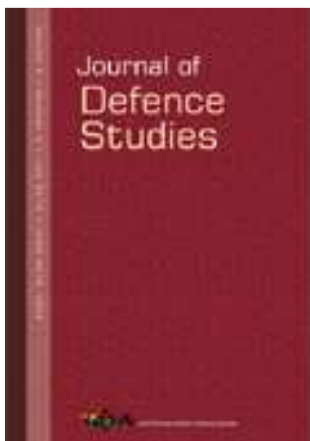


Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010



Journal of Defence Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.idsa.in/journalofdefencestudies>

Revisiting the 1971 'USS Enterprise Incident': Rhetoric, Reality and Pointers for the Contemporary Era

Raghavendra Mishra

To cite this article: Raghavendra Mishra (2015): Revisiting the 1971 'USS Enterprise Incident': Rhetoric, Reality and Pointers for the Contemporary Era, Journal of Defence Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2 April-June 2015, pp. 49-80

URL http://idsa.in/jds/9_2_2015_Revisitingthe1971USSEnterpriseIncident.html

Please Scroll down for Article

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.idsa.in/termsfuse>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

Views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDSA or of the Government of India.

Revisiting the 1971 'USS Enterprise Incident' Rhetoric, Reality and Pointers for the Contemporary Era

*Raghavendra Mishra**

The USS Enterprise naval task group entry into the Indian Ocean during the closing stages of 1971 Indo-Pak Conflict led to further deterioration in the relations between India and the United States (US), and this estrangement lasted until the end of the Cold War. The US couched this show of force under the rubric of ensuring safety of American personnel caught up in a war zone. In India, however, this was seen as a coercive attempt to prop up a genocidal military regime. Using recently declassified official records from both sides, additional scholarly works on the 1971 conflict, and in light of the rapprochement in Indo-US relations, the article attempts to deconstruct the rhetoric and reality of this incident. It examines the prevailing politico-strategic environment, roles of diplomatic-military apparatus of major players, the mechanics of the naval deployment, and provides lessons for historical re-interpretation and the utility of seapower in the contemporary context.

The Indo–Pak conflict of 1971 remains a significant chapter in modern India's military history. This conflict was seminal in one respect: that it required India to apply its military power simultaneously on two theatres, the East and the West, against a common adversary. This short, sharp conventional military engagement that lasted 14 days was also an unqualified Indian success, evident by the East Pakistan military commanders' surrender on 16 December 1971.

* Commander Raghavendra Mishra is a Research Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi. The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Indian Navy or NMF.

ISSN 0976-1004 print

© 2015 Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

Journal of Defence Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2, April–June 2015, pp. 49–80



This was also the first contest of arms where the Indian Navy was able to display its full might in both the theatres. The successful missile attacks on Karachi in the Western theatre and the psychosis they created in the Pakistani establishment are well documented. In a similar vein, Indian Navy used its superiority and sea-based air power to blockade the Eastern theatre from further reinforcements. The damage inflicted on critical maritime infrastructure in the Eastern theatre was considerable, further degrading the adversary's war-waging potential, and reinforced the feeling of 'being out on a limb'. The larger geopolitical effects were two-fold: (a) a change in the political geography of South Asia with the creation of Bangladesh; and (b) a jolt to the supremacist psyche harboured by Pakistan military vis-à-vis the Indian armed forces. In sum, the conduct of military operations during this conflict could be termed a decisive victory at the 'grand tactical' or 'operational' level in the strategically decisive Eastern theatre, while a virtual *status quo* was achieved in the West.¹

Embedded within this saga of unqualified military success lies the chapter of 'USS Enterprise' incident when a nuclear powered and nuclear weapon capable US naval task force entered the Bay of Bengal during the closing stages of the conflict. It generated considerable peeve in India and was criticized among all sections, including the political, diplomatic and military, communities, media, and the strategic community. The critique ranged from confirmatory evidence of quasi-hostility harboured by the US against India; support to a military dictatorship that was in denial of legitimate electoral process; and, helping the cause of a government engaged in genocide. In addition, the incident is also categorized as an instance of 'gunboat diplomacy'. The result was a deepening of 'the estrangement' among the world's oldest and the largest democracies, and this adversarial trend persisted until the end of Cold War. The significance attached to this incident can be gauged by the fact it continues to find repeated mention despite a larger Indo-US rapprochement, particularly while discussing the divisive aspects of bilateral relations.

THE 'WHY' OF REVISITING THE 'ENTERPRISE' INCIDENT

With the end of the Cold War and release of additional information, declassification of records, and publication of anecdotal biographies as well as scholarly works, it emerges that there was an 'artificial exaggeration' of events during the era of bipolar politics as to 'what' actually took place. The primary reason for revisiting this incident is to disaggregate the reality from rhetoric through these new sources and attempt a new narrative

that is different from the oft-quoted *clichéd* discourse. In addition, recent works also bring out the role of 'perceptions and misperceptions' while these events were in progress and its effect on shaping the future strategic narrative among erstwhile adversaries.² The fortnight-long Cuban Missile crisis of October 1962 can be cited as an apt example. This event was a case of extreme brinkmanship by the two superpowers when the world stood a hairbreadth away from a nuclear exchange. Two recent works bring new light to the incident. In one instance, it is surmised the crisis was a Soviet tit-for-tat to the US deployment of nuclear capable Jupiter Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM) in Turkey.³ These missiles were removed in 1963 as a *quid pro quo* for the Soviet de-escalation in Cuba. In game theory parlance, it was 'an interesting case of mutual accommodation, bargaining and avoiding mutually damaging behaviour in international politics'⁴, which is in contrast to the popular perception that the Soviet Union had 'backed off'. Another recent work on the same event infers that the proverbial 'eyeball to eyeball' standoff never took place.⁵ In this case, the deductions are based on a recently released map and detailed time-space calculations to aver that the Soviet ships carrying nuclear missiles and other related equipment had, in fact, turned away well before the much-publicised accounts of the US naval quarantine. This brings to fore a very different perspective from the quasi-official description about the US naval *cordon sanitaire* having deterred further reinforcements.⁶

The second reason for a repeat analysis in contemporary setting is that there are as many lessons to be learnt in victories as there are in defeat, not only by the military but also for the political, policy maker and analytical community alike. This issue is of particular relevance to those associated with 'seapower' issues and other maritime themes, such as, the legal regime at sea, the larger politico-diplomatic-strategic dimension of navies, and some unique characteristics of naval forces that do not find much mention in strategic discourse. The basic proposition is that navies serve far more functions in support of national interests and national security objectives during peace, crisis and conflict than just being the traditional arm for war fighting which remains their *raison d'être*.

Another reason is to undertake a scenario building exercise to address two issues that do not seem to have been analysed in detail. The first is to carry out a mechanistic time-space-geography reconstruction of the event in order to measure the effectiveness of coercive signalling by the US. A secondary purpose is to do a counterfactual 'what if' analysis to verify

some of the 'dismissive and optimistic' assessments by the Indian side. The Indian discourse about the USS Enterprise incident are not covered as these have been detailed in the book titled 'Transition to Triumph', part of an ongoing project to build Indian Navy's historiography.⁷

THE LARGER PICTURE

It is pertinent to mention that the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict took place under the Cold War overhang when this adversarial bipolarity was at its height. Borrowing from the axiom that '...context, context, context, decodes the origin, meaning, character and consequences of warfare'⁸, a broad narrative of the extant international environment and some cardinal factors that had a direct impact on the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict and the Enterprise incident are amplified.

Pervasive and Hostile Ideological Divide

The bipolar divide that existed between the US led 'West' and the Soviet 'East' during the Cold War can be considered as an aberration in world politics. It is not as if such bipolarities did not obtain earlier, namely, Anglo-French relations during the Napoleonic era and the Anglo-German rivalries prior to the First and the Second World Wars. What sets the Cold War divisiveness apart is its permeation across international, national, social, economic, cultural, religious and human dimensions.⁹ Both superpowers saw the world through distinct white (with us) and black (against us) lenses. The third grouping, the non-aligned nations were also cast into these categories depending on their leanings.

Vietnam Overhang

The US, engaged in an exhausting and indeterminate military operations in Vietnam since 1961, had realised that 'victory' was becoming a distant possibility despite investing significant military and diplomatic capital. Given the military realities and increasing domestic opposition, a 'face saving draw' was fast emerging as the favourable option. The talks with the North Vietnamese leadership that ultimately culminated in the 1973 Paris Peace Accord were in a critical phase. The 'war weariness' and concerns about further erosion of the Western strategic influence were visible in the Nixon doctrine, formalized in his November Vietnamization speech that the US was no longer ready to support the 'free world in Asia' fighting against communism with active involvement, although military materiel and economic assistance would be provided.¹⁰

Alliance Politics

Pakistan was a formal ally of the western security umbrella as a member of the 1954 South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the 1955 Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). While these security communities became defunct and were dissolved in 1977 and 1979, respectively, both multilateral military alliances were in force in 1971. Therefore, there was an obligatory need to take some action that could be interpreted as safeguarding the security interests of Pakistan and to send a reassuring signal to other partners about the western commitment.

Sino-Soviet Dissonance and Kissinger's Coup

The Sino–Soviet schism following the death of Stalin had deepened and this has been covered in some detail by Henry Kissinger.¹¹ The Chinese and Soviet Communist parties severed relations in 1963 with consequent militarization of the adjoining border regions. Despite an initial agreement on border delineation, Sino-Soviet military clashes broke out in 1969 along the Ussuri River. The war paranoia in China was fuelled by the US warnings about imminent Soviet attacks.¹² This window was exploited by Kissinger to send feelers seeking strategic rapprochement with China using Pakistan as the intermediary. Based on the positive feedback received, he made his first secret visit to China in July 1971 while in Pakistan, and another one four months later in November 1971.¹³ The ground breaking US–China summit of February 1972 formalizing the commitment to present a united front against the Soviet Union still lay in the future. Therefore, the survival of Pakistan (West) and more importantly, General Yahya Khan, who lent unstinting support as the 'covert go between' were indispensable.¹⁴

1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty

The spirit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), though robust in terms of membership, was weakened by the implicit alignments of some members with one bloc or the other. An important agreement that cemented the West's perceptions about India was the August 1971 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Some of the reasons extended for India concluding this treaty with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) are: (a) frustration about a lack of appreciation about India's security concerns; (b) inequitable US behaviour by continued military assistance to Pakistan when both countries were under sanctions post-1965 conflict; (c) the military security concerns in the backdrop

1962 experience; and (d) the growing Sino-Pak nexus re-inforced by Kissinger's visit to China.¹⁶ The treaty was 'strategic' in content and intent, with three provisos related to mutual security assurances and military cooperation. These three articles reinforced the perception in the West that India had virtually joined the 'Soviet Camp'. The language of these articles, particularly Article IX, is 'quite close' to that contained in US bilateral defence treaties with its allies in Asia-Oceania region, namely, Korea, Japan, Philippines, and Australia (Table 1). This was a classic case of the 'mirror imaging' between nations with adversarial relations.¹⁷ Some Indian scholars have also stated that these were essentially alliance clauses and have questioned the non-aligned 'spirit and character' of India in this light.¹⁸ To some extent, this hypothesis is reinforced when this treaty was re-negotiated in 1993 and despite re-iterating the long-standing India-Russia relationship, the content of this treaty was altered to reflect the post-Cold War world realities. The three articles in question were dropped and words such as, 'military', 'security' and 'defence' do not find mention in the text.¹⁹ This raises important questions—did the US 'misperceive' India in light of the treaty text, and whether India made an implicit choice about being 'close' to the USSR, given its vexed security concerns.

Table I Comparative Example of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty Provisions and US Bilateral Security Treaties in Asia-Oceania²⁰

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Article and Abbreviated Text</i>
Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea; October 1, 1953	Article II: The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of either of them, the political independence or security of either of the Parties is threatened by external armed attack. Separately and jointly, by self-help and mutual aid, the Parties will maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this Treaty and to further its purposes.
Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between The Government of India and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, August 09, 1971	Article IX: In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.

Source: Author's compilation.

Passing of Indian Ocean Maritime Baton

An important development during mid-1960s was the gradual realization in Britain that it could no longer remain the pre-eminent naval power in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Some of the newly independent states were unwilling to support their expeditionary pursuits, for example, the refusal of Jordan, Libya and Sri Lanka to permit operations against Egypt during the 1956 Suez Crisis (Operation Musketeer). While there was a consensus to adopt an expeditionary strategic posture, the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Navy (RN) disagreed on the method of implementation. RAF seems to have won the argument when the 1966 *Defence Review* was announced and the strategic roles such as the strike, reconnaissance, and air-defence activities were taken out of the ambit of carrier-based aviation.²¹ Geoffrey Till sums up the argument by stating that Britain could not afford the 'capital cost' to match the military aspirations in the face of 'new strategic realities' that were emerging in the Mediterranean, North Atlantic and the Central European theatres.²² As Britain withdrew, the maritime baton was passed on to the US in a consensual manner (a rare occurrence), exemplified by the depopulation and handing over of Diego Garcia to the US.²³ The presence of US military 1,000 nautical miles (nm) away from Indian shores and emerging closer ties with the USSR, the issue of Diego Garcia became a convenient cause for anti-US rhetoric in India. Further, the need to show support for another non-aligned nation, especially a neighbour with deep historical linkages like Mauritius, was an additional mitigating factor.

Indian Ocean as a 'Zone of Peace' (IOZP) Proposal

The efforts by the non-aligned nations since the early 1970s to declare the Indian Ocean as a 'zone of peace' (IOZP) was perceived by the West as yet another attempt by the largely socialist (therefore, pro-USSR) bloc to curtail its 'freedom of manoeuvre' in an increasingly important part of the world's oldest commons. This perception was strengthened considering in that the proposal corresponded with increasing Soviet naval presence in the North Arabian Sea and the East African littorals.²⁴ Coincidentally, the IOZP proposal was adopted at the 26th Session of UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the very same day that Indo-Pak hostilities ceased, that is, 16 December, with the support of entire 113 member NAM grouping.²⁵

**THE POLITICS (WHY) AND MECHANICS (HOW) OF THE
USS ENTERPRISE TASK FORCE DEPLOYMENT**

As Clausewitz and Corbett have emphasized, military strategy is subordinate to politics and diplomacy, therefore the politico-diplomatic and military (naval dimension) of USS Enterprise deployment are covered in a concurrent manner. This broad overview of the US politico-diplomatic dimension related to naval task force deployment draws upon the 2005 US governmental publication, based on the recently declassified information about the 1971 South Asia crisis.²⁶

The naval part of the narrative related to the 1971 USS Enterprise incident is built upon four partially declassified US Navy primary source documents and other secondary sources. The primary sources are: (a) US Pacific Command (PACOM) histories of 1971 and 1972; and (b) USS Enterprise Commanding Officer's histories for 1971 and 1972. Interestingly, even after the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict, the air defence of India in event of a repeat 1962 Chinese aggression is listed as one of the Contingency Plans (CONPLAN) in both the annual PACOM histories. The aim was to augment the Indian air defence and early warning system, and active defensive measures against the Chinese aircraft within Indian airspace. No offensive operations into the Chinese airspace were envisaged *a la* the Korean War (1950–53).²⁷ It is pertinent to mention that both India and Pakistan came under the Area of Responsibility (AOR) of US Pacific Command during the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict, unlike the case today.

It is pertinent to mention that the 1971 deployment of USS Enterprise was not the first instance of this ship as the centrepiece for US naval demonstration in the Bay of Bengal. A similar deployment was envisaged in November 1962 against China. This was in response to India's request for assistance from the Kennedy Administration and aimed 'to help provide air cover to Calcutta, if that became necessary'.²⁸ Due to the cessation of hostilities and a unilateral withdrawal by China, the deployment eventually did not take place.²⁹

PACOM HIST 71 mentions that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) sought CONPLAN regarding the evacuation of US citizens from Pakistan (East and West), India and Nepal on 19 August 1971. This was forwarded to JCS on 1 September 1971. Based on further clarifications from JCS, this CONPLAN was refined and a revised plan submitted on 26 September 1971, which envisaged three options—two involving aircraft for short field/vertical lift operations, and the third using a

floating platform concept using helicopters flown from the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea. This third option was worked out keeping in mind the JCS input that aircraft/ship refuelling may not be available. Further, heavy and medium lift helicopters were deployed at U Tapao (Thailand). The document goes on to mention that the first two options were not exercised since the personnel were evacuated from Dhaka to Calcutta (Kolkata) on 12 December 1971 by four British C-130s.³⁰ The option to deploy an attack carrier to dissuade 'third party intervention' forwarded by PACOM was slated for discussions during the Washington Select Actions Group (WSAG) meeting scheduled on 12 November 1971; however, this issue was not broached. This option was examined by JCS and PACOM informed the next day that the concept could be developed for 'planning purposes only' and, 'a [one] aircraft carrier group could be placed at 48 hours notice' for such a deployment.³¹

The hostilities broke out between India and Pakistan after the pre-emptive attacks on 11 Indian airbases in the evening of 3 December 1971. The first mention of an aircraft carrier deployment comes up in Kissinger's memorandum to Nixon on 8 December 1971. Kissinger suggested that helicopter operations from an aircraft carrier appeared to be the sole feasible option for evacuation of US personnel since Dhaka airfield was rendered unusable by continuous Indian air attacks. Nixon, in a meeting with Kissinger and the US Attorney General later in the day, averred that India plans to overrun East Pakistan and then turn to the Western Theatre. A broad plan of action emerged which included cutting off economic aid to India, and transfer of military equipment from other US regional allies to West Pakistan. These were to be supported by a possible naval deployment and a simultaneous move by the Chinese military along the border. The aim was put pressure on the Soviet Union which, in turn, would prevail upon India from expanding the conflict. Nixon directed Kissinger to explore the option of US naval deployment with Chinese representatives before taking a final decision.³² It is pertinent to mention that, at this stage, the use of the aircraft carrier for coercion was not envisaged. However, as the crisis unfolded, it could well have been the trigger for 'constructing the official pretext' to justify the eventual naval deployment.

During the WSAG meeting on 9 December, Kissinger discussed the option of carrier deployment with Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and thereafter directed JCS to present a plan by the same afternoon. In a later meeting, Kissinger suggested to

President Nixon about positioning a helicopter ship with other naval assets to fulfil the 'strategic' requirements of warning to Soviet Union and India from further escalation. He also briefed the US President about the directives given to WSAG/CJCS in relation to the naval deployment. Kissinger, in his briefing notes for WSAG meeting, brings out that the US President should direct CJCS to move a naval task force, then deployed in the South East Asian theatre, to the Bay of Bengal immediately via the Singapore Straits under the pretext of 'prudent contingency measures'.³³ As part of diplomatic manoeuvrings, a strong US demarche about India's hostile intentions towards West Pakistan was also served on this day.

The excerpts of the Nixon-Kissinger meeting on the morning of 10 December indicate that the decision for a naval task force deployment to the Bay of Bengal was ordered the previous evening. In this meeting, Nixon reiterated to Kissinger the criticality of a complementary movement/threatening military posture by China in the Himalayan sector was to be emphasized during his discussions with Chinese counterparts later in the evening. During his meeting with the Chinese delegation led by Huang Hua, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Ambassador to Canada (US did not have formal diplomatic relations with China at that time), Kissinger apprised his counterpart about the US naval task force move through a map showing the deployment of the US and Soviet forces. He averred that the Pakistani military had collapsed in the East and the same was anticipated within two weeks in the West. Emphasizing the importance of West Pakistan's continued existence for regional dynamics, Kissinger sought military moves by China along the border to restrain India and the Soviet Union. Huang Hua, while expressing solidarity for the common cause, made no formal commitment, stating that he would convey the US proposal for consideration of Beijing.³⁴

On 11 December, Kissinger informed the US President through a written memo that the carrier task force was moving as scheduled and first media reports about its possible deployment in the Bay of Bengal had started circulating in India. He went on to list the Soviet naval response by referring to unconfirmed reports about Soviet Mediterranean Fleet units being directed to the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, but were unlikely to arrive in time to be of any value. He also referred to the movement of Soviet Pacific Fleet units comprising one guided missile cruiser, one diesel electric submarine and a replenishment ship having crossed Tsushima Straits, possibly enroute to the Indian Ocean. Further,

the Soviet Indian Ocean squadron deployment comprised 16 ships, half of them combatants, largely in and around Sri Lanka and Socotra. During a conversation with US President on the Indo-Pak situation the same evening, Kissinger appeared enthusiastic and confident about China making complementary moves, whereas Nixon seemed uncertain. On the same day, during a telephonic conversation Kissinger informed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that the US naval task force would be crossing the Straits of Malacca 'tomorrow night', that is, 12 December (presumably Washington time since the transcript does not bear a time stamp).³⁵

On 12 December, during an early morning meeting with Kissinger and General Alexander Haig (Deputy NSA), the US President arrived at the conclusion that China would not make any supporting moves. He also made a policy turnabout by asking Kissinger to inform the Soviets about the increasing probability of a major war involving both the superpowers. A little later, Soviet ambassadorial staff informed Kissinger that a Soviet delegation had arrived in New Delhi for consultations, and that India had agreed not to expand its military operations in the Western theatre. Further, four British C-130 aircraft under UN aegis had evacuated foreign nationals from Dhaka, except those wishing to stay back. At this stage, the US administration possessed reasonable proof that West Pakistan would not be attacked by India. However, in a meeting attended by senior state and defence department officials, Kissinger decided to go ahead with the naval deployment, which was expected to traverse the Straits of Malacca in the evening and could arrive off East Bangladesh on the morning of 16 December. Nixon and Kissinger left for a two-day trip to Azores for Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks that were to usher in the era of détente in the mid-1970s. Later in the evening, the US Deputy NSA informed his Soviet counterpart that TF 74 advance was temporarily suspended for 24 hours.³⁶

In the evening of 13 December, Kissinger informed the US Deputy NSA that the planned naval deployment would take place, but the exact mechanics would be conveyed after consultations on the return flight from Azores. On 14 December, the US Deputy NSA informed Kissinger (still in Azores) that the movement of TF 74 was being held-up until the receipt of new instructions and recommended calling off the proposed naval deployment. He also passed on the message from Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, General Raza, requesting the US Seventh Fleet deployment in the Bay of Bengal as well as in the North Arabian Sea to deter further attacks by the Indian Navy. This proposal

was repeated by the President of Pakistan to Nixon stating: 'The Seventh Fleet does not only have to come to our shores but also to relieve certain pressures which...not in a position to cope with...have sent a specific proposal...about the role the Seventh Fleet could play at Karachi which, I hope, is receiving your attention'³⁷ A request by Kenneth Keating, US Ambassador to India, for issuing official clarifications about the rumours of a US intervention was denied by Kissinger. This ambiguous stance of neither confirming nor denying possible US intervention was maintained when India's ambassador in Washington, L.K. Jha, called on the Assistant Secretary of State. In a meeting late in the evening, the Soviet Minister Counsellor at Washington, Vorontsov, reiterated to the US Deputy NSA that India had given unequivocal assurances about not attacking West Pakistan.³⁸

On 15 December, Kissinger informed Nixon that TF 74 was transiting the Straits of Malacca and was expected to 'arrive at a point near the centre of the base of Bay of Bengal'³⁹ in the evening. Further, India was awash with rumours about the naval deployment and a possible US intervention. The British had moved a commando carrier and a destroyer off the Southern Coast of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The Soviet task force mentioned earlier were transiting through the South China Sea and expected to arrive in the Indian Ocean by 18 December 1971. In addition, 12 other Soviet naval ships were present in the Indian Ocean, none in the vicinity or heading for the Bay of Bengal or North Arabian Sea, where the Indian Navy was continuing with its operations. Soviet Counsellor Vorontsov, in a meeting with Kissinger in the forenoon, stated that the Soviet Union was ready to extend unconditional guarantee that India would not attack in the Western sector, either in West Pakistan or in Kashmir.⁴⁰

At this stage, it seems quite clear that, India was close to achieving its objectives or brought around by the Soviets not to continue further because of the threats from the US. One recent work chronicling the diplomatic dimension of the crisis, especially the proceedings at the UN, posits that the latter appears to be the probable reason. USSR had already used its veto power thrice (on 4, 5 and 13 December) at the UN Security Council (SC) and had repeatedly blocked the tabling of further proposals there. However, on 7 December, UNGA passed a resolution censuring India and calling for an immediate ceasefire with 104 votes in favour, 11 against with 10 absentations.⁴¹ US conveyed its intentions of seeking UN mandate for a Korea-like police action based on the UNGA resolution. These factors and the escalatory signalling of a unilateral intervention by

the US made the Soviet Union engage New Delhi so as not to progress military operations in the West after the surrender of the Pak military in East Pakistan.⁴²

On 16 December, Kissinger informed Nixon about the surrender in East Pakistan. The Soviet Ambassador to India had dismissed the possibilities of US or China intervening by emphasizing that the Soviet Fleet was also in the Indian Ocean and would not allow the Seventh fleet to interfere; and if China moved in Ladakh, the USSR would respond in Sinkiang [Xinjiang]. TF 74 was east, off Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and this naval deployment had generated considerable anti-US feeling in India. The Pak media was still publishing speculative reports about a possible naval intervention. PACOM HIST 1971 mentions:

Although the task group was not actually required in operations connected with the India-Pakistan war, strong political repercussions followed the transit of USS Enterprise. Indian anger at US backing of Pakistan was compounded by knowledge of the task force and there were rumours that the Navy had been sent to rescue Pakistani troops and that the United States was about to intervene in the war.⁴³

On 17 December, Kissinger informed Nixon about Pakistan's acceptance of the Indian ceasefire proposal and mentioned that Sri Lanka wanted TF 74 to make a port visit to Colombo to show presence in their waters.⁴⁴ This issue is examined later in the article.

MECHANICS OF TF 74 MOVEMENTS

The USS Enterprise Command Histories for 1971–72 bring out that the ship along with escorts left 'Yankee Station'⁴⁵ off Vietnam on 10 December. TF 74 assembled in holding area north-east off Singapore on 12 December, and transited the Straits of Malacca on 14 December, arriving in the Indian Ocean on 15 December. Thereafter, the US Naval Task Force moved off the southern tip of the Indian Sub-continent to await instructions. During its deployment in the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Indian Ocean Force ships, usually more than one, were in company. TF 74 operations continued until the morning of 8 January 1972 when it returned to Subic Bay in the Philippines.⁴⁶

There are differing accounts about the composition of TF 74. However, the details that match through cross-referencing from multiple sources are:

1. Nuclear powered strike carrier USS Enterprise and four escorts:
 - (i) USS McKean (DD 784) and USS Orleck (DD 886)—Gearing-class destroyers.
 - (ii) USS Decatur (DDG 31)—Forrest Sherman-class guided missile destroyer.
 - (iii) USS King (DLG 10/DDG 41)—Farragut-class guided missile destroyer;
2. Amphibious Assault Ship, USS Tripoli with Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of 2000 marines embarked (CINCPAC 1971 Command History mentions 800 marines)⁴⁷ and three escorts ships:
 - (i) USS Parsons (DDG 33)—Forrest Sherman-class guided missile destroyer.
 - (ii) USS Bausell (DD 845) and USS Richard B Anderson (DD 786)—Gearing-class destroyer.
3. USS Haleakala (AE 25)—Nitro-class ammunition ship, and replenishment oiler—USS Wichita (AOR 1).
4. The fact that a nuclear attack submarine (SSN) was part of TF 74 is confirmed by Commander Submarine Group 7 online account of the USS Enterprise incident.⁴⁸

From the recent accounts, TF 74 did not enter the Bay of Bengal as mentioned in the 1980 narrative by Admiral Krishnan, then Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command (FOCINCEAST).⁴⁹ This is also borne out by the first-hand account of then Captain Swaraj Prakash, Commanding Officer of INS Vikrant during the 1971 conflict.⁵⁰ Admiral S.M. Nanda, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) during 1971 conflict, in his 2004 autobiography, provides a slightly different version where TF 74 on exiting the Straits of Malacca on 14 December 1971, headed due east to operate in an area south–south-east of Sri Lanka until heading back to the Pacific theatre on 8 January 1972.⁵¹ This version is also supported by:

- (a) Washington-based research agency, Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) papers.⁵²
- (b) US Navy Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Erno Zumwalt's autobiographical narrative, and the recent biographical sketch of Admiral Zumwalt's naval career by Larry Berman.⁵³
- (c) Detailed analysis by David Hall and Gary Bass's account of the 1971 conflict.⁵⁴

- (d) Pran Chopra's forceful and cogent analysis of the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict.⁵⁵
- (e) Most importantly, the anecdotal account of the event by Rear Admiral (Retd.) Ernst E. 'Gene' Tissot, Commanding Officer of USS Enterprise in 1971–72.⁵⁶

As gathered from Admirals Nanda and Krishnan's accounts, the comparative depiction of Indian Naval operations and USS Enterprise movements, are shown in Figure 1. This difference between the two accounts could be attributed to Admiral Krishnan writing about the Indo-Pak conflict in 1980, at the height of a re-ignited Cold War. During this period, access to US open source literature was limited to 'The Anderson Papers'⁵⁷ that gave a leaked journalistic account of the Kissinger-Nixon decision-making during the 1971 South Asia crisis. This proposition is also supported by Admiral Krishnan's mention of 'USS Tartar Sam' as one of the ships comprising TF 74. 'Tartar' was, in fact, a Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) of 'Triple T' (Terrier-Tartar-Talos) family, then fitted on the US naval ships. This point has also been clarified in Admiral Zumwalt's account. However, the difference in the geography of Indian Naval operations as depicted by Admirals Nanda and Krishnan would have to wait for further declassification from India and is anyway immaterial to this paper. This inconsistency in Admiral Krishnan's account should not detract from his overall persuasive narrative of the naval operations, which also forms the basis of Indian Navy's historical account of the 1971 Indo-Pak War in the Eastern theatre.⁵⁸

The impression that one gets from reading the official transcripts is that the US naval deployment was deliberately delayed by 48 hours off Singapore before it crossed the Straits of Malacca on 15 December. However, the account given by the Commanding Officer of USS Enterprise paints a different scenario, where he states that the non-nuclear components of TF 74 had to be refuelled twice enroute thus delaying their arrival in the Indian Ocean. He goes on explain that the replenishments concerns forced the TF 74 to maintain a speed of 15 knots thus making them vulnerable to 'Soviet shadowing', which would not have been possible if more robust logistic support was available, and attributes this to extensive commitments in Vietnam. This interpretation is also supported by Admiral Zumwalt's account, albeit indirectly, where he avers that the US naval ships were put at disadvantage not only by the sub-optimal decision-making but also by half-hearted signalling which did not achieve the desired effects.⁵⁹

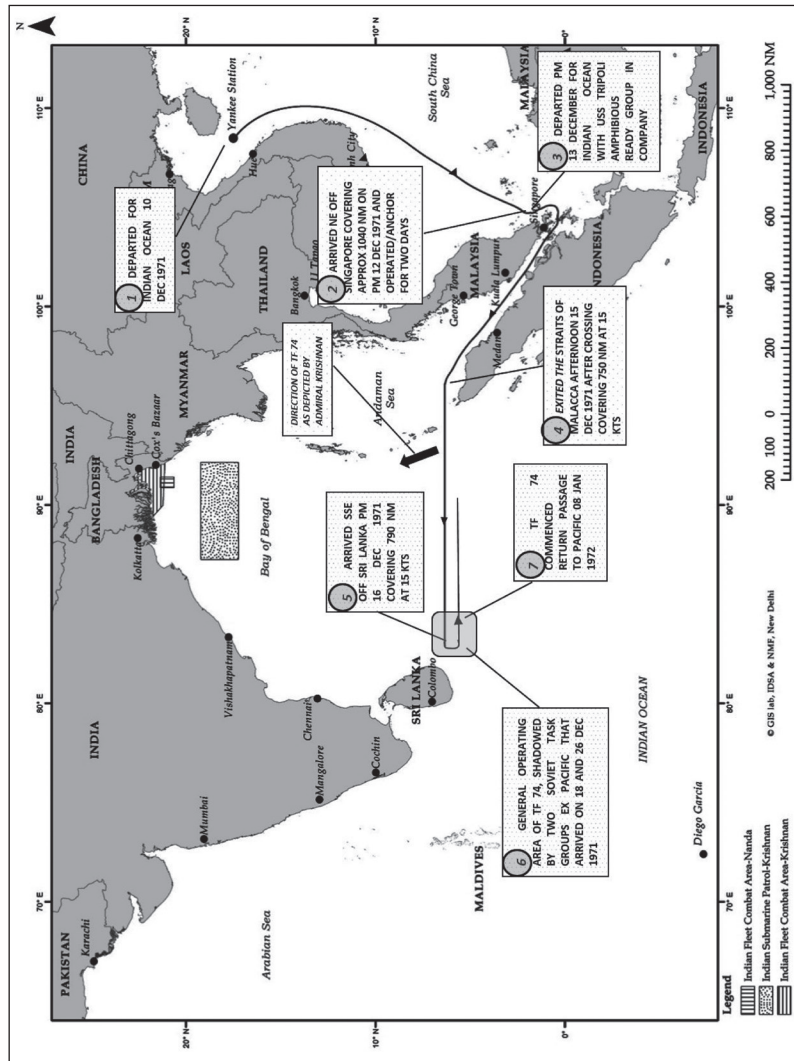


Figure 1 TF 74 Movement during 1971 Indo-Pak Conflict

Source: Author.

SIGNALLING BY OTHER PLAYERS

The deployment and signalling by other major naval powers, especially Britain and Soviet Union, were more by coincidence than deliberate design, thus proving that the Clausewitzian trinity of 'friction and violence, chance and probability, and rational calculation' will always exist during acute crises and conflicts.⁶⁰

As mentioned earlier, Kissinger assessed the Royal Navy presence south-west off Sri Lanka as an indication of support for the US actions. In reality, the British decision to withdraw from East of Suez had necessitated a downsizing of the Royal Navy's presence in Asia. The British ships in question were bound for North Arabian Sea from Singapore, when the Indo-Pak conflict broke. Their withdrawal was temporarily suspended for the safe extraction of British nationals from East Pakistan. Once the evacuation was completed on 12 December, the Royal Navy ships continued with their planned passage towards the Suez.⁶¹ During this crisis, Britain adopted a pro-India tilt by not extending wholehearted support to the US policies and abstaining during the UN voting process. The memorandum of conversation between the British and the US delegations on 21 December provides a glimpse of where the close allies stood on the South Asian affairs after the 1971 war. The British, among other factors, put Pak disinterest in SEATO/CENTO commitments and its getting closer to China, as the major reasons for the whole chain of events. The British suggested that the new balance of power in South Asia, where India was the dominant power, should also be taken into account. Further, India's strategic culture of maintaining a non-entangling outlook be encouraged instead of pushing it closer to the Soviet Union by continued US intransigence. However, the US President Nixon seemed to be of a different view where India was projected in a negative light.⁶² One of the commentators of that era had posited that India was also responsible in equal measure for deepening of 'bilateral strategic divide' with the US due to its continued hostility towards later overtures.⁶³

The Soviet Indian Ocean naval component also got a lucky break with three of their ships near the Straits of Malacca, on their return passage to their Pacific homeport when the information about the possible US naval deployment to the Indian Ocean became general knowledge. These were retained and reinforced by two further task groups that arrived in the Indian Ocean on 18 and 26 December. These Soviet naval assets continued to shadow the TF 74 off Sri Lanka until its return passage to the Pacific theatre on 8 January 1972.⁶⁴

The change in Sri Lankan attitude during the three months preceding the war was evident when they requested US Naval forces to make port visits for 'demonstrative purposes'. When India imposed over flight restrictions against Pakistan, Sri Lanka was used as a staging point for reinforcements in the Eastern theatre using civilian and military aircraft. While Sri Lanka gave assurances to India that these would not be used for transfer of men and materiel, it was obvious that events contrary to these were in progress. Sri Lanka initially seems to have turned a blind eye and was brought around in August 1971 by some 'polite but firm diplomatic signals'.⁶⁵ Sri Lanka also voted against India in the UN General Assembly, as was the case with most UN members, except for close Soviet allies and Bhutan. While a majority of nations were sympathetic to the Indian actions, reasons of domestic politics and the idea that force could be used to redraw political cartography forced them to adopt a different public posture.⁶⁶ Further, when a new balance of power emerged after the Indo-Pak war, Sri Lanka wanted to 'hedge' its bets, hence the request for port visits.

Except for some minimal sabre rattling during the closing stages of the conflict where India was accused of transgressions along the Sino-Sikkim border, China maintained a reticent stance. However, China and some other countries, such as, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Libya were more proactive in transferring military assets, such as combat aircraft, to West Pakistan. Iran, despite considerable push by the US, refused to get involved citing a Soviet backlash.⁶⁷

'WHAT IF' COUNTERFACTUALS

This section is a counterfactual 'what if' scenario-building exercise. Admiral Krishnan's analysis was quite accurate—the deployment of the US Naval task force was a coercive signal and its active involvement did not seem a real possibility. He further goes on to state that even if the US Navy did intervene, it would not have altered the chain of events in East Pakistan. However, if one was to match the combat potential of TF 74 mentioned earlier against the Indian Naval Forces in the Eastern Theatre comprising the light carrier INS Vikrant, two Brahmaputra (British 'Leopard' class) frigates and Soviet Petya corvettes, and one conventional submarine, it mandates a sobering rethink about 'how it might have turned out'. This is in contrast to some of the 'ebullient and dismissive' assessments expressed at that time, which could be attributed to the grandstanding and rhetoric that is the norm in such cases.⁶⁸ Admiral

Nanda's sanguine assessment about 'offering a drink' is far more reflective of the reality, in case the two forces had clashed at sea.

This incident raises some further questions, such as, could the US have gained much more by doing nothing. Considering the international milieu where its stock was low by the Vietnam overhang, the emergence of a technologically improved and numerically robust Soviet Navy under Admiral Gorshkov, and the necessity of sending a reassuring signal to its allies, mandated some visible proof. The naval deployment was a gesture of solidarity for a formal ally (Pakistan) and an indicator to a future partner (China), that the US could be relied upon to abide by its formal commitments.

A further issue that merits examination is whether India would have expanded its operations in the Western theatre after the fall of Dhaka. It is difficult to answer, but the possibility cannot be ruled out as all post-conflict analyses do report two brigades being airlifted to the Western theatre by 11 December, where the early gains by Pakistan in the Chhamb Salient and Shakargarh Bulge had been neutralized.⁶⁹ Another question as to whether the naval deployment could have been done better requires a two-pronged analysis. A viable US intervention in the Eastern theatre, if that was the desired end state, would have required the deployment of naval task force much earlier, as early as 27 November 1971 to be on scene when full-fledged hostilities commenced between India and Pakistan. This is in light of the fact that PACOM HIST 71 mentions 21 November 1971 as the date when 'Indian troops invaded East Pakistan', in all probability a reference to the Boyra military engagement.⁷⁰ Another option could have been to deploy the US naval forces in the North Arabian Sea instead of the Bay of Bengal to make the demonstrative signal more reassuring to West Pakistan and other West Asian allies. However, even in this case, an effective intervention would have been difficult considering that the conflict zone was between 1,100–1,600 kilometres inland.

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY AND USS ENTERPRISE INCIDENT

The classic definition of the term 'Gunboat Diplomacy'—through a historical prism extending up to the Cold War period—was expanded as 'the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage or to avert loss, either in the furtherance of an international dispute or else against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state.'⁷¹ The purpose for such demonstrations/actions are categorized as definitive, purposeful, catalytic

and expressive; all of these as tools of diplomacy. Purposeful intent is the effort to change the policy/character of the target government or to resolve a dispute that may later expand into a major conflict. Definitive use involves discrete use of naval potential for a limited military purpose where the target country is faced with *yes/no fait accompli* choices. Expressive use, on the other hand, is the signalling by the use of navies for foreign policy objectives.⁷² A recent work has further refined the 'Gunboat Diplomacy' as 'Maritime Coercive Diplomacy' and defines it as 'the overt display, demonstration, threat or use of limited sea-based force by a state or non-state actor designed to coerce an opponent to further a political goal, often unstated, by compulsion or deterrence.'⁷³ The author goes on to explain that sea-based military power can be used for three broad purposes—coercive, cooperative and persuasive.

The USS Enterprise incident is often quoted as an instance of 'gunboat diplomacy', reminiscent of the behaviour of erstwhile colonial powers.⁷⁴ While true to some extent, in contemporary lexicon it would be fair to categorize this incident as a case of 'expressive and purposeful intent' using a 'superior fleet', which should not be lost sight of during various analyses. In addition, while this incident did produce considerable resentment in India and was decried as a case of 'political use of seapower for intervention purposes'; a peek into history at events that occurred around six months earlier sheds new light. At Sri Lanka's request, the Indian Navy was deployed off its coast in April 1971 to prevent seaborne reinforcements while counter-insurgency operations were in progress. Therefore, the criticism of the USS Enterprise, though valid, needs to be interpreted through a broader perspective that navies have been, and will continue to be, used for political purposes. Further, India is also 'credited' with three instances of 'Gunboat Diplomacy' during 1987 to 1991, twice using them for 'definitive', and once for 'purposeful', ends.⁷⁵

A more appropriate approach to describe the use of navies for 'demonstrative, supportive, coercive and deterrent' purposes could even be the revival of erstwhile umbrella term of 'armed naval suasion'.⁷⁶ While the US naval deployment was to coerce India and the Soviet Union, it was a cooperative signal for Pakistan. Further, it was meant to convey a persuasive intent to China that it was a 'reliable' partner.

A systematic study of 'gunboat diplomacy' during the Cold War period (1945–1991) reveals that there were 179 such instances with navies of 32 countries taking recourse to such measures (see Figure 2). There

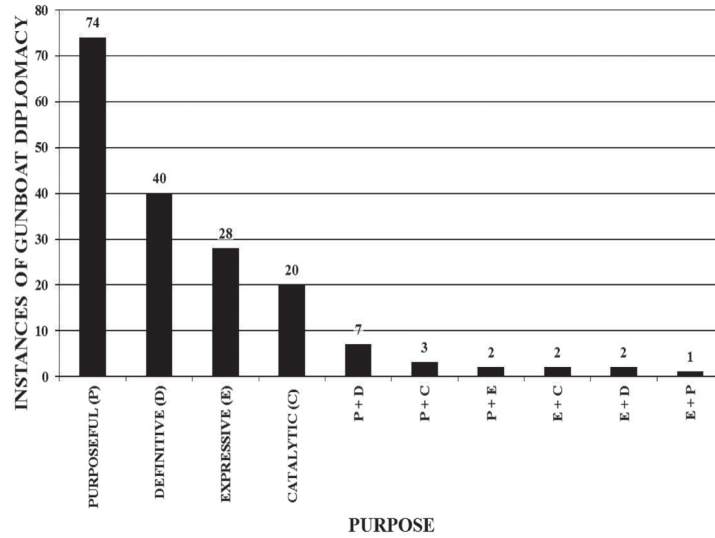


Figure 2 Use or Threat of Limited Naval Force (1945–1991): Initiating Countries

Source: Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy: 1919-1991*, 1994, Author's Compilation.

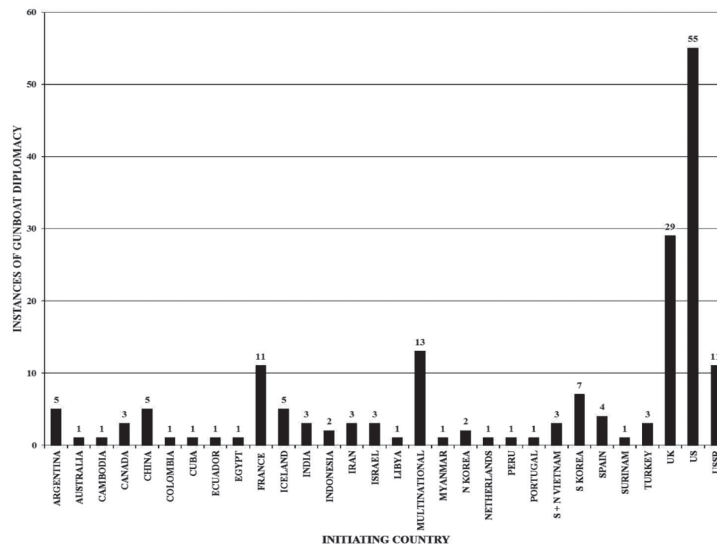


Figure 3 Use or Threat of Limited Naval Force (1945–1991): Classification by Purpose

Source: Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy: 1919-1991*, 1994, Author's Compilation.

were 13 instances where navies of two or more countries cooperated for strategic signalling purposes. Some of these are quite interesting in that the conglomerate of countries involved were at the opposite ends of bipolar divide, but decided to cooperate because of shared geo-strategic concerns and interests. The collaborative efforts of the West (US, France and UK) and the East (USSR) during the 1984–88 Tanker War is one such case in point. The list also throws up some interesting names, albeit isolated, such as Myanmar against Thailand in October 1977 and Surinam against Guyana in January 1978.⁷⁷ The use of limited naval forces was successful in 91 instances (about 51 per cent) whereas it failed to achieve the desired end-state on 31 occasions (18 per cent). The results of naval signalling were partially successful or the results uncertain during the balance one-third incidents. In a majority of cases, that is, on 74 occasions (41 per cent), the navies were used for ‘Purposeful’ intent followed by 40 instances for ‘Definitive’ and 28 cases of ‘Expressive’ aims (see Figure 3).

In the present day environment, the use of naval and constabulary maritime response agencies to signal the intent of competing parties in support of their claims in the South and East China seas can be seen as a continuance of the long tradition of use/threat of limited naval force for national strategic aims. Therefore, coercive use of ‘seapower’ is a grammar of history and while it may serve beneficial strategic aims when applied as an initiator, it is as agonizing when the initiator becomes the target. Another moot point is that the political use of navies is not the sole dominion of great/major naval powers but has been utilized in equal measure by the smaller navies. This lesson is being re-learned by all coastal states through the course of history, including the US as evident from the *Liberty*, *Peublo* and *Mayaguez* incidents.⁷⁸ Similarly, the use of navies for diplomatic aims is an undeniable rhythm of history for creating as well as resisting ‘pressure’ and for ‘power control’.⁷⁹

LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The USS *Enterprise* incident was a case of ‘perceptions and mis-perceptions’ where both countries prejudged each other through their own ‘images’. This was further compounded by the misreading of ‘strategic signalling’ by both sides. The US perception about the Indian intent was based on an ‘exaggerated geopolitical logic’ of expansive war aims, whereas India misread the ‘extant US security alliance anxieties’ as an interventionist posture. As far as the end results are concerned, even the US analytical community has evaluated this incident as making the

worst of two bad choices, between 'doing something ineffective and doing nothing'.⁸⁰

This incident also proves that nations are 'amoral' and their conduct is generally driven by strategic imperatives. A tenuous case could also be made that the US used this pretext to ensure that Pakistan was cut to size and thus made more dependent for its security needs against a relatively larger nation at the end of the conflict. Similarly, India's intervention against the suppressive regime in East Pakistan was undoubtedly driven by humanitarian intent, but a geopolitical thread to the whole narrative cannot be denied. Indian military operations in East Pakistan are embellished by eminent western scholars as the first truly successful case of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), but they also go on to state that these were not perfect in the sense that there was a sliver of geostrategic purpose attached to it.⁸¹

It is true that the relevance of seapower receives greater spotlight during times of systemic flux in international relations as is being witnessed today. However, the effects of land-based disruptive and defensive capabilities need due consideration while templating the lessons of 1971 conflict. The land and naval operations were facilitated by the 'command of the air' that the Indian Air Force was able to achieve in the Eastern theatre. The exemplary conduct of Indian Navy's fleet air arm during Battle Airfield Support (BAS) and air/maritime interdiction missions in face of heavy and professionally directed Pakistan's ground-based air defences is noteworthy. However, it is also worth mention that in the Eastern theatre, Pakistan's air combat capability was about 20 aircraft, and that such asymmetry may not obtain in future.⁸²

The debate on 'seapower' could even be expanded to include the national effects that could be achieved 'at and from the sea' instead of keeping it within the narrow confines of naval ambit alone. Another takeaway from 1971 is that 'strategic punditry is no substitute for tactical aggressiveness' and, hence the importance of professional skill sets. The importance of a cogent national/military strategy is paramount; nevertheless, it needs to be complemented in equal measure by decisive force application at operational and tactical levels.

An important lesson about the efficacy of demonstrative 'use or threat of limited force' for benign as well as coercive purposes is that it can only be achieved through politico-military synergy and commitment. Timely decision-making, unambiguous delineation of policy ends, and keeping the sharp end of the stick, that is, the military in the loop, is essential for

success in such cases. This applies in equal measure to the naval forces that are generally more responsive, flexible, less escalatory, and fungible as compared to the other services. While the Nixon-Kissinger duo took about eight days to reach a decision, the same as in the case of 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the end result in the context of 1971 Indo-Pak conflict was unsuccessful. On 10 December, when the deployment of TF 74 was ordered, 60 per cent of East Pakistan had been overrun, and on 15 December when the naval task force entered the Indian Ocean, the fall of Dhaka was imminent. The deployment of USS Enterprise task force was a case where 'geography, time and tactical considerations' trumped 'policy, diplomacy and strategy'.

The 'use or threat of use of force' in the maritime dimension as it occurred in the 1971 conflict, be it the case of US coercion or India's systematic application, reinforces the axiom that politics, power and influence are inseparable adjuncts of ocean affairs. This relevance of navies is further magnified for 'non-use functions' like deterrence (maintaining status quo), compellence (regaining status quo) and demonstration (technology and intent). This has to do with the semi-anarchical or the international character of the seas. The effect of gradually receding 'sovereignty and sovereign rights' of a coastal state allows a sense of 'freedom' for using the world's oldest commons for larger geopolitical ends. This is also supported by the fact that the constitution of the seas, that is, UNCLOS, provides for an 'innocent passage' through territorial waters where the coastal state otherwise enjoys 'general sovereignty', in contrast to the hermetically sealed regimes on land and in the air.

One of the outcomes of 1971 Indo-Pak conflict that got subsumed during later years and still continues to bedevil India's institutional ecosystem is of 'systemic and functional synergy'. This was an occasion where India's polity, diplomacy and military were in perfect sync, as opposed to the indeterminate trans-border IPKF operations during the 1980s. Some analysts have averred that an institutional transformation is obtained either by a 'jolt' or a political intervention. More often than not, it is a combination of the two that brings about a sense of synergy among these important elements. In this regard, the Kargil Review had suggested far-reaching reforms on military-strategic imperatives; yet, despite early promise, most of the 'tough but compelling changes' remain in animated suspension. A recent article by India's former naval chief, Admiral Arun Prakash, elucidates the institutional and systemic dissonance in forthright detail. He raises some important issues about the lingering voids that

need urgent redressal, such as a comprehensive overhaul of civil-military relations, ambivalence about force for coercive and benign purposes, and the disparity among institutional outlooks.⁸³ Prakash's views in contemporary context are also relevant as the 'India story' is once again finding greater traction.

Today, there is undoubtedly a greater interest about the maritime domain among India's strategic community and repeated national leadership articulations related to oceanic dimension of India's strategic interests are welcome developments. However, navies traditionally have been technology and capital intensive; and while its budget share has increased from 14 per cent in 2001 to about 19 per cent in 2013, the Indian Navy is still the least funded among the three services.⁸⁴ Such dilemmas are not new for rising nations with vexed territorial concerns. Furthermore, there is also the need to be cognizant of an empirical trend where territorial concerns have always superseded maritime aspirations.⁸⁵ A suggested approach could be to expand India's military maritime narrative along the 'implicit' (real) and 'opportunity' (comparative) costs of the navies in terms of capabilities, functions and roles. Further, an emphasis could also be placed on K. Subramanyam's statement that a robust naval posture in crises/conflict injects greater uncertainty, expands the geography of conflict and infuses greater levels of violence.⁸⁶

In sum, the USS Enterprise incident and the 1971 Indo-Pak conflict took place in a different time and context; in the contemporary environment, there is much more to 'seapower' than navies and much more to navies than just war-fighting. The USS Enterprise story could be categorized as a minutiae in the continuing contestation among powers for influence at sea, which is not likely to disappear anytime soon. The key take-away from the USS Enterprise incident, the developments and its relevance in contemporary context would be to pay heed to profound words by Hegel, articulated about two centuries ago:

Rulers, Statesmen, Nations, are wont to be emphatically commended to the teaching which experience offers in history. But what experience and history teach is this, that peoples and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.⁸⁷

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the inputs from a wide spectrum of Indian naval community, who by force of circumstances remain unnamed.

The assistance provided by the GIS Section of IDSA was particularly helpful. The author is also grateful for the comments and suggestions by Rear Admiral K. Raja Menon (Retd.) and Cmde Uday Bhaskar (Retd.). Captain Peter Swartz, US Navy (Retd.) of the Center for Naval Analyses, Washington deserves special mention for his invaluable help with resource material.

NOTES

1. Operational level of armed conflict has been defined as 'a component of military art concerned with the theory and practice of planning, preparing, conducting, and sustaining major operations and campaigns aimed at accomplishing operational or strategic objectives in a given theater.' See Milan N. Vego, *Operational Warfare at Sea: Theory and Practice*, New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 1–2.
2. Jervis, Robert, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. Jervis links cognitive psychology to political decision-making (foreign policy). His theory is rooted in the axiom that adversaries tend to 'typecast' each other along normative extrapolations of 'perceived behaviour', despite evidence to the contrary.
3. Nash, Philip, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957–1963*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
4. Schelling, Thomas, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 4.
5. Dobbs, Michael, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008, electronic edition, pp. 112–14.
6. Utz, Curtis A., *Cordon of Steel: The US Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Washington: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1993.
7. Hiranandani, G.M., *Transition to Triumph: History of the Indian Navy, 1965–1975*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2000, pp. 166–70.
8. Gray, Colin S., *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005, p. 55.
9. Kennedy, Paul M., *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London: Hyman Unwin, 1988, especially chapters 5–7 for a comparative description of historical bipolarities.
10. Tudda, Chris, *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon and China, 1969–1972*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012, p. 24.
11. Kissinger, Henry, *On China*, New York: Penguin, 2012.
12. Burr, William, 'Sino-American Relations, 1969: The Sino-Soviet Border War

- and Steps Towards Rapprochement', *Cold War History*, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2001, pp. 73–112.
13. Komine, Yukinori, *Secrecy in US Foreign Policy: Nixon, Kissinger and the Rapprochement with China*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
 14. See Handwritten Letter from President Nixon to President Yahya, 7 August 1971, effusively thanking him for facilitating the US-China rapprochement efforts. The letter is available at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB20.pdf>. Also, the handwritten note from President Richard M. Nixon on 28 April 1971 on National Security Council decision paper: 'To all hands. Don't squeeze Yahya at this time—RMN', available at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB9.pdf>, both accessed on 9 March 2015.
 15. Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between The Government of India and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, August 09, 1971', available at <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5139/Treaty+of+Peace+Friendship+and+Cooperation>, accessed on 8 March 2015.
 16. Cohen, Stephen P., 'South Asia and U.S. Military Policy' in Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph (eds), *The Regional Imperative: The Administration of U.S. Foreign Policy Towards South Asian States Under Presidents Johnson and Nixon*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1980, pp. 113–17.
 17. Puchala, Donald J., *Theory and History in International Relations*, New York: Routledge, 2003, 2nd edition, pp. 52–60 and 116–25. The author describes 'mirror imaging' as 'where statesmen project their own aggressive intentions onto rivals and thus escalate destructive spirals of mutual suspicion. Nor, of course, is it extraordinary for the political leaders of major powers to actually harbour, and opportunistically act upon, externally expansionistic ambitions.'
 18. Thomas, Raju G.C., "The South Asian Security Balance in a Western Dominant World" in T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michel Fortmann (eds), *Balance of Power Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 305–33. Also see Sumit Ganguly, 'Structure and Agency in the Making of India's Foreign Policy', ISAS Working Paper No. 116, 21 November 2010, p. 6.
 19. MEA, 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between The Government of India and the Russian Federation, January 28, 1993', available at <http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/RUB1210.pdf>, accessed on 8 March 2015.
 20. Similar parallels can be drawn with Article III of Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines (30 August 1951); Article IV of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between

Japan and the United States of America (19 January 1960); and Article III of Security Treaty between the United States, Australia, and New Zealand (ANZUS) (1 September 1951). New Zealand withdrew from the ANZUS Treaty in 1984 on the nuclear visiting issue.

21. Speller, Ian, 'The Royal Navy Expeditionary Operations and the End of Empire, 1956–75', in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *British Naval Strategy East of Suez, 1900-2000: Influences and Actions*, London: Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 178–98.
22. Till, Geoffrey, 'The Return to Globalism: The Royal Navy East of Suez, 1975–2003', in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *British Naval Strategy East of Suez, 1900-2000: Influences and Actions*, London: Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 244–68.
23. For details of agreements related to the transfer of Diego Garcia to the US and its gradual development as an NSF see Peter H. Sand, *United States and Britain in Diego Garcia: The Future of a Controversial Base*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 65–143, especially Appendices I to IX.
24. Hattendorf, John B., *US Naval Strategy in the 1970s Selected Documents*, Newport Paper Series #30, Newport: Naval War College, 2007, pp. ix, 6–7. The year 1970 was a seminal one as the Soviet Navy carried out the first of its *OKEAN* global war games that involved combined and joint forces for defensive, offensive and expeditionary operations. The 200-ship exercise covered the four major theatres of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans as well as the Mediterranean Sea. This was also period that the majority of the US Navy was approaching *en masse* obsolescence. The increase in Soviet naval presence was especially notable in the Indian Ocean (p. 7) which far outstripped the US Navy deployments, although it is qualified that most of these deployments were in the North and South-West Indian Oceans.
25. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2832 (XXVI), 'Declaration of the Indian Ocean as A Zone Of Peace', 16 December 1971, available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/328/48/IMG/NR032848.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed 7 March 2015.
26. Smith, Louis J. (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2005, hereinafter referred to as FRUS. This volume contains the transcripts of telephone conversations, minutes of meeting, copies of diplomatic and military communication, and an editorial assessment of the events in a chronological order.
27. Pacific Command History 1971, Vol I and II dated 31 May 1972 [hereinafter PACOM HIST 71], p. 107, available at http://nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/c_seventyone.pdf. Pacific Command History 1972, Vol I and II dated 31 August 1972 [hereinafter PACOM HIST 72] where the defence of India had been given the designation CONPLAN 5096, p. 99, available at http://nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/c_seventytwo.

- pdf. The declassified portion of 1971 Command History of USS Enterprise, [hereinafter ENTERPRISE HIST 71] is available at <http://www.public.navy.mil/airfor/enterprise/Documents/Enterprise/1971.pdf>, and the declassified portion of 1972 Command History of USS Enterprise [hereinafter ENTERPRISE HIST 72] is available at <http://www.public.navy.mil/airfor/enterprise/Documents/Enterprise/1972.pdf>, (all weblinks accessed on 6 March 2015). Annex A to ENTERPRISE HIST 1971, covering the detailed description of USS Enterprise operations in the Indian Ocean, is not yet declassified.
28. Andersen, Walter K., 'Emerging Security Issues in the Indian Ocean: An American Perspective', in Selig S. Harrison and K. Subrahmanyam (eds), *Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean: Indian and American Perspectives*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 21.
 29. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21. This is also confirmed by Vice Admiral M.P. Awati (Retd.) while presenting the Indian viewpoint in response to the aforementioned American perspective, where he cites a Russian source—I. Redko et al., *The Indian Ocean: A Sphere of Tension or a Zone of Peace*, Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1983, p. 30.
 30. PACOM HIST 1971, n. 27, pp. 117–18.
 31. FRUS, n. 26, pp. 505–18, 546. WSAG meetings were chaired by Henry Kissinger and attended by the representatives of the State and Defense departments, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council (NSC). In certain cases, representatives from other departments, like the Agency for International Development (AID) were co-opted as required for providing specialist advice.
 32. *Ibid.*, pp. 688–89, 701–06.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 712–28.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 741–63.
 35. *Ibid.*, n. 26, pp. 765–78.
 36. *Ibid.*, pp. 779–97.
 37. *Ibid.*, pp. 806–07.
 38. *Ibid.*, pp. 797–820.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 827.
 40. *Ibid.*, pp. 828–30.
 41. UN General Assembly Resolution 2793 (XXVI), 7 December 1971, available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/328/09/IMG/NR032809.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed 7 March 2015.
 42. Bass, Gary J., *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*, New York: Knopf, 2013, electronic edn, pp. 340–44, 362–63.
 43. PACOM HIST 1971, n. 27, p. 203.

44. FRUS, n. 26, pp. 850–51, 874, 875.
45. Yankee Station was a fixed point in international waters off the coast of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV, North Vietnam) in the South China Sea (17 degrees 30 minutes north, 108 degrees 30 minutes east). Yankee Station was the staging area for the US Navy's Seventh Fleet Attack Carrier Strike Force (Task Force 77), from which navy pilots conducted strikes against North Vietnam. See Spencer Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History, Second Edition, Vol III*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011, p. 1355.
46. ENTERPRISE HIST 1971, n. 27, pp. 2, 10; and, ENTERPRISE HIST 1972, n. 27, pp. 1, 8.
47. PACOM HIST 1971, n. 27, p. 203.
48. 7th FLEET REGION, Commander Submarine Group 7, available at <http://www.csg7.navy.mil/engagements/7thfleetregion.htm>, accessed 9 March 2015.
49. Krishnan, N., *No Way But Surrender: An Account of the Indo-Pakistan War in the Bay of Bengal, 1971*, Ghaziabad: Vikas, 1980. See inside cover for a representative map of Indian Naval deployments and USS Enterprise movements.
50. Prakash, Swaraj, 'Cold War Games', *Bharat-Rakshak.com*, available at <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NAVY/History/1971War/Games.html>, accessed on 8 March 2015.
51. Nanda, S.M., *The Man Who Bombed Karachi: A Memoir*. New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2004. See map on p. 240.
52. McConnell, James M. and Anne M. Kelly, 'Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the Indo-Pakistani Crisis', Professional Paper No. 108, Washington DC: Center for Naval Analyses, February 1973, available at <https://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/research/5500010800.pdf>, accessed 8 March 2015.
53. Zumwalt, Elmo R., *On Watch: A Memoir*, New York: Quadrangle, 1976, pp. 367–68. Also see Larry Berman, *Zumwalt: The Life and Times of Admiral Elmo Russell 'Bud' Zumwalt, Jr*, New York: Harper, 2012, electronic edition, p. 321.
54. Hall, David K., 'The Laotian War of 1992 and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971' in Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan (eds), *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces As a Political Instrument*, Washington: Brookings Institution, 1978, pp. 175–211; and Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, n. 38, p. 374.
55. Chopra, Pran, *India's Second Liberation*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974, pp. 197–213.
56. Francis, Patricia B. and Burdett Ives, *The Brown Shoes: Personal Histories of Flying Midshipmen and Other Naval Aviators of the Korean War Era*, Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 2003, pp. 182–83.

57. Anderson, Jack and George Clifford. *The Anderson Papers*, New York: Random House, 1973.
58. Krishnan, *No Way But Surrender*, n. 49, p. 56; Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir*, n. 53, pp. 370–73; and Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph: History of the Indian Navy, 1965–1975*, n. 8.
59. Francis and Ives, *The Brown Shoes*, n. 56; Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir*, n. 53.
60. Von Clausewitz, Carl, *On war*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, p. 89.
61. Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir*, n. 53, p. 368.
62. FRUS, n. 26, pp. 864–67.
63. Chopra, n. 55, pp. 257–59.
64. McConell and Kelly, 'Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the Indo-Pakistani Crisis', n. 52.
65. Dixit, J.N., *India-Pakistan in War & Peace*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 178–79; Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, n. 55, p. 256. Surprisingly, James Cable seems to have missed this incident in his chronicling of Gunboat Diplomacy.
66. Wheeler, Nicholas J., *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 55–77.
67. FRUS, n. 26, pp. 750–54, 827–32.
68. Krishnan, *No Way But Surrender*, n. 49, p. 58; PACOM HIST 1971, n. 27, pp. 203–04; and Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, pp. 216–18, 245, 263–64.
69. For example, see Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, n. 55, pp. 178, 204–08.
70. PACOM HIST 1971, n. 27, p. 542. For short description of the Boyra incident see Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, n. 55, p. 101.
71. Cable, James, *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force*, London: Macmillan, 1994, p. 14.
72. *Ibid.*, especially Chapter 2, pp. 15–62.
73. Le Mièrè, Christian, *Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Drivers and Challenges*, London: Routledge, 2014, p. 27.
74. Sakhuja, Vijay, *Asian Maritime Power in the 21st Century: Strategic Transactions: China, India, and Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011, p. 66.
75. Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991*, n. 71, pp. 101, 198–99, 201–12.
76. Luttwak, Edward, *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

77. Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1919-1991*, n. 71, Chronological Appendix, pp. 178-212.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-96, 202.
79. Wylie, J.C., *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967. A simple but powerful narrative about the underpinnings of sea, air, land and revolutionary (Maoist/ Communist) strategies.
80. Hall, 'The Laotian War of 1992 and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971', n. 54, p. 217.
81. Walzer, Michael, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, New York: Basic Books, 1977, pp. 105-06. For an analysis of India's humanitarian and geopolitical interests during 1971 conflict, see Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, n. 66, pp. 55-77.
82. Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, n. 55, p. 191.
83. Prakash, Arun, 'Civil-Military Dissonance: The Bane of India's National Security', *Maritime Affairs*, Vol. 10 No. 1, Summer 2014, pp. 1-19.
84. Collated from the annual reports of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
85. See 'Introduction to the Paperback Edition' in Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, New York: Prometheus, 1998, pp. XXVII-XL.
86. *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report, New Delhi, December 15, 1999*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000, pp. 101, 105.
87. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, London: Henry Bohn, 1857, translated by John Sibree, p. 6.