius is also able to get developmental assistance from a France keen to be accepted as part of an Indian Ocean country. As such, by pragmatic policies Mauritius has been able to maximise its position vis-à-vis Britain and France. Additionally, it has also been able to maintain good economic relations with its neighbour South Africa during the apartheid years and despite opposition from African countries. Moreover, with a majority population of Indian origin, it receives substantial assistance from India, the other main dominant actor in the Indian Ocean. Although it can perhaps be claimed that Mauritius has managed to minimise its security problems because it is strictly no longer a 'small' and 'developing' state, it is these factors that have led Mauritius to the position the country is in today. Therefore, in this respect, the Mauritian story is somewhat unique.

However, this not say that Mauritius is without any security problems. It is simply the case that security problems in Mauritius are more in the area of vulnerabilities rather than threats. Military vulnerability exists in Mauritius.

Politically, the country appears strong on the surface yet many of the inherent vulnerabilities of the SIDS such as personalisation of politics and openness to external influence and pressure remains. Although Mauritius is now categorised as a newly industrialising country, the economy is still vulnerable to external threats. Potential threats remain in the form of economic shocks such as those that may arise from sudden changes of trade patterns from the countries that Mauritius exports, and changes in world prices, especially that of sugar. The Minister in charge of Economic Planning and Development stated, "Despite our current success we are still a very fragile economy which has to keep in step with others".<sup>72</sup> While the different ethnic communities live in harmony, potential societal threats in the form of ethnic problems could surface unless the present level of unity is maintained. Furthermore, the society faces problems from narcotic drugs. Environmentally, the country is vulnerable and potential and actual environmental threats exist. Some of these are a direct result of economic development. Today only 1 % of the native forest remains in Mauritius.<sup>73</sup> Other problems such as those due to global warming and sea level rise and to cyclones are beyond the control of Mauritius. Although at present Mauritius has succeeded in minimising its threat scenario, the question is can Mauritius continue on this path in the future? It is difficult to predict what the future holds in any case, let alone as far as the security of a SIDS is concerned. However, as long as Mauritius manages to continue its present policies it is apparent that it could lead to a further reduction of its vulnerabilities and threats.

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<sup>72</sup> Quoted in *The Courier*, No. 135, September-October 1992, p. 30

<sup>73</sup> Ibrahim Alladin, *Economic Miracle in the Indian Ocean: Can Mauritius show the way*, (Editions de l'Océan Indien, Rose-Hill, Mauritius, 1993), p. 177

## **THE INDIAN OCEAN SECURITY MATRIX**

(Threats, Vulnerabilities, Strategies and Responses in a comparative context)

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will compare and contrast the various security problems of the three Indian Ocean SIDS (IOS). It will demonstrate the similarities and difference among the IOS in the national, regional and international context. The second part identifies the numerous strategies and responses that have been used by the IOS and are available to these states at various levels. These will be divided into domestic (self-help), bilateral (patron-client), and regional and international levels.

### **Threats and Vulnerabilities**

#### **The National Dimension**

In analysing the security problems of the IOS some vulnerabilities and threats are more real than others. Militarily, all the three IOS are weak. They lack the necessary military resources to defend themselves against determined armed attack from outside sources. They all have limited human resources and hardware. They all are handicapped in the area of command and control and often rely on foreign expertise to assist in their defence policy making. Even if they might have sufficient resources to hold off an armed attack from a non-governmental source for some time, the likelihood is that foreign help will have to be sought and soon. The Maldives and the Seychelles have maintained defence forces, though they are costly and take a large share of their budgets that could have been used for other purposes. The Seychelles has actually cut down their defence budget as well as the number of personnel in their armed services in the last year. The Mauritian armed force is also small, although they have a Special Mobile Unit to deal with external threats. However, actual threats of armed intervention in all three are low. Although both the Maldives and the Seychelles have experienced mercenary attacks in the past, the possibility of this happening again in the near future is doubtful. In the case of the

Maldives the prompt assistance received from India during the 1988 attack could deter dissidents from seeking assistance from non-governmental sources such as mercenaries in the future. In the case of the Seychelles, it was once again overseas dissidents barred from returning home who were the organisers of the attack and today, with the re-establishment of multi-party democracy, the need to replace the ruling elite by such means does not appear to be likely. Mauritius has been free of the problem of coups and mercenary attacks, mainly due to well established democratic practices unlike the other two, and the fact that Mauritius does not have an active overseas population that is keen to see a change of government by undemocratic means. Besides, all three maintain good relations with the rest of the world. As far as the Maldives and the Seychelles are concerned no serious disputes, especially territorial ones, exist with other states or neighbours and the only IOS with such a problem is Mauritius over Diego Garcia. Furthermore, they have so far proved successful in maintaining a balance of friendship between neighbours who may have problems with each other in the region and have avoided taking sides. As such, armed intervention, whether it be from another state or from foreign mercenaries, is not a key threat to the IOS at present although the problem of mercenaries remains a potential threat as long as political suppression, together with people willing to use force for financial gains, remain.

The IOS are not only weak militarily. Political weakness and openness also appear to be two problems that are real in all three, although to varying degrees. In all of them personalisation of politics is a key feature. In all three, the ruling elite have dominated the political scene for a long time and the head of the government plays the 'father figure'. He is often portrayed as a person which the country cannot do without. As such, in the three SIDS relatively few people tend to dominate politics. Although they appear to enjoy political stability, the abuse of power by those in government, as well as allegations of nepotism and corruption are potential problems that could well threaten these states in the future. This has created among some a strong desire for change that may lead to the use of undesirable means to



bring a change of leader. In the Maldives President Gayoom has faced three attempts to overthrow his government and it is difficult to quantify the numerous coups and alleged coup attempts designed to overthrow President René of Seychelles. Mauritius, once more, seems to be the least affected of the three. Although the tendency for a few to dominate politics exists in Mauritius, this is accepted by the people as long as power is exercised by democratic means. The current Prime Minister, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, remains in office because he has invited various opposition parties to join him as partners rather than because he is the only candidate in elections. This contrasts with one candidate elections in the Seychelles in the past and which remain the policy in the Maldives. As far as threats are concerned, actual domestic political threats at present are low and the IOS appear to be rather stable. However, potential problems exist on the political front, especially for the Maldives. In the case of the Seychelles the long term effects of the newly established multi-party system remains to be seen. If it is continued as the accepted way then it should reduce potential political problems.

Furthermore, all three are dependent on foreign resources to overcome problems in several areas. Lack of resources has meant that foreign assistance has become vital, although this is less obvious in Mauritius due to its better economic performance. Both the Maldives and the Seychelles rely heavily on foreign expertise and assistance, not just for their economic development but also in other areas such as environmental policy making and the day to day running of the government. This has made all three open to foreign influences and pressure. Additionally, they have very little ability to influence events outside their territorial borders, even in their own region. In the past, the IOS have all raised their concern about the threat from the militarisation of the Indian Ocean, especially by the larger powers of the international community. However, this issue appears to have become a lower priority in their lists of security concerns after the end of the Cold War. More worrying is the growing military strength and increasing role in the Indian Ocean by regional powers like India. One of the major threats to all three IOS is that of foreign

influence and pressure, especially from India and France (in the western Indian Ocean). In all three IOS, India plays a vital role. To carry out any policy contrary to the interest of India is therefore going to be extremely difficult. This scenario is also true as regards French influence, though not to the Maldives as the country is not situated in the south west Indian Ocean where French interest is mostly concentrated. Although at present all three IOS maintain good relations with most states, foreign pressure continues in some areas, especially for Mauritius from Britain over the issue of Diego Garcia. This is a key problem as part of the territory of Mauritius is being used by another state for its own purpose, bearing in mind that the British have rented it out to the Americans.

One of the key security problems faced by all the SIDS is that of economic vulnerability and the subsequent dependence on foreign assistance, although once again this is less obvious in Mauritius. In the Maldives and the Seychelles the economic resource base is extremely narrow and both are heavily dependent on one or two industries, especially tourism. Their economies are open to external vicissitudes as their ratio of imports to GDP is fairly high. They are vulnerable to economic shocks. Even in the case of Mauritius, the country is sensitive to price fluctuations and import quotas imposed by other states can seriously affect the country. In the early 1980s many industries in the EPZ of Mauritius had to close down due to recession in European markets and imports quotas imposed by Britain, France, Italy and the United States, which had serious effects on the textile industry. A World Bank report in 1989 stressed the need for Mauritius to diversify more in order to cut down dependence on a few products and reduce vulnerability to price fluctuations in the international markets.<sup>1</sup> Dependence on foreign aid has also created problems. They cannot afford to antagonise their donors and this appears to be a considerable problem in all three. Further, economic development has also led to the drying up of foreign aid, especially to the Seychelles and to a lesser extent the Maldives. The main issue here is that while the SIDS have improved their economic

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<sup>1</sup> See Donald L. Sparks "Economy" (Mauritius), *Africa: South of the Sahara, 1995*, p. 621

performances, they still require considerable amounts of assistance by the international community to continue to develop, diversify their economies and improve their overall economic resilience. If such assistance is withdrawn then it could lead to all sorts of problems. Economic hardship can create public dissatisfaction and could lead to political instability. This fear is more real in the Seychelles where the country is experimenting with multi-party democracy after 14 years of being a one party state. Besides, one of the key problems faced by the SIDS is the dominance of foreign owned business interests. This is more so in the Seychelles. They need foreign investment but at the same time are vulnerable to its dominance. Linked with economic vulnerability as well as territorial protection, one of the primary problems faced by all three is the violation of their waters by foreign vessels, especially unlawful poaching in the EEZ. All three have vast zones that need to be protected yet all three lack the means to do so, especially in the case of Seychelles where the EEZ is over 1.3 million square kilometres.

As far as societal vulnerabilities and threats are concerned all three have managed to minimise societal threats. The Maldives, being a homogenous society, faces no ethnic problems and although secessionism was a problem in the past this is not the case today. Both the Seychelles and Mauritius have multi-ethnic societies but so far ethnic problems are minimal. The existence of numerous constitutional safeguards as well as inbreeding has encouraged unity between the various ethnic communities. However, future problems between different ethnic communities can become a problem, especially in Mauritius where the ethnic communities identify with their respective ethnic origins and religion; and the people of Indian origin are also divided by caste. Drugs are also a considerable problem, although it has not affected the countries as much as it has in the SIDS of the Caribbean. It can become a serious hazard if not tackled effectively.

Environmental and ecological vulnerabilities exist in all three IOS. Island environments are especially precarious and vulnerable. Destruction of coral reefs,

erosion of coastal areas, and marine pollution are common. Further, the improper disposal of domestic and industrial waste is also a major threat. All the IOS have numerous programmes and policies to overcome environmental problems. However, these need to be sustained and more international assistance, especially in the form of further research into the various causes of and solutions to environmental problems, needs to be carried out. As far as the Maldives is concerned the single greatest environmental threat facing the country today is that of global warming and associated sea level rise. This is a problem beyond its control although it is somewhat less threatening to the Seychelles and Mauritius as in both states most islands are granitic.

### **The Regional Dimension**

Although the three IOS have some similarities as regards vulnerabilities and threats, the security problems of the IOS, when analysed together, do not form a similar pattern. Their vulnerabilities are primarily a function of their own individual conditions and apart from the dominant role of India in all three, common linkages are rare. In the past, the Indian Ocean was a theatre for the Cold War, yet the IOS have managed to withstand the politics of bipolarity with minimal participation. Even in the Seychelles, where a socialist government dominated in the late 1970s and 1980s, the influence of the former Soviet Union was minimised and it was able to maintain a balance between the two superpowers. Mauritius, although declaring itself to be a non-aligned country, was always pro-Western. The Maldives, in relative isolation from the rest of the world for most of its history, also managed to stay clear of any superpower influences, mainly due to the fact that the British had a military base in Gan until 1977 and therefore was 'out of bounds' for the Soviet Union. After the departure of the British it did find itself having to fend off advances from the Soviet Union for the lease of Gan. It somehow managed to avoid a Soviet entanglement and therefore was able to be non-aligned, receiving aid and assistance from both camps yet pledging allegiance to none. All three IOS did express strong concerns about the militarisation of the Indian Ocean during the 1970s and 1980s

though there was hardly any evidence that they faced any real threats. Today, this issue has somewhat fizzled out.

As far as the region is concerned one common element facing the IOS is the influence of India. Even in this case the relationship with the IOS appears to be different. Mauritius, by virtue of having a majority of people of Indian origin, shares cultural links with India, unlike the Seychelles. The Maldives do not have any cultural or linguistic links with India although located in its immediate vicinity. France is the other power which plays a regional role. However, the French influence appears to be limited to the Seychelles and Mauritius. This is not surprising as they were both French colonies in the past and, furthermore, the French DOM of Reunion is located near them. As far as the Maldives are concerned there are no historical contacts with France and hardly any French influence. South Africa did affect the two SIDS of the south western Indian Ocean and caused real problems, especially in the Seychelles. With the dismantling of apartheid it remains to be seen how or if South Africa will involve itself in the Indian Ocean. At a recent seminar on Defence Equipment Co-operation in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Defence Minister, Joe Modise, stated that "Collective responsibility for the maintenance of peace has emerged as a key activity in international co-operation. As a partner in both the region and the continent, South Africa can be expected to become involved in the support of peace operations".<sup>2</sup> It appears that this new role will be rather different to the one South Africa undertook in the past, which was one of sponsoring mercenaries to overthrow governments and bribing the SIDS to break the trade embargo. The United States is the only non-regional power that has a major interest in the Indian Ocean. It maintains the military base in Diego Garcia and it was very much the target regarding the establishment of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. Despite the fact that the IOS staunchly supported the Indian Ocean 'Zone of Peace' concept the relationship between them and the United States was more or less cordial. The Seychelles allowed the United States to maintain a satellite tracking station even after the establishment

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the *Asian Defence Journal*, April 1995, p. 14

of a socialist one party state and refused the Soviets the base that they allegedly wanted. The Maldives has not had a close relationship with the United States in the past but this has changed over the last four or five years. Although Mauritius has called for the return of Diego Garcia, this seems to be directed towards Britain rather than the United States. As such, the direct influence on the IOS by the presence of the United States in the Indian Ocean has been limited.

Although the IOS individually had confronted many threats in the past there was hardly a regional element to them. Even today, in the several areas where vulnerabilities and threats exist, they are somewhat different in each case. In the Maldives the key threats today appear to be environmental and economic and those that may arise domestically with the people's desire to bring change to the political system. In the Seychelles the main threats appear to be economic, especially those that could arise from the influence of foreign business interests and the depletion of external development aid. Although the Seychelles also faces potential domestic political threats, the eventuality of this happening appears to be more related to economic vulnerabilities than any desire of the people to bring change to local politics, particularly now that the people in the Seychelles have established a multi-party democracy. In the case of Mauritius the main problem appear to be externally, the issue of Diego Garcia, and internally, domestic political problems in the form of corruption. Therefore, the vulnerabilities of the IOS are similar in kind to the SIDS of the world as a whole rather than unique to the Indian Ocean. Similarly, where threats are concerned, the problems once again seem to conform to the particularities of the IOS rather than the region as a whole. This is hardly surprising as the three IOS form a region in a geographical sense only in that they are all located in some part of the Indian Ocean. This is especially true of the Maldives, located in South Asia and quite distant from the other two. The Seychelles and Mauritius are located closer to each other. As for common external threats, the one factor that could play a major role in the security scenario in all three is the growing dominant role of India in the Indian Ocean. The desire of India to take on the role of the regional policeman,

especially in South Asia, was seen in India's involvement in trying to broker peace between the separatist Tamils and the government in Sri Lanka; and in the military assistance to the Maldives to put down the mercenary attack in 1988. The possibility that India wants to expand this role to the rest of the Indian Ocean is feared by many in the Indian Ocean littoral and hinterland states. This fear is not without reason. India has been expanding its navy and has the largest naval fleet among the countries of the Indian Ocean. Although the IOS currently enjoy a close relationship with India, there is an underlying fear of India's hegemonial ambitions. If India continues to expand its role in the Indian Ocean it could make it extremely difficult for the IOS to refuse to do what India desires, even if it is detrimental to their own national interests. Further, the expansion of the nuclear capability of both India and Pakistan could affect the geo-politics of the region. Although India and Pakistan have fought three wars the last one was in 1971. Then the situation more or less stabilised, with each making intimidating gestures and threatening statements followed by attempts to diffuse tensions. However, in recent years tensions have been increasing over the disputed territory of Kashmir. As such, it is feared that the expansion of nuclear capability in both countries can destabilise the region and in effect lead the sub-continent into destruction. Although neither India nor Pakistan claims that they possess nuclear weapons it is generally agreed that they both are nuclear powers. For the IOS such a situation will be disastrous, especially to the Maldives which has a close relationship with both countries and relies on assistance from both. The IOS benefited from the role of India in the Indian Ocean in the past with generous developmental and military assistance. They also welcome the assistance received from Pakistan, although on a much smaller scale. However, a war in the Indian sub-continent could change all that. The growth of Indian influence in the region could also affect the position of other powers such as France in the western Indian ocean. Although the island of Reunion is a French DOM, the Tamil population has been growing and they have been demanding greater political participation. If they wish to establish a more closer relationship with India then it could be a cause for concern to

France.<sup>3</sup> Although in the future the geo-politics of the Indian Ocean could alter the security scenario for the IOS, at present their security problems appears to be derived more from the fact that they are small and island developing states rather than as a consequence of them being SIDS located in the Indian Ocean. This is not to say that there is no regional influence, but that the security problems due to regional influences are limited.

### **The International Dimension**

The smallness of the IOS and the fact that they are developing states which are islands rather than some part of a geographical mainland have resulted in certain characteristic that they share with other SIDS. The smallness of the IOS means that they only possess limited abilities to deter and defend themselves. Therefore, they are militarily weak and vulnerable to external threats. Thus militarily all three IOS fall into the category of states with high vulnerability and low actual threats making the security problems more systemic than specific. Similarly, they share with the other SIDS problems of weakness, not only militarily but politically and economically. Although political stability exists today, the IOS have had their share of domestic upheaval in the past and continue to face possible external interference and pressure. Therefore, politically once more all three have high vulnerability and low actual threats. However, potential threats do exist, especially in the Maldives and the Seychelles. This scenario prevails where societal security problems are concentrated. Economically Mauritius is the only success story so far. The Maldives and the Seychelles are both resource-poor and dependent on foreign resources and have high vulnerability and a high threat factor making their economic security problems all encompassing. This is true where environmental security problems are concerned and applies to all three IOS. Most of the potential threats they face are common to the SIDS located in the Caribbean and the South Pacific and if there are differences, they vary only in degree and not in kind. Even where actual threats are concerned other SIDS also face similar threats or have faced such threats in the past.

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<sup>3</sup> Admiral M.P. Awati, "The Geo-political and Geo-strategic importance of the Islands of the Indian Ocean" in S. Chandra et al (eds), *The Indian Ocean and its Islands: Strategic, Scientific and Historical Perspectives*, pp. 80 - 81



This is especially true where economic and environmental threats are concerned. Although many such vulnerabilities and threats may also be common to small states in general, there are certain problems faced by the IOS that are only shared by other SIDS. The explanation for this is self-evident. The IOS are not only just small but they are island states and therefore they share features peculiar to small island states. The IOS are remote in terms of distance and transport. Besides, they are multi-island states and therefore inter-island communication within the state is difficult and expensive. They possess vast areas of maritime territory, yet they are unable to fully utilise their resources let alone protect them from exploitation by others. The environments of the IOS are fragile and vulnerable to threats that are often beyond their control and for which they are not responsible. Besides, their insular nature affects their societies and also the way they perceive and carry out their activities as sovereign states. Therefore, the security problems of the IOS are also common to most of the SIDS in other parts of the world. There may be some differences based on the geo-politics of the area where the SIDS are located. As far as the IOS are concerned, although the geo-politics of the Indian Ocean do influence and shape the security of the IOS, this is less of a determinant of their security problems than it is for SIDS located in other areas such as the Caribbean or the South Pacific.

### **Strategies and Responses**

The IOS have resorted to various means in their attempt to reduce their vulnerabilities and at the same time find means of confronting threats. The different ways that these states have tried to deal with their security problems can be roughly divided into self-help measures, patron-client methods (bilateral), regional measures and international measures. Self-help measures are those measures that these states have taken and can take on their own without any outside assistance. Patron-client methods are those strategies and responses that are designed to deliver resources and assistance from a larger power in order to reduce vulnerabilities and threats. The most obvious example of this is a bilateral defence pact to combat military threats.

Regional measures are those put in place by regional bodies or a group of regional states. International measures are those organised and delivered by various international organisations. For the purpose of the thesis only the measures instituted by the two major international organisations currently involved in the issues of small states (the Commonwealth and the UN) will be analysed.

### **Self-help**

However small the SIDS may be the first response has to come from within the states themselves. It is the SIDS who have to recognise the need for security and try to identify the security problems they face and may have to face, both domestically and internationally. Unless there is an initiative on the part of the SIDS themselves, it would prove futile for the rest of the international community to try and provide solutions to their security problems.

The three SIDS of the Indian Ocean have some capabilities to meet some of the threats they confront. (See individual case studies.) However, the issue here is not just having some measures in place. It is paramount that the security situation is carefully analysed and vulnerabilities and threats identified. In many instances, the SIDS follow a reactionary policy to security problems rather than a forward planning one. For example, in the Maldives, after the mercenary attack in 1988, the whole defence policy appears to have been geared to meet a threat from mercenaries who may arrive by boat! In most cases, realistic analysis is rarely attempted. This is more so because in the SIDS regime security often becomes synonymous with the security of the SIDS as a whole. This may be true to a certain extent in that, for example, any threat such as a coup or mercenary attack to topple the regime in power can have a strong impact on the country as whole. However, there are many instances where the threat scenario is mainly or, in some cases, wholly geared to the regime in power. Artificial threats against the regime from outside sources are often conjectured in order for the government to carry out policies that otherwise may not be popular with

the people. This was the situation in the Seychelles in the past as 'threats from mercenaries' against the country appeared to be always on the horizon. For most SIDS, some sort of forward planning is carried out, especially on the economic and the environmental front. However, in other areas, especially with regard to military, political and societal threats, there is very little forward thinking. This has to change as this is one way that the SIDS can help themselves. They need to carefully analyse their security scenario to detect real threats and assess the dangers in order to maximise the limited resources available to them.

In order to establish an effective strategy by the SIDS themselves, many measures have been suggested among which can be included the strategy of the 4 D's: deterrence, defence, development and diplomacy.<sup>4</sup> Deterrence and defence may be achieved in many ways. The most common example cited for defending the SIDS from security threats is that of strengthening military defences. Although the desire to maintain an effective army, navy and airforce exists in nearly all states, it is not always possible for the SIDS to do so. Considering the limited resources available to these states, the ideal would be to have an armed force that is multipurpose and mobile, specially in the case of archipelagos where troops might have to be despatched to far flung islands.<sup>5</sup> They should be able to carry out a wide range of functions from police duties to that of patrolling the maritime zones. As mentioned before, the Maldives do not have distinctive army, navy and airforce divisions. The National Security Service perform all the functions. The Seychelles has a citizen militia that could be called up in times of crisis as well as their regular armed force. This is convenient as there are a limited number of people available for the defence force. The armed forces in the Seychelles are also trained in building and construction work, mechanics, farming and fishing.<sup>6</sup> In the case of Mauritius, there is a highly trained Special Mobile Unit. Even though an effective armed force can be seen as crucial, an over-zealous armed force can be dangerous as was found in the

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<sup>4</sup> H.E. Chang Heng Chee, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the UN, at the UN General Assembly, 19 October 1987.

<sup>5</sup> See the Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in a global society*, and Neville O. Linton, "A policy perspective" in Clarke and Payne (eds), *Politics, Security and Development in small states*, p. 217

<sup>6</sup> Franda, *The Seychelles: Unquiet Islands*, pp.69 - 72, 118

Seychelles in the past and in Sao Tome in August 1995. Henceforth, the SIDS will have to discipline their armed forces to a high level although this might not be such an easy thing to achieve. However, the difficulty with self-help is that already limited resources have to be used for the development of an armed service that could, at best, just manage to hold off an armed attack until outside help arrives. Some factions in the Seychelles have claimed that the Seychelles do not need a military force following the détente between the US and the Soviet Union. This claim was dismissed by the Chief of Staff, James Michael, in January 1991, pointing out that it was every country's right to have an army or military force to defend itself and its national sovereignty against aggression: "Seychelles is no exception".<sup>7</sup> Mauritius appears to be the only one among the SIDS of the Indian Ocean that has the resources to form an effective armed force. Mauritius has a larger population and is better developed economically and therefore has more resources available.

Defence in many contexts not only means the strengthening of their armed forces. One of the main problems in the past is the lack of defence against political threats, both from internal and external sources. One of the ways that this can be remedied and coups, political instability and the notorious use of mercenaries to overthrow governments avoided, is through the establishment of democratic practices. Although some have criticised such a strategy by saying that a weak democracy is worse than a benevolent dictatorship, democracy is the accepted norm today. Already many SIDS have what can be called 'tailor-made democratic practices' to suit their needs. The problem with some of the SIDS is that many are ruled by people who do not necessarily reflect the political structure of the whole community. It is, therefore, essential that wider political participation is undertaken so as to tap into all the resources available. In the case of the Maldives and the Seychelles, the threats from mercenaries involved dissident elements from within the country as well. The problem with the SIDS is that because of the personalisation of politics everything is taken on a personal level and therefore acceptance of criticisms

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Publication No. 038, Government Information Service, Seychelles

is difficult for those in power. This appeared to be specially true in the Seychelles in the past and is to some degree the situation in the Maldives today. While bearing in mind that no government could satisfy the demands of all the people, it might be worthwhile to analyse the demands of the dissidents. In some cases they might have genuine grievances. The case for democracy is strong, especially when the security situation of Mauritius is analysed. Mauritius has managed to avoid the threats from coups and mercenaries that have plagued the other two SIDS, despite the multi-ethnic community and a party system that has ethnic undertones. The main reason for it appears to be well-established democratic practices whereby elections are regularly held which are fair and free and accepted by the majority, and that freedom of expression is generally allowed, if not openly welcomed by the ruling elite, whichever party is in power. Further, the larger population appears to have made the politics of Mauritius somewhat less personalised than the other two, although it is still based on the dominance of personalities. This is not the case in the Seychelles (a one-party state from 1979 - 1992) and in the Maldives where no political parties exist. As such, there appears to be a case for democracy as a means of defence against domestic political security problems. However, in some of the SIDS there is also a very real barrier to the establishment of democracy. For example, the Maldives has always been ruled by a small political elite. Democracy is a concept that is understood only by a few educated people as the functional literacy in the country is rather low. Although the ruling elite claims that the Maldives is a democratic country, the introduction of real democracy is going to be difficult. The concept of freedom of speech, although generally seen as a right of the people, is accepted only as a limited concept. For example, criticisms of the government are not only discouraged by the ruling elite but the majority of the people themselves often see it as being disloyal to the country. There is thus still some way to go although this scenario is somewhat changing today as more and more people are becoming literate and educated. Therefore, wider political participation and political legitimacy are an essential part of the defence structure against the threat from coups and political instability.

As for defence against external political threats, all three rely on the policy of 'make as many friends and as few enemies as possible'. The three IOS enjoy cordial relations with a large number of states in the international community and seek to maintain a good reputation. This could prove a vital self-help measure as it could raise the political costs to would-be aggressors. The IOS have also joined various regional and international organisations in order to enhance their role among the members of the international community. However, just becoming a member of such an organisation does not mean very much on its own. Participation to the maximum extent possible at such gatherings, where the main actors of the regional and international community convene, is vital. Many SIDS lack the necessary resources to attend many international gatherings. However, the IOS have attempted to raise their profile at international level by hosting various regional and international gatherings. Island states are often seen to be perfect locations for such meetings away from the political turmoil in other areas of the world. While the SIDS may lack the necessary resources to 'go to the mountain' bringing 'the mountain' to themselves may be one way that they can continue to participate meaningfully in the international community. International gatherings are one area where the IOS have played a key role in drawing the attention of the international community to the plight of the small states. All three have raised their concerns at various regional and international gatherings and the Seychelles and Mauritius co-sponsored the Maldives' initiative in raising the issue of the security of small states at the United Nations. In order to reduce external pressure, many SIDS also opt for non-alignment. The Maldives, the Seychelles and Mauritius have done the same. Although this may be seen as a better alternative by most of these states than the alternative of joining one of the allied camps this is less of a security guarantee. For these countries, most of the security problems they faced, the Caribbean excepted, did not emanate from the superpowers. As such, being non-aligned, while it did provide certain benefits, such as aid from both camps, did not really solve most of the problems they faced.

As for strengthening their defence against the major economic threats, development appears to be the answer (This will be dealt later). Where the problem is poaching in the EEZ the solutions available to the IOS are limited. They do have coast guards but in reality there is very little they can do to effectively monitor their vast EEZs. The Maldives have recently installed a radar to detect vessels entering its EEZ. None of the three SIDS face major societal threats from ethnic discrimination. The Maldives is a homogenous country. In Mauritius 'ethnic peace' is mainly due to the establishment of a legislative framework whereby no community is alienated. Integration and inbreeding have also helped reduce ethnic problems, especially in the Seychelles. The attempt to create a national Seychellois identity is also one of the factors that has helped unite the Seychelles. Integration has also helped reduce the possible threat of secessionism although differences between the various island communities still remains to some degree. Another factor that could strengthen national identity is the attempt to avoid marginalisation of outer islands. All three IOS have attached great importance to this issue. The IOS have also put in place constitutional measures to combat threats from the drugs trade, although it is a small step compared to the potential threat from drugs. Lack of trained personnel in enforcing the law appears to be the major problem that needs to be tackled. Further, there appears to be a lack of resources, especially on the rehabilitation side. However, domestic anti-drug education is one area where the IOS can help themselves and this is an area that has to be expanded in all three IOS. More programmes to create awareness using such mediums as the radio can be useful in SIDS, especially in archipelagos such as the Maldives.

As far as environmental problems are concerned, the IOS have managed to put in place legislative frameworks to protect their environments. Yet difficulties exist with the enforcement of the law. Moreover, self-help is extremely limited. There is very little these SIDS have done to contribute to the environmental problems they are facing today. Most of the problems of global warming and sea level rise and the increasing frequency of cyclones and storms are beyond their control. Even in the

case of waste disposal there is only limited action available to the SIDS. Raising awareness among the people as to the importance of environment is one of the key issues. Environmental impact assessments often need assistance from outside. Although disaster-preparedness is vital for these SIDS in order to cope with sudden cyclones and tropical storms, training programmes cost money and forecasting such disasters, warning the people, planning and stockpiling emergency funds are often beyond the means of SIDS and therefore require foreign assistance.

For many of the SIDS development is a cornerstone of an effective security strategy. As Robert McNamara, a former President of the World Bank, summed up, "Security is not military hardware, though it may include it; security is not military force, though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development, and without development there can be no security."<sup>8</sup> For many of the SIDS, economic vulnerability is one of their main problems and this vulnerability is the main element underlying many of the other security problems that they face. Therefore, economic development becomes vital, not only to reduce their economic vulnerability but as a prerequisite to meet the security threats in many of the other areas. Not only will it "prevent the emergence of weaknesses which can be exploited by the others" but it will also provide much needed resources that could be channelled into the defence of the country without having to sacrifice other sectors.<sup>9</sup> Economic development would also enable these states to overcome the technological bottlenecks that most of them now confront and enhance facilities for communication and exchange of vital information. Even in the case of military defence, economic development contributes a great deal. For example, in the Maldives it was the newly installed communication facility that enabled the Maldivian leadership to appeal for international assistance on the fateful day in November 1988. Since it was a newly constructed building on a stronger foundation than most of the older buildings in Malé, it was able to withstand the constant assault by the mercenaries. However, once again self-help is rather limited

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<sup>8</sup> Robert McNamara, *The essence of security*, (Harper and Row, New York, 1987)

<sup>9</sup> H.E. Chang Heng Chee, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the UN, at the UN General Assembly, 19 October 1987



in the search for economic development. The poor resource base means they usually rely on one or two primary products. However, the IOS have attempted to maximise the resources they have as well as attempting to diversify into other areas. The Maldives has continued to expand its fisheries sector while tourism is given equal importance. The Seychelles has followed a more or less similar policy although it also has manufacturing on a small scale. Mauritius has come out the best of the three. It has successfully moved from a sugar based economy to one in which the main strength is now manufacturing. Tourism comes a close third and the fisheries sector is also being developed. While the Maldives and the Seychelles are also attempting to follow this path, for them, once again, self-help is limited. The SIDS may have vast areas of EEZ with plentiful stocks of fish, and they may have beautiful sandy beaches, but these in themselves cannot foster the growth of successful industries. In order to foster development they need additional resources but their availability is limited. As such, there is little that these SIDS can do without external assistance. Although foreign investment can be encouraged by the prospect of good economic returns on capital, the best form of self-help in encouraging foreign investment is the establishment of a sound political system in the country. It is axiomatic that foreign investors will be extremely reluctant to invest in a country torn by political instability or where there is high political risk. Further, foreign investment can also be encouraged by a sound legal system. These appear to be two of the underlying factors that encouraged foreign companies to invest in the Export Processing Zone of Mauritius. In the case of the Maldives, the legal system is based on the Islamic Shariath and commercial laws need to be developed that would encourage foreign investment. At the moment this seems to be one of the main factors that make foreign investors hesitate to invest in the country. Further, careful policies and laws need to be enforced in order to avoid the undesirable influences and pressures from foreign business ventures as they themselves can pose a threat to the SIDS as it was found in the Seychelles.

One of the important mechanisms that acts as a general deterrent factor for security threats is diplomacy. In an interdependent international community no SIDS can really afford to remain as an 'island'. Therefore, the need to establish a "prudent foreign policy and an effective diplomacy" cannot be over-emphasised.<sup>10</sup> It is necessary to have a more open policy, establish close relations with other states and altogether have a more open outlook. As mentioned before, it is also important for these small countries to participate in international gatherings. Not only do such meetings foster goodwill but they often prove to be "an excellent mechanism for communication and exchange of vital information regarding security concerns".<sup>11</sup> The problem for most of the SIDS is that they cannot afford to send representatives or establish resident embassies in various countries, due to the lack of resources, both financial and human. The Seychelles and Mauritius have established a reasonable presence in foreign countries, but the Maldives only has three resident missions overseas. More often than not, the representatives from such states are inexperienced and untrained. But this should not be a limitation on an effective diplomatic policy. They should be able to put to good use their limited resources and could co-operate and share diplomatic facilities. Many small states use the same office building at the United Nations sponsored by the Commonwealth, and the UN has proven to be a vital link to the smaller states to enable them to maintain contact with other states. As in many cases, alongside the benefits of joining international organisations come negative effects as well. In many instances their votes are canvassed by representatives from other more powerful countries and they may be offered incentives by these states which the SIDS find difficult to reject.<sup>12</sup> In summary, while there are certain areas that the SIDS themselves can tackle to enhance their security, self-help is clearly limited and they need to look elsewhere for assistance.

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<sup>10</sup> See Linton in Clarke and Payne (eds) *Politics, Security and Development in small states*, p. 219

<sup>11</sup> H.E. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, *Smallness and Vulnerability of Small States*, paper presented at the Workshop on Security of Small States, Giraavaru, Maldives, May 1991

<sup>12</sup> C. E. Diggines, "The problems of small states", *The Round Table*, No.295, 1984, pp.195 - 205

## **Patron-client methods**

Bilateral measures play a vital role in the security concerns of SIDS. Some SIDS seek to strengthen their military and political security by establishing a defence pact with a regional neighbour which is relatively powerful. Or in some cases the bigger neighbours provide some type of military assistance, as found in the South Pacific where Australia and New Zealand have provided general and technical defence assistance for their smaller neighbouring island states. In the past decades, some SIDS leased part of their territory to larger powers to set up military bases providing an element of security for the SIDS. In some instances this type of defence pact or defence assistance is not regarded favourably, as such types of security arrangements are unlikely to occur without some substantial benefit to the larger power. However, it must be borne in mind that the ultimate question is whether the SIDS is satisfied with the arrangement. All too often that the larger powers are criticised for interfering and undermining the sovereignty of smaller states, but if the SIDS themselves have requested such assistance then it may prove worthwhile; as sovereign members of the international community they should have the right to choose a protective umbrella from a larger power if they so wish.

The IOS at present have no defence pacts with other states. However, they have received assistance from neighbouring states and the most obvious example is that of the Indian assistance in the mercenary attack on the Maldives and the French assistance to the Comoros. The Seychelles has held joint military exercises with Tanzania and Madagascar, and in the Maldives, Indian armed forces also help in the training of the National Security Service. Training may not be restricted to military personnel but also include civil servants and diplomatic staff. It is far better that they receive this sort of training in neighbouring countries if these countries share common cultural and social ties. Training in states which are not similar to these small states could result in the personnel being indoctrinated in foreign ideologies, especially when sent to distant countries.

India has a close relationship with all three IOS. Indian assistance is not just of a military nature but developmental and technological as well. This has assisted the IOS to overcome some of their vulnerabilities, especially in the form of human resource development and training of personnel, both in the government and the industrial sectors. India has also provided soft loans for economic development and often encourages foreign investment in the IOS by Indian businessmen. The nature of Indian assistance to these IOS is something of an enigma. The IOS see the relationship between themselves and India on a purely bilateral level. Nevertheless, this may not be the same as far as India is concerned. It sees it as part of a regional approach whereby India is mainly assisting states in its natural sphere of influence, with a view to discouraging extra-regional influences.<sup>13</sup> Although Indian assistance may be seen by some of the Indian Ocean states as part of a more sinister plan, the fact remains that India is one of the most powerful states in the Indian Ocean and therefore it is better for the IOS to have India as a friend than an enemy. As for India, as long as the IOS remains friendly there is very little need for it to interfere in their internal affairs. In the south western Indian Ocean the same dilemma is created by the French presence. By virtue of territorial possession France is an Indian Ocean power and any signs of France diminishing influence by giving up these territories is unlikely at present. As far as threats and vulnerabilities are concerned, France continues to assist the SIDS in numerous ways. However, the SIDS have to be careful in their acceptance of the French role in order to maintain relations on a cordial basis and not to let French assistance become unwelcome influence.

Bilateral assistance is welcome but the need to minimise dependence, especially on one power, should be the eventual goal. Although the IOS maintain their bilateral relationships at a reasonable level this always has to be carefully analysed and assessed, otherwise the solution might become part of the problem in the form of foreign pressure and undesirable influences. Even if the IOZP concept becomes a reality (which is rather unlikely anyway) India and France are Indian

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<sup>13</sup> See Ross H. Munro, "Superpower Rising", *Time* (International Edition) 3 April 1989, p. 8

Ocean powers and will remain so for the foreseeable future. For the IOS the acceptance of this fact is vital and the IOS have to shape their relationships with these powers in a way which is more beneficial to them. This is also true with non-regional powers who have a vested interest in the Indian Ocean. The United States is the number one non-regional power in the area. Although Mauritius continues to seek the return of Diego Garcia it is important that the IOS maintain good relations with the United States. The main interest of the United States in the Indian Ocean lies in the Gulf and South East Asia and unlike the Caribbean SIDS, who often fear American hegemonic influence, this scenario is somewhat different with regard to the IOS. As such, the presence of the United States in the Indian Ocean (with the exception of the Diego Garcia issue) is seen by the IOS as of no direct threat to them. As such, American assistance, especially in the military sector, is often welcomed by the IOS as way of reducing their military vulnerability. To sum up, bilateral relations need not always be seen as a threat by the SIDS. On the contrary, maintaining cordial relations with other states while at the same time not depending on one single power can assist these states to enhance their security.

### **Regional Measures**

Regional co-operation and regional solutions have been seen by many as an approach that could enhance the security of the SIDS. An important aspect, especially with regard to military security, is a regional defence system. It might be useful for certain SIDS to become members of one of the larger defence pacts but this will depend to a large extent on the eligibility of the state. Regional co-operation could also prove vital in the case of protection against mercenaries and terrorism. In many cases the mercenary groups or the terrorist organisations have their bases in neighbouring countries. It is important for SIDS to exchange intelligence information about the region. Although many states are reluctant to share their intelligence information an attempt at even the most basic level could prove to be vital. For example, if the Maldives government could have found out about the departure of the mercenaries from Sri Lanka they would have been in a better position to meet the

threat rather than being taken by total surprise. This is similar to the case in the Seychelles in 1981. It was only after the discovery of weapons in the bags of the mercenaries that the Seychelles' authorities became aware of the planned coup attack. Some of the measures that have been suggested to overcome this sort of handicap are the establishment of regional networks, documentation centres, data banks and other methods of collecting and disseminating data.<sup>14</sup>

One important defence system that has appeared to be successful so far is the Regional Security System in the Eastern Caribbean. Here they carry out joint training sessions, co-operate in the patrolling of their maritime zones and carry out anti-drug patrols. The armed force of each state is under national command but may be placed at the disposal of the system in a crisis. One problem is that this type of defence system may not be suitable to all regions. The IOS, unlike the Caribbean, are scattered far and wide and do not form a cohesive community. Therefore, the success of such a defence system would undoubtedly depend on the geopolitics of the region concerned.

There is no regional organisation that caters for the whole of the Indian Ocean. The closest the Indian Ocean region has come together in the past was in the movement to establish an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. This was mainly aimed at removing the presence of extra-regional powers such as the United States and the former Soviet Union. However, the focus of the movement has changed with more attention being given to the regional powers and the introduction of confidence building measures between them. This may prove crucial for the IOS. For example, one of the main problems for the Maldives in its immediate security environment of South Asia is the existing tension between India and Pakistan and the fear of Indian hegemonic ambitions by the other countries. If such tensions could be removed, which at present seems rather remote, then the whole security scenario of the region could change considerably.

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<sup>14</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in a global society*

Although there is no Indian Ocean regional group, regional organisations in sub-systems of the Indian Ocean have provided for the IOS in areas such as economic co-operation. The IOS are all members of such regional organisations, the Maldives being a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) and the Seychelles and Mauritius being members of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC): The SAARC may be a means whereby the South Asian countries could eventually establish a defence system in the military sense. This possibility was mentioned by the late Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who on the eve of the inaugural summit expressed the view that "SAARC can become an approach to regional security in South Asia".<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the likelihood of this happening is still very distant. Even though the SAARC has agreed that bilateral problems should not interfere with the SAARC, too many problems and differences exist among its member states that would easily restrain the idea. One of the main obstacles is the differences in interests and goals among the member countries. While most defence organisations are based on the idea of a common enemy or common threats, this is not true of the SAARC countries. The two largest member countries, India and Pakistan, see each other as the main threat and therefore the possibility of the SAARC evolving into a security community with regard to military problems is distant.<sup>16</sup> The closest it has come to this form of security co-operation is the ratification of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. The convention was signed in November 1987 and came into effect on 22 August 1988, under which member countries pledged to extradite or prosecute alleged terrorists. The exchange of information, intelligence and expertise are also identified as areas for co-operation. However, SAARC has made progress in several areas that have been useful for the Maldives,

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in R. V. Aryasinha, *South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC): The potential for regional security*, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Colombo, 1990, p. 34

<sup>16</sup> See R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao, "Regional Co-operation in South Asia", in *The Round Table*, No.293, 1985, p.53 - 65

especially with regard to economic, societal and environmental security. In 1991 a Regional Study on Trade, Manufacturing and Services recommended areas where regional co-operation can be carried out and following this a Committee on Economic co-operation was established. The SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) was signed in April 1993 which contains provisions giving "Special and Favourable Treatment" to the least developed member countries. Further, an Inter-governmental Group on Trade Liberalisation was established to negotiate trade concessions. Although this may seem quite beneficial for a SIDS like the Maldives, the trade pattern of the Maldives suggests that the SAARC countries accounts for only 15.6 % of imports to the Maldives and around 30.5 % of the exports.<sup>17</sup>

The SAARC has also facilitated co-operation in other areas such as the control of narcotic drugs and environmental problems. The SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was signed in November 1990 and came into force on 15 September 1993, the purpose of which is described as "to promote co-operation among the member States so that they may address more effectively the various aspects of prevention and control of drug abuse and the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances which are specific to the SAARC region."<sup>18</sup> Previously, a Technical Committee was established in 1987 under whose guidance seminars and training programmes have been carried out to promote co-operation between drug law enforcement agencies in member countries. The SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk was set up in Colombo to collate and analyse information on drug offences. While this could prove to be an important mechanism for the Maldives to deal with the growing problem of drug abuse, it has so far met with little success. The drug problem appears to be on the increase with the import of drugs from within the SAARC region originating mainly in India. The main problem here is not the non-existence of regional mechanisms to deal with the problems but the lack of effectiveness in the operation of existing

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<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Development, Male, *Statistical Yearbook, 1994*

<sup>18</sup> *The SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal



mechanisms. Where environmental security is concerned, the SAARC has undertaken national studies on "Causes and consequences of natural disasters and the protection and preservation of the environment", and following that a study on the "Greenhouse effect and its impact on the region".<sup>19</sup> These were carried out by the SAARC Technical Committee on the Environment and the committee identified several areas for immediate action among which include "the improvement of climate monitoring capabilities through networking arrangements and the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre, making available to member states expertise on climate research and monitoring greenhouse gas emissions, exchange of information, etc."<sup>20</sup>

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC): The Indian Ocean Commission was established in 1982 and was formally inaugurated in 1984. It has provided a forum for regional co-operation for the IOS of the south west Indian Ocean. The IOC was established to promote economic and social development within the area. Article 1 of the Victoria Accord outlined four areas of co-operation: diplomatic; economic and commercial; agriculture, fishing and conservation; and cultural, scientific, educational and justice. The IOC took some time to establish itself with a Secretariat being established in Mauritius only in 1988, four years after its inception. Committees have been established for regional co-operation in the areas of tourism, commercial exchange, labour force, industrial co-operation, environment, maritime transport, fishing and sports. The IOC has made some progress in the areas of co-operation among the member states. The Regional Committee for commercial exchange was established in 1984 and steps were taken to improve inter-island trade within the region among which were the convening of a group of experts examining tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers to regional trade; and the establishment of a data bank relating to external trade. In other areas the possibility of developing a regional shipping company was examined and a marine school was established in Madagascar. In July 1995, the EU allocated ECU 9.3 million to the IOC for financing

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<sup>19</sup> Information: SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

the Programme Regional Integre de Developpement des Echanges des Pays de l'Ocean Indien (PRIDE) to improve the contacts between companies in the region and to improve the availability of commercial information.<sup>21</sup>

The IOC appears to be one way that the SIDS of the south west Indian Ocean could overcome some of their vulnerabilities. However, real progress remains modest as the interests of the member states of the IOC appear to differ and the various projects carried out under the auspices of IOC regional co-operation remains limited. While the IOC could prove beneficial to the IOS, the main problem is that economic contacts between the member states are low and therefore there is little interest in furthering the role of the IOC. One of the significant developments of the IOC is the membership of France in 1986. This has enhanced the role that France already plays in the Indian Ocean and is seen by the French as recognition by the other states of the French role in the region. However, the IOC is far from a security organisation. It was not designed to be one and therefore it appears unlikely that it will ever become one.

The Indian Ocean Rim: The Indian Ocean has several sub-regional groupings such as the IOC, SAARC, ASEAN, etc. Nevertheless, there is a growing movement to bring all the Indian Ocean countries together to form some sort of a regional Indian Ocean group. In March 1995, a meeting was held in Mauritius to discuss the Indian Ocean Rim initiative. The meeting was attended by officials and academics from Australia, India, Kenya, Oman, Singapore, South Africa and Mauritius, representing the various sub-systems of the Indian Ocean. The purpose of the meeting was to seek ways into which the Indian Ocean countries could come together to form a regional trading bloc to represent the interests of the Indian Ocean countries as a region against other trading blocs of the world. In June 1995, the International Forum on the Indian Ocean Region was held in Perth, Australia. From the conference emerged a consultative Business Network where membership will be accorded to all business groups in the

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<sup>21</sup> *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 15 July 1995, p. 7

region with working groups co-operating on matters including information technology, customs and trade documentation, non-tariff barriers and impediments to investment and maritime co-operation. An Indian Ocean Academic Research Network was also established to promote the exchange of information and encourage joint research projects.

For the IOS such a regional grouping may provide certain benefits, especially on the economic front. Mauritius is economically strong and an Indian Ocean trade group could provide the market it needs for its products apart from the EC. However, if such a regional bloc is established it will be the larger powers of the region that will dominate. As such, for the IOS like the Maldives and the Seychelles, it may not necessarily be as beneficial as it initially seems. Besides, it is not going to be a defence organisation. Australia was the only country from the seven countries that participated in meeting in Mauritius that wanted to discuss such measures. However, they appeared to back down later and the Australian Foreign Minister stated that, "the truth is that right from the very outset we knew perfectly well that the real action was likely to be in the economic and trade area".<sup>22</sup> The problem for the Maldives and the Seychelles is that although a larger trade grouping may be beneficial to some extent it may not necessarily be the answer to their main problems. In any case, to instil regionalism in the Indian Ocean as a whole is not going to happen overnight and therefore it is going to take some time for the Indian Ocean Rim to become a truly regional body. However, the forging of any close links among the Indian Ocean states that could lead to the improving of the relations among them would be welcomed by the IOS as it could lead to improved stability in the region.

Regional initiatives have worked in many instances to improve co-operation among SIDS located in the Caribbean and the South Pacific. This option, however, is not available to the IOS where regionalism among the SIDS, especially between the Maldives and the SIDS in the south western Indian Ocean, is non-existent. As

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in *Aafathis*, 15 June 1995, Malé, Maldives

such, an attempt to bring the IOS together in the manner of the SIDS in the Caribbean or the South Pacific remains at present a futile exercise. A common Indian Ocean regional framework to meet the security problems of the IOS is therefore a long way off. Nevertheless, this is not to say that regional responses are useless. In their own sub-regions, the existing regional mechanisms can be better utilised to serve the needs of the SIDS, especially the IOC as its main membership is made up of SIDS. Thus it appears to be an ideal body in which SIDS can explore regional responses to their existing problems. The SAARC in this sense is less ideal as the membership is composed of states from varying backgrounds and the Maldives is the only SIDS in the SAARC.

### **International Measures**

It is the international community which can ultimately accord protection to these SIDS. Under international law all states are equal; therefore all states should be allowed to enjoy the privileges of being sovereign members of the international community. The principle of non-interference and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign states must be respected, even among the smaller members of the community.

The Commonwealth: The issues concerning the security of SIDS are given priority in the affairs of the Commonwealth. Among its member countries 32 states have a population of less than one million and 24 among them are island states.<sup>23</sup> The issue was first raised at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Delhi in October 1983 following which a consultative group was established to study the vulnerability and needs of small states. The study group published their findings in their report *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* with their recommendations. The report highlights the inherent vulnerabilities of small states to external interference and economic vulnerabilities and details threats to economic, political and territorial security. It also recommends measures to reduce

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<sup>23</sup> Information by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London

vulnerabilities such as strengthening national defence capabilities, improving economic growth, promoting international stability and cohesion, and measures in dealing with the international community such as prudent diplomatic and foreign policy management. The report also recommends measures that can be taken at national, regional and international level.<sup>24</sup> Since then, the Commonwealth has accorded special assistance to the SIDS and small states in general. A Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Small States and a Commonwealth Consultative Group on Small States and an inter-divisional task force was established.

The Commonwealth helps the SIDS to reduce their vulnerabilities in several areas. Among these include human resources development and capacity building, training of personnel, providing experts in the field of science and technology, and also technical assistance to the industrial development and export needs of SIDS. This is a vital area as one of the reasons for vulnerability in SIDS is the lack of qualified human resources. It is a problem in all three IOS although less obvious in Mauritius. The activities of the Commonwealth include the publication of several studies in the educational sector of SIDS, and the implementation of programmes to train personnel in SIDS. In Mauritius, a scheme for performance appraisal is being conducted to improve the management performance of the civil servants. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation is one of the tools of assistance and in 1993/94 56% of the expenditure was directed to assist small states in general.<sup>25</sup> The Commonwealth has also taken a keen interest in the environmental vulnerability of SIDS and has provided assistance in such areas as effective waste management. Water pollution is a problem for all IOS. In June 1994, a training workshop was organised in Mauritius on ground water modelling so that water resources management can be more effective. Further, the Commonwealth has published a book on Coastal Zone Management for tropical islands.

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<sup>24</sup> Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small states in the global society*,

<sup>25</sup> Information by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London

The Commonwealth also assists in resource management by offering legal assistance in such issues as maritime boundary delimitation. Such assistance was provided to the Maldives in its boundary agreement with Britain (BIOT) and it has also assisted the Seychelles. Moreover, the Commonwealth offers economic policy advice in developing effective policies by the SIDS. The Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Management and Recording Systems (DRMS) have helped the SIDS by providing low cost software to help them manage their debt burdens better and the SIDS assisted so far include the Maldives and Mauritius. The Commonwealth has also assisted Mauritius in developing its non-banking financial sector. The Seychelles received assistance in developing an effective petroleum policy. Although most of these are related directly to development, it nevertheless, assists the SIDS in overcoming some of their vulnerabilities, especially in the development of manpower. Although the Commonwealth has recognised that small states face security problems of a direct military nature there is little the Commonwealth can do or has done to directly assist SIDS in this area. However, the Commonwealth has provided support in the maintenance of good governance and the promotion of sound political values which can contribute to the reduction of threats. It assists SIDS in their electoral process by sending observers to ensure that elections are 'free and fair'. Seychelles was one such benefactor in their first multi-party elections held for over a decade. It is clear that the majority of the threats of a direct military nature does not arise for SIDS from outside sources alone but also has some local involvement as well. Although the threat from mercenaries and terrorists cannot be totally wiped out, by promoting sound political values this threat can be reduced to a certain extent.

The Commonwealth continues to give priority to the problems of the small states and the second meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on small states was held in May 1995. They raised the importance of security issues to the SIDS and repeated their support for the sovereign independence and equality of all states and to continue their support for enhancing small states security at regional

and international level by creating closer links between the Commonwealth and various regional bodies such as the South Pacific Forum, as well as supporting the issues of small states security at the United Nations.

The United Nations: The United Nations is the international body that has been endowed with the task of maintaining peace and security within the international community. In this respect there is no difference between small and large states, island and continental states. After the November 1988 attack in the Maldives, the government of the Maldives forwarded a resolution to the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly which was co-sponsored by 54 other states and was adopted without a vote. The resolution entitled 'Protection and Security of Small States' called for international recognition of the vulnerability of small states and appealed to the international community for assistance to small states to strengthen of their security.<sup>26</sup> The resolution also called for the Secretary General of the United Nations to play a wider role in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter. Article 99 of the UN Charter empowers the Secretary General to bring matters which he considers a threat to international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council. The SIDS believe that this "is particularly suited for monitoring the security issues of small states".<sup>27</sup>

In May 1991, representatives from eleven small states (including Mauritius and the Seychelles), and representatives from the Commonwealth and the UN met in the Maldives to discuss what further measures could be taken to reduce security problems. Among the final recommendations of the Workshop on Protection and Security of Small States were the following: consideration to be accorded to "the establishment of a UN force of a rapid response nature. This would be under the direct control of the UN Secretary General to be used to meet the security threats of small states at their request".<sup>28</sup> It also suggested that the activation of the force could

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<sup>26</sup> UNGA Resolution 44/51, *The Protection and Security of Small States*, 8 December 1988 See Appendix F

<sup>27</sup> Explanatory memorandum presented by the Maldives to the UN General Assembly 10 August 1989

<sup>28</sup> *Final Recommendations of the Workshop on the Protection and Security of Small States*, Maldives, May 1991 See Appendix G

be in the hands of the Secretary-General in consultation with the Security Council and would include paramilitary personnel from the regular armed forces from various states and this should be done on a voluntary basis.

In theory, the above suggestion appears to be a near perfect answer to security problems of a direct military nature. If there is an armed attack by another state or even a group of mercenaries the SIDS would 'dial 999' and the Secretary-General would despatch the rapid deployment force to that state to meet the threat. However, the possibility of such an eventuality appears to be remote, especially since the Final Recommendations called for the force to be under the direct control of the Secretary-General whereas it is Chapter VII of the UN Charter that deals with the threats to peace, breaches of peace and aggression and therefore it is the Security Council which has the authority to determine the existence of threats and make recommendations or decide what measures to be taken. At present, the actual establishment of an international armed force that could be used to assist SIDS in times of crisis appears to be wishful thinking on the part of the SIDS at this stage.

Although the resolution on the protection and security of small states was adopted without a vote, little has been achieved since. According to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the UNGA resolution 44/51 the Secretary-General invited member states to explore the ways and means of protecting small states and to submit their suggestions by October 1990. However, only 22 countries replied by the extended deadline of  
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 254)



be in the hands of the Security Council and would include paramilitary personnel from the regular armed forces from various states and this should be done on a voluntary basis.

In theory, the above suggestion appears to be a near perfect answer to security problems of a direct military nature. If there is an armed attack by another state or even a group of mercenaries the SIDS would 'dial 999' and the Security Council would despatch the rapid deployment force to that state to meet the threat. However, the possibility of such an eventuality appears to be remote and the Final Recommendations left many questions unanswered. Firstly, it brings up the question of actually mobilising and training such a force. Does the United Nations pay for the cost or the countries themselves? Even if the UN bears the brunt of the cost, what about the actual transferring of troops to far flung corners of the world, to these remote island states? The Gulf War demonstrated difficulties of this nature. Even though the deployment of troops to a small state in trouble will be nothing compared to the scale and the size of the forces in the Gulf, it still leaves many technical questions unanswered. Who provides the transport? It might take a considerable length of time to transfer troops to these isolated areas. Finally, it brings up the all important question of the threat to the state and the threat to the government. Does the United Nations decide the answer? On what basis? Consequently, even if the UN did manage to get a force there are many gaps to be filled in and difficulties to iron out before such a force could actually be of assistance to the SIDS. Therefore, the actual establishment of an international armed force that could be used to assist SIDS in times of crisis appears to be wishful thinking on the part of the SIDS at this stage.

Although the resolution on the protection and security of small states was adopted without a vote, little has been achieved since. According to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the UNGA resolution the Secretary General invited member states to explore the ways and means of protecting small states and to submit their suggestions by October 1990. However, only 22 countries replied by the extended deadline of

1991. Further, the discussion at the Security Council led to differences in opinion as to whether small states should be accorded special status or not. Some were of the opinion that as the UN was based on the principle of sovereign equality there was no need to accord special status to small states.

Nevertheless, there are other measures that could be taken by the international community to help small states, be they islands or otherwise, to meet their security problems. One such measure discussed at the UN was the establishment of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs); by co-operation and trying to establish more stable relations between states. Further international conventions against mercenaries and terrorists are also seen as a way to enhance international security. One such measure is the Convention on the Elimination of Mercenaries in Africa adopted by the OAU. The SAARC has concluded the 'SAARC Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism' which came into force in August 1988. But far more important, and of greater significance, is the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. The Convention is useful because it prohibits states from assisting mercenaries. It is almost always the case that, when mercenary attacks take place, they are backed by another state in one way or the other i.e. by providing them with arms or training bases etc. The ratification of this convention should result in the closure of such support for mercenaries, at least in theory. Also, the international community should be encouraged to pass appropriate domestic laws that would ban the recruitment of mercenaries on their own territory. A Convention of a similar nature regarding terrorism may prove worthwhile. The difficulty with dealing with mercenaries, and even to a greater extent terrorism, is that there is no internationally accepted definition of these terms. This enables both the mercenaries/terrorists to get around Conventions; and states who assist such aggressors fall back on the infamous dictum 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. Even if the international community did come up with an acceptable definition the actual enforcement of these conventions is still going to be a considerable task.

More realistic and useful has been work carried out to reduce vulnerability in other areas, especially on the economic and the environmental front. Economic assistance has been forthcoming from the UN through such agencies as the UNDP, the IMF, World Bank and so on. They assist the SIDS in their economic development which can reduce vulnerabilities and threats on the economic front. In order to do so, without sacrificing other sectors, sustainable development has become the buzz word today. Further, there are international agreements concluded by organisations such as the ACP countries and the EU which, through the Lome Convention, has provided some assistance to the SIDS such as the Seychelles and Mauritius. On the environmental front the UN has assisted the SIDS in several ways. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the main UN body concerned with the vulnerability of SIDS to environmental changes, especially to global warming and sea level rise. Regional task teams were formed in 1987 to study the potential impact of global warming on these states. In June 1988 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change (IPCC) was established to analyse and assess scientific information relating to climatic change. In July 1989 a meeting was held in Majuro, Marshall Islands by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. Although this was mainly to highlight the environmental problems faced by the South Pacific countries the meeting was also attended by the Maldives and Mauritius. In 1989, the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise was held in the Maldives resulting in the Malé Declaration which calls for wider international recognition of the environmental problems of SIDS and for greater international assistance.

Although the SIDS have been able to unite themselves in an ad-hoc manner to highlight their numerous problems in the international community as a whole, the first time they united to form an official group was with the establishment of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). AOSIS was established at the end of the Second World Climate Conference in 1990, with an initial membership of 24 states, to raise the awareness among the international community of the vulnerability of

small island states to environmental threats.<sup>29</sup> AOSIS has had mixed successes in its campaigns. At the fourth negotiating session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to establish the framework convention on climate change prior to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) a draft proposal was submitted to establish a mechanism at the international level that would compensate for the loss or damage caused to the SIDS by climatic change. However, this was rejected by the industrialised nations. The AOSIS has now moved to include other developmental issues in its agenda and has 41 members. After the AOSIS campaign at Rio for more priority to be given to the situation of small island states in Agenda 21, a separate programme area was allocated for the SIDS and agreement was reached to convene a global conference on the sustainable development of SIDS. Subsequently, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was held in Barbados in 1994. The Conference was attended by the IOS. The Conference adopted a Programme of Action that outlined key problems faced by the SIDS.<sup>30</sup> The main emphasis was on environmental problems such as the impact of climate change and natural disasters, and on developmental issues such as the need for technical, institutional and human resource development. It highlights the need for action at national, regional and international levels. One of the initiatives agreed in Barbados is the establishment of the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDS/NET) and the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP). The SIDS/NET is aimed at linking the SIDS through computers to share information and expertise. The problem with the Barbados Conference is that most industrialised states appeared not to take the conference seriously and were mainly represented by low level delegates. Only Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Canada sent ministerial level representatives and the SIDS did not receive any serious extra funding from the UN. However, the fact that there was a Conference at international level to deal with the issues of the SIDS gives recognition to the problems of the SIDS and is seen by the

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<sup>29</sup> For membership of the AOSIS see Appendix H

<sup>30</sup> Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of the Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April - 6 May, 1995

IOS as an important step forward. International recognition, and more importantly international assistance, is needed for the IOS to reduce their vulnerabilities.

### **Conclusion**

Although IOS in general have sought responses at all levels, including regional solutions, the main security problems arise from these states being small and island developing states and therefore the responses have to relate to their smallness and islandness rather than from an Indian Ocean perspective. The responses have to be shaped by the fact that the Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles are first and foremost Small Island Developing States rather than being SIDS located in the Indian Ocean. They are SIDS and are going to remain as Small Island States. They may change their status from developing to developed or may move out of the category of small when their populations multiply, but this seems to be a long way off. As such, many of their characteristics of being small and island states are going to remain with them. The responses needed to reduce their security problems have to take account of this and have to come from all levels. Although SIDS, including the IOS, have managed to attract the international community's attention as far as their security problems are concerned, there is still much to be done. Security problems for the SIDS are multi-faceted and they need a multi-faceted response. The SIDS require a security regime that is strong in all sectors and not just the strengthening of their armed forces. It has to be from all fronts; national, regional and international. At the national level threats have to be not only identified but also distinguished between actual and latent threats. Capabilities have to be assessed and realistic targets need to be set to reduce vulnerabilities. Assistance at both regional and international level is also vital and where regional responses are necessary and where a wider international assistance is needed these have to be carefully identified and assessed. The SIDS have managed to bring to the attention of the international community their numerous problems. By co-operation and uniting to voice their concern at the Commonwealth and the UN, and in alliances such as the AOSIS, they have succeeded to a certain extent in putting their case on the international agenda. In

this sense, AOSIS has proven that there is strength in numbers. Nevertheless, this is just a first step. Recognition of the problems is not going to reduce vulnerabilities and threats. It must be followed by appropriate responses. There has to be a willingness and a commitment on the part of the international community to assist the SIDS in finding appropriate responses to their problems. There is the need for the establishment of a wider international regime that recognises the status of the SIDS and their security problems and which will assist them in overcoming these problems. Furthermore, it has to be recognised that security is not an absolute concept. At present most SIDS fall into the category of high vulnerability and high threats with total security problems in many areas. Or they have high vulnerability and low threats with systemic security problems. The aim should be to make the SIDS states with low vulnerability and low threats and therefore with minimal security problems. No state can be virtually free from security problems. Therefore, the measures needed to meet the threats could help to make these states less exposed to threats and more secure, but only in varying degrees and not totally. As such, there is always going to be a degree of insecurity. The question for the SIDS is how much insecurity are they going to accept?

## CONCLUSIONS

The case studies of the IOS reinforce the hypothesis that the security problems of SIDS are specific to them. As such, it is clear that in the current international climate security needs to be applied on a broader basis than it was traditionally used, especially in relations to SIDS. By virtue of being small and island developing states, the SIDS have confronted special problems that removes them from the traditional 'power politics' scenario. Economic, societal and environmental issues have entered the equation as well as the more traditional ones of military and political problems. These new areas have become equally and in some instances more important to the SIDS. Security problems therefore affect all walks of life in these states. Additionally, in spite of the fact that SIDS belong to the Third World, there are substantial differences in the security scenario of SIDS from the larger states of the Third World.

Although there had been difficulty in defining 'smallness' in the past, the issue has been more or less resolved today with consensus around the one million population as a cut-off point (or near to that figure). The security problems of SIDS in general, can be identified by assessing the vulnerabilities of the SIDS together with the threats that confront them. Four main areas of vulnerability have been identified: weakness, openness, dependence and islandness that collectively contribute in shaping the core security problems for SIDS. Many of these areas are linked to the smallness of these states. Although the vulnerabilities of the IOS vary, they differ from SIDS elsewhere in degree and not in kind. In this sense, in many areas the IOS are have high vulnerability. Security threats are the other main consideration. For SIDS the list is fairly long with military, political, economic, societal and environmental issues all adding to their security problems. In the case of the IOS, the

threat scenario varies among the three, with Mauritius having an overall lower threat scenario, and the Maldives and the Seychelles having relatively higher threat scenarios, especially on the economic and environmental fronts.

While it can be seen that vulnerabilities are very real for the SIDS this is not so true of some of the threats. Many are often exaggerated by those governing these states. For the majority of the SIDS actual threats from foreign invasions are almost non-existent although theoretically this will always be a threat in an anarchic international system. Occupation of their territories by foreign powers is therefore unlikely, although the situation of Mauritius and the British control of the Chagos archipelago still remains and will do so for some time. Threats from non-governmental sources such as mercenaries and terrorists are also high on the list of threats by these states and it is true that there has been genuine reason for concern in states such as the Maldives and the Seychelles. However, very little appears to have been done to address the underlying cause of the problem. Very often the basis for such threats arises from the practices of those ruling the states and the core of the problem appears to be internal rather than external. This is true of the IOS. As such, the international clamour by SIDS that these are real threats emanating mainly from foreign sources seems to be based either rhetoric, aimed at gaining international attention or on misunderstanding or misperception which overlooks the root cause of the problem. The consequence is that the SIDS appear to be unwilling to do much to address the real issues unless forced into doing so by the international community. Not least for the reason that forcing any country to admit to its faults is not an easy task. This can be seen from the Seychelles experience.

As for other types of threats, economic threats are real ones for the IOS, something they have in common with most SIDS and which has an effect on almost all areas of security. With regard to the IOS, societal problems are minimal irrespective of the fact that two of the SIDS are multi-ethnic societies. However, problems from narcotics can spread if not controlled. In recent times one of the areas



in which the concept of security has been enlarged is that of environmental security. This is absolutely crucial when it comes to SIDS. No matter which part of the globe they are located in, and whether they are volcanic or low lying islands, single islands or archipelagic, environmental problems are real problems demanding a response which goes beyond rhetoric. Some may argue that those who claim that global warming and the subsequent sea level rise could result in the disappearance of low lying islands are just scare-mongering. Although the rate of sea level rise is widely disputed, it is unrealistic to expect the inhabitants of these states to adopt a 'wait and see approach' when what is at stake is their existence as a nation. In such circumstances, the future for these SIDS remains uncertain, if not precarious.

The identification of the security problem for each IOS established similarities among all three. However, in relations to SIDS in other parts of the world there are two main observations. Firstly, in the Caribbean and South Pacific there are strong regional influences that help shape their security problems. Although individual differences do exist between the two regions, the security environments of the SIDS are heavily influenced by the geopolitics of the region. For the IOS this is less obvious. This may be due to the fact that the IOS do not conform to a 'region' as such. Although regional influences in the Indian Ocean do affect the security environment of the IOS and may do so in the future, especially depending on the role that the various Indian Ocean littorals such as India and South Africa decide to undertake in the future, these influences are very much based on a one-to-one relationship between individual IOS and the larger power rather than a uniform regional issue. As such, very little evidence is found for a common Indian Ocean security problem or problems. Secondly, the security problems of the IOS are more in line with the security problems of all SIDS in general. Although similar types of security problems exist these stem more from individual situations i.e. to the fact that these states are Small Island Developing States. One of the main questions that has been posed by the research is the question of why Mauritius has been able to do much better in reducing its vulnerabilities and threats as compared to the Seychelles

or the Maldives. The answer appears to lie in the unique historical and political circumstances that Mauritius has found itself to be in, and not in the development of a general policy that is specific to it being a small and island developing state. As such, while there are lessons to be learnt from the Mauritian example there are limits to what the Maldives and the Seychelles or indeed other SIDS can ultimately gain from Mauritius.

The thesis has argued that there are similar problems facing almost all SIDS in the international community. The vulnerabilities facing the IOS are common to most SIDS and very often they cannot be resolved by the SIDS themselves. Responses have to come from all fronts. In dealing with the strategies and responses regional responses are often advocated. However, in the case of the IOS international responses may be more suited to their needs. This is not to say that regional responses are totally futile. Regional strategies could be beneficial, especially in the south west Indian Ocean where the Seychelles and Mauritius have already united to establish a regional body, the Indian Ocean Commission. But due to the fact that there are very few 'regional' problems in the Indian Ocean as a whole, this must be a limited approach. As such there is very little scope for a regional security agenda that involves all the IOS. In such a situation it is up to the IOS to determine their security problems, and the strategies and responses they need, individually rather than collectively. However, international responses in reducing vulnerabilities and confronting threats depends a great deal on the willingness of the international community to assist the SIDS. To get the international community to acknowledge that the SIDS have special problems that require their assistance is the easy part. The difficulty is to get them to do something about it. There is an urgent need for an international regime that not only recognises the problems but provides for others to assist the SIDS on a universalist basis.

Thus in the case of the IOS the onus is very much on the international community. However, in assessing the security problems of the IOS, and possible

responses and strategies, there are two main points that need to be emphasised. Firstly, the need for international assistance must be put in perspective. While what the SIDS can do on their own is fairly limited, there are some areas where the international community cannot assist unless the SIDS are willing to assist themselves. This is true regarding the threat from mercenaries and terrorists, an issue raised by SIDS at the UN and at other international gatherings. It must be noted though that in many such instances it is the SIDS who need to put their own house in order, albeit 'with a little help' from international friends. Secondly, the need to identify the appropriate responses to problems of economic security. Economic problems are widely accepted by the international community as real problems that need international assistance and the international community is often genuinely willing to assist the SIDS. But at the same time there is also the question of when to halt assistance. It appears that although the international community assists the SIDS to stand up a little bit on their own feet, they are quick to abandon their help before the SIDS can actually walk on their own. As in the case of the Seychelles, the moment the country's economic performance improved international assistance declined drastically. This is a real problem that needs to be addressed and failure to do so can increase security problems for the Seychelles.

Security problems in the IOS therefore corresponds to many of the problems confronted by SIDS in other parts of the world. The problems identified are not going to go away. Something needs to be done about them. Some of these problems need urgent action; some are potential problems that may become real if not tackled now; and some are systemic problems that not only require help today but continuous assistance for years to come. Additionally, there is limited scope for the IOS to unite together in the manner of the Caribbean or the South Pacific SIDS. Although this is true, the future for the IOS may not be quite so bleak. There are options available to them. Assistance can be sought from bilateral relationships and from regional and international organisations. Further, joining forces with the rest of the SIDS in international bodies

such as the AOSIS is vital. This is more so in the current climate where the two main regions of SIDS, the Caribbean and the South Pacific, have forged ahead by giving a special focus to regional strategies and responses of their own. If the IOS fail to canvass support among the SIDS, they will be left to fend for themselves, unable to put their own difficulties on the international agenda. As such, not only are the UN and the Commonwealth important but so also is keeping in contact with other SIDS in the Caribbean on the South Pacific.

Ultimately it is the SIDS themselves who have to decide the type of security they want. Many of the characteristics of being Small and Island Developing States are not open to easy change. The problems associated with remoteness, the pervasiveness of the oceans, environmental fragility and islandness, together with the difficulties of being small, are going to remain with these states. Neither assistance from regional nor international communities can change this overnight. This is not to say that the SIDS will have to adopt a defeatist attitude; rather there is a need to realise the situation they are in order to prioritise their security needs, determine what are the real vulnerabilities and threats, and identify where urgent action is needed. If they want to maximise the limited resources available to them (and minimise vulnerabilities and threats) there will have to be a realistic assessment of their problems and of how they are going to allocate the resources. The SIDS will have to decide how much security has to be sacrificed today for tomorrow. Further, this has to be more than simply making a list of security problems to be presented at the next international gathering. It has to be a continuous process as security problems are not static but change with time. In this context it is important to remember that the security of SIDS is never absolute but relative, and contingent on time and place. So that while at present there is only a limited scope for an Indian Ocean security agenda this may not always be true. The IOS, along with other SIDS, will have to be more alert than many other states to change at home and abroad if they are to survive and thrive in the modern world system.

## APPENDIX A

### SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

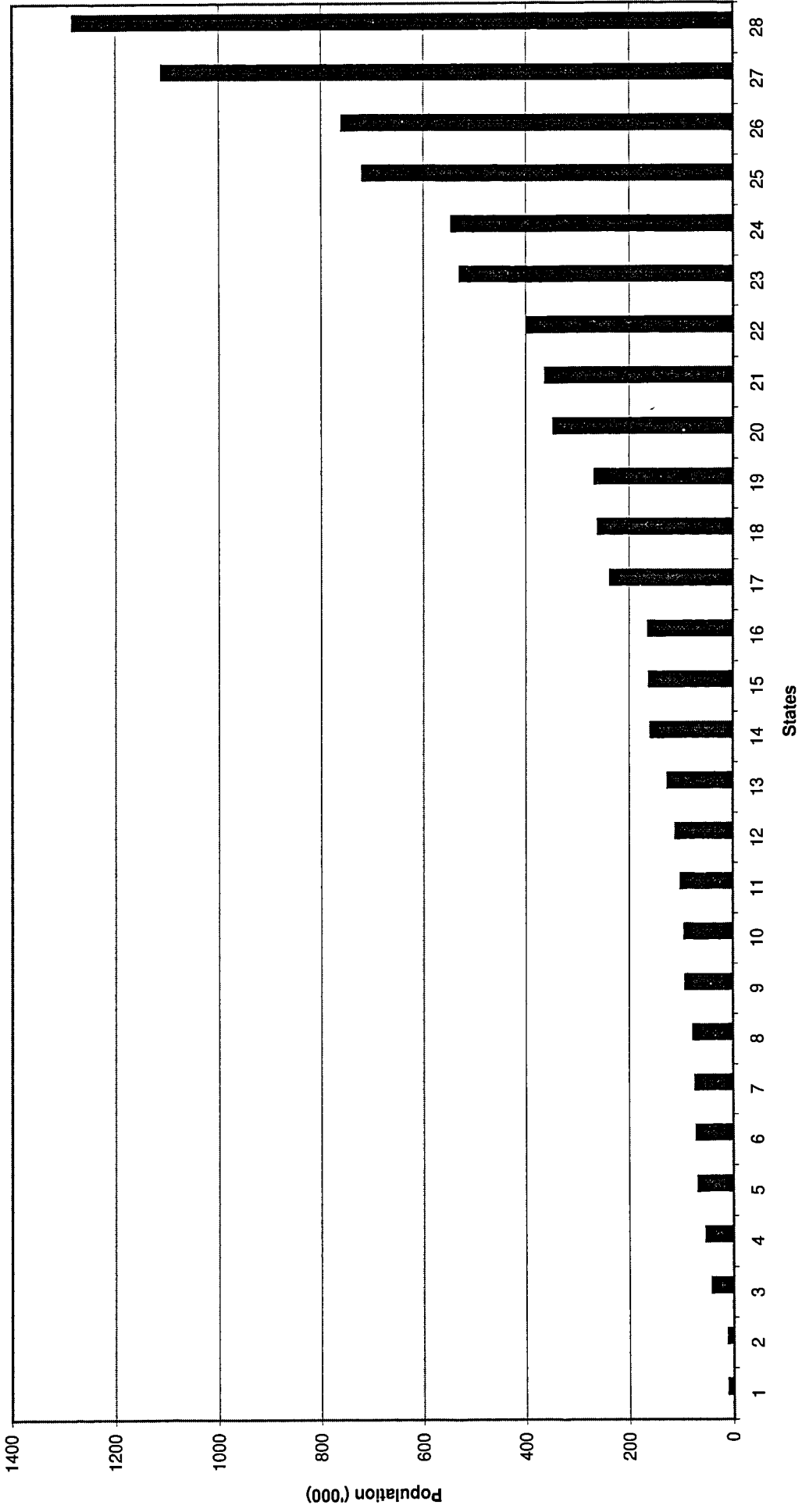
<u>States</u>	<u>Population ('000) 1993</u>
1. Tuvalu	9
2. Nauru	10
3. St. Christopher and Nevis	41
4. Marshall Islands *	52
5. Antigua and Barbuda	67
6. Seychelles	70
7. Dominica	72
8. Kiribati	76
9. Grenada	91
10. Tonga	93
11. Micronesia*	100 (1991)
12. St. Vincent and the Grenadines	110
13. Sao Tome and Principe	125
14. St. Lucia	158
15. Vanuatu	161
16. Western Samoa	163
17. Maldives	236
18. Barbados	260
19. Bahamas	266
20. Solomon Islands	346
21. Malta	362
22. Cape Verde	398
23. Comoros	528
24. Bahrain	544
25. Cyprus	718
26. Fiji	759

27. Mauritius	1111
28. Trinidad and Tobago	1282

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, London

\* Source: *Far East and Australasia 1995* 26th edition, (Europa Publications Ltd., London, 1994)

# SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES



## APPENDIX B

### **UN General Assembly Resolution Declaring the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace Resolution 2832 (XXVI), December 16, 1971**

The General Assembly,

Conscious of the determination of the people of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to preserve their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to resolve their political, economic and social problems under conditions of peace and tranquillity,

Recalling the Declaration of the Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Lusaka in September 1970, calling upon all States to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great Power rivalries and competition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition should be excluded, and declaring that the area should also be free of nuclear weapons,

Conceived of the desirability of ensuring the maintenance of such conditions in the area by means other than military alliances, as such alliances entail financial and other obligations that call for the diversion of the limited resources of these States from the more compelling and productive task of economic and social reconstruction and could further involve them in the rivalries of power blocs in a manner prejudicial to their independence and freedom of action, thereby increasing international tension.

Concerned at recent developments that portend the extension of the arms race into the Indian Ocean area, thereby posing a serious threat to the maintenance of such conditions in the area,



Convinced that the establishment of a zone of peace in an extensive geographical area in one region could have a beneficial influence on the establishment of permanent universal peace based on equal rights and justice for all, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Solemnly declares that the Indian Ocean, within the limits to be determined, together with the air space above the ocean floor subjacent thereto, is hereby designated for all time as a zone of peace,

2. Calls upon the great Powers, in conformity with this Declaration, to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral States of the Indian Ocean with a view to:  
(a) Halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean; (b) Eliminating from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great Power rivalry;

3. Calls upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, in pursuit of the objective of establishing a system of universal collective security without military alliances and strengthening international security through regional and other co-operation, to enter into consultations with a view to the implementation of this Declaration and such action as may be necessary to ensure that: (a) Warships and military aircraft may not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or independence of any littoral or hinterland State of the Indian Ocean in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; (b) Subject to the foregoing and to the norms and principles of international law, the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by vessels of all nations is unaffected; (c) Appropriate arrangements are made to give effect to any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session on the progress that has been made with regard to the implementation of this Declaration;

5. Decides to include the item entitled "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace" in the provisional agenda of its twenty-seventh session.

#### Recorded Vote

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Ceylon, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua\*, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syria, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Abstaining: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, USSR, United Kingdom, United States, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Zaire.

Absent: Albania, Bahrain, Barbados, Botswana, Ecuador, Gabon, Gambia, Iraq\*\* , Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Niger, Oman, Paraguay, Sierra Leone, United Arab Emirates.

\* Later advised the Secretariat it had intended to abstain

\*\* Later advised the Secretariat it had intended to vote in favour

## APPENDIX C

### MALDIVES

#### **1/ Military Resources**

##### National Security Service:

Personnel: 2,000 (approx.)

##### Coast Guard:

- Personnel: 400

- 4 Tracker II Class (Patrol craft)

*Kaani* 133 (ex -11)                      *Kuredhi* 142 (Ex - 12)

*Midhili* 151 (Ex - 13)                      *Nirolhu* 106 (Ex - 14)

Displacement tons: 38 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 65.6 × 17.1 × 4.9 (20 × 5.2 × 1.5)

Main Machinery: 2 Detroit 12V-7 ITA Diesels; 840 hp(627 kW); sustained, 2 shafts

Speed knots: 25

Range: 450 miles at 20 kts

Complement: 10

Guns: 1-12.7 mm MG, 1-7.62 mm MG

Radars: Surface search; Kroden; I band

Comments: First one ordered June 1985 from Fairey Marinteknik and commissioned in April 1987. Three more acquired July 1987 ex-UK customs craft. Used for fishery protection and EEZ patrol. Seven days normal endurance.

- 1 Cheverton Class *Burevi* 115 {Ex - 7} (Patrol Craft)

Displacement tons: 24 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 55.8 × 14.8 × 3.9 (17 × 4.5 × 1.2)

Main Machinery: 2 Detroit 8V-7 1TI Diesels; 850 hp(634 kW); sustained; 2 shafts

Speed knots: 22

Range: 590 miles at 18 kts

Complement: 10

Guns: 1-12.7 mm MG, 1-7.62 mm MG

Radars: Surface search; Kroden; I band

Comments: GRP hull and aluminium superstructure. Originally build for Kiribati and subsequently sold to the Maldives in 1984

- 1 Dagger Class *Funa* 124 (Patrol boat)

Displacement tons: 20 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 36.8 × 11.2 × 5 (11.2 × 3.4 × 1.2)

Main Machinery: 2 Sabre Diesels; 660 hp(492 kW) sustained; 2 shafts

Speed knots: 35

Complement: 6

Guns: 1-7.62 mm MG

Radars: Surface search; Furuno; I band

Comments: Built by Fairey Marine at Cowey, Isle of Wight and delivered in 1982

Source: Capt. R Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1995-96*, 98th edition, (Jane's Information Group Limited, Surrey, 1995) pp. 434 - 435

## **2/ Diplomatic Representation in the Maldives**

1. India
2. Pakistan
3. Sri Lanka

## **Diplomatic Representation Abroad**

1. Sri Lanka
2. United Kingdom
3. United States

## **3/ Membership in major international and regional organisations**

1. Colombo Plan
2. United Nations
3. United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)
4. UN Conference in Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
5. UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
6. UN Population Fund (UNFPA)
7. World Health Organisation (WHO)
8. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
9. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
10. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
11. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
12. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)
13. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
14. Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)
15. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP)
16. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
17. International Monetary Fund

18. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
19. International Development Association (IDA)
20. Asian Development Bank (ADB)
21. World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)
22. FAO/Indian Ocean Fishery Commission (IOFC)
23. International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)
24. Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
25. Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT)
26. United Nations Education, Scientific and  
Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
27. World Tourism Organisation (WTO)
28. South Asia Co-operative Environment  
Programme (SACEP)
29. Asia Pacific Postal Union (APPU)
30. Commonwealth
31. International Finance Co-operation (IFC)
32. General Agreements on Tariffs  
and Trade (GATT)
33. Asia Pacific Development Centre(APDC)
34. South Asian Association for Regional  
Co-operation (SAARC)
35. Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population  
and Development
36. INTERPOL
37. Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting and  
Development (AIBD)
38. Inter-governmental Organisation for Marketing  
Information and Technical Advisory Service for  
Fishing Products in the Asia & Pacific  
Region (INFOFISH)

39. Unified Hijree Calendar Committee
40. United Nations Industrial Development  
Organisation (UNIDO)
41. Commonwealth Foundation
42. International Organisation for  
Folk Art (IOFA)
43. International Textile Clothing Bureau
44. Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union
45. World Assembly of Youth
46. Association of Management Development  
Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA)
47. Asian Youth Council



## APPENDIX D

### SEYCHELLES

#### 1/ **Military Resources**

Total Armed Forces: 300 (active)

Army: 300

1 infantry battalion,

2 artillery troops,

Equipment:

Recce: 6 BRDM-2,

Towed Artillery: 122mm:3 D-30,

Mortars: 82mm: 6 M-43,

Rocket Launcher: RPG-7,

Air Defence Guns: 57mm:S-60,

SAM: 10 SA-7

Paramilitary:

National Guard: 1,000

Source: *The Military Balance 1995 - 1996*, (Oxford University Press for International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), p.254

#### Coast guard

Personnel: 300 (Including 80 air wing and 100 marines)

Base: Port Victoria

## Patrol Forces

- 1 Type FPB 42 (Large Patrol Craft)

### *Andromache*

Displacement, tons: 268 full load

Dimensions, feet (meters): 137.8 × 26 × 8.2 (41.8 × 8 × 2.5)

Main machinery: 2 Paxman Valenta 16 CM diesels; 6650 hp (5 MW)  
sustained; 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 26; Range, miles: 3000 at 16 knots

Complement: 22 (3 officers)

Guns: 1 Oerlikon 25mm; 2 - 7,62 mm MGs

Depth charge: 1 rack

Radars: Navigation: Furuno; I band

Comments: Ordered from Inma, La Spezia in November 1981. Pennant numbers no longer worn. A second of class reported ordered in 1991 but this was not confirmed.

- 2 Zhuk (type 1400M) Class (Coastal Patrol Craft)

### *Constant Fortune*

Displacement, tons: 39 full load

Dimensions, feet (meters): 78.7 × 16.4 × 3.9 (24 × 5 × 1.2)

Main machinery: 2 Type M 40 1B diesels; 2200hp (1.6 MW) sustained; 2  
shafts

Speed, knots: 30; Range, miles: 1100 at 15 knots

Complement: 12 (3 officers)

Guns: 4 - 14.4 mm (2 twin) MGs,

Radars: surface search; Furuno I band

Comments: Transferred from the USSR on 11 October 1981 and 6 November 1982 respectively.

- 1 Sirius Class (Large Patrol Craft)

*Topaz*

Displacement, tons: 440 full load

Dimensions, feet (meters): 152 × 28 × 8.2 (46.4 × 8.6 × 2.5)

Main machinery: 2 SEMT-Pielstick diesels; 2000hp(m) (1.47 MW) 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 15; Range, miles: 3000 at 10 knots

Complement: 38

Guns: 1 Bofors 40 mm/60, 1 Oerlikon 20 mm

Comments: Ex-French minesweeper built in 1956 and transferred without sweep gear in January 1979. Paid off in 1987 but brought back into service in late 1990. Not in good repair and probably non-operational.

Auxiliary

1 Landing Craft (tank)

*Cinq Juin*

Displacement, tons: 855 full load

Dimensions, feet (meters): 186.8 × 38 × 6 (56.9 × 11.6 × 1.9)

Main machinery: 2 Poyaud A 12 150M diesels; 880hp(m) (647kW); 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 9; Range, miles: 2000 at 8 knots

Military lift: 300 tons plus 1 LCP

Comments: Ordered December 1977. Although government owned, this ship is commercially operated except for occasional exercises.

Land-based maritime aircraft

Numbers/Type: 1 HAL (Aerospatiale) Chetak (Alouette III)

Operational speed: 113 kts (210 km/h)

Service Ceiling: 10 500ft (3200 m)

Range: 290 nm (540 km)

Role/weapon systems: Support helicopter; used for police and anti-smuggler patrols.

Sensors: None

Weapons: 2 × 7.62 mm machine guns can be fitted

Numbers/Type: 1 Pilatus Britten-Norman Maritime Defender

Operational speed: 150 kts (280 km/h)

Service Ceiling: 18 900 ft (5760 m)

Range: 1500 nm (2775km)

Role/weapon systems: Coastal surveillance and surface search aircraft.

Sensors: Search radar.

Weapons: Provisions for rockets or guns

Source: Capt. R Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting ships 1995-96*, 98th edition, (Jane's Information Group Limited, Surrey, 1995), pp. 635 - 636

## **2/ Diplomatic Representation in the Seychelles**

1. China
2. Cuba
3. France
4. India
5. Netherlands
6. Russia
7. South Africa
8. United Kingdom
9. United States

## **Diplomatic Representation Abroad**

1. Belgium
2. France
3. United Kingdom
4. United States

## **3/ Membership in major regional and international organisations**

1. ACP state of EEC
2. African Development Bank (AfDB)
3. Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
4. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)
5. G-77
6. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
7. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
8. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
9. International Finance Corporation (IFC)
10. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

11. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
12. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
13. International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL)
14. Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)
15. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
16. Organisation of African Unity (OAU)
17. United Nations (UN)
18. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
19. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
20. World Health Organisation (WHO)
21. World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

## APPENDIX E

### MAURITIUS

#### **1/ Military Resources**

Special Mobile Force: 1,300

6 rifle, 2 mobile, 1 engineering company, support troops

Equipment:

Armoured Personnel Carrier: 10 VAB

Mortars: 81mm: 2

Rocket Launcher: 89mm: 4 LRAC

Police Air wing: 2 Alouette III

Source: *The Military Balance 1995-1996* (Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995)

#### Coast guard

Base: Port Louis (plus 12 manned stations)

Personnel: 600

Patrol Forces:

0 + 1 Offshore Patrol Vessel

Displacement tons: 1650 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 246.1 × 45.9 × 12.8 (75 × 14 × 3.9)

Main machinery: 4 Caterpillar 35 16 diesels; 11,530hp (8.6 MW); 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 22

Range, miles: 6500 at 19 kts

Complement: 57 (11 Officers) plus 20 spare

Guns: 1 Bofors 40mm/70.2 - 12.7 mm MGs

Radar: Surface search I band

Helicopters: 1 light

Comments: Contract signed with the Western Canada Marine Group in March 1994. The vessel's keel was laid at ASMAR's Talcahuano Yard in Chile in April 1994 and is expected to complete in November 1995, with delivery in March 1996. Full helicopter facilities are included in the design which is based on a Canadian fisheries vessel.

- 1 Abhay Class (large patrol craft)

*Amar P 1*

Displacement tons: 120 standard; 151 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 117.2 × 20 × 5 (35.7 × 6.1 × 1.5)

Main machinery: 2 Paxman diesels; 1000hp (746 kW); 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 18 Range, miles: 500 at 12 kts

Complement: 20

Guns: 1 Bofors 40mm/60

Radar: Surface search: Racal Decca 978; I band

Comment: The last of the old Abhay class built by Garden Reach Workshops Ltd. Calcutta 1969. Transferred April 1974. Retained original name. Planned to pay off in 1996.

- 9 Mandovi Class (inshore patrol craft)

*Marlin Barracuda Castor Polaris*

*Sirius Pollux Capella Canopus Rigel*

Displacement tons: 15 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 49.2 × 11.8 × 2.6 (15 × 3.6 × 0.8)

Main machinery: 2 Deutz MWM TBD232V 12 Marine Diesels; 750 hp(m) (551 kW); 2 Hamilton waterjets



Speed, knots: 24 Range, miles: 250 at 14 kts

Complement: 8

Guns: 1-7.62 mm MG

Radar: Navigation; Furono FR 8030; I band

Comment: Ordered in 1987 from Mandovi Marine Private Ltd. courtesy of the Indian Government. First two delivered early in 1989; second batch of the three with some modifications on 1 May 1990 and the last four at the end of 1990. Satellite navigation fitted.

- 2 Zhuk Class Type 1400M (Patrol craft)

*Rescuer      Retriever*

Displacement tons: 39 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 78.7 × 16.4 × 3.9 (24 × 5 × 12)

Main machinery: 2 M 40 1B diesels; 2200 hp(m) (1.6 MW) sustained; 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 30 Range, miles: 1100 at 15kts

Complement: 14

Guns: 4 - 14.5 mm (2 twin) MGs

Radar: Surface search; Spin Trough I band

Comment: Acquired from the USSR in 1990

- 1 SDB Mk 3 Class (Patrol craft)

Displacement tons: 210 full load

Dimensions, feet (metres): 124 × 24.6 × 6.2 (37.8 × 7.5 × 1.9)

Main machinery: 2 MTU 16V 538 TB92 diesels; 6820 hp(m) (5 MW) sustained; 2 shafts

Speed, knots: 30 Complement: 32

Guns: 2 Bofors 40mm/60; 80° elevation; 120 rounds/minute to 10km (5.5 nm);

weight of shell 0.89kg

Comments: Transferred from Indian navy in 1993; Built by Garden Reach, Calcutta in 1984

### 32 Patrol Boats

Comment: Two Rover 663 FPC donated by Australia and 30 Rigid Inflatable craft mostly RHIBS, AVONS and ZODIACS acquired in 1988-89

### Maritime Aircraft

Numbers/Type: 1 Dornier 228 (MPCG 01)

Source: Capt. R Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting ships 1995-96*, 98th edition, (Jane's Information Group Limited, Surrey, 1995)

## **2/ Diplomatic Representation in Mauritius**

1. Australia
2. China
3. Egypt
4. France
5. India
6. Madagascar
7. Pakistan
8. Russia
9. United Kingdom
10. United States

## **Diplomatic Representation Abroad**

1. Australia
2. Belgium
3. Egypt
4. France
5. India
6. Madagascar
7. Malaysia
8. Pakistan
9. South Africa
10. Switzerland
11. United Kingdom
12. United States

Info: The High Commission of Mauritius, London

### **3/ Membership in major regional and international organisations**

1. ACP State of EEC
2. African Development Bank (AfDB)
3. Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
4. Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)
5. Commonwealth
6. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
7. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)
8. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
9. G-77
10. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
11. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
12. International Civil Aviation Association (ICAO)
13. International Conference of Free Trade (ICFTU)
14. International Development Association (IDA)
15. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
16. International Finance Corporation (IFC)
17. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
18. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
19. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
20. INTELSAT
21. INTERPOL
22. Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)
23. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
24. International Wheat Council (IWC)
25. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
26. Organisation of African Unity (OAU)
27. African Malagasy Common Organisation (OCAM)
28. Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA)

29. United Nations (UN)
30. United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
31. United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)
32. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
33. World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
34. World Health Organisation (WHO)
35. World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)
36. World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)
37. World Tourism Organisation (WTO)

## APPENDIX F

### UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/51 ON THE PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES

Date: 8 December 1989

Meeting: 78

Adopted without a vote

Report: A/44/707

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its commitment to international peace and security,

Recalling the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

Conscious that small States may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs and may have special needs consonant with the right to sovereignty and territorial integrity that they share with all nations,

Concerned at the danger that mercenaries can represent for small States,

Recalling with deep concern the various incidents in which groups of mercenaries have attempted to infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small States, including the attempted invasion of Maldives in November 1988,

1. Recognises that small States may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs;
2. Stresses in this regard the significance of the obligation of all States to respect the principle of territorial integrity and the other principles of the Charter of the United Nations;
3. Appeals to the relevant regional and international organisations to provide assistance when requested by small states for the strengthening of their security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter;

4. Urges the Secretary-General to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States and to consider making use of the provisions of Article 99 of the Charter;
5. Invites the Secretary-General to explore ways and means, within the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter, of preserving the security of small States;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to hold consultations with the members of the Security Council and interested Governments and to submit a report to it at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution;
7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Protection and Security of Small States".

## APPENDIX G

### **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP ON PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

#### 1. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

1.1 The UN Charter contains many articles which if effectively implemented would enhance the security of small states. In particular, members of the UN should facilitate the implementation of article 39-51 (Chapter VII) designed to deal with the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression and make every effort to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council.

1.2 The Workshop endorsed the view that there is a need for consistent implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions without exception.

1.3 The Secretary-General should play a more active role in the spirit of Article 99. In particular he should, in cases of incipient and low-level security threats, consider responding positively to a request from a state, feeling itself under military threat from another state, for a mission to its territory. Alternatively, he could send a personal representative or an official of the United Nations Secretariat to obtain a firsthand assessment of the situation.

1.4 Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of either a permanent or an ad-hoc UN force that may be activated under Chapter VII for international security needs.

1.5 It would also be worth considering the establishment of a UN Force of a rapid response nature which would be under the direct control of the UN Secretary General to be used to meet the security threats of small states at their request. The activation of the Force could be at the initiative of the Secretary General in consultation with the Security Council. The stationing of the Force should be constantly reviewed by the Security Council. The Force would consist of paramilitary personnel provided from the regular armed forces of various countries, including the small countries, on a voluntary basis. The members of the Force would be trained under the aegis of the



United Nations at various military institutions of high repute. The Secretary-General should be empowered to initiate consultations with interested countries.

1.6 The Security Council should consider providing collective security guarantees to smaller states in appropriate circumstances.

1.7 Bearing in mind that a sizeable number of the UN member states could claim to be small states, the Workshop urged that:

(a) the "Global Watch" facility should focus on the security problem of small states

(b) the UN Secretary-General should consider the feasibility of establishing a unit to the study and co-ordination of activities relating to the protection and security of small states.

## 2. REGIONAL SECURITY

2.1 Regional security measures proved to be quite successful and effective in some parts of the world and, where appropriate and applicable, may be encouraged. However, this should not be a substitute for possible UN action. The UN should explore measures that could facilitate action at the regional level in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter to enhance the protection and security of small states.

## 3 NATIONAL SECURITY

3.1 The Workshop recognised that the question of national security is a responsibility to be borne by the nation state itself. There is no substitute for building the internal resilience of small states. However, many small states have inadequate resource endowments to undertake their own defence needs effectively. Moreover many of the threats to national security may have an external origin. Examples of these problems are found in -

(a) dealing with the international drug network

(b) policing the territorial seas and the EEZs

(c) the problems of piracy, mercenaries and terrorists.

The Workshop advocated enhancing the capacity of small states to deal with these problems through greater exchange of information, adequate surveillance capacity,

provision of training and appropriate technical assistance, including suitable technology and equipment.

3.2 The Workshop urges the member state of the UN to ratify the International Convention Against The Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

5-6 May 1991

Maldives

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malé, Maldives

## APPENDIX H

### ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

#### Members

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Bahamas
3. Barbados
4. Belize
5. Cape Verde
6. Comoros
7. Cook Island
8. Cuba
9. Cyprus
10. Dominica
11. Federated States of Micronesia
12. Fiji
13. Grenada
14. Guinea-Bissau
15. Guyana
16. Jamaica
17. Kiribati
18. Maldives
19. Malta
20. Marshall Islands
21. Mauritius
22. Nauru
23. Papua New Guinea
24. St. Kitts and Nevis
25. St. Lucia

26. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
27. Samoa
28. Sao Tome and Principe
29. Seychelles
30. Singapore
31. Solomon Islands
32. Tonga
33. Trinidad and Tobago
34. Tuvalu
35. Vanuatu

Observers

1. American Samoa
2. Guam
3. Netherland Antilles
4. Niue
5. US Virgin Islands

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