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## Australia and the Indian Ocean: Strategic Dimensions of Increasing Naval Involvement

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the expense of economic and strategic overextension.

The British government followed a policy beyond its resources, and the British political tradition and morality had a grander vision of empire than simply one held together by brute force. In his concentration on force, Clayton says too little of how the exceedingly constructive institutional transformations, and examples of moral and political leadership—despite all repression—paved the way for the support Britain received in World War II, and the ease with which the empire was dismantled immediately thereafter.

Clayton's conclusion will give a contemporary superpower pause. Britain maintained its empire with bluff, pragmatic concessions, and the show of power. These worked for a while, but all evidence suggests that sooner or later the bluff would have been called. Restrained force was not enough to hold back centrifugal tendencies, such as nationalism and anticolonialism. In the end, the British could not, nor did they want to, hold the empire together by force; and so they gave it up to institutions they had let develop within the system.

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Bruce, Robert H. *Australia and the Indian Ocean: Strategic Dimensions of Increasing Naval Involvement*. Studies in Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs No. 1, Perth, Australia:

Centre for Indian Ocean Regional Studies, 1988. 138pp. \$20

This collection of papers from a 1988 conference examines the Indian Ocean region in light of the Australian decision to head toward a two-ocean (Pacific and Indian) fleet.

One of the most interesting papers documents the importance of the Indian Ocean for Australia, noting, for example, that over half the seaborne commerce moving to Australia sails through that ocean. This paper examines why it was not until the mid-1980s that steps were taken to protect the vulnerable northwest coast with a permanently stationed naval presence. The long-standing Australian reliance on the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the lack of a defined threat perception are noted as the major causes of the laxity of Australian defense policy toward the Indian Ocean.

The essay likely to be of most interest to the American reader is by K. Subrahmanyam, formerly director of India's Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, who presents an Indian perspective on the Indian Ocean that is far different from that found in the United States. His is a view that should be considered carefully. The Indian Navy is one of the fastest growing in the world. India is now the sixth nation to be operating a nuclear-powered attack submarine. Countering the perceived U.S. threat has been a major stimulus for this growth. As Subrahmanyam notes, "India had been subjected to an exercise of force

without war in 1971 when the task force 74 headed by the nuclear powered carrier USS *Enterprise* tried to intervene—though it proved to be too late—in the last stages of the war in Bangladesh.” India believes that the newly acquired SSN will “provide some minimal deterrence against such interventionism.”

One essay focuses on the U.S. military involvement in the 1980–88 Gulf War and another looks at the Australian role. While this is the most dated section of the work, there are many points of value in it. As one paper notes, “The U.S. interventionist strategy for the Gulf region has some serious limitations. On paper, plans and numbers look pretty promising but under the impact of a real conflict situation in a distant area they may not work.” As the United States knows full well, the difficulties of mounting any U.S. military activity in the Indian Ocean region cannot be understated. While in 1987–88 the U.S. Navy, with support from the other services, was able to escort merchant ships in the Persian Gulf, this was a difficult mission which required the commitment of a large number of ships.

Though the dramatic changes over the past several years have dated this volume, the work will remain of value for those interested in the Indian Ocean region.

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Chandra, Satish, ed. *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce & Politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987. 334pp.

This erratic combination of historical essays, technological evaluation and polemics is exceedingly difficult to evaluate. The theme of exploration, commerce and politics in the Indian Ocean region serves as only a tenuous connexion among the various articles. Consequently, either the editor, perhaps finding himself unclear as to the articles' individual accuracy, gave up the attempt to keep the authors' speculation within the theme, or he may simply have failed to meet the most basic requirements of editorship.

If this collection has anything to offer, it is in reminding us that the Indian Ocean is an important area for historical investigation, particularly when it comes to elements of cross-cultural and economic exchange between the area and Europe. S. Bhattacharya in “The Indian Ocean in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” attempts to bring some analysis to the various exchange mechanisms operating during those times; F.J.A. Broeze, K.I. McPherson, and P.D. Reeves, in “The Making of the Modern Indian Ocean Ports,” gives us vast technological knowledge of how ports were developed and what factors influenced that development; Immanuel Wallerstein observes the economic impact of West on East.

If the reiteration of these various, often familiar themes were all there was to this collection, it would have