

SECURITY OF MICRO STATES IN THE CHANGING WORLD: A CASE STUDY OF MALDIVES

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "SECURITY OF MICRO STATES IN THE CHANGING WORLD: A CASE STUDY OF MALDIVES" submitted by HIDEYUKI TAKAHASHI in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M. Phil.) of the University is his own work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University to the best of our knowledge.

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*To the people of Maldives and
other vulnerable micro states*

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PREFACE

In recent years, the problem concerning security of micro states has drawn the attention of the world community. The present world is so interpenetrative that security problems of micro states may directly or indirectly affect global or regional security. Until recently, security problems of micro states regarded to be internal issues, meriting little attention from the international community. Micro states have now not only been offered opportunities to secure themselves by participating in comprehensive and cooperative security systems, but also to evolve their own security mechanisms with bilateral and multilateral assistance.

Except for interest in the Gan island after the British withdrawal in 1976, the Maldives, a micro states in the Indian Ocean region, did not figure in the study considerations of the world powers. This may have to do with the country's geographical smallness and insularity. However, in the eighties, the militarization of the Indian Ocean marked by great power rivalry had pose threats to the atoll state. The British did not seriously consider the Maldives as crucial as Trincomalee in Sri Lanka.

But the mercenary attack of Malé in 1988 demonstrated the plight of the micro states in protecting their security. The Maldives has realized that the primary sources of threat to its national security is non-state actor's military aggression. Although the Maldives asked for military assistance from India when mercenaries landed in the capital, its security has not been always made dependent on assistance of the powerful neighbor. In stead, the Maldives has succeeded in diversifying its security policy in order to gain maximum strategic benefits. While relying on big nations for security and economic assistance, the Maldivian government has initiated various steps to seek multilateral military security assistance.

At the same time, the atoll state suffers from environmental threats and other non-military challenges. Although non-military threats do not pose immediate threats to the territorial integrity and sovereign independence of the Maldives, they may be serious for the Maldivian people. These non-military threats are primarily due to high vulnerability of the country that stems from its peculiar geographical features, lack of higher education, narrow economic base and so on. The country has also vigorously worked to safeguard the global environment at several international fora for over a decade.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Distinguish the Maldives' security dilemma from other small state's problem.
2. Identify vulnerability of the Maldives not only in terms of geographical factors, but also socio-economic aspects.
3. Analyze the nature of threats to security of the Maldives and to what extent they even threaten the survival of the nation.
4. Discuss Maldives' diversified security policy and how does it benefit the country in safeguarding its sovereignty and independence.

This study is divided into five chapters. While trying to define 'micro states', the first chapter will attempt to construct a theoretical framework on security of micro states by identifying their vulnerability, the nature of threats and options for their protection.

Discussion on sources of high vulnerability of the Maldives will be the focus of the second chapter. In this context, a thorough analysis will be made of various aspects peculiar to the country: the geographical features, lack of infrastructure and trained manpower, narrow economic base, and centralization of political power.

In the third chapter, an attempt has been made to elaborate the nature of threats to Maldivian national security. There are three components: militarization of the Indian Ocean, mercenary and other non-state actors' violence, and non-military threats such as sea-level rise, ocean-related natural disasters, and external economic shocks and pressures.

The fourth chapter discusses the diversified security policy adopted by the Maldives. In this context, the country's security links vis-à-vis Britain, India and other big powers, its initiatives at the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and the SAARC, and its effort to enhance defense capabilities will be examined.

While summing up the discussion, the last chapter seeks to test the theoretical propositions in the light of the specific case of Maldivian national security.

CHAPTER ONE
"SECURITY OF MICRO STATES:
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK"

The Commonwealth has discussed the survival of micro states as they constitute one-third of its membership. As a result, two outstanding reports on the security of micro states were prepared. The U.S military intervention in Grenada in 1983, a micro state in the Caribbean Sea and a member of the Commonwealth, necessitated such a study. This intervention drew world attention because it constituted the proxy war between the two superpowers. However, this intervention revealed the vulnerability of micro states to external military threats posed by big powers and their inherent structural difficulties in overcoming them.

The study of international relations and international security has concentrated on analyzing power relationships and has not, for long, focused on the weakness of sovereign independent micro states. This study attempts at analyzing the causes of weakness and security of a micro state. Such a study usually concentrates on both an identification of threats to national, regional and global security, and a consideration for its protection. Any study on security of micro states discusses these two significant aspects, but it is also important to make an in-depth analysis of a micro state's vulnerability. Some scholars have already identified several socio-economic vulnerability of micro states.

This chapter attempts at building a theoretical framework that aptly defines a micro state and their need to enhance security. The recognition of micro states as actors in international relations, therefore, needs discussion on the reason why they have not found mention in the global sphere, how are they as nation-states trying to maintain their sovereignty and what are the measures they adopt to overcome their vulnerability.

BROADER CONCEPT OF 'SECURITY'

While the realist school dominated the study of international relations during the 1950s and 1960s, the security problems of nation-states were considered purely militaristic, state-centric and the concerns of themselves. Hedley Bull mentions that nation-states are ready to resort to war and the threat of war for securing their independence and the continued existence of the society.¹ The school strongly believed in the idea of self-help that could only be realized by further armament and active diplomacy. Scholars, strategists and diplomats understood the term security as freedom from military threats. Under the realist paradigm, the role of non-state actors, whether legitimate or illegitimate, did not figure.

By the 1980s, the domination of realists diminished due to the emergence of the liberal institutional school. The school (now called 'neo-liberal institutionalism') is not a group of idealists who once dominated the mainstream of the study during the first half of 20th century. The views of this school are more liberal and pluralistic than the realist, while at the same time, it accepts the basic ideas of the realists such as approaches to power and the significance of national interests. Furthermore, realists (now 'neo-realists') have also accepted the basic concepts of neo-liberalism. In the 1990s scholars like Steve Smith² and Ole Wæver³ observed that these two schools form the unified rationalist school to counter the challenge of the reflectivists.

¹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p. 18. He further mentions that "it can hardly be denied that war is endemic in the system of states". He adds that "given the availability of nuclear weapons and means of instant mass destruction, recurrence of war will lead sooner or later to the end of civilized social life, or perhaps to the end of human life itself".

² Steve Smith, "New Approaches to International Theory" in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 165-88. Smith noted six main features of the neo-liberalist/neo-liberal debate: issues on anarchy, international cooperation, absolute or relative gain, security or international political economy capabilities or intention and international regime.

³ Ole Wæver, "Figures of International Thought: Introducing Persons instead of Paradigms" in Iver B. Neumann and Ole Wæver (eds.), *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making?* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1-29.

A major shift occurred in security studies as well. Two schools of international relations basically accept John Baylis's definition of security. He defines the term security as "freedom from threats to core values".⁴ However, many scholars propose to broaden this narrow definition. Firstly, the three vital topics of security studies i.e., power, vulnerability of nation-states, and threats to their national security are now examined in several aspects. Barry Buzan defined the term security in broader terms to include political, economic, societal, environmental as well as military aspects.⁵ Karl Deutsch was probably the first scholar who proposed that the term security be revised. He coined the term 'economic security' and explained that "it [security] means peace and the maintenance of peace. But security can also mean the security of wealth and property".⁶

Secondly, apart from a different emphasis on the role of non-state actors in international security, two major schools now accept not only their existence, but also their influence. Nation-states are no longer the only actor in world politics. Some sovereign nation-state actors have worked to maintain peace and security in the world. Likewise, some non-state actors like the United Nations, International Red Cross Movement⁷ and Médecins Sans Frontières have largely contributed to safeguarding international peace and security. There are other non-state actors like transnational terrorists, transnational pirates and transnational arms-drug dealers that have harmed governments and people by their violent criminal activities.

Thirdly, the emergence of multilateralism such as collective security, global security and multilateral diplomacy is the most significant shift in the study. Nation-states no longer ensure their security through a policy of self-help. Robert Keohane countered the self-help argument advocated by the neo-realists by saying

⁴ John Baylis, "International Security in the Post-Cold War Era" in Baylis and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Karl W. Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968), p. 170. He understood 'economic security' as real conflicts of economic interest between creditor and debtor, landlord and tenant, employer and employee and so on.

⁷ It consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross.

that “on some security issues, states have substantial mutual interests that can be realized only through institutionalized cooperation”.⁸

DEFINITION OF MICRO STATES

Hierarchy in International Relations?

Sovereign nation-states no longer act unilaterally since the Westphalian system⁹ came into being in the 17th century. These nation-states have to interact with each other by concluding peace treaties to settle multilateral/bilateral wars and by forming multilateral alliances to challenge the threats posed by bigger powers. Nation-states have also established several international organizations, known as international administrative unions, to manage cross-border contacts of people through business, postal, transport matters and so on.¹⁰ The principle of sovereign independence and equality used to be highly respected in the politics among nation-states. Equal status and right of decision had been granted to all sovereign nation-states in the international fora since the nineteenth century on the basis of this principle. No matter how large the territory or how powerful it is, decision making at all international fora had been guided by the unanimity principle. Even the first universal international organization, the League of Nations, strictly followed this principle.¹¹

⁸ Robert Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essay in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview Press Inc., 1989), p. 15.

⁹ Robert H. Jackson, “The Evolution of International Society” in John Baylis and Steve Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 41. He observed that the Westphalian system (1648) was based on three principles: (1) sovereigns are not subject to any higher political authority; (2) outsiders have no right to intervene in a sovereign jurisdiction on religious ground; and (3) the balance of power.

¹⁰ It includes the Union Télégraphique Universelle (1864), Union Générale des Postes (1874), Bureau Universel des Poids et Mesures (1883). Three have maintained the organizations since then, currently known as Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Bureau International de Métrologie Légale (BIPM).

¹¹ Article 5 (1) of the Covenant of the League of Nations mentioned: “Except where otherwise expressly provided in this Covenant or by the terms of the present treaty, decisions at any meeting of the Assembly or of the Council shall require the agreement of all the members of the League requested at the meeting”.

Although this principle is still somewhat respected in the United Nations and other international organizations,¹² one can observe a decline in its importance, after the Second World War and the failure of idealism. The meaning of sovereign independence and equality has gradually been revised since the emergence of power analysis. The realist school of international relations had dominated the post-Second World War period, especially in the 1950s and 60s, and asserted the reconsideration of those two aspects. Hans Morgenthau observed that “sovereignty is not actual independence in political, military, economic, or technological matters”.¹³ Benedict Kingsbury stated that “there is a relationship of mutual constraint between sovereignty and inequality”.¹⁴ Scholars have come to understand that the principle of sovereign equality has gradually become a mere shell.

All nation-states may be placed in a hierarchy. As Robert Keohane noted in his book, *International Institutions and State Power*,¹⁵ a hierarchy exists in international relations. Many scholars usually consider the existence of two hierarchical groups: powerful and weak states and; developed and developing countries. Michael Handel illustrated ‘the international power hierarchy’, which consist of five components: superpowers, great powers, middle powers, weak states and mini states.¹⁶ Charles Kegley and Gregory Raymond drew a picture on ‘the hierarchy of world power’ on the basis of Richard Rosecrance’s work, *International*

¹² For example, Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations states: “Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote”. Another example is Article 10 of the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which states: “Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity”.

¹³ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948), p. 312.

¹⁴ Benedict Kingsbury, “Sovereignty and Inequality” in Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods (eds.), *Inequality, Globalization and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 67-68.

¹⁵ Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power; Essay in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1989), p. 10. However, he did not fully admit the existence of hierarchy by mentioning, “neorealists and neoliberals agree that world politics lacks stable hierarchy”.

¹⁶ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass Ltd., 1981), p. 11. He said “the international power hierarchy might be illustrated by a pyramid in which the lowest layer, representing the weakest states, would include the greatest number of states”.

*Relations: Peace or War?*¹⁷ They classified world power into three components: great powers at the top, middle powers in the middle and minor powers at the bottom. David Myer observed the existence of regional hegemons and aspiring hegemons, bargainers and peripheral dependents in nine regional systems.¹⁸

The upper layer of the hierarchy, comprising the great powers and middle powers have been discussed by many scholars on several occasions. According to Robert Keohane, “a great power is a state which leaders consider that it can alone exercise a large, perhaps decisive impact on the international system”.¹⁹ Palmer and Perkins define middle powers as states, which are not great powers, exercise more influence in international relations than the majority of small countries.²⁰ Morgenthau, Keohane, Palmer, Perkins and other classical international relations scholars understand international relations as the interaction between great powers and role played by middle powers.

Definition of ‘Small States’

The analysis of the lower layer has only gradually started from the 1960s. A small state, the lower component of the hierarchy, was first identified by David Vital in 1967. He observed a hierarchy consisting of three parts: great powers, middle powers and small states. According to him, small states are excluded from both great powers and highly populous or highly developed middle powers. His definition of small state is:

-a population of 10-15 million in the case of economically advanced countries;
and

¹⁷ Charles W. Jr. Kegley and Gregory A. Raymond, *A Multipolar Peace?: Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1994), p. 12.

¹⁸ David J. Myer, “Threat Perception and Strategic Response of the Regional Hegemon” in David J. Myer (ed.), *Regional Hegemons; Threat Perception and Strategic Response* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), pp. 1-29.

¹⁹ Robert Keohane, “Lilliputians’ Dilemma: Small States in International Politics” *International Organization* (San Diego), No. 23, Spring 1969, pp. 295-96.

²⁰ Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, *International Relations: The World Community in Transition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 4.

-a population of 20-30 million in the case of underdeveloped countries.²¹

The Commonwealth later attempted to redefine the lower layer, of 'small states' on the basis of studies conducted by Burton Benedict in 1967²² and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in 1971.²³ The organization wanted to focus on a country that was smaller in size than prescribed by David Vital or Michael Handel. Without giving any definition of 'micro-powers', Vital suggested another category of states with reasonably distinct and characteristic problems of their own.²⁴ Handel admitted the problem of defining 'mini' or 'micro'-states.²⁵ The 1985 Commonwealth Report, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* by a Commonwealth Consultative Group, defined a small state as one in which the population does not exceed one million.²⁶ The report explained that this population determinant may severely restrict human resources and can be a crucial constraint on a country's overall capacity to function effectively as an independent member of the international community.²⁷ It implies that a country's strength or weakness, especially its military and industrial capabilities, depend on its population size. As a result of the on-going population explosion in the whole world, the cut-off point has already been revised to one and a half million in a 1997 report by a Commonwealth Advisory Group.²⁸

This Commonwealth definition has been somewhat accepted by many scholars such as Paul Sutton²⁹, David Lowenthal³⁰ and Tony Payne.³¹ Ken Ross also

²¹ David Vital, *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 7-8.

²² Burton Benedict, *Problems of Smaller Territories* (London: The Athlone Press, 1967).

²³ Jacques Rapaport, Ernest Muteba and Joseph J. Theratti, *Small States and Territories: Status and Problems* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

²⁴ Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

²⁵ Handel, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

²⁶ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985), p. 9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

²⁸ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997), p. 9.

²⁹ Paul Sutton, "Political Aspects" in Colin Clarke and Tony Payne (eds.), *Politics, Security and Development in Small States* (London: Allen and Unwin Inc., 1987), pp. 1-24.

³⁰ David Lowenthal, "Social Features" in *ibid.*, pp. 26-46.

³¹ Tony Payne, "Economic Issues" in *ibid.*, pp. 50-61.

asserted the need to designate those states with populations under one million as 'very small'. He, however, presented a revised definition of the Commonwealth one. The layer can be divided into three components by population: 'small states' with populations of less than five million, 'mini states' with populations of less than one million, and 'micro states' with populations of less than one hundred thousand.³²

However, it is strange that many scholars have followed the population-oriented Commonwealth definition with little doubt. Some questions and suggestions may be raised as far as the definition is concerned. Firstly, it is quite odd to consider all of those very small states as 'small states'. The term, 'small states' has gradually become ambiguous because not only the Commonwealth, but also scholars such as David Vital, Ashok Kapur³³ and Gabriel Sheffer³⁴ have used the term to consider different criteria of states.

Secondly, it is somewhat acceptable to the Commonwealth's explanation of the definition; however, it is doubtful whether the whole population contributes to the human resource development of the country or not. One can clearly say that labor force of the country, especially one which has been educated till the tertiary level, plays a crucial role in the core sector of the state such as administration, business, industry, education and so on. It can be inferred from the current power analysis that population itself cannot be the only aspect in determining the elements of national power. One clear example is the current analysis of military capability. In current warfare, the quality of military, such as the performance of military

³² Ken Ross, "The Commonwealth: A Leader for the World's Small States?" *The Round Table* (London), July 1997, No. 343, pp. 415-16.

³³ Ashok Kapur, "Nuclear Policies of Small States and Weak Powers" in Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (eds.), *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World* (London and Portland: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1997), pp. 107-125. He suggested that small states are defined by populations; it is a developed country with a population of up to 20 million or a developing country with a population of up to 35 million.

³⁴ Gabriel Sheffer, "The Security of Small Ethnic States: A Counter Neo-Realist Argument" in *ibid.*, pp. 9-38. Sheffer also utilizes a population determinant to define his term "small ethnic states". It referred to states with a population of up to 15 million inhabitants, in which the dominant forces that determine policies and behavior in both the domestic and international arenas are connected to ethnic identities, needs and goals.

equipment and logistical supplies, strategies and training of military personnel are much more significant than quantity, the number of military personnel. In the analysis of economic power as well, human resources will be gradually replaced with machinery, computers and technical know how. Tommy Koh explains the changing nature of power by saying that both geography and population can be excluded from the power analysis.³⁵ Richard Rosecrance, a proponent of the 'virtual state', says: "rather than size of territory, capital and population, virtual states set strategy and investment in people".³⁶

Thirdly, the size of the population of a country is not always predestined, but is frequently guided by government policies. People can move across international borders and change their nationality quite easily. Both legal and illegal migrants can change the entire demographic structure of a country. For example, the labor force in Kuwait, a high income economy according to the World Bank³⁷, numbered 718,840 in 1988. But the 1988 data also reveals that of this, 605,889, that is, more than three-quarter of the entire Kuwaiti labor force, are foreign nationals.

Fourthly, a serious problem of relying on a population determinant while discussing smallness is where to draw a cut-off line. The cut off has already been established by the Commonwealth, at a population of one and a half million. However, many scholars and institutes admit that this fixation is arbitrary.³⁸ One cannot find any major difference between Botswana, with a population of just above 1.5 million, and Trinidad and Tobago, which has a population of 1.3 million.

³⁵ Tommy Koh, "Size is not destiny" in Arun Mahizhnan and Tsao Yuan Lee (eds.) *Singapore: Re-Emerging Success* (Singapore: The Institute of Policy Studies, 1998), pp. 179-80.

³⁶ Richard Rosecrance, "The Rise of Virtual State" *Foreign Affairs* (New York), Vol. 74, No. 5, September/October 1995, p. 47. He further explains that the virtual state specializes in modern technical and research services and derives its income not just from high-value manufacturing, but from product design, marketing and financing.

³⁷ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, *World Development Report 1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 214. GNP per-capita of Kuwait amounted to \$17,390 in 1995.

³⁸ These include the 1971 UNITAR work (Rapaport, Muteba and Therattil, *op. cit.*, p. 31), the 1985 Commonwealth Report (A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 9) and Paul Sutton's article (Clarke and Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 6).

Finally, the population criterion neglects the geographical aspect altogether. The area of the country, one of the four major components of a state³⁹, was totally excluded from the Commonwealth definition, and the two reports did not explain the reason of this negligence. As mentioned in Rosecrance's paper, the size of the territory itself does not always determine the power of the state. According to him, "land becomes less valuable than technology, knowledge, and direct investment, the function of the state is being further redefined".⁴⁰ Human resources, especially well-educated ones, are the most important resources for further development; however, a country's geography provides us with natural resources which are useful in furthering economic development and technological advancement of the country. Many less-populated small states are abundant in mineral resources such as oil, diamond, gold, bauxite and so on, which are all strategically very important. For example, economy of Brunei Darussalam, Bahrain, Barbados and Qatar have been thriving on oil and natural gas exports; Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland are all major exporters of diamonds along with their regional power, South Africa. Developed countries also import bauxite from Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname.

Proposing Definition of Micro State

Firstly, as Vital and Handel asserted, we need to grant a certain status to 'very small states'. In order to distinguish very small states from small states, it has been suggested that the former be termed as 'micro states'. The term 'small states' is too broad to define. Some scholars like Vital, Kapur and Sheffer use the term for states with a population of under 10 to 35 million, while the Commonwealth applied the term for very small states whose population is less than 1.5 million. It is obvious that these two definitions of small states are totally different. The primary concern of the Commonwealth, the UNITAR and several scholars is the vulnerability and security of very small states.

³⁹ It consists of a permanent population, a defined territory, a central government and independence.

⁴⁰ Rosecrance, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

Secondly, it has been suggested that the population-oriented definition proposed by the Commonwealth be revised. Since each nation-state desires to have a flourishing economy, it is not possible to achieve further economic development with a shortage of labor supply. It is therefore vital for nation-states to establish an administration with sufficient labor force. One may also be able to draw the line by three hundred thousands. Some data indicates that countries with a total number of indigenous labor force that does not exceed three hundred thousand, accept a huge expatriate labor force. For example, the total indigenous labor force in Oman, an upper middle economy, was 272,397 (1993), but expatriate labor forces accounted for more than four hundred thousand.⁴¹ This means that the country suffers from a severe shortage of indigenous labor force. On the other hand, Mauritius, also an upper middle economy with a GNP per-capita of \$3,380 (1995)⁴², has had a boom in its economy without suffering from a shortage of labor force. The total indigenous labor force accounted for approximately 460,500 in 1995.⁴³

Thirdly, the geographical aspect cannot be ignored when we define micro states. It cannot be denied that the size of territory determines the national power. It is vital to examine the natural resources in a country. A large territory can provide enough space to establish the administration, industry and social welfare system. Natural resources, especially strategically important ones such as petroleum, also contribute to further development of the economy.

Taking into consideration two major components of the nation-state: population and territory, a new definition may be proposed: sovereign nation-states possessing labor forces numbering less than three hundred thousand, and without strategically important mineral resources. These two criteria are of paramount importance.

⁴¹ Source of data is: Europa Publications Ltd., *The Europa World Yearbook 1998* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1998).

⁴² The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Source of data is: Europa Publications Ltd., *The Europa World Yearbook 1998* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1998).

According to this criterion, thirty-four states can be listed. These micro states have to cope with severe restrictions on the fronts of human and natural resources.

The size of territory may be accorded the status of secondary criterion. Although size is not so important in the current world, as Rosecrance maintains, it still be neglected from the study of international relations. Large territory still provides enough comfortable space for the nationals, while states with smaller territories usually suffer from high population density. Population densities of several territorially large micro states, such as the Bahamas (20 persons per one square kilometer), Belize (9 persons), Djibouti (27 persons), Equatorial Guinea (14 persons), Iceland (3 persons), Solomon Islands (13 persons) and Vanuatu (14 persons), are very low as compared to the population density of the world (42.4 persons per one square kilometer).⁴⁴ These states, with a territorial size exceeding 6,000 square kilometers, may be excluded from the category of micro states. However, it is again arbitrary to draw a cut-off line between micro states and other states. The UNITAR held that "there is no obvious break between larger and smaller at any point in the distribution".⁴⁵ After excluding eight larger territorial countries from the group, the Bahamas (13,939 sq. km.), Belize (22,965 sq. km.), Cyprus (9,251 sq. km.), Djibouti (23,200 sq. km.), Equatorial Guinea (28,051 sq. km.), Iceland (103,00 sq. km.), Solomon Islands (27,556 sq. km.) and Vanuatu (12,190 sq. km.), twenty-six micro states can be identified.⁴⁶

All these micro states can be classified into 'weakest states' in the international power hierarchy. Handel holds that while 'weak states' usually take defensive positions, and occasionally take a limited offensive posture against the great and

⁴⁴ Source of all data is: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

⁴⁵ Rapaport, Muteba and Therattil, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁴⁶ It includes eight South Pacific island countries (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu), six countries in the Caribbean region (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and Grenadines), six European countries (Andorra, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, San Marino), three island countries in the Indian Ocean (the Comoros, the Maldives and the Seychelles), two countries in Africa (Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe) and one island country in the Mediterranean Sea (Malta).

super powers, mini or micro states on the other hand, are incapable of their effectively defending by own devices against even the weakest of other states.⁴⁷

This does not mean that they are failed states. We understand that failed states are those which have collapsed into civil war and disorder.⁴⁸ Nicholas Wheeler explains that those states with a government that has ceased to exist within the territorial boundaries of the states, are failed states. Among the twenty-six micro states, only the Comoros has suffered from civil war, secessionist movements and disorder. After independence, the Comoros has witnessed severe instability as several Comoran governments have been rendered by coups and mercenary attacks. Other micro states, on the other hand, have not suffered from any major political crises in recent times.

SOURCES OF VULNERABILITY

What is Vulnerability?

Micro states share a common feature that can be called 'high vulnerability'. The second Commonwealth report clearly defined that "to be vulnerable is to be especially susceptible to risk of harm", and added that "the concept of vulnerability has to take into account the ability of a country to respond to risk".⁴⁹ Christopher Easter calculated the vulnerability of 111 Third World countries for his Commonwealth Vulnerability Index, and identified four groups: highly vulnerable countries, higher medium vulnerable countries, lower medium vulnerable countries and low vulnerable countries.⁵⁰ Apart from Malta (a higher medium vulnerable country), fourteen micro states have been identified as highly vulnerable countries.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Handel, *op. cit.*, p. 39 and p. 48.

⁴⁸ Nicholas J. Wheeler, "Humanitarian Intervention and World Politics" in Baylis and Smith *op. cit.*, p. 397.

⁴⁹ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Christopher Easter, "Small States Development: A Commonwealth Vulnerability Index" *The Round Table* (London), Issue 351, July 1999, pp. 403-22.

⁵¹ Data of six European developed micro states (Andorra, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco and San Marino) and five micro island states in the Pacific Ocean (Marshall Islands, F.S.

In fact, all nation-states have both strength and vulnerability. David Vital, probably the first scholar who initiated the discussion on vulnerability, observed that all nation-states, whether powerful or not, may find themselves on the defensive.⁵² He further mentioned:

the small state may seek to pursue an active policy, which is to say, one which implies a deliberate attempt to alter the relationship between it and other states to its own advantage; and great states in conflict with their equals, or being bitten, like the fleas in the rhyme, by their lesser brethren.⁵³

The second Commonwealth report also mentioned “since all societies are subject to risk, all societies are vulnerable”.⁵⁴

Analysis of vulnerability is quite new to the study of international relations, though power analysis has been a mainstream of the study. Concrete analysis of vulnerability has started only since the first Commonwealth report was published in 1985. Here, vulnerability was seen to exist on all fronts: political and economic.⁵⁵ Authors simply considered military aspects as political vulnerability and non-military aspects as economic vulnerability. Although C. E. Diggines did not use the term ‘vulnerability’, he raised twelve specific problems of smallness.⁵⁶ The most recent analysis on vulnerability was conducted by Easter. He proposed a Commonwealth Vulnerability Index of 111 Third World countries by measuring three aspects: economic exposure, remoteness and susceptibility to natural disasters.⁵⁷ Easter considered these socio-economic aspects as vital for discussion on vulnerability; however, he did not take into consideration the military and political aspects of a nation-state.

Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Tuvalu) are not available from his article.

⁵² Vital, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ See, A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 14-21.

⁵⁶ C. E. Diggines, “The Problems of Small States” *The Round Table* (London), No. 295, July 1985, pp. 193-94.

⁵⁷ Easter, *op. cit.* The model testing was specified as Output Vulnerability = (1)Economic Exposure + (2)Remoteness and Insularity + (3)Susceptibility to Environmental Events and Hazards + (4)Other sources. Two significant variables of economic exposure were: export dependence, as measured by the exports as a percentage of GDP, and lack of diversification, as measured by UNCTAD’s Diversification Index. Susceptibility to environmental events and hazards was measured by the proportion of the population affected by natural disasters.

The second Commonwealth report maintains that all micro states, by and large, have suffered from four major vulnerabilities: physical, social, economic and political. Physical vulnerability relates to both external and internal risks.⁵⁸ External risks include natural disasters, sea-level rise and marine pollution. Internal risks are deforestation, desertification and soil erosion, decreased availability of water and overfishing. Social vulnerability relates to the exposure of individuals and social groups to risks of climatic events, disease, economic shocks and political instability.⁵⁹ Economic vulnerability refers to the susceptibility of the economy to both internal and external risks.⁶⁰ Political vulnerability relates to threats to territorial integrity, core values and internal cohesion from forces outside and inside the state.⁶¹

Geographical Sources

Geographical features can often work to the detriment of a nation and contribute to its vulnerability. The elevations of many micro states are relatively lower than that of other states. The low elevation of a country is susceptible to not only the loss of territory with the rise in sea level, but also to the occurrence of floods due to tidal waves and typhoons. The second Commonwealth report commissioned a study on the impact of a one meter rise in the sea-level on all nations, the percentage of people that would be affected, and the percentage of land area lost as a result.⁶² The study concluded that five micro states would be seriously affected.⁶³ According to the data, the percentage of predicted territorial loss in all five countries is much higher than that of big states. For example, it has been predicted that eighty percent of the Marshall Islands' territory will be lost as a result of just one meter rise in the

⁵⁸ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 69. The full date of studies on which these estimates, see, R. K. Turner, S. Subak and N. Adger, "Pressures, Trends and Impact in Coastal Zones: Interactions between Socioeconomic and Natural Systems" *Environmental Management*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1996, pp. 159-73.

⁶³ Five micro states are Antigua and Barbuda, Kiribati, Marshall islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Tonga.

ocean level. Kiribati, another island micro state, will lose 12.4 percent of its territory. Data also predicts that hundred percent of the people of those two Pacific islands will be affected.

Insular and remote location is another geographical source of high vulnerability. Each micro state has a different geographic feature; however, it has either of the two characteristics: island and landlocked. There are a few ocean littoral micro states in the world.⁶⁴ As David Lowenthal asserted, both island and landlocked micro states are geographically insular.⁶⁵ The location of many island states is far away from continents, and according to Lowenthal, landlocked states are usually 'destitute and impotent'.⁶⁶ Externally, micro states will be isolated from international and regional politics. Internally, insularity may cause secession. The second Commonwealth report said "insularity is often manifest in a close association with a sense of place which gives preference to individual identity over collective solidarity, making co-operation between islands problematic".⁶⁷ Moreover, most island micro states are archipelagic features which consist of two or more islands. Coral atolls are major physical features of the state in some micro states. Some states consist of three islands, while others have more than a hundred islands and atolls. In landlocked countries too, rural areas usually exist in mountainous regions which are very far from the capitals. High transport and administrative costs are necessary to either contact people in island micro states, or to govern rural areas in landlocked micro states.

Societal Sources

Societal sources of the vulnerability of micro states are lack of infrastructure and trained staff, especially in the higher education sector. As mentioned before, well-educated labor force and elite class usually forms the administration and plans and

⁶⁴ Monaco is only a coastal micro state.

⁶⁵ David Lowenthal, "Social Feature" in Clark and Payne *op. cit.*, p. 31-32.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* He said three quasi-sovereign Southern African landlocked countries; Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland serve South African convenience.

⁶⁷ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

implements economic and social welfare policies. Without any knowledge of administration, politics, international relations, economy and other subjects that are usually taught at university level, governments cannot function at all. Looking at the data of *The World of Learning 1999*, university level education is only available in four micro states.⁶⁸ The universities of two micro states, University of Malta and Pontifical Gregorish University in Holy See have long histories, and are internationally recognized in some fields.⁶⁹ If one examines the personal data of the heads of state in these micro states, one notices that only three leaders, President Teburoro Tito of Kiribati, President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici of Malta and Pope John Paul II of Holy See have been educated in their own countries.⁷⁰

Economic Sources

A primary commodity-oriented economy of micro states is also a source of vulnerability. This peculiar type of economy can be explained by both economic activities of micro states and the amount of export of commodities. Data of the *Europa Yearbook* indicate that economy of some micro states depend on primary commodities such as agricultural and marine products. For example, the agricultural sector in the Comoros, a micro island state in the Indian Ocean, accounts for 37.7% of total Comoran GDP.⁷¹ The agricultural sector also accounts for more than forty percent in Samoa, a Pacific Ocean island state.⁷²

The amount of export commodities can easily explain the peculiar type of economy. A feature of export patterns is the narrow range of products, especially

⁶⁸ The four countries are: Luxembourg, Malta, Samoa and the Holy See. Data of ten countries are not available: Cape Verde, the Comoros, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Tuvalu, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. Except for some colleges and polytechnic institutes, there probably does not exist any university in those ten countries.

⁶⁹ The University of Malta is internationally recognized for its Mediterranean regional studies, studies of small states and diplomacy. Data of *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook 1997-98* demonstrates that many professors and lecturers have been educated in this university.

⁷⁰ President Teburoro received a bachelor's degree in the University of South Pacific in Suva Fiji Islands, a university for all South Pacific nationals.

⁷¹ Source of data is: *Europa Yearbook 1999*, p. 909

⁷² Source of data is: Europa Publications Ltd., *The Far East and Australia 1999* (London, Europa Publications Ltd., 1999), p. 897.

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agricultural and mine products.⁷³ According to data of the *Europa Yearbook 1999*, primary commodities account for more than 40% of total export earnings in eighteen micro states. These countries have to depend on international market prices for their economic growth. However, these prices are not always stable. When the price of a commodity drops sharply, it affects the economy of the country severely. A preambular paragraph of the Lomé Convention (1975) states: "safeguarding the interests of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) states whose economies depend to a considerable extent on the export of commodities and of developing their resources".⁷⁴ The resolution of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned (NAM) countries at Belgrade, Yugoslavia on 1989 also asserted that:

they [heads of State or Government of NAM members] pointed out that commodity-exporting developing countries have, for ten years now, due to the drastic decline in prices, been suffering large export earning shortfalls which resulted in the deterioration of their economic position, stagnation of development, heavier debt burden and decline of living standards of their populations.⁷⁵

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Political Source

Politically, defenselessness of micro states is a source of vulnerability. Their defenselessness explains the recent coup attempts in two Pacific island countries (Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands), though the two countries do not fit into the category of micro states. In Fiji, it took more than a month to resolve the hostage crisis, while the Solomon Islands witnessed the resignation of the Prime Minister. The armed forces of two countries failed to quell coup attempts of a few armed rebels.

⁷³ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁷⁴ Lomé Convention established the STABEX (Stabilization of Export Earnings) which the E.C. (later E.U.) compensates for losses of earnings by ACP states with direct financial aid. This mechanism of support exclusively concerns agriculture and covers a total of forty-nine agricultural and fishing products. Among seventy ACP states, eighteen are micro states.

⁷⁵ Odette Jankowitsch, Karl P. Saurant and Jorg Weber, *The Third World without Superpowers: the collected documents of the non-aligned countries Volume XII* (New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1993), p. 983.



None of the micro states has more effective defense capabilities than the Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands. These two states and many micro states maintain a small security force, while few micro states merely maintain police forces. These forces are supposed to prevent any external aggression by illegal fishermen and other criminals, and to safeguard their governments from 'anti-state elements'. The number of armed personnel ranges from 100 to 2,000.⁷⁶ The quantity of military equipment is also very small. According to *Jane's Fighting Ships*, no micro state has any submarine, frigate, missile craft and torpedo craft.⁷⁷ They only have a few patrol boats which are armed with one or two machine guns.⁷⁸

NATURE OF THREATS

The term security, according to John Baylis, means "freedom from threat to core values".⁷⁹ The core value of a micro state is its sovereignty. The term has already been defined by two Commonwealth reports. The first one clearly defined it as "the absence of threat to the capacity to govern, protect, preserve and advance the state and its peoples consistent with the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states".⁸⁰ The second report expressed a reservation on stressing the word 'absence' in the definition of the first Commonwealth report.⁸¹

Apart from minor disagreements regarding definition of security, security studies concern that it is essential to examine the elements or forces threatening the core values, in other words, the forces that threaten national security. Weaker countries

⁷⁶ Both *The Europa World Yearbook 1999* and *The Statesman's Yearbook 2000* are sources of this data. *The Military Balance* published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) is usually common for the analysis of a country's military capability. However, it does provide only data on six countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Cape Verde, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and the Seychelles.

⁷⁷ Other data on military equipment is not available from other *Jane's* volumes. *Fighting Ships* only provides data of all countries.

⁷⁸ For example, the Antigua and Barbuda Navy maintains two patrol crafts. One, namely Swift 65ft Class, is equipped with one 12.7mm machine gun and two 7.62mm machine guns. Another one, Dauntless Class, is armed with one 7.62mm machine gun. Source of data is: Captain Richard Sharpe (ed.) *Jane's Fighting Ships: 1999-2000* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1999), pp. 8-9.

⁷⁹ John Baylis, "International Security in the Post-Cold War Era" in Baylis and Smith *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁸⁰ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁸¹ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

invariably face threats from militarily and economically stronger powers. Security of stronger powers is also challenged by other strong powers, military alliances and terrorists. The national security of the United States, the sole superpower of the world, has also been threatened with instances of bombing of several U.S. embassies and military installations abroad. The U.S. government, in turn, retaliated by attacking Sudan and Afghanistan on whom they pinned their suspicions by a series of Tomahawk missiles. In this sense, no country can be said to have absolute security.

It is crucial to conduct an analysis of threat while studying the security of micro states. The first Commonwealth report suggested the need to distinguish between general vulnerability of 'small states' and the existence of specific threats to their national security.⁸² The report also attempts to define a threat to national security "as any type of specific action or situation which could damage national integrity".⁸³ In the second Commonwealth report, a revised definition was taken from Ullman's work. According to him, threat to national security is an action or a sequence of events that:

- threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or
- threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to a state or to private non-governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state.⁸⁴

The threat to micro states was discussed by scholars after U.S. intervention in Grenada in 1983. In the beginning, two different views on the nature of threats have been expressed at the international fora for a couple of years. One school, comprising of Anglo-American scholars and strategists, asserted that the prevention of both revolutionary elements and coup attempts were important for micro states.⁸⁵

⁸² A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 21-22.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸⁴ H. Ullman, "Redefining Security", *International Security* (Cambridge, MA), Vol. 8, No. 1, Summer 1983.

⁸⁵ Editorial, "Small States and Left-Over of Empire" *The Round Table* (London), No. 290, April 1984, p. 129. The Editorial said "the most frequent security threats facing small states today are those of subversion, the coup d'état or (much more rarely than is commonly supposed) revolution".

Although Jonathan Alford did not clearly determine those elements as threats to micro states, he also observed that it is far more difficult to prevent the deliberate take-over of the reins of power in micro states by a small group acting against the wishes of the majority than by bigger regional neighbors.⁸⁶ However, as David Adamson warned, judging the moral wrong and rights of mini-state coups is immensely difficult.⁸⁷

The other school of thought discussed a broader nature of threats to the national security of micro states. The first Commonwealth report was the first to observe threats to three major spheres: territorial, political and economic.⁸⁸ To these, the second Commonwealth report added environmental threats and threats to social cohesion.⁸⁹

Roberto Espindola has done an interesting study that makes it easy to understand the nature of threats to security of micro states. According to him, most micro states suffer from three dimensions of threats: irregular military, regular military, and non-military, though he did not give instances to substantiate these dimensions.⁹⁰ A government force is not involved in an irregular military threat. Therefore, one can say that a threat that is regular military in nature is one where the government military forces pose a threat to one another. However, in the aftermath of the Cold War, some of his work, especially on the regular military dimension, has become outdated.

Irregular Military Threats

Of the three dimensions, irregular military activities of powerful illegitimate non-state actors pose the most serious threat to national security of micro states in the post-Cold War era. These non-state actors are: transnational mercenaries and

⁸⁶ Jonathan Alford, "Security Dilemmas of Small States" *The Round Table* (London), No. 292, October 1984, p. 378.

⁸⁷ David Adamson, *The Last Empire: Britain and the Commonwealth* (London: I.B. Tauris & CO. Ltd., 1989), p. 150.

⁸⁸ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-35.

⁸⁹ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

⁹⁰ Roberto Espindola; "Security Dilemma" in Clarke and Payne (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 64-69.

terrorists, drug traffickers, pirates and arms' dealers. One of the ways in which they can pose a threat to the sovereignty of micro states is by occupying a part of the territory and using it as a base. Espindola asserted that micro states - and in particular islands- are vulnerable to attacks by exogenous irregular forces, whether they are exiles, mercenaries, or mere adventurers.⁹¹

Past evidence has illustrated the weakness of some micro states as compared to irregular military forces, especially groups of well-organized transnational mercenaries. Gerry Thomas called these mercenary force the 'coup strike force' that has attempted to overthrow governments of seven sovereign nation-states (three are micro states) since 1970.⁹² Thomas observed that this type usually consists of a single, close-knit group of well-financed, trained and equipped mercenaries hired by an exiled opposition leader.⁹³ The only time that they succeeded was in the Comoros, incidents which made the Comoran political situation further complicated after three successful *coup d'etats* in 1975, 1978 and 1989.⁹⁴ All three coups were directed by Colonel Robert (Bob) Denard, a retired French military service man. Mercenary leaders usually dissolve their commando after the operation, but he was different from other mercenary leaders. Exiled Comoran leaders such as Ali Soilih and Ahmed Abdullah asked Denard and his mercenary force to remain in the newly established administrations for the purpose of training the security forces.⁹⁵ Denard had dominated politics and economy of the Comoros for a decade.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁹² Gerry S. Thomas, *Mercenary Troops in Modern Africa* (Boulder and London: Westview press Inc., 1984), p. 7. According to him, three types of mercenary operations can be observed: operational maneuver groups, the coup strike force and internal paramilitary security. The seven countries are: Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Togo, the Comoros, the Seychelles and the Maldives. The latter three countries are micro states of the Indian Ocean.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ See Philip M. Allen, *Security and Nationalism in the Indian Ocean: Lessons from the Latin Quarter Islands* (Boulder and London: Westview Press Inc., 1987), pp. 36-45, and Malyn Newitt, *The Comoro Islands: Struggle against Dependency in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder and London: Westview Press Inc., 1984), pp. 56-70.

⁹⁵ Denard became the Minister of Defense in 1976 named Colonel Said Mustapha M'Hadjou, but soon left his post because of a coup attempt in Benin in January 1977. Later he was appointed chief of the presidential guard which became the principal security force of the Comoros in 1978.

Regular Military Threats

Regular military threats was significant in the Cold War era. Espindola notes three major regular military threats that typified the Cold War: escalating East-West tension, expansionism of regional power as proxies of a superpower and clash with regional organizations.⁹⁶ No proxy war over micro states or armed conflict in which a micro state is a belligerent power has occurred since 1983. Most micro states are somewhat safeguarded by regional groupings. If, on the other hand, regional integration processes fail, a new threat to the aspirations of the regional hegemon can be predicted in the context of regional power rivalry.

Non-Military Threats

The non-military dimension of threats to micro states includes all types of threats without any military means. Most scholars of peace studies take serious note of the non-physical violence. Johan Galtung distinguished two types of violence: physical and psychological.⁹⁷ According to him, human beings are hurt somatically to the point of death, and psychological violence serves to decrease mental potentialities.⁹⁸

Firstly, sea-level rise and other environmental threats are the most crucial for security of micro states for both low-lying island states and low-lying coastal states. The territories of these states will disappear in the sea after a sea-level rise of even one or two meters. This means that inhabitants of those micro states will lose their place of residence. In the long run, their sovereign independent nation status might be terminated after the complete loss of territory due to rise in the sea-level. Natural disasters, plant and animal diseases and damage of coastal and marine resources are also major environmental threats.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Espindola, *op. cit.*, p. 64-67.

⁹⁷ Detailed analysis of structural violence, see Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" *Journal of Peace Research* (Oslo), Vol. 6, 1969, pp. 167-91.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

Secondly, economic threats are equally crucial to security of micro states. The second Commonwealth report discussed the effects of globalization, the growth of money laundering and economic exclusion as major economic threats.¹⁰⁰ External economic shocks have become a major challenge for many micro states since they have depended on a few industries such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism for their economic growth. These shocks are mainly caused by a sharp drop in primary commodity export prices, tourist arrivals and the currency value.

Thirdly, political dimension of threats can include political and economic pressures for policy change, destabilization or subversion attempts, effects of major policies, reporting by foreign media, attempts at extra-territorial jurisdiction and undermining of social and cultural identity in the first Commonwealth report.¹⁰¹

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING MICRO STATES' SECURITY

National Security Policies

Nation-states have usually adopted military measures to protect their national security. But, at the same time, they face a common dilemma: the choice between further armament and the cost of military expenditure. Although diplomatic efforts such as collective security measures, and peace keeping operations have played a major roles, a policy of increased armament is still considered to be easier in defending a country against regular and irregular military threats. In the current situation, only a few powers such as U.S., France, Russia, China and Britain have the capability to produce sophisticated military equipment and weapons of mass destruction. Other countries face problems of lack of defense resources and technology. It is necessary for weak states to purchase those arms and military technologies from military (industrial) powers. However, the prices of those arms are so high that governments cannot easily afford them.

¹⁰⁰ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰¹ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.

Micro states also suffer from the same dilemma, but the dilemma is more acute than that of other states because of the micro size of their economy. They also need to depend on other powers and international organizations for their security. A wide range of options are available to micro states to deter different kind of threats. Micro states need to choose a multi-dimensional approach rather than sticking to one option because if a micro state takes only one measure, it will suffer from either dependency or insecurity for a longer period.

The first Commonwealth report stressed that “every state, no matter how small, must assess its own interests and how to protect them”.¹⁰² Therefore, many micro states also attempt to enhance their defense capability at the national level. As a matter of fact, a few micro states like the Maldives and the Seychelles have implemented policies of upgrading the defense capabilities of their security forces after a group of mercenaries attacked their respective capitals. They not only increased the number of security personnel, but also purchased some military equipment.

However, in recent years, a series of socio-economic measures have been more significant for their security than military measures. Leaders of micro states gradually acknowledge that the socio-economical progress of a country is directly proportional to its security. A good example is Singapore. This tiny state in South East Asia was a micro state throughout the 1960s. For thirty years, it has faced consistent economic growth, it has enhanced human capital, social capital and technology. The country managed to enhance its defense capabilities. The second Commonwealth report suggests that, at the national level, it needs to implement policies of enhancing both the quality of human capital and the quality of social capital, and of investing in technology.¹⁰³ Improving the quality of education is vital if the human resources have to develop, and at the same time, employment opportunities should be enhanced in order to develop the social capital.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁰³ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-38.

Security Policies at the International Level

Micro states cannot implement the full range of national level options due to the micro size of the population, territory and economy, and similar other constraints. It is preferable for micro states to pursue some international options rather than national ones, but different scholars have varying opinions. The first Commonwealth report suggested three international options: bilateral, special multilateral and regional along with some national level options.¹⁰⁴ Espindola suggested three international military options: neutrality and non-alignment, regional security arrangements and finlandization¹⁰⁵, though he did not mention a reason for excluding national level options.¹⁰⁶ C. E. Diggines also opted for international military solutions by mainly relying on the protection of more powerful friends and neighbors.¹⁰⁷

On the basis of studies conducted by both the Commonwealth, Espindola and Diggines, three international level options can be considered for the protection of the security of micro states. These are discussed below.

Bilateral Arrangement

The most common option is the conclusion of security arrangements with strong powers. This has usually been the case through either a formal or informal, a bilateral or a multilateral agreement. According to these arrangements, the army, navy and air force of bigger powers, both great and regional powers are responsible for protecting military security of micro states. Bilateral economic arrangements include grants, loans, technical cooperation, free trade agreements and custom unions.

¹⁰⁴ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-47.

¹⁰⁵ Espindola, *op. cit.*, p. 78. He uses the term to describe nation-states that rely on a superpower and its regional associates for their security.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 75-78.

¹⁰⁷ Diggines, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

In return, micro states normally discharge various obligations to the strategic advantage of bigger powers. The security of micro states can be well protected by either an ex-colonial power or a regional power. There are around eighteen micro states which have concluded military security pacts with either great or regional powers.¹⁰⁸ More than two-thirds of all micro states rely for their military security on bigger powers. Furthermore, apart from developed countries of Europe, all micro states accept bilateral external aid from economically rich countries. These facts demonstrate that security arrangements with bigger powers must be a more realistic and secure option than any other options. Espindola also said that those arrangements are the most obvious solution for states of a particular strategic importance to a superpower.¹⁰⁹

However, some of the Third World and Nonaligned Movement (NAM) countries are not so willing to go along with bigger powers. The members of the NAM assert that military security arrangements will easily become a unfavorable for micro states and might pose threats to the political independence. Additionally, bilateral free trade arrangements with an economically big power may also threaten economic independence of micro states. The first Commonwealth report observed that bilateral arrangements involving a foreign power contain inherent dangers for the sovereignty of the small state concerned.¹¹⁰ Therefore, the report suggested that the governments of micro states should carefully weigh the possible repercussions within their region while concluding arrangements.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Among them, the United States concluded security arrangements with most of the Caribbean micro states, and some Pacific island micro states. France officially concluded it with the Comoros. The country is also responsible for securities of Andorra and Monaco. In the Pacific region, Australia concluded an arrangement with Tonga and Nauru, and New Zealand with Samoa. Data on Kiribati and Tuvalu are not available, but these micro states must probably be protected by those two regional powers.

¹⁰⁹ Espindola, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹¹⁰ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Multilateral Arrangement

Most micro states hope that world-wide international organizations will assist them in protecting their security. In addition, these countries have worked extensively for establishing world-wide arrangements for environmental security. Two world-wide international organizations, the United Nations and the Commonwealth, have taken an interest in not only protecting military security of micro states, but also in safeguarding our planet from environmental degradation.

On the one hand, the United Nations and its specialized organizations have gradually drawn attention to these two issues in both General Assembly resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General. Three resolutions, 'Protection and Security of Small States', have been adopted at the General Assembly since 1989.¹¹² Two reports on the issue have been submitted by the Secretary-General in 1991 and 1994. In recent years, the U.N. stressed on the environmental issues and the sustainable development by organizing several international conferences. A group among small island states, called the 'Alliance of Small Island States' (AOSIS) was formed after a series of U.N. sponsored international conferences on environmental and socio-economic developmental issues.¹¹³ In other words, the U.N. and its specialized organizations have encouraged the establishment of a caucus among small states.

On the other hand, the Commonwealth has a longer experience of discussing security of micro states than the United Nations. The discussion in the Commonwealth started after the U.S. military intervention in Grenada in 1983, while the U.N. started to discuss the issue in 1988 after the mercenary attack in the Maldives. As the only major international organization with many micro states as its members, the Commonwealth has played the unique role of advocacy in the

¹¹² General Assembly Resolutions 44/51 (8th December 1989); 46/53 (9th December 1991); and 49/31 (9th December 1994). *Yearbook of the United Nations 1989, 1991 and 1994* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1990, 1992 and 1995), pp. 31-32 (1989), pp. 22-23 (1991) and pp. 123-24 (1994).

¹¹³ It consists of forty-seven sovereign nation-states and territories.

global arena on behalf of those members.¹¹⁴ It has not only established a Commonwealth Consultative Group on Small States (CGSS)¹¹⁵ and the Joint Office for Commonwealth Permanent Missions to the United Nations,¹¹⁶ but also played the extensive good office work in conflict areas.¹¹⁷ The Commonwealth also sent election observer groups to several member countries including a few micro states like the Seychelles for the 1993 presidential election.

Nevertheless, both organizations are not effective in countering immediate threats posed by mercenaries and other irregular military activities, and long-term threats posed by sea-level rise. The United Nations cannot organize its rapid reaction forces, to say nothing of permanent U.N. forces authorized by the Charter. Therefore, in the case of invasion of a micro state, all they can do is to appeal to regional organizations which have regional security arrangements to retaliate. The U.N. stressed the importance of strengthening the regional security arrangements by interaction, cooperation and consultation in two General Assembly resolutions.¹¹⁸ The Commonwealth does not intend to establish its own armed forces.

U.N. sponsored multilateral environmental measures are incapable in halting the rise in sea-level, though U.N. organizations adopted several conventions on the issue. The Kyoto Protocol of December 1997 is one of the effective multilateral environmental measures that aims at checking sea-level rise. According to the Protocol, all signatory states must cut 5.2 percent of the greenhouse gas emission. Although most micro states have ratified the Protocol, they are not satisfied with the current measures. Together with low-lying coastal states and numerous

¹¹⁴ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹¹⁵ Three areas of work have been identified by CGSS: the sustainable development of small states with a focus on environmental issues, small states and the international trading system and the security of small states. The latter addresses political and security issues broadly defined.

¹¹⁶ Nine Commonwealth small states use its facilities due to lack of financial resources to set up a diplomatic mission in New York.

¹¹⁷ The Commonwealth recently offered its good offices in Lesotho, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

¹¹⁸ *Yearbook of the United Nations 1991, and 1994* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992 and 1995), pp. 22-23 (1991) and pp. 123-24 (1994).

environmental NGOs, they demanded fifteen or an even more drastic cuts of greenhouse gases at the Kyoto conference.

Regional Arrangement

A regional arrangement is also a good option for micro states in safeguarding their security, in the protection of their political and economic independence and to have the opportunity of developing their economy, especially if the sense of a regional collectivity truly emerges. It is widely hoped by not only international organizations, but also governments of micro states that regional organizations will play an important role in ensuring the security of micro states. The first Commonwealth report suggested “it might be thought helpful for small states to consider trying to join one of the regional defense pacts that have already been established by larger nations”.¹¹⁹ Neville Linton also asserted that a security pact with regional small states can be useful in countering many of the types of threats.¹²⁰ He added that the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an ideal regional organization for micro states’ security.

However, there is no organization that exclusively consists of micro states. Some organizations like the South Pacific Forum, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Indian Ocean Commission (COI) were established between regional powers and micro states. Others like the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), were formed between small states and micro states. Each organization has different areas of regional cooperation such as free trade arrangements, custom unions, food security and political cooperation.

CONCLUSION

No matter how small a country is, each nation-state prefers to implement security policies at the national level. However, micro states, with an indigenous labor force

¹¹⁹ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹²⁰ Neville Linton, “A Policy Perspective” in Clarke and Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

of less than three hundred thousand, a territorial size of less than 6,000 square kilometers, and no natural resources at their disposal, are too vulnerable to implement national level security policies. They suffer mainly from four sources of vulnerability: geography, society, economy and politics. Moreover, security of these vulnerable states is challenged by four major military and non-military threats: military and economic influences of bigger powers, irregular military activities of illegitimate non-state actors, sea-level rise caused by global warming and external economic shocks. Their security situation is much more precarious and severe than that of other states.

Each micro state opts for a different international option to overcome both its vulnerability and threats. Among many micro states, it can be observed that there is heavy dependency on external military and economic assistance for the protection of military security and socio-economic development. Some micro states have been heavily dependent on a single big power, while others have succeeded in diversifying their dependence through accepting assistance of two or more countries and multilateral organizations. Micro states also utilize multilateral military, economic and environmental measures to safeguard their national security, territorial integrity and sovereign independent status.

CHAPTER TWO

“MALDIVES: A VULNERABLE ATOLL STATE”

Even though the Security Council of the United Nations recognized the sovereignty of the Maldives after it attained independence in 1965, two permanent members of the Security Council, France and the United States, raised the question related to the status of micro states in the international organization.¹ The concern was more about the ‘microness’ and vulnerability rather than its sovereignty and legal status.

Abiding by the criteria of micro state, the Republic of Maldives can be classified as one of the micro states of the world. The indigenous labor force of the nation in 1995 accounted for only 67,476, around one-fifth of the total population.² In recent years, the country has accepted cheap and skilled labor from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to overcome serious labor shortage. The total number of expatriate labor force (legal migrants) accounted for 20,595 in 1998.³ The country’s economic activity is also dependent on larger number of illegal migrant labor forces.

There exist no strategically important mineral resources in any of the islands in the republic. The area of the Maldivian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is around a million square kilometers. This is larger than the land area of Sri Lanka. No oil and or significant natural resources have been discovered in the EEZ.

Apart from these two major constraints, the nation is at a great risk of harm, and is highly vulnerable. In the Commonwealth Vulnerability Index, Christopher Easter demonstrates that Maldives has the ninth highest vulnerability index among all third

¹ The representatives of the United States expressed doubts about the micro states’ ability to carry out their Charter obligations.

² Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999* (Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

world countries.⁴ He named the Maldives one of the most vulnerable countries of the world. The Commonwealth reports also categorized the Maldives as one of the 'Small States' that has suffered from various forms of vulnerability: physical, economic, societal and political. These vulnerability in the nation basically originate from several sources. This chapter will attempt to analyze the sources of vulnerability of the Maldives.

GEOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

The Maldives is a founder member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since 1985. Historically, the country has been largely influenced by people, religion and culture of the Indian subcontinent. The British colonial domination and influence are another common links between the Maldives and the rest of South Asian region.

Because of its geographical proximity, some people attempt to include the nation among one of Indian Ocean island countries along with the Chagos Archipelago, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Réunion, the Comoros and Madagascar. However, the nation has shared little historical experience with these French-Creole speaking states, namely *Iles de l'ocean indienne* region.⁵

Two peculiar geographical reasons -smallness and remoteness- might explain the survival of the age-old sultanate system. Smallness of the country prevented it from being colonized by the European powers. As compared to other states in the Indian subcontinent, the tiny coral atolls of the Maldives could not provide colonial powers with resources and market, and hence, the island was not attracted to the colonial powers.⁶ Remoteness, on the other hand, probably deterred expansionist

⁴ Christopher Easter, "Small States Development: A Commonwealth Vulnerability Index" *The Round Table* (London), No. 351, October 1999, p. 418.

⁵ All five states and territories had been colonized by the French. Later on, three of them, the Chagos archipelago, Mauritius and the Seychelles had been administered by the British since 1814 after Napoleonic war.

⁶ In addition, Maloney's book *People of the Maldivian Island* mentioned that "The Maldives gained unfavorable impressions among the British either because of shipwreck or because they caught the dread 'Maldivian Fever'".

expeditions from the kingdoms of the Indian subcontinent. Phadnis and Luithui observed that traders and sailors preferred to bypass it, although its location gave importance on the trade-tracks to India.⁷

Atoll Feature

Ironically, these two geographical features make the republic of Maldives highly vulnerable in recent years. Firstly, atoll feature of the territory makes the environment of the nation highly vulnerable as also the socio-economic security of the islands. The republic's total land area is only 298 square kilometers. It consists of 1,190 tiny coral islands and islets, out of which only about 199, i.e., roughly 20 percent of them are inhabited. The area of Fua Mulaku island, the largest island of the Maldives is 13.4 square kilometers. The smallest one is less than ten square meters. Malé, the capital island, covers an area of about two square kilometers. Most of them lie around the rims of the atolls which are ring-shaped islands. Elevation of all the islands, whether large or small, is less than three meters. There are no mountains or hills in the country.

Maldivian territory is highly vulnerable in the physical sense. The 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment report disclosed that the nation suffers from beach erosion. According to the report, 94 percent of inhabited atolls experienced beach erosion.⁸ Another crucial data from the report holds that eleven of the nation's twenty atolls suffered from beach erosion.⁹ The report mentioned "there appears to be evidence in the Maldives of an intensification of erosion processes for reasons which are not entirely clear, but which may be related to climate change and sea state".¹⁰ After a few centuries, almost entire Maldivian islands and islets

⁷ Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, *Maldives: Wind of Change in an Atoll State* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt., Ltd., 1985), p. 1.

⁸ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, *Republic of Maldives: Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment 1998* (Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development and United Nations Development Programme, 1999), p. 57.

⁹ *Ibid.* Eleven atolls include Shaviyani, Baa, Kaafu, Alif Dhekunu buri, Vaavu, Faafu, Dhaal, Thaa, Gaaf, Gnaviyani and Seenu.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

face the danger of being sunk, if the sea-level rises above two meters. In addition, the nation's low-lying territory is also vulnerable to ocean-related natural disasters such as tidal wave, high wave and typhoon. The nation has experienced two massive floods in 1987 and 1991.

The atoll feature also endangers socio-economic security which is explained in terms of shortage of safe water. The Maldivian people have largely depended on rainfall for water. The 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment report says that 87 percent of population in outer atolls depends on rainwater, while 41 percent of population in Malé also relies on rainwater for their daily lives.¹¹ Although water in Malé and other atolls is purified by a series of water supply and sanitation projects, 24% of the population in the outer atolls, i.e. more than sixty thousand people, lack sufficient supplies of drinking water.¹² Moreover, the data of the *Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment 1998* demonstrated that water used by twelve percent of the population in the outer atolls, i.e. around thirty thousand people, was not safe.¹³ Water borne diseases are the major cause of illness and death in Maldives; it once assumed epidemic proportions, especially in Malé.¹⁴ Some diarrhoea cases are probably caused by consuming unsafe water as well. Diarrhoea cases in the Maldives amounted to 6,402 in 1997, and it drastically increased to 12,350 in 1998.¹⁵ According to the 1998 data, more than 83 percent diarrhoea cases were found in outer atolls.

Low agricultural productivity is yet another socio-economic vulnerability. This stems from the country's atoll feature. Thus, the nation has had to depend on large amount of imports of agricultural products. Imports of vegetable products amounted to 346 million rufiyaas, almost forty percent of total export revenue in 1998.¹⁶ This

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Republic of the Maldives, Department of Information and Broadcasting, *Information 11: Health* (Malé: Department of Information and Broadcasting, 1992), p. 6.

¹⁵ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 199 and p. 208. Total amount of export revenue accounted for 878 million in 1998.

large amount of vegetable import is a major cause of huge trade deficit in the nation. Many Maldivian islands lack humus in the soil. The soil of almost all the islands has poor water retentive capacity and is highly alkaline due to the presence of calcium from the basic coral rock.¹⁷ According to the Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, there were only 35 vegetables and fruits growing fields in the Maldives. Among them, *babukeyo* (breadfruit), *bileh* (bitter leaf), *faiykeyo* (banana), *githeyomirus* (pepper), *hikandhifa* (curry leaf), *kurunbaa* (coconut), *murangatholhi* (drumstick) and *tholhimiru* (chilies) are widely available in the country.¹⁸ Banana and coconut are staple foods in the nation, while other six agricultural crops are spices and other non-major food items. The data also indicates that major vegetables and fruits like guava, mango, papaya, watermelon, brinjal, cassava, pumpkin, onion and sweet potato had also grown in the archipelagoes; however, the produce is not large enough for consumption by the entire population.¹⁹ For example, the number of agricultural products such as pumpkin (76,214 pieces), sweet potato (130,879 pieces), mango (213,836 pieces), guava (205,463 pieces) and watermelon (195,557) is less than the population of the country.

Remoteness and Insularity

Remoteness, especially internal remoteness is another geographic feature that renders the country highly vulnerable, especially in the socio-economic sphere. The country comprises of 26 natural atolls, which are divided into twenty units or atolls for administrative convenience. The length of the archipelago is 823 kilometers and its width is 130 kilometers. It is around 345 kilometers from Malé to the northern-

¹⁷ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information and Culture, *Information 7: Agriculture* (Malé: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1994), p. 2.

¹⁸ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Economic Planning and Coordination Section, *Basic Agricultural Statistics Jan-Dec 1998* (Malé: Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, 1999), p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

most atoll, North Tiladummati Atoll, and 478 kilometers from the capital to the southern-most atoll, Addu Atoll.

Several domestic air links have already been established by the Air Maldives between Malé and its three remote islands, Hanimadu island in South Tiladummati Atoll, Kadhu island in Haddummati Atoll, Gan island in Addu Atoll. The Maldivian people prefer to use boats called *dhonis* and *vedi* (both in Dhivehi language) between Malé and remote atolls because it costs cheaper. The 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty report observed that the 55 percent of population in outer atolls is not accessible by *dhoni* as they lack harbors and jetties.²⁰ The report also disclosed that 29 percent of population in outer atolls is able to access Malé only one or two times a month.²¹ These ferry services are not regular.

Such limited access within the nation brings about many socio-economic problems in the Maldives. The 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty report clearly mentioned that insularity is one of the causes of severe dis-economies of scale in production, transport and the provision of essential infrastructure and services.²² Insularity also creates socio-economic imbalances among the Maldivians. These imbalances will be analyzed in the following sections.

The problem of insularity has posed a threat to the national security when three southern atolls declared independence in 1958, namely the 'United Suvadivan Republic'. Maloney observed that the southerners were upset about the fact that the dried fish trade had to be routed through Malé.²³ The southerners might still have a feeling of exploitation because the government in Malé has not permitted them to export fish on their own yet. However, no rebellion against the government in Malé has occurred in the last four decades.

In recent times, external insularity has been gradually overcome by the development of transportation between the Maldives and other countries through air

²⁰ Ministry of Planning and National Development and UNDP, *op. cit.* p. 31.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²³ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

links in particular. This accounts for the rapid increase in both passenger arrivals in international flights²⁴ and the amount of trade.²⁵ The country is located in the central Indian Ocean. Situated about 720 kilometers south-west of Sri Lanka, the northern-most atoll of the Maldives is about 480 kilometers south west of Cape Comorin in India and the southern-most island of Gan is approximately 400 kilometers off Diego Garcia in the Chagos archipelago. However, numerous airlinks have been established not only with cities of the Indian subcontinent,²⁶ but also Dubai, Singapore, several European cities and Southern African countries. Air Maldives Limited (51 percent government-owned and 49 percent owned by the Malaysian Helicopter Services under the administration of Ministry of Transport and Communications) also operates international flights to Colombo, Dubai, Thiruvananthapuram and Kuala Lumpur.

SOCIETAL SOURCES

The Human Development Index (HDI)²⁷ of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has categorized the Maldives as a 'medium human development country'. The value of HDI accounted for 0.716, which is higher than China, India and Pakistan.²⁸ HDI rank is 93rd among 174 sovereign-nation-states. The literacy rate of the nation, one of societal indices of HDI, is the highest among seven South Asian countries. According to the *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives*

²⁴ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 295. The number of passengers amounted to 170,092 in 1988. It increased to 447,823 in 1997 after a decade, more than two times as large as one in 1988.

²⁵ Both *ibid.*, p. 199. and Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning Human Resource and Environment, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1995* (Malé: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, 1995), p. 286. The total amount of import counted for 842 million rufiyaas in 1988. In 1997, it increased to 4.1 billion rufiyaas, almost five times as large as one in 1988.

²⁶ Among Indian subcontinent cities including Sri Lanka, the Maldives has daily flight connections with both Colombo and Tiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum). It has flight links between Karachi and the Maldives twice a week. Source of this data is: James Kalassery, *HELLO MALDIVES* (Cochin: QR Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1997).

²⁷ The United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 127-133. The index is calculated by three elements: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and adjusted per capita income in Purchasing Power Parities (PPP).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135-36.

1999, 98 percent of total population were 'functionally' literate in 1998.²⁹ This figure was calculated, possibly, on the basis of ability to read religious texts.³⁰ The table of *Human Development Report 1999*, on the other hand, maintains that the adult literacy rate of the nation was 95.7 percent of total population in 1997.³¹ The education index was 0.89³², same as Luxembourg, Chile, Antigua and Barbuda and Bulgaria. The UNDP defined adult literacy rate as the proportion of adults aged 15 and above who can understand, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.³³

In the Maldives, life expectancy at birth, another societal measurement of HDI, is not so high as compared to the literacy rate. According to the UNDP, life expectancy at birth means "the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of birth were to stay the same throughout the children's life".³⁴ The life expectancy in the Maldives was 65.4 years in 1997, the second highest among seven South Asian countries by the HDI. Life expectancy index is 0.66³⁵, almost same as Guyana (0.66), Indonesia (0.67), Guatemala (0.65) and Pakistan (0.65). The Maldivian official figure on life expectancy was much higher than the UNDP data. In 1997, the life expectancy was 69.62 years, according to the *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999*.³⁶

These societal measures are however, insufficient in explaining how the Maldivian society really develops. Based on an in-depth analysis of the quality of its education and health care, and of the quality of communications, electricity and housing of the entire nation, we can say that the social security of the nation is highly fragile. The Maldivian government recognized its vulnerability by admitting that "despite enormous progress in the field of education, there are numerous quantitative and

²⁹ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

³⁰ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³¹ UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³⁶ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

qualitative problems that still need to be overcome”, and numerous challenges in the sphere of health that still need to be addressed.³⁷ The poor quality of education has neither produced high quality of elite nor exceptional labor force. The quality of health care is closely related to the survival of the Maldivian people. Low quality of communication, housing and electricity also makes the people feel insecure about their day-to-day existence. Such high degree of vulnerability are the product of two major factors: lack of infrastructure and lack of trained manpower.

Lack of Infrastructure

This is seen in the sphere of education, health, communications, electricity and housing. The Maldives does not have a university: it is therefore, almost impossible to provide a high quality of education in the absence of higher institutions. Moreover, there are only two higher secondary schools³⁸ in the nation. Some data demonstrate that the educational attainment of the population as a whole remains at a very low level because of the lack of educational infrastructure. The Maldivian educational system is divided into four sections: primary, middle school, lower secondary and higher secondary.³⁹ Only 232 students enrolled in the Grade Eleventh in March 1999, while 8,370 students enrolled in the First Grade in the same year.⁴⁰ Only around three percent of selected students are eligible to study in two higher secondary schools in Malé.⁴¹

In the health sector too, the Maldives suffers from shortages of beds and medicines. For instance, in the Central Hospital and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Malé, the number of in-patients accounted for 4,759 in 1988; after a

³⁷ Government of the Republic of Maldives, *Maldives and Development Partners: An Agenda for Cooperation* (Malé: Government of the Republic of Maldives, 1999), p. 28-29.

³⁸ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Education, *Educational Statistics 1999* (Malé: Ministry of Education, 1999), p. 14 and p. 42. It comprises of Mauhadhul Dhiraasaathul Islamiyya and Science Education Centre.

³⁹ Republic of the Maldives, Department of Information and Broadcasting, *Information 9: Education* (Malé: Department of Information and Broadcasting, 1993), p. 5.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Education, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁴¹ Students completing the tenth grade have to sit for the G.C.E. “O” Level (London) examination. At the end of grade twelve, they do the G.C.E. “A” Level (London) examinations. Consequently, the secondary classes follow the G.C.E. syllabus of the University of London.

decade, the number had risen to 9,032.⁴² The total number of hospital beds accounted for 391, while population per-hospital bed in the Maldives amounted to 648 in 1998.⁴³ Another crucial data on its health care is that 22 percent of Maldivian people have problems in getting medicines according to the 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty report.⁴⁴ Even the two percent of the Maldivian population living in Malé have problems in procuring medicines.⁴⁵

Housing is the other major infrastructural problem for the people living in Malé because of its high population density. Population density in Malé is about 344 per hectare.⁴⁶ According to the survey of the Ministry of Planning and National Development, seventeen percent of people in Malé live in forty square feet (twelve square meters) or less housing area.⁴⁷ About 43 percent of the population occupies dwellings without a compound in Malé.⁴⁸

The situation in outer atolls is much more severe than that in Malé. Many schools in outer atolls suffer from total lack of basic infrastructure. For the twelve to thirteen percent of students in outer atolls, both drinking water and toilet facilities are not available in their schools.⁴⁹ More than half the schools in outer atolls do not have libraries.⁵⁰ There are many atolls where middle school and lower secondary level of education is not available. In the health sector, more than one quarter of the people in outer atolls have problems in getting medicines.

Infrastructural imbalances between Malé and outer atolls in both communication and electricity sectors are also evident. There are numerous public telephones in Malé, whereas there is not even a single public telephone available in 87 inhabited outer islands; most of them are in the northern part of the country such as the Haa

⁴² Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Planning and National Development and UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Alif Atoll, the Haa Dhaal Atoll and the Shaviyani Atoll.⁵¹ According to the 1998 Vulnerability and Poverty report, 34 percent of population in outer atolls did not have access to public telephone in their own islands.⁵² They had to make a telephone call either from the nearest island where public phone was available, or at the office of island chief. Furthermore, electricity is not available in seven inhabited islands⁵³; it is available for less than six hours in 68 islands.⁵⁴ Nine percent of the population in outer atolls did not receive any supply of electricity, while 28 percent of population in outer atolls received electricity for less than six hours.

Lack of Trained Manpower

The country also faces heavy shortage in trained manpower. The shortage of indigenous teachers has been a long-standing problem of education in the Maldives. The total number of Maldivian students enrolled in all five levels of schools accounted for 101,069, while total number of both permanent and temporary teachers amounted to 4,314 in March 1999.⁵⁵ About 2,917 teachers are trained, out of whom only 736 teachers obtained graduate level education.⁵⁶ Among them only 56 teachers are Maldivian nationals.⁵⁷ Students per indigenous and tertiary-educated teacher accounted for 1,800. The nation depends on 680 tertiary-educated expatriate teachers, which constitutes about 90 percent of total tertiary-educated teachers in the nation. Moreover, the country has accepted 396 untrained foreign teachers, and 74 temporary teachers.

In the health sector too, the nation suffers from shortages of doctors, nurses and other medical staff. The total number of doctors was 197, this means that there was

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-71.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-61. It includes Thurakunu, Uligamu and Berinmadhoo in the Haa Alif Atoll (north), Hondaidhoo and Kuburudhoo in the Haa Dhaal Atoll (north) and Dheevadhoo and Dhiyadhoo in the Gaaf Alif Atoll (south).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Ministry of Education, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

one doctor for every 1,358 people in 1998.⁵⁸ In addition, there were four hundred nurses in the country in 1998.⁵⁹ It means that there was one nurse for 668 people. According to the data of Ministry of Planning and National Development, 58 percent of population in outer atolls live without a single doctor.⁶⁰ Doctors are only available only in 38 inhabited islands, while nurses are available in 26 islands.⁶¹ Data also indicate that doctors and nurses are usually available in one or two inhabited islands of outer atolls. Both health workers and midwives are easily available as compared to doctors and nurses. However, conditions are still severe in the country. People of 28 islands (ten percent of population in outer atolls) live without a health worker, and people of 21 islands (six percent of population in outer atolls) live without a midwife.⁶²

ECONOMIC SOURCES

Until the late 1980s, the Maldives had the lowest income in the world. In 1987, the World Bank data indicated that the nation was among the poorest of Island Developing Countries and among twenty-five poorest countries of the world.⁶³ Phadnis and Luithui observed that the historical experiences of the Maldivian

⁵⁸ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Ministry of Planning and National Development and UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-91. The islands in which at least one doctor is available include Hoarafushi in the Haa Alif Atoll, Kulhudhuffushi in the Haa Dhaal Atoll, Funadhoo in the Sha Viyani Atoll, Manadhoo and Velidhoo in the Noonu Atoll, Alifushi, Hulhudhuffaaruu, Ugoofaaruu and Kadholhudhoo in the Raa Atoll, Eydhafushi in the Baa Atoll, Hinnavaruu and Naifaruu in the Lhaviyani Atoll, Thulusdhoo in the Kaafu Atoll, Rasdhoo in the Alif Uthuru Buri, Mahibadhoo and Dhagethi in the Alif Dhekunuu Buri, Felidhoo in the Vaanu Atoll, Muli in the Meenu Atoll, Magoodhoo in the Faafu Atoll, Kudahuvadhoo in the Dhaal Atoll, Vilufushi, Guraidhoo, Thimarafushi and Veymandoo in the Thaa Atoll, Isdhoo, Gamu, Fonadhoo and Hithadhoo in the Laamu Atoll, Viligili in the Gaaf Alif Atoll, Gadhdhoo and Thinadhoo in the Gaaf Dhaal Atoll, Foammulah in the Gnaviyani Atoll, Meedhoo, Hithadhoo, Maradhoo, Feydhoo and Hulhudhoo in the Seenu Atoll and Malé.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ For example, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per-capita of the Maldives accounted for \$290 in 1987, 22nd smallest of the 140 countries whose data appeared in the *World Development Report 1987* of the World Bank. Data of the Maldives' basic indicators have been available since 1987.

economy had been a slow and largely unchanging phenomenon.⁶⁴ This, according to them, was due to a relatively late planned economic development.⁶⁵

Throughout the 1990s, the nation flourished economically especially in tourism and fisheries industries. The economy has also improved to lower-middle-income economy by now, though the World Bank and other international organizations do not recognize the improved status due to the small population and GDP. GDP per-capita increased to 990 U.S. dollars in 1997, and 1,230 dollars in 1999, the 96th largest and 68 smallest among 164 countries.⁶⁶ The per-capita itself is not only the largest among the South Asian countries, but also almost the same as Egypt, Morocco and Bulgaria. The *Asian Development Report 1999* of the Asian Development Bank observed that the high economic growth was sustained by increased tourist arrivals and higher international fish prices.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, a decade-long economic development has done little to overcome the nation's high vulnerability. Economic problems facing the nation have remained almost the same since its independence. The *Asian Development Report* maintained that the economy remained vulnerable to external shocks because of its dependence on tourism and fisheries.⁶⁸ The United Nations Development Programme report on the Maldives also observed that "the two key sectors are prone to external susceptibilities".⁶⁹ Economic causes contributing to the nation's high vulnerability, therefore, include primary commodity-oriented economy, huge trade deficit, an excess amount of food imports, narrow-based industries and dependency on external aid.

⁶⁴ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Sources of data are: *the World Development Report 1997* and *1999/2000*.

⁶⁷ Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 138.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Development Cooperation: Maldives 1993 Report* (New York: UNDP, 1994), p. 4.

Primary Commodity-Oriented Economy

Firstly, the primary commodity-oriented Maldivian economy results in rendering the Maldivian economy highly vulnerable. Fishing is certainly considered to be the most important occupation in the Maldives and a respectable one too.⁷⁰ It has been the bedrock of the island economy, the most important export item and one of major staple foods.⁷¹ For example, over sixty percent of the population of the Maldives has been engaged in fishing and related activities.⁷² At present, around one-third of population is engaged in the fisheries industry.⁷³

Total fish catch has almost doubled within a decade. It amounted to 107,000 metric tons in 1997.⁷⁴ About 60 percent of total fish catch (64,500 tons) is exported to foreign countries, while 40 percent (40,000 tons) is for local consumption.

The national economy, especially country's export revenue, has for centuries, been largely dependent on the export of fish. This dependence is sometimes susceptible to an external economic shock caused by sharp decline in the price of fish. Not only does it severely affect the balance of payment position of the country, but also reduces its international reserve. When fish export declined in 1992⁷⁵, there was an increase of trade deficit in 1992 and 1993⁷⁶, and a decrease of international reserve in 1993.⁷⁷ According to the *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999*, most of export items were fish products such as prepared tuna, chilled yellowfin tuna, frozen yellowfin tuna, bellied bonito, dried skipjack and salted dried skipjack in 1998.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁷¹ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Economic Planning and Coordination Section, *Basic Fisheries Statistics January-December 1998* (Malé: Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, 1999), p.3.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

⁷⁵ Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 246. The fish export amounted to 55 thousand metric tons in 1991. It fell 46 thousand tons in 1992. It again increased to 49 thousand tons, but the amount was much smaller than that in 1991.

⁷⁶ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 326. In 1991, trade balance was \$-65.6 million. It increased to \$-102.8 million in 1992, and \$-125 million in 1993.

⁷⁷ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 1998* (New York: United Nations Publication, 1999), p. 318. The international reserve in 1992 amounted to \$28.23 million, while it reduced \$25.09 million in 1993.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-10.

Export earning of these six fish products accounted for about 66 percent of the total export revenue.

The data of the *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999* demonstrate how fish prices are unstable in international market. It picked up in quantities, values and units values. Out of eight products: frozen skipjack, fish meal, dried skipjack, salted dried reef fish, dried shark fins, dried sea cucumber and canned fish, price of dried sea cucumber is the unstablest one. Between 1994 and 1998, the product marked the highest price (7,532 U.S. dollars per metric ton) in 1995. It sharply dropped to 4,443 U.S. dollars per metric ton in the next year, and it again sharply dropped to 2,287 U.S. dollars in 1997.⁷⁹ The price in 1997 had become less than one-third of 1995. Likewise, a sharp price fall can be observed in dried shark fins product. The product also marked the highest price (45,579 U.S. dollars per metric ton) in 1995. It dropped sharply to 27,620 U.S. dollars in 1996.⁸⁰ All other fish products also experienced sharp price decline at least once between 1994 and 1998.

Huge Trade Deficit

Huge trade deficit is also one of the main economic causes for the country's high vulnerability. It severely affects the country's export industry, mainly the fishery. The total import spending considerably exceeds the total export earning. In 1988, for example, total import spending amounted to around 842 million rufiyaas (\$97 million), while export earnings around 347 million rufiyaas (\$39 million).⁸¹ Import amount was more than twice the export amount. The trade deficit has increased in recent years due to rapid increase of import spending since 1988. In 1997, the import spending increased to 4.1 billion rufiyaas (\$350 million), while export

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 286 and p. 289. Average exchange rate of 1988 was: U.S\$1.00=Rf.8.78.

earning figured 826 million rufiyaas (\$71 million) -around one-fifth of import spending.⁸²

This sort of vulnerability is due to the slow growth of GDP in fishery sector. Its growth in GDP has been 29.6 million rufiyaas between 1988 and 1997, while the GDP itself increased to 828.9 million rufiyaas. This is more than double in a decade.⁸³

Dependence on Food Imports

Thirdly, in this connection, a large-scale imports of primary goods also creates vulnerability, especially when price of commodity sharply rises every now and then. As a matter of fact, the national economy was more or less affected, when oil price rose in 1990 due to the crisis.⁸⁴ Thus, import business is very important for Maldivian economy. Import Duty constitutes a good chunk of government revenue, it has increased four times between 1988 and 1997.⁸⁵ It is found that a low level of economic development makes the Maldives dependent, to a large extent, on external supplies.⁸⁶ The country imports a large quantity of machinery, transport equipment and petroleum for its socio-economic development and staple foods.

In recent years, especially in the last decade, a large quantity of consumer goods have been imported. Spending on food, tobacco and beverage accounted for 575 million rufiyaas in 1989. After a decade, its spendings reached around 1 billion rufiyaas (\$88 million), around 25 percent of total import spending.⁸⁷ The amount of

⁸² Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 199 and p. 211. Average exchange rate of 1997 was: U.S\$1.00=Rf.11.77.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 322. The GDP contribution of the fisheries sector accounted for 124.1 million rufiyaas in 1988. After a decade, it only increased to 153.6 million rufiyaas. On the contrary, the total amount GDP counted for 771.6 million rufiyaas in 1988, and 1.6 billion rufiyaas in 1997.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 253. The oil price was 4.5 rufiyaas per litre in 10th October, 1990. Before the Gulf Crisis (31st July, 1990), the oil price was 2.75 rufiyaas per litre.

⁸⁵ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, p. 305. Import Duty amounted to 137 million rufiyaas in 1988. It increased to 552 million rufiyaas after a decade.

⁸⁶ Prakash Chandra Adhikary, "An Overview of the Economy of Maldives and her trade with India" in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of SAARC Nations: Maldives* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1997), p. 210.

⁸⁷ Ministry of Planning and National Development, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

consumer goods imports is bigger than that of total export revenue. Ministry of Planning and National Development, however, sees no evidence for acute food insecurity.⁸⁸ But, except for fish and a few agricultural products, the country cannot produce most agricultural crops. Thus, their food supplies are heavily dependent on its prices. According to Maloney, import of staple food is a new phenomenon among the Maldivians. Historically, it was not really necessary to import foods from outside, because their major staple foods were both fish and coconuts. Maloney holds that food in the Maldives may be thought of in three categories; traditional fare, Sri Lanka cuisine and the new imported modern foods.⁸⁹ New imported foods are largely rice, wheat for *roti*, and white sugar for tea which cannot be cultivated in the Maldives.

Narrow-Based Industries

Fourthly, the narrow-based industries cause a high vulnerability. There are only two major industries in the Maldives: fisheries and tourism. As it has already been observed, fishery industry is always susceptible to risk of harm by unstable export prices. Tourism industry is also vulnerable to external shocks caused by the sharp decline of tourist arrivals. It mainly reduces international reserve and tax. When tourist arrival declined in 1983 due to insurgency in Sri Lanka⁹⁰, international reserve was also reduced to 4.58 million U.S. dollars⁹¹, and Airport Departure Tax revenue was also reduced to 3.6 million rufiyaas⁹². International reserve fell again

⁸⁸ Ministry of Planning and National Development and UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁸⁹ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 25. The traditional fare is mostly fish boiled in a broth called *garudiya*, and coconut pieces; some old people say they used to live, and would still like to live, on just that. During the centuries of the sultanate, Sri Lankan cuisine became popular. It is a curry of fish pieces with green papaya or breadfruit cooked in, and a simple *masala* of imported condiments ground on a erude grindstone in the kitchen.

⁹⁰ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and Development, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1986* (Malé: Ministry of Planning and Development, 1986), p. 117. Total tourist arrivals amounted to 80,390 in 1982. It declined to 78,717 in 1983.

⁹¹ ESCAP, *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 1991* (New York: United Nations Publication, 1992), p. 237. The amount of international reserve of the previous year was \$8.45 million.

⁹² Ministry of Planning and Development, *op. cit.*, p. 149. In the previous year, it amounted to 4.3 million rufiyaas.

to 23.51 million U.S. dollars⁹³ due to the decline of tourist arrival from European countries in 1991.⁹⁴ The Persian Gulf War was a major cause of decline.

Excess Amount of External Debt

Finally, severe external indebtedness has recently become crucial to the nation's economy. The country has always succumbed to external economic pressures of loan givers. It is likely that the world community will ultimately determine it as a 'default' country, and will cease to care about the country's economy, if the nation fails to repay the huge debt that it owes. Such debt problem is a common to all Third World countries and all developing micro states. According to the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook 1996*, external debt in the Maldives amounted to 61.8 million U.S dollars in 1987. It increased to 151.9 million U.S dollars in 1995, more than twice as that of 1987.⁹⁵ It had again increased to 162.6 million U.S dollars in 1996. The amount of indebtedness itself is much smaller than that of five South Asian countries.⁹⁶ The amount is almost similar to that of two other micro island countries in the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles (\$138.1 million) and the Comoros (\$192.9 million). Comparing with the Maldives' Gross Domestic Product (\$210 million) and other financial data, one can see the amount itself is too big, and also harsh for the national economy.⁹⁷ The total Maldivian indebtedness amount of 1996 is greater than the total revenue of the nation in 1996 (\$135,5 million), and total expenditure and net lending of the nation in 1996 (\$145 million). The Maldivian government has struggled to repay huge amount of debt, and therefore the amount has increased each year. The *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1995* data

⁹³ ESCAP, *op. cit.* (1998), p. 318. The amount of previous year was \$24.42 million.

⁹⁴ Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 256. It reduced European tourists to 5,029 between 1990 and 1991.

⁹⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Statistical Yearbook 1996* (New York: United Nations Publications, 1999), p. 832.

⁹⁶ According to the *U.N. Statistical Yearbook 1996*, the amount of Bangladeshi indebtedness accounted for \$15.4 billion, Indian \$74.4 billion, Nepali \$2.3 billion, Pakistani \$23.7 billion and Sri Lankan \$6.8 billion in 1996. Bhutan has also suffered from the indebtedness; however, the amount (\$86.3 million) is much smaller than five major South Asian countries.

⁹⁷ Source of GDP and other financial data is: *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999*.

demonstrates that the government merely repaid three times (1987, 92 and 93) during 1984-1993, and the total amount of repayment within a decade amounted to 5.6 million U.S dollars.⁹⁸

This problem is accelerated by the increase in the amount of external loan in the Maldives in recent times. Three types of external aid -grant, technical cooperation and loan- are usually given by donors. Donors include Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries like Japan⁹⁹, Australia, United Kingdom, and multilateral organizations such as Asian Development Bank (ADB), Nordic Development Fund (NDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Development Association (IDA). Data of UNDP also indicates that some developing countries like Bangladesh, Egypt, India and Pakistan are donors to the Maldives between 1990 and 1993.¹⁰⁰ Both grants and technical cooperation need not to be repaid, while loan has to be repaid by the aid receiver per the conditions.

According to the 1993 United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) report on the Maldives, the amount of external loan constituted 4.6 million U.S. dollars in 1988¹⁰¹; it increased to 21.6 million U.S dollars in 1997.¹⁰² According to the 1999 data of the Department of External Resources, five international organizations - IDA, ADB, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

⁹⁸ Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

⁹⁹ According to a series of *Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance) Annual Report* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Cooperation), ODA by both OECD countries and multilateral organizations amounted to \$22.37 million in 1990, \$32.3 million in 1991, \$30.8 million in 1993, \$32.3 million in 1994 and \$50.4 million in 1995. Data also indicated that Japan played a major role in aiding the Maldives. For example, Japan granted \$12.86 million (\$10.3 million for grants and \$2.56 for technical cooperation), around 40 percent of total ODA in 1994. In 1995 too, Japan was also the largest donor to the Maldives (\$15.18 million for grant and \$3.41 for technical cooperation), around 37 percent of total ODA.

¹⁰⁰ UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 19. In recent years, India has played a major role in aiding the Maldives. For example, Indian aid to the Maldives amounted to \$12.8 million in 1993, the largest donor among all bilateral and multilateral donors. The money was granted for the construction of Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital.

¹⁰¹ UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁰² Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of External Resources, *External Aid Disbursement 1994-1999* (Malé: Department of External Resources, 2000), p. 1.

(OPEC)- agreed to grant loans (total amount is \$17.08 million) for the country's agricultural, human resource, energy and transport developments.¹⁰³ Other seven loan givers are export creditors.

POLITICAL SOURCE

It is subjective to determine whether the Maldivian political system is an oligarchical or not. But one can say that the political regime in the Maldives is probably the most stable one in South Asia. It has not only maintained a single political regime, presidential democracy, but also been ruled by only two leaders since the nation became a republic. Under presidential democracy, the head of state is president who is firstly nominated by the *Majlis* (parliament)'s secret ballot, and secondly approved in a referendum for a five year tenure.¹⁰⁴ The first President, Ibrahim Nasir ruled the country from 1968 to 1978, and later his successor, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has been held office for over two decades.

It may not be possible to fully apply concepts of western democracy such as separation of powers, i.e. administration, legislation and judiciary to the Maldivian political system. But this presidential system is too powerful to oppose by democratic means. This highly centralized Maldivian political system has been vulnerable to coups, mercenary activities and other armed attacks. The Gayoom regime was threatened by two coup attempts in 1981 and '83, and a mercenary attack in 1980 and '88. Sahadevan analyzed three factors which are responsible for the spread of political discontent: the concentration of political and economic forces in Malé, the narrow base of decision-making structure and the presence of oligarchical streak in the political system.¹⁰⁵ Maloney observed, "the President's position is very strong, but strong individual leadership is expected".¹⁰⁶ Phadnis and

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ If people will reject a candidate by a referendum, another name will be nominated in *Majlis* as soon as possible.

¹⁰⁵ P. Sahadevan. "Challenges to Political Order in Maldives" *BIIS Journal* (Dhaka), Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1998, pp. 94-108.

¹⁰⁶ Maloney, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-3.

Luithui admitted that overarching powers of the President can enable him to turn the system into highly centralized structure, but comparing with Nasir's one, they also discovered that it has become a more open and relatively autonomous government under President Gayoom.¹⁰⁷ The new constitution was inaugurated on January 1998. It contains some democratic reforms appropriate to a forward-looking nation:

- (1) providing for multi-candidate Presidential elections;
- (2) guaranteeing civil liberties and due process of law;
- (3) strengthening the judiciary, and;
- (4) stipulating for the first time that the offices of Commissioner of Elections and the Auditor-General should be constitutional posts.¹⁰⁸

However, the president still retains maximum power. He holds two important additional ministerial posts, Minister of Defence and National Security and Minister of Finance and Treasury. He rejects bills passed by the *Majlis*, enjoying unlimited discretionary powers to make temporary orders during emergency and nominating one or more Vice Presidents of he wishes.

Except for a presidential referendum, even though it is a democratic way, oppositional political activities are not allowed in the Maldivian democracy. Establishing a political party is not banned, but it is strictly censored by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment. No political party exists in the country. Anyone suspected of being involved in oppositional activities that threaten the government faces the risk of being banished to remote atolls. In 1993, Ilyas Ibrahim, a brother in law of President Gayoom, was arrested for challenging Gayoom's presidency, and later sentenced to over 15 years' banishment *in absentia*.¹⁰⁹ The Amnesty International Report disclosed that twenty-two supporters

¹⁰⁷ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-43.

¹⁰⁸ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information Arts and Culture, *Facing the Challenge of the New Millennium* (Malé: Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, 1998), p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Royston Ellis, *A Man for All Islands: A Biography of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives* (Singapore: Times Edition Pvt. Ltd., 1998), p. 215-22. According to Ellis, secret ballot was conducted at the *Majlis* in around September 1993. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom could secure 28 votes, a majority of members of *Majlis*, while Ilyas Ibrahim received 18 votes. Gayoom was re-elected for his fourth term as President by November 1993. Ilyas was later pardoned on January 1997, and now he is the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation.

and associates of Ilyas Ibrahim were also arrested between April and September.¹¹⁰

In addition, freedom of expression is severely restricted by the Maldivian authority. Gayoom himself was also banished from May to October 1973, and was sent to jail from July to September 1974 by the then President Nasir for only commenting on politics.¹¹¹ Publication is strictly censored by either the Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, or the Ministry of Education. The Amnesty International Report further disclosed that three Maldivian journalists were arrested in 1993¹¹² and 1995.¹¹³

CONCLUSION

It is widely agreed by both the Maldivian government and some international agencies that the Maldives is vulnerable in several aspects. These originate from geographical, societal and economic sources. A political source is still debatable. Despite the initiatives undertaken at achieving socio-economic development, it has been very difficult to overcome vulnerability. These inherent vulnerability will threaten its national security, further rendering it susceptible to dangers posed by several threats like rise in the sea-level, external economic shocks and so on.

The vulnerable situation in outer atolls is especially severe as compared to Malé. From the security point of view, such imbalances within the nation may affect the national integration of Maldives. The Ministry of Planning and National Development admits seven major socio-economic imbalances. These are income poverty, physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, housing and environment, food security and nutrition, employment and gender. The Ministry asserted that “one of the major challenges that has confronted Maldives has been to ensure that the benefits of growth and development are equitably shared between the nation’s highly dispersed population”.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Amnesty International Publications (AIP), *Amnesty International Report 1994* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1994), p. 205.

¹¹¹ Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-94.

¹¹² AIP, *Amnesty International Report 1993* (London: AIP, 1993), p. 202.

¹¹³ AIP, *Amnesty International Report 1995* (London: AIP, 1995), p. 205.

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Planning and National Development and UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

CHAPTER THREE

“NATURE OF THREATS TO SECURITY OF THE MALDIVES”

The Maldives has managed to preserve its independence for eight hundred years, except for fifteen years when the Portuguese controlled the island. This does not mean that the Maldives is powerful enough to defend itself against threats to its national security. Threats in the form of naval expeditions by the *Ali Raja* in the Indian subcontinent and the Portuguese Empire existed between the 15th and the 18th centuries. Some European powers competed to gain colonies in the Indian Ocean region until the beginning of 19th century, and till the end of the last century, superpowers had tried for naval bases in the ocean. Competition for colonization and militarization in the ocean also posed threats to the Maldivian security.

In recent years, the nation has had to combat both illegitimate activities of non-state actors in the Indian Ocean and a series of socio-economic challenges for its survival as a sovereign nation-state. Nation-states usually attempt to counter threats posed by illegitimate non-state actors like mercenaries, transnational guerrillas and pirates by various means. Micro island states, on the contrary, have constraints in their capability to defend themselves. Their security forces are too weak to suppress irregular military threats of groups that are usually equipped with infantry weapons such as pistols, machine guns and mortars. Scholars also emphasize that non-military threats such as sea-level rise and economic pressure are important to the discussion on the security of micro states.

This chapter discusses the nature of threats to security of Maldives. It can be categorized as: naval race in the Indian Ocean by great and regional powers, irregular military activities by sea-based non-state actors and, finally non-military threats.

MILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

The Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean after the Pacific and the Atlantic. The total area of the ocean is about 45,360,800 square kilometers. In the north, the Indian peninsula divides the Indian Ocean into two zones, the Arabian Sea in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east. It connects three continents -Africa, Asia and Australia. The ocean is separated from the Atlantic Ocean at the Cape of Good Hope in the west, and the boundary between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific follows the line from the Malay peninsula through Sumatra and Australia in the east.

The trade routes of the Indian Ocean had been busy and flourished for centuries with the help of monsoon winds. Kenneth McPherson observed that there are two distinctive seasons of winds: for about six months of the year these winds blow as northeasterlies and for another six months as southwesterlies.¹ He added:

mastery of the monsoon winds provided travelers with regular passage across the Arabian Sea, enabling the growth of international networks based upon the growing prosperity and wealth of great states in the Mediterranean, the fertile heartland of the Middle East, and South Asia.²

The waters of this busy ocean are not always safe. The license to navigate freely in the Indian Ocean had been hotly contested for a long period. Both Muslim and Chinese naval hegemonies did not allow other merchants and sailors to sail in the ocean before the colonial period. Colonial competitions, especially between the British and French, had taken place in the 18th century. Naval battles of a medium scale were fought between the Japanese and the Allied Forces in Sri Lanka, Andaman and Nicobar and Madagascar during the Second World War period.

This prompted the superpowers to militarize the Indian Ocean in the 1960s. The first U.S. task force, named the 'Concord Squadron', entered the Indian Ocean in

¹ Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

April 1964³, while the Soviet Union maintained a naval presence in the ocean since 1968.⁴ The 1970s and the early 1980s saw grave threats posed to the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean by the superpowers. According to the Australian Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, the Soviet navy visited twenty ports of the ocean littoral states between 1971 and 1976, while the U.S. navy visited 34 ports between 1973 and 1976.⁵ During the same period, natural harbors in the ocean such as Berbera, Mombassa, Socotra, Aden and the North West Cape were gradually converted into military bases or support facilities for the superpowers.

Pre-Independence Period

Security of the Maldives had also been threatened by naval expeditions of both regional powers and external powers between 15th and 18th century. Available historical records show the Maldives' involvement in South Asian regional politics, when the Sultan signed a treaty with the *Ali Raja* of Cannanore (one of the city states in the Malabar coast in Kerala), and agreed to pay an annual tribute in 1512.⁶ Maloney observed that Maldivian language, culture and economy had influences of the Chola dynasty, the Chinese Ming dynasty and the Sri Vijaya dynasty in Sumatra; they however did not pose any threat to the Maldives until the 15th century.⁷ It can be deduced from H.C.P. Bell's monograph that between 1480 and

³ K.R. Singh, *The Indian Ocean: Big Power Presence and Local Response* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1977), p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵ Source of data is: The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, *Australia and the Indian Ocean Region: Report from the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), pp. 211-35. According to the report, the Soviet navy mainly visited seven ports between 1971 and 1976: Berbera in Somalia (95 times), Aden in South Yemen (34 times), Singapore (35 times), Umm Qasr in Iraq (28 times), Port Louis in Mauritius (27 times), Mogadishu in Somalia (24 times) and Colombo (20 times). On the other hand, the U.S. navy mainly visited seven ports between 1973 and 1976: Mombassa (13 times), Karachi (12 times), Djibouti (12 times), Bandar Abbas in Iran (12 times), Bahrain (11 times), Massawa in Ethiopia (10 times) and Port Louis, Mauritius (10 times).

⁶ H.C.P. Bell, *The Maldives Islands: Monograph on the History, Archaeology, and Epigraphy* (Colombo: The Ceylon Government Press, 1940), p. 25.

⁷ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 107-114. He goes on to add that "except for Chinese tapestries among those hanging in the palace, and a few lovely items of Chinese porcelain in the possession of some prominent families, the cultural impact of China on the Maldives is negligible. (p. 111) The

1495, there were struggles for succession among several princes as the nation saw the reign of nine sultans in fifteen years.⁸ Some sultans ruled four or five years, while other sultans did not even last one year. Twice deposed sultan, Kalu Muhammad, secured the assistance of the *Ali Raja* of Cannanore to regain the throne in 1495. However, Maloney discovered that conflicts existed between the *Ali Raja* and the Maldives over territorial claims in Lakshadweep islands, and a monopoly of the Maldivian trade by Mammali Marakkar, a Moor in Cannanore.⁹ Later, the *Ali Raja* sent powerful navies in 1649, 1752, 1761 and 1771, thereby posing direct threats to the archipelago, including Malé.

Portugal was the only European colonial power that not only assaulted the Maldivian people, but also occupied its territory. Maldivian security had been directly threatened by the Portuguese since 1512 when they began to demand tribute from the nation.¹⁰ McPherson opines that the Maldivian archipelago was very profitable in promoting the Portuguese economic interests.

“elephants, areca nuts and cinnamon from Sri Lanka to the Malabar and Coromandel coasts; cowries from the Maldives to Bengal; and rice from Bengal and the Coromandel and Kanara, to other parts of South Asia, the Persian Gulf and to insular South East Asia”.¹¹

The Portuguese sent a series of naval expeditions to the archipelago, and their naval threat to the Maldives continued until 1649.¹² Phadnis and Luithui observed that “these expeditions gave way to more serious attempts at religious conversion and physical occupation of the islands” during the occupation by the Portuguese from

Maldives Sultan and the King of Acheh in northern Sumatra were good friends in Pyrard's time and often letters and presents to each other”. (p. 112)

⁸ Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁹ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

¹⁰ Subash Chawla, *The New Maldives* (Colombo: Dianu Agencies Ltd., 1986), p. 18. He mentions that the Sultan Ali V signed another treaty with the Portuguese commander, agreeing to pay an annual tribute to the Portuguese ruler in Goa as well.

¹¹ McPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹² According to Bell, the last Portuguese expedition to the Maldives was conducted in 1649. They attempted to capture Malé, but were repulsed by the Maldivian “navy”.

1558 to 1573.¹³ According to Bell, the Portuguese forcibly converted the inhabitants to Roman Catholic, threatening them with the death penalty on non-compliance.¹⁴

Holland, France and Britain had been the competitors for colonies in the Indian Ocean from 17th to the mid-20th century. Most parts of Sri Lanka were occupied by the Dutch by 1658. After the Napoleonic War, the whole island was controlled by the British Empire by 1815. The British colonial expansion in the Southern India also started in 1767. The French Empire succeeded in capturing Pondicherry by 1673. All these military moves probably made the Maldivians insecure about their sovereignty, it was more so because the country suffered a series of naval expeditions by the *Ali Raja* until the end of 18th century. The Maldivian sultan solicited the assistance of the western powers in combatting the military invasions of the *Ali Raja*. They did not pose any military threat to the Maldives, nor did they display any interest in the archipelagoes as compared to the other countries of the Indian subcontinent such as Sri Lanka. This can be attributed to frequent shipwreck around the archipelagoes and the incidence of malaria in the nation.¹⁵ The national security had been safeguarded by a protectorate agreement with Britain until 1965. Although this agreement was abrogated in 1965, British armed forces were asked to remain in the Gan island for thirty years under the 1965 Maldives-U.K. Agreement.¹⁶

¹³ Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, *Maldives: Winds of Change in an Atoll State* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985), p. 17.

¹⁴ Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁵ Maloney, *op. cit.*, p. 127. He said that "the European gained an impression that islands were inhospitable".

¹⁶ Article 3 of the Agreement said "Until the 15th day of December 1986, the United Kingdom Government may maintain within the Agreed Areas (the whole area of Gan island in Addu Atoll and a demarcated area of 110 acres on the Hithadoo island in Addu Atoll) such as armed forces as they may think fit for the exercise and use of the rights and facilities accorded to them under this Agreement". Article 4 said "The United Kingdom Government undertakes to utilize the facilities granted to them by the Maldivian Government in the Agreed Areas only for Commonwealth defense".

Militarization of the Indian Ocean

In the post-independence period, security of the Maldives was threatened by militarization of the Indian Ocean by the superpowers during the 1970s and the 1980s. At the Seventh Summit of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in New Delhi, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom asserted that “the growing military activities by the superpower in the Indian Ocean is de-stabilizing our region”.¹⁷ At the 35th General Assembly of the United Nations in October 1980, Foreign Minister, Fathulla Jameel warned against the consequences of a naval competition in the Indian Ocean by announcing that “continuation of the rivalry between superpowers in the region bears the threat of its escalation into conflicts of wider dimension”.¹⁸

In fact, the nation is weaker than other littoral states of the region after the loss of British protection in 1976. Due to its weakness, it has maintained a passive stand in international political affairs for fear that its relations with other countries might deteriorate. In the early 1970s, almost all the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region demanded that a ‘Zone of Peace’ be established in the Indian Ocean by the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁹ But some littoral states had taken double stands. Security of some of the countries was protected by security pacts with the western powers -France, U.K. and U.S.-, while some countries concluded ‘Peace and Friendship’ treaties with the former Soviet Union. The Maldives is one of the

¹⁷ Republic of Maldives, The Department of Information and Broadcasting, *Maldives: A Global view (Excerpts from President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's Speech 1979-1987)* (Malé: The Department of Information and Broadcasting, 1990), p. 17.

¹⁸ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information and Culture, *Maldives: Foreign Policy in Perspective (Speeches delivered at the United Nations on behalf of the Maldives 1965-1990)* (Malé: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1995), p. 50.

¹⁹ The United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1978* (New York: United Nations Publication, 1981), p. 94. Res.33/68 was adopted by the General Assembly on 14th December 1978 by recorded vote of 130 to 0, with 14 abstentions. Littoral states of the Indian Oceans amounts to 34 countries in 1978: Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar), the Comoros, Democratic Yemen (North Yemen), Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). Among them, two littoral states, the Seychelles and South Africa did not participate in the voting. All other 32 countries voted in favor.

few Indian Ocean littoral states that did not participate either in power politics or security pacts. Ferenc Vále maintains that “the Maldivians were passive outlookers at international development, thus it has not only failed formally to oppose Soviet or American naval activities in the Indian Ocean, but also avoided taking sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict in October 1973”.²⁰ Ahmed Shaheed said that the Maldives has never protested the U.S.-U.K. military deployment in Diego Garcia, because Chagos archipelagoes are under the sovereignty of the U.K.²¹ The nation also declined to accept an invitation to attend the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) summit at Lahore in 1974.

Immediately after the withdrawal of the British armed forces, it was feared that the atoll state would be militarized by the superpowers or their allies. Syed Anwar Husain observed that potential for a military base at the island of Gan was highlighted by its deep water anchorage, an international standard runway of 8,700 feet, a 2.5 megawatt diesel power generating plant, radar and a medical center.²² According to the *Asia 1984 Yearbook*, three external powers, the former Soviet Union, Iran and Libya, were interested in the Gan island.²³ In addition, Australian was also involved in the competition.²⁴

On the one hand, on 1977, the former Soviet Union officially asked the Maldivian government to lease the Gan island for an annual rent of one million U.S. dollars. It was allegedly for the use by its ‘fishing fleets’.²⁵ The militaristic ambitions of the erstwhile Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean was made clear by this offer. After the success of the Communists’ takeover of South Yemen, Ethiopia, Mozambique,

²⁰ Ferenc A. Váli, *Politics of the Indian Ocean Region: The Balances of Power* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), p. 105.

²¹ Interview with Dr. Ahmed Shaheed on 3rd November, 1997. At that time, he served the Director for Foreign Affairs in the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives.

²² Syed Anwar Husain, *Superpowers and Security in the Indian Ocean: A South Asian Perspective* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 169.

²³ Donald Wise (ed.) *Asia 1984 Yearbook* (Hongkong: Far Eastern Economic Review Publishing Company Ltd., 1983), p. 220.

²⁴ Ravinatha P. Aryasinha, “Indo-Maldivian relations and the relevance of the Sri Lankan factor” in Bertram Bastiampillai (ed.), *India and her South Asian neighbors* (Colombo: S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation, 1992), p. 97.

²⁵ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Madagascar and Seychelles by the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union needed a permanent naval base facility in the central Indian Ocean to secure the Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) between Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and several ports of the western Indian Ocean like Aden, Socotra, Dahlak island in Ethiopia and Maputo. Derek da Cunha observed that “one of the more significant aspects of the Soviet fleet’s use of basing right in Vietnam during the 1980s was that it provided a useful linkage between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean”.²⁶ The former Soviet Union also calculated that a military base in Gan island would check militarization by the United States in Diego Garcia, approximately 380 kilometers away.

On the other hand, the United States did not directly involve itself in the competition for the Gan island. Instead, the U.S. urged its allies, Shah’s Iran and Australia to try for it. The reluctance on the part of the U.S. to get directly involved marks a clear departure from the U.S. policy that was still reeling from the reverses suffered in Vietnam. It was in fact the ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ that influenced the Nixon Doctrine in 1969 and guided the American security policy. Nixon explained his doctrine:

we should provide military and economic aid to friendly states in whatever amounts necessary to defeat Soviet-supported insurgents, but the country under attack must undertake the responsibility for providing the troops to mount its own security.²⁷

The Maldivian government rejected the external offers on the Gan island. The country, at least, succeeded in preventing militarization of the Gan island. However, the issue was too controversial to be decided by the President only. According to Royston Ellis, the then President Ibrahim Nasir consulted all his ministers and put the decision to vote before refusing the Soviet offer.²⁸ His ministers were divided.

²⁶ Derek da Cunha, *Soviet Naval Power in the Pacific* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1990), p. 178.

²⁷ Richard Nixon, *1999: Victory without War* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., 1988), p. 122.

²⁸ Royston Ellis, *A Man for All Islands: A Biography of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the*

Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, then Minister of Transport, held the view that the Soviet offer did not merit a vote and should be rejected outright in order to maintain a genuine non-aligned stance and to secure economic aid from western countries.

Maldives and the U.S. Military Presence

Militarization of the Indian Ocean has continued in the post Cold War era. There is an U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf region, Diego Garcia and western Australia, and French military presence in Réunion, Mayotte and Djibouti. Furthermore, the U.S. Pacific Fleet now covers most of the Indian Ocean region to safeguard the 'U.S. national interests'.²⁹ But the situation is different from that of the Cold War period. It is not a power rivalry. The Russian naval forces withdrew from the ocean in 1992 as a result of disintegration of the Soviet Union.

However, it is too early to ascertain whether or not the unipolar militarization of Indian Ocean poses a threat to the Maldivian national security. The country's geographical location in the ocean has a strategic importance.³⁰ Its non-aligned stance was challenged by the U.S. during the Persian Gulf War. The U.S. understood that the size of Maldivian defense forces was too small to deploy in the Persian Gulf region. Instead, due to Maldives' proximity to the region, the U.S. demanded logistic support from the Maldives, which meant the use of Hululé International Airport as an air base, and refueling of bombers and air fighters of U.S.-led Coalition Forces.³¹ The country turned down the demand in February 1991.

Maldives (Singapore: Times Editions Pvt. Ltd., 1998), p. 106.

²⁹ The headquarters of the U.S. Pacific Fleet is located in Pearl Harbor. The Fleet is equipped by 39 strategic submarines, six air carriers, 29 cruisers, 30 destroyers and 12 frigates. Detachments from this fleet serve in the Indian Ocean.

³⁰ Váli, *op. cit.*

³¹ Atsuko Akasaka and Hiromi Yamashita, *A Handbook of South East Asia* (Tokyo: Institute of South East Asian Research, 1991), p. 35.

IRREGULAR MILITARY CHALLENGES

Although there is no power rivalry in the Indian Ocean after the Cold War, it cannot be said that absolute security has been achieved in the region. Several non-state actors such as mercenaries, guerrillas and pirates operate in the island states of the ocean. It is not easy to categorize those groups. One group may be involved in two or more activities at the same time, while other groups are totally different from each other. The past experience demonstrates that threats of great power involvement in the region can be said to involve more psychological violence. The naval force of great powers seldom attacked merchant ships and their sailors. Threat of non-legitimate groups, on the other hand, has often become violent.³² Civilians are injured and killed in such encounters.

Both the government and people of the Maldives were physically assaulted by a group of non-state actors in November 1988. It sought to oust President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. This mercenary invasion altered the nation's threat perception altogether. Mohamed Zahir, the Chief of Staff of the Maldivian National Security Service, asserted that irregular military threats such as mercenary invasion, drug-trafficking, and terrorist activities have always been a bigger problem for small states than conventional threats.³³

Threat of Mercenaries

Mercenary activities have been a major concern in the Indian Ocean region, especially in micro island states. Their threats are more real than any other military activities. Gerry Thomas distinguishes these threats as the 'coup strike force', which is usually well-financed, trained, equipped and directed by an exiled opposition leader.³⁴ As a matter of fact, around hundred mercenaries invaded three

³² Johan Galtung made a distinction between physical and psychological violence while he analyzed structural violence in his article. "Violence, Peace and Peace Research", *Journal of Peace Research* (Oslo), Vol. 6, 1969, pp. 167-91.

³³ Mohamed Jaleel and Ahmed Shaheed, "Regional Economic Trends: Security Implication for Maldives" in Iftekhruzzaman (ed.), *Regional Economic Trends and South Asian Security* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1997), p. 118.

³⁴ Gerry S. Thomas, *Mercenary Troops in Modern Africa* (Boulder and London: Westview Press,

micro states of the ocean, the Comoros (1976, 1978, 1989 and 1995) and the Seychelles (1981). These countries struggled to defend themselves against mercenaries. Two western Indian Ocean countries accepted military intervention from France and Tanzania. Surprisingly, four governments in the Comoros were overthrown by mercenaries under Colonel Robert Denard, an ex-French military service man. He had, for a decade, influenced politics of the Comoros.³⁵

In the 1980s, several studies on mercenaries were conducted. These studies attempted at defining a mercenary. Thomas was the first to distinguish five military operatives (army, auxiliary, agent, partisan and mercenary) by three determinant factors: whether they are local citizens or not, whether they receive own government's support or not, and whether they integrate into a national structure or not. He concluded that a mercenary:

1. is not a citizen of the country in which he is fighting;
2. is not supported by his own government and;
3. takes direct part in the hostilities outside the structure of the standing army.³⁶

Later, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution (Res.44/34) in December 1989, called 'International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries'. Article 1 of the Convention defined that a mercenary is a person who:

1. is specially recruited locally or, abroad in order to fight an armed conflict;
2. is specially recruited locally or abroad for the purpose of participating in a concerted act of violence aimed at overthrowing a Government or otherwise undermining the constitutional order of a State, or territorial integrity of a State;
3. is motivated to take part in hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar rank and functions in the armed forces of the part;

1984), p. 7.

³⁵ For mercenary involvement in Comoran politics, see Malyn Newitt, *The Comoro Islands: Struggle against dependency in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984) and Phillip M. Allen, *Security and Nationalism in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).

³⁶ Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

4. is neither a national of a party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a party to the conflict;
5. is neither a national nor a resident of the State against which such act is directed;
6. is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict;
7. is not a member of the armed forces of the State on whose territory the act is undertaken;
8. has not been sent by a State which is not a party to the conflict and;
9. has not been sent by a State on official duty.³⁷

In the Maldives, since President Gayoom's tenure in office in November 1978, there have been two cases of attempted coup in which mercenaries were involved. Both aimed at overthrowing the Gayoom regime. One year after his assumption of office, the first coup strike mercenaries landed in the capital on February 1980. According to Ellis, they consisted of nine Englishmen most of whom were former members of British Special Air Service.³⁸ Their attempt failed without any military activities. The second coup strike forces, which consisted of two hundred armed men, invaded Malé after eight years. This force was stronger than the first one. Two more unsuccessful plots were reported in 1981 and 1983. Mercenary involvement was not seen in these two coup attempts.

The identity of the leader of all these coup attempts was not ascertained. V. Suryanarayan suspected that Ibrahim Nasir, the first president of Maldives, was the ringleader of four coup attempts, though he denied it.³⁹ It is true that Nasir was the founding father of the republic of Maldives; however, he failed to ensure his popularity among the people while he was in office. Nasir decided to retire on grounds of ill health after he finished his second term as President in 1978. At the same time, *Majlis* nominated Maumoon Abdul Gayoom as President with majority of votes. Gayoom, twice deposed by Nasir, was not a successor appointed by him. Soon after Gayoom assumed charge, Nasir went to Singapore for treatment and eventually became a resident. In 1980, Nasir was charged *in absentia*, by the

³⁷ The United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1989* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1990), pp. 825-26.

³⁸ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

³⁹ V. Suryanarayan, "The Maldives and India's Security" in Satish Chandra, B. Arunachalam and V. Suryanarayan (eds.), *The Indian Ocean and its Islands: Strategic, Scientific and Historical Perspectives* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1993), p. 110.

Gayoom regime for misappropriation of government funds. His status in the Maldives declined from the founding father of the republic to a criminal. On the other hand, "Gayoom is earning popularity by adopting policies of democratization and economic liberalization. He will be a greater father of the country than Nasir, if he will be able to end his presidential term without any problem".⁴⁰

Transnational Guerrillas

Transnational guerrillas are an example of non-state actors in the world politics. As compared to mercenaries, pirates and other non-state actors, some of transnational guerrillas have been virtually recognized as freedom fighters who participate in national liberation movements. On the contrary, if the whole world determines it as an illegitimate organization, it will be a terrorist organization. Therefore, the term 'transnational guerrilla' is a broad category, and it is more convenient to use the term than terrorists or national liberation movements. Peter Willetts defined guerrillas as a neutral term to cover all groups fighting for political goals, whether or not they adopt terrorist method.⁴¹

In the Maldives, it is widely believed that many guerrillas from northern Sri Lanka were involved in the mercenary invasion of the capital in 1988. They were armed with AK-47 rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.⁴² A report in the *Frontline* revealed that shortly after they were captured by the Indian troops, four of the mercenaries confessed that they were members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). This group was one of five prominent Tamil secessionist groups in Sri Lanka and was headed by Uma Maheswaran.⁴³

⁴⁰ Hideyuki Takahashi, "Maldivian National Security -And the Threats of Mercenaries" *The Round Table* (London), No. 351, July 1999, p. 436.

⁴¹ Peter Willetts, "Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics" in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 297.

⁴² Sukhdeo Prasad Baranwal (ed.), *Military Yearbook 1987-88* (New Delhi: Guide Publications, 1988), p. 84.

⁴³ Thomas Abraham, "Sri Lankan Link" *Frontline* (Chennai), November 26-December 9th, 1988, p. 32.

Moreover, the Indian naval forces had detailed intercepted messages exchanged between PLOTE headquarters in Sri Lanka and the mercenaries.⁴⁴

Aryasinha observed that though the coup was led by Abudulla Luthufi, it was masterminded by Maheswaran.⁴⁵ Luthufi, a Maldivian businessman residing in Sri Lanka, merely directed the coup to overthrow President Gayoom in 1988. Abraham holds that Maheswaran probably needed a large amount of money and a piece of Maldivian land for another base.⁴⁶ By the end of 1988, PLOTE was marginalized by both the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka and by the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) headed by Velupillai Prabhakaran. O'Ballance reveals that Maheswaran sought to include his PLOTE guerrillas in the Sri Lankan Army to fight the LTTE. He seemed to have a secret meeting with the Sri Lankan President, Julius Jayawardene.⁴⁷

Piracy and Hostage-taking

Piracy and hostage-taking have posed threats to freedom and safety of navigation in the Indian Ocean. A hostage-taking case occurred on a micro island state, when a group of mercenaries seized a Maldivian commercial vessel, *Progress Light*, and escaped from Malé to probably Sri Lanka in November 1988.

International law regards both piracy and hostage-taking as a crime. Whether the motive is towards achieving political or private gains, the International Convention against Taking of Hostages defines hostage-taking as all acts of capture and restraint. On the contrary, the United Nations Convention of the Law of the sea (UNCLOS) has determined that conducting piracy is only restricted both to a private purpose and by a private group. Article 101 of the UNCLOS defines piracy as:

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Aryasinha, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁴⁶ Abraham, *op. cit.* He said "according to one report, he was promised \$2.5 million and the use of an island in the Maldivian chain".

⁴⁷ Edgar O'Ballance, *The Cyanide War: Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka 1973-1988* (London: Brassey's UK. Ltd., 1989), p. 117.

- (a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft,
- (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate-ship or aircraft, and
- (c) any act of inciting or of internationally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) and (b).

Recent piracy activities, however, are not always perpetrated by private groups. Three categories of piracy can be distinguished according to *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*: private commercial groups, locally based groups and dissident groups.⁴⁸ Some acts are committed by corrupt local officials, others may have linkages with insurgent groups that seek funds for equipment and other purposes. *Jane's* report particularly asserted that there are allegations that a new deeply ingrained relationship has developed between the maritime criminals and 'officialdom' such as shipping agents, port officials and coast guards.⁴⁹

According to reports of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a total number of reported incidents of piracy accounted for 252 in 1997, 228 in 1996. It has steadily increased since 1984.⁵⁰ Although recent attention on piracy has now been shifted to the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the coast of East Africa and to a certain extent, the Malacca Strait, have still remained significant in reports. The number of reported attacks in the Ocean rose to 52 in 1997, around twenty percent of the total cases and the second largest figure after the South China Sea.⁵¹

NON-MILITARY THREATS

Military threats usually target at the Maldivian government and non-military threats affect the daily life of people and their survival. In recent years, non-military threats have become a significant issue for Maldivian national security. Ibrahim Hussain

⁴⁸ Mike Bryant (ed.), *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1999), p. 31.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *IMO News* (London), No.2, 1998, pp. 29-30.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Zaki agreed that “when we talk about the security of small states, we are referring to a very broad range of threats”.⁵² He also include that non-military threats such as problems of famine, refugees, drug-trafficking, organized crime, AIDS, environmental degradation and “failing states”.⁵³

Environmental Threats

The rise in the sea level has posed major threats to the survival of Maldivian people. This rise is due to the melting of the polar ice caps as a result of global warming. An increase of one to two meters in the sea level is likely to occur in the next two hundred years. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) observed that about half the rise comes from the thermal expansion of the ocean, and half from melting glaciers and polar land ice.⁵⁴ These organizations predicted that over the next century an estimated 60 cm rise in sea level could affect about 50 million people.⁵⁵

As mentioned in the previous chapter, elevations of almost all islands and islets in the Maldives are less than two meters. Apart from Malé, almost all the Maldivian islands face the danger of being sunk if the sea-level rises above two meters. The UNEP identified the Maldives as one of the ten countries that faces threat from sea-level rise.⁵⁶ President Gayoom held at the United Nations Assembly in October 1987 that if the global sea-level rises up to two meters, “this will be a death of a nation”.⁵⁷ He further added: “with a mere one meter rise also, a storm surge would

⁵² Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, “Protection and Security of Small States: The Maldives’ Initiative at the United Nations” *United Nations Association of Maldives (UNAM) Chronicle* (Malé), Vol. 2, No. 1, October 1995, p. 11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁵⁴ International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *Climate Change and Energy Efficiency in Industry* (London: IPIECA, 1991), p. 52.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Ten vulnerable countries include Bangladesh, Egypt, the Gambia, Indonesia, the Maldives, Mozambique, Pakistan, Senegal, Suriname and Thailand.

⁵⁷ The Department of Information and Broadcasting, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

be catastrophic, and possibly fatal”.⁵⁸ Five years later, he raised the issue of global sea-level rise in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (widely known as the Earth Summit) at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and held that although a twenty centimeters rise in sea level by the year 2030 may not sound much for the entire international community, but it is substantial to island states like Maldives where 80 percent of its land elevation is less than two meters above the sea level.

As a matter of fact, sea-level rise is slowly but steadily proceeding. In 1998, the Ministry of Planning and National Development disclosed that beach erosion has occurred in 94 percent of islands in outer atolls.⁵⁹ Only eleven islands are free from beach erosion.

Ocean-related natural disasters such as cyclones and tidal waves pose more immediate threats to the Maldivian people than sea-level rise. Floods in the Maldivian territory are frequent due to its low elevation and are caused when giant waves were unleashed by cyclones or earthquakes. Two massive floods occurred in 1987 and '91 in Malé, Hululé International Airport and other atolls. Mary Lynn Hanley noted that two-thirds of the capital territory was flooded by tidal wave, resulting in damage worth over \$40 million, almost the same amount as the central government expenditure (\$37 million) during that year and more than forty percent of the GDP (\$95 million) in April 1987.⁶⁰ In June 1991, a strong cyclone, with a wind speed of 90mph hit the entire archipelago. The total damage was estimated at \$30 million, 3,000 houses and 135,000 plantain trees.⁶¹ Hanley mentioned that “for the Maldives, the ocean is the greatest threat as well as its greatest asset”.⁶²

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, *Republic of Maldives: Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment 1998* (Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), pp. 207-11.

⁶⁰ Mary Lynn Hanley, “The Fragile Islands of Maldives” *World Development* (New York), Vol. 4, No. 6, November 1991, p. 26. The central government expenditure amounted to 343 million rufiyaas, while GDP counted for 876 million rufiyaas in 1987. At that time, the average exchange rate was: US\$1.00=Rf.9.22. Source of data is: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, Republic of Maldives, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1995* (Malé: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, 1995), p. 280 and p. 290.

⁶¹ Alan J. Day (ed.), *The Annual Register: A Record of World Events 1991* (Essex: Longman Group U.K. Ltd., 1992), p. 327.

⁶² Hanley, *op. cit.*

External Economic Shocks

In the past, the Maldivians had suffered from threats of several external economic shocks. As with environmental threats, the economic threats cannot be overcome by the Maldivians. As has already been seen in the second chapter, the economic development is determined by external economic conditions, especially prices of fish exports and number of tourist arrivals. Therefore, when either price of export fish or tourist arrivals sharply decline, economy registers a great loss as there is a decline in trade surplus, tourism-related tax revenue and international reserve. In 1972, the Maldives suffered its first external economic shock that posed a grave threat to the national economy when Sri Lanka, the then major buyer of Maldivian fish, reduced its import of fish.⁶³ At that time, the national economy was totally dependent on fish export to Sri Lanka. A decade later, another external economic shock was experienced when negotiated fish prices dropped sharply.⁶⁴ One year later, civil disturbances in Sri Lanka largely affected the tourism industry in the archipelago. The *Asia 1985 Yearbook* noted a drop of 21 percent in tourist arrivals to the Maldives, it was common for most tourists to combine their holiday with a trip to Sri Lanka.⁶⁵ Since the late 1980s, many direct airlinks have been established between the Maldives and European cities, and between the Maldives and Asian cities. However, the nation's tourism industry suffered a setback during the Persian Gulf and the recession in Europe in 1991.⁶⁶ There was four percent drop in tourist arrival from European countries throughout 1991.⁶⁷

⁶³ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁶⁴ Donald Wise (ed.), *Asia 1984 Yearbook* (Hongkong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1983), p. 221. According to the *UNCTAD Commodity Yearbook 1985* (Geneva and New York: United Nations Publications, 1988), p. 370, the price of one metric ton of fishmeal was 467.5 dollars in 1981. The price dropped sharply to 352.9 dollars in 1982.

⁶⁵ Donald Wise, *Asia 1985 Yearbook* (Hongkong: Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1984), p. 201.

⁶⁶ Day, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

⁶⁷ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1995* (Malé: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, 1995), p. 256. The tourist arrivals from European countries accounted for 152,041 in 1990, while the 1991 figure was 147,012.

Moreover, the 1991 Persian Gulf War posed another threat to the daily life of the archipelago's people. The country almost entirely depends on the Middle East for petroleum and other energy sources. Fearing a shortage of oil supply during the Persian Gulf War, the government imposed a series of measures like power cuts, restrictions on the long hours of business and obligatory fifty percent reduction in the consumption of oil.⁶⁸ In the open market, fuel oil cost 4.50 rufiyaas per liter in December 1990, the highest price ever.⁶⁹ This measure probably affected the daily life of the Maldivians until the government lifted all the restrictive measures on energy and power in the beginning of March, 1991.

The recent boom in the national economy has been sustained by two major positive elements, higher international fish prices and increased tourists arrivals, especially from Europe and Asia. The GDP growth rate of the Maldives was around 6.2 percent in 1997 and 6.8 percent in 1998.⁷⁰ Fortunately, for the Maldives, despite a financial crisis in many Asian countries, its economy did not suffer any significant repercussions of external economic shock in the Asia Pacific region.⁷¹

External Economic Pressure

External aid givers often exert pressure on the aid-receiving countries. Aminath Didi, Director of Department of External Resources under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held the view that the Maldivian government was very careful in accepting aid from countries.⁷² Although most of the loan is not written off, she did not elaborate on the point of pressure being mounted by the donors. The donors often coerce the receivers to agree to some hidden agenda to pursue their national

⁶⁸ Day, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

⁶⁹ Source of data is: Ministry of Planning Human Resources and Environment, *op. cit.*, p. 253. For example, the price was 2.94 rufiyaas per liter in December 1984, while 3.25 rufiyaas in January 1992.

⁷⁰ Source of data is: Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 138.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Interview with Ms. Aminath Didi on 14th June 2000. She said the Aid Management and Coordination Committee, comprises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Department of External Resources and President's Office,

interests. The recent structural adjustment programmes of both the IMF and the World Bank (U.S. dominated world financial organizations) have challenged the Maldivian government somewhat. These organizations grant aid on a condition that the receiving countries implement a series of structural adjustment programmes. The UNDP report held that the Maldivian authorities were careful about minimizing the social costs of a structural adjustment programme.⁷³ This would explain the cold response of the Maldives towards the Bretton Woods system since the nation supported the implementation of the New International Economic Order (NIEO). At the Seventh Conference of NAM Summit in New Delhi, President Gayoom asserted that “despite the efforts of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, the world community has so far failed to establish a more equitable economic system”.⁷⁴

Threats of Organized Crimes

Since nation is chiefly dependent on the fishing industry for economic growth, illegal fishing poses a major threat to the national resources of the Maldives. Maldives is one of the few ‘archipelagic states’ of the world, which is recognized by the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea. Therefore, the size of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is much larger than the size of its territory. It is approximately 859,000 square kilometers, bigger than the size of Pakistani territory (796,000 square kilometers). It would take more than six small patrol crafts to patrol the entire Maldivian EEZ.⁷⁵ It is therefore difficult to detect illegal fishermen. Though reports and statistics on illegal fishing cases have not been made available by the government, two Maldivian government officials, Mohamed Jaleel and Ahmed Shaheed, admitted that illegal fishing is a major problem for the

⁷³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Development Cooperation, Maldives: 1993 Report* (New York: UNDP, 1994), p. 4.

⁷⁴ Department of Information and Broadcasting, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁷⁵ Captain Richard Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1999-2000* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1999), p. 449.

Maldives.⁷⁶ They added “even where licensing arrangements may be in operation, deficiencies and difficulties in the monitoring systems lead to considerable loss of resources and potential income”.⁷⁷

Another organized crime that poses threats to the Maldivian society is drug trafficking. The Statistical Yearbook of the Maldives and other Maldivian official publications have not reported on drug trafficking or drug abuse case. According to the UNDP, drug crime cases in the nation accounted for 3.7 per 100,000 in 1994.⁷⁸ Recently, President Gayoom acknowledged that “the biggest threat facing the nation was the spread of drug abuse, which was inflicting a lot of suffering and pain on a number of families”.⁷⁹ This means the number of drug trafficking and drug abuse cases must be higher than that reported by the UNDP. The Maldivian government believes that some tourists, especially from Europe could pervert the society by spreading ‘un-Islamic’ culture.⁸⁰ The government tries to minimize all contacts between the locals and tourists by restricting access to other inhabited atolls.⁸¹ Many tourist resorts are now built in uninhabited islands and islets.

Money laundering also poses threats to the country. The nation has plans of establishing an offshore financial centre of the Indian Ocean and South Asia in the near future, to minimize its reliance on fish export and tourism industry. There is no exchange control legislation and economy is free from restrictions to international payments and trade.⁸² Moreover, it is a tax haven for multilateral corporations.

⁷⁶ Jaleel and Shaheed, *op. cit.*, p. 118-19.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁷⁸ The United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 222.

⁷⁹ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, “National Security Service is the Shield of the Nation and the People –President Gayoom” *Maldivian News Bulletin* (Malé), No.746, 1st May 2000, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Alan J. Day, *The Annual Register: A Record of World Events 1993* (Essex: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1994), p. 330.

⁸¹ According to Mark Balla and Robert Willox, foreigners who intend to visit other atolls have to submit application forms to the Ministry of Atolls Administration. In the application form, they have to mention not only their name, passport number and nationality, but also the name of island and atoll which they intend to visit, duration of their stay, the name and address of their sponsor in atoll and purpose of visit. Mark Balla and Robert Willox *Maldives and Islands of the east Indian Ocean* (Hawthorn, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 1993), p. 51.

⁸² Jaleel and Shaheed, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

However, all multilateral corporations do not engage in normal business activities. It is very easy for multilateral corporation-turned-criminal organizations to launder money under such unrestricted financial conditions in the country. Detailed reports on large scale money laundering and other illegal economic activities in the Maldives have not been disclosed as yet. In the absence of drastic financial reform, the present situation will not only encourage such criminal activities as drug trafficking, arms trafficking and financial fraud in the islands, but also seriously affect the nation's macroeconomic policy formulation and implementation.

CONCLUSION

In the past, the Maldivians suffered from a series of regular military challenges. Apart from armed expeditions of two powers, the *Ali Raja* of Canannore and the Portuguese Empire, no great power posed direct military threats to the sovereignty of the island. This was probably due to the small size of its territory, insularity and living conditions in the atolls. Instead, the nation always feared colonization and later militarization by the great powers upon expiry of the security pact with Britain. The nation witnessed naval deployment of the U.S. and the soviet Union in the Indian Ocean. The Maldivians were firm in refusing militarization of the Gan island. Due to its passive stand in international politics, the micro state could do little to prevent the deployment of the navies of superpowers navies near the atolls.

The invasion of Malé by a group of mercenaries in 1988, altered the threat perceptions posed to the country altogether. The possibility of regular military challenges in the future cannot be ruled out; however, both irregular military threats and non-military threats have been more crucial and immediate to the Maldivian national security than regular military threats. The 1988 mercenary invasion case proved that the atoll state was unable to combat the irregular military activities of illegitimate non-state actors. Some facts indicate that economic security has always been fragile and is sensitive to external threats of economic shocks and pressures. Almost all the islands have suffered from beach erosion which is caused by the rise in global sea-level and ocean-related natural disasters.

CHAPTER FOUR

“PROTECTION OF MALDIVIAN SECURITY: POLICIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS”

It is not easy for micro states to overcome their vulnerability. They are, however, faced with the task of protecting themselves from both irregular military threats posed by non-state actors; and non-militaristic socio-economic challenges. Scholars have suggested that the Maldives has many policy options, which other micro states follows to protect their security. The first Commonwealth report on Small States suggested four military measures to secure their sovereignty: national security establishment, bilateral arrangements, special multilateral arrangements and regional arrangements.¹ In addition, the report also stressed the need for the enhancement of socio-economic measures for safeguarding their security by achieving economic growth and promoting internal cohesion.² At the same time, the second Commonwealth report limited the policy options for micro states to two: national measures to enhance security through capacity-building and multilateral security measures to enhance the role of Small States in the international system.³

All micro states have so far relied on military assistance and/or economic aid of bigger powers, especially either ex-colonial great powers or neighboring regional powers, to ensure their security. The Maldives is one of the few micro states that has succeeded in diversifying bilateral contacts. It has also diversified its security policy by seeking multilateral security assistance from the United Nations and bilateral assistance from India. These Maldivian initiatives are not confined to military aspects. The atoll state has vigorously worked to safeguard the global

¹ A Commonwealth Consultative Group, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985), pp. 38-53.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 54-67.

³ A Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997), pp. 127-49.

environment at several international fora for almost a decade.

This chapter attempts at analyzing the diversified security policy adopted by the Maldives. This includes bilateral arrangements with Britain and India and multilateral security arrangements for protection of the security of micro states.

BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS

As mentioned previously, the Maldives resisted colonization by the great powers. Geographical factors -smallness of the territory and its insular location- prevented its colonization. In addition, frequent shipwrecks near the archipelagoes and the spread of malaria can be other reasons for the external power's disinterest in colonization of the Maldives.

This does not mean that the Maldives was isolated from the colonial competition and subsequently, the militarization of the Indian Ocean by the superpowers. The country enjoyed the protection of Britain without much interference in its domestic affairs until 1976. Thereafter, it has not concluded any security pact with any country. The Maldivians think that the dependence of a nation on a big power for its military security and economic growth tantamounts to the loss of its sovereign independence. Instead, the country diversified its bilateral arrangements by utilizing many bilateral contacts. Till now, the most realistic and effective security arrangement to keep the Maldives secure is bilateral arrangements with great or regional power with substantial military and economic capabilities.

Relying on British Protection

From the 17th to the end of the 20th century, the country had bilateral military security arrangements primarily with two global naval powers, Holland and Britain, to encounter the threat posed by the *Ali Raja* of Cannanore and later the destructive activities of Bohra merchants in the islands. Little evidence is available on the relations of the atoll state with Holland. Although an annual tribute was sent to the Dutch embassy in Colombo between 1645 and 1796, the Dutch Navy did not

participate in quelling aggression from the Malabar coast.⁴ The Maldives enjoyed a *de facto* protectorate status from the Dutch; however, they refrained from intervening in internal matters, and their influence did not last longer than that of the British.

After the British East Indian Company acquired the Dutch territory in Ceylon in 1796, Britain became a security guarantor of the archipelagoes until 1976. During that period, there was no serious military threat posed to the Maldivian national security. As compared to the period of Dutch protection, the micro state could enjoy security provided by the most powerful colonial power in South Asia and Indian Ocean. The period in which the Great Britain offered protection to the Maldives can be divided into two phases. In the beginning, an annual tribute was sent to the British Governor of Ceylon in Colombo. From 1887, the protection was formalized by three bilateral agreements between Maldives and Britain: the 1887 Agreement, the 1947 Agreement and the 1965 Agreement.

The protectorate status continued until the country was recognized by the world community as sovereign independent state. During the British protectorate period, the Maldives did not require any British military intervention since it did not face any external aggression. Keeping diplomatic and business contacts were more important than military ties until 1860s. Both the sides realized the need for formalizing relations during the time when the Maldives suffered from political instability possibly created by the Borah merchants.⁵ Under the 1887 protectorate agreement, the contracting parties agreed to abide by two obligations. The Maldivian side recognized the suzerainty of Britain, and gave up its right to enter into negotiations or treaties with any foreign state, except through the British Governor in Ceylon.⁶ The British side, in turn, agreed to protect the Maldives against foreign enemies and to abstain from interfering in internal affairs of the

⁴ Urmila Phadnis and Ela Dutt Luithui, *Maldives: Winds of Change in an Atoll State* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985), p. 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶ H.C.P. Bell, *The Maldivian Islands: Monograph on the History, Archaeology and Epigraphy* (Colombo: The Ceylon Government Press, 1940), p. 48.

Maldives.⁷

Apart from these obligations, Britain acquired the right to establish a military base for the defense of the Maldives and other 'dominions'. Temporary military bases had already been established in two islands by the British as a back-up so that the allied power could be assisted in South East Asia and the Indian subcontinent during the Second World War. After a decade of negotiations with the Maldivian government⁸, the construction of an air base in the Gan island commenced in 1957. The construction work was completed in 1960. Under the 1948 Agreement, the Maldives could gain limited diplomatic accesses in accordance with advice of the British government. More independent status was also granted when suzerainty and annual tribute ceased.

The bilateral arrangement merely lasted for ten years. It was largely a relation between two sovereign countries. The 1965 Maldives-U.K. Agreement aimed at two things: granting full independence to the Maldives and the use of an air base on Gan island and a radio station on Hithadoo island until 1986. It is doubtful whether this pact was aimed at ensuring the Maldives' security. Article 3 of the Agreement said that the Maldivian government confirmed the grant made by them to the United Kingdom government under the 'Agreement of 14th February 1960'. It also gave an unrestricted and exclusive use of Gan island and Hithadoo island by Britain until 15th December 1986. Article 4 also mentioned that "the United Kingdom Government undertakes to utilize the facilities granted to them by the Maldivian Government in the Agreed Areas for 'Commonwealth defence'". As compared to the two protectorate agreements, the protection of the islands' security is not clearly mentioned in other articles. It is worth noting that the country was not even a

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Phadnis and Luithui, *op. cit.*, p. 28-34. The 1948 Agreement, especially the article 5, was revised by the 1953 Agreement after the Maldives was declared a republic. The revised agreement said that the United Kingdom Government shall have the right to establish and maintain in the Maldivian islands such facilities for defense of the Maldives or any part of the Commonwealth 'after consultation with Maldivian government'. It took several years for Britain to negotiate with the Maldivian government. Finally, the Maldivian government officially admitted to grant the right. However, at the same time, Britain unilaterally started the construction of air base during negotiations.

member of the Commonwealth until 1982.

India's Security Assistance

The British armed forces withdrew from the Maldives in 1976. The Maldives did not seek any bilateral security arrangement between 1976 and 1988. Instead, the country adopted a non-aligned foreign policy so as to insulate the archipelago from the influence of the two superpowers. However, this policy was not useful in defending its national security against the mercenary aggression of 1988. The most serious irregular military threat ever faced was successfully quelled by the Indian armed forces. The Indian naval and air forces not only restored a democratic regime in the Maldives, but also rescued many Maldivian hostages taken by mercenaries. President Gayoom also requested that a token presence of Indian forces be maintained in the island for training the Maldivian National Security Service until 1990.

Gayoom possibly sought India's intervention for two reasons. He must have considered several other options, but finally chose India as a security guarantor since he needed a strong intervener that could deploy its armed forces in the island without delay. Its geographical distance from its Islamic allies, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan, posed difficulties for their navies to reach Malé in a short time. Gayoom eliminated both Sri Lankan and the American options because of military reasons. The Sri Lankan Navy and air force, at that time, were incapable of deploying their forces in the Maldives as they were facing insurgency. The size of the navy and air force is so small that its role was strictly limited to the defense of the country.⁹ The U.S. forces in Diego Garcia were not equipped with any rapid reaction forces to suppress the activities of non-state actors. According to the *Military Balance 1988-89*, the U.S. Navy in Diego Garcia consisted of 1,700

⁹ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 1988-89* (London: IISS, 1988), p. 177. The then Sri Lankan navy was equipped with two offshore patrol crafts (*Jayesagara* class), six inshore fast patrol boats (*Sooraya* class) and 28 other inshore patrol crafts.

personnel with five marine prepositioning squadrons in 1988.¹⁰

The major powers supported the Indian military intervention in the archipelago. Thomas Abraham revealed that there was an understanding between the U.S. and Indian governments that Indian forces would rescue the Gayoom government.¹¹ After the success of Operation Cactus, President Ronald Reagan congratulated India's rôle in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, hailing it as a "valuable contribution to the regional stability".¹² At the same time, Japan, a faithful ally of the U.S. which depended on the Indian Ocean trade route for its oil and other resource supplies, did not officially support the Indian action. However, a statement made by the former Japanese ambassador to India was subsequently disclosed by Koji Okamoto. It held that Japan would only denounce nuclear and missile armament issues and that it was commendable that the friendly and powerful Indian navy has safeguarded the Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) of the ocean, which was vital to the Japanese national interest.¹³ It would therefore be appropriate to adopt a 'wait-and-see' approach in the South Asian region and the Indian Ocean.

The Indian rôle in the Maldives may be considered to be one of successful attempts to build a regional hegemonic stability¹⁴ in South Asia. Shortly after the success in the Maldives, the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told in the *Rajya Sabha* that "our response to developments in the Maldives is a clear manifestation of our commitment to the promotion of peace and stability in our region".¹⁵ The

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Thomas Abraham, "The Sri Lankan Link" *Frontline* (Chennai), November 26th-December 9th, 1988, p. 32.

¹² Ross H. Munro, "Superpower Rising" *Time* (New York), April 3, 1989, p. 7.

¹³ Koji Okamoto, "India as a Military Great Power" in Koji Okamoto and Masaaki Kimura (eds.), *Contemporary History of Conflicting Areas: South Asia* (written in Japanese language) (Tokyo: DOUBUNKAN Publications Ltd., 1994), p. 212.

¹⁴ Andreas Hansclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Pittberger, *Theories of International Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 88-89, and Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne, "The New Regionalism" in Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and World Order* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 249-64. As per Hansclever, Mayer, Pittberger, Gamble and Payne's definition, it can be defined a regional hegemonic stability as the presence of outstanding regional economic and political power which has the capacity and willingness to lead a political and security framework and a set of economic institutions which promote prosperity and development through trade.

¹⁵ Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, *Rajiv*

Indian intervention in the Maldives, in the opinion of Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, marked a significant evolution of 'Rajiv doctrine', whereby the use of force including military power for attaining regional political objectives, was perceived to have taken place.¹⁶ He further stated that the Rajiv doctrine appeared to be qualified by two important considerations: consulting the superpowers before undertaking any military action, and intervening to prevent the overthrow of a democratically-elected government.¹⁷

After the end of the Cold War, India has been looked upon as a hegemonic power.¹⁸ Such possibility have been discussed by David Myer. In addition, the Maldivian officials like Ahmed Shaheed also acknowledged that "we have to accept the fact that India has already been a hegemonic country in South Asia due to geographical, militaristic and other aspects".¹⁹ India is the biggest and the most powerful among the seven countries and has potential to lead smaller South Asian states towards regional cooperation and stability. When five smaller countries face a serious threat, they often depend on India for the protection of their national security as it has greater military capability.

However, given the present situation in India, one can hardly accord to India the status of a hegemon. Harish Kapur notes that India has not been particularly successful in assuming a hegemonic role in South Asian.²⁰ Sandy Gordon holds that it is likely that the 'weak-strong' paradigm will continue to be a feature of Indian strategic thinking for some time.²¹ Until now, India has been a hegemon of poor and landlocked Himalayan kingdoms and has given security assistance to three small

Gandhi: Selected Speeches and Writings (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1989), p. 363-64.

¹⁶ Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, *Sea Power and Indian Security* (London: Brassey's U.K. Ltd., 1995), p. 134.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35.

¹⁸ David J. Myer, "Threat Perception and Strategic Response of the Regional Hegemons: A Conceptual Overview" in David J. Myer (ed.), *Regional Hegemons: Threat Perception and Strategic Response* (Boulder: Westview Press Inc., 1991), p. 8.

¹⁹ Interview with Dr. Ahmed Shaheed on 3rd November 1997.

²⁰ Harish Kapur, *India's Foreign Policy, 1947-92: Shadow and Substance* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1994), p. 211.

²¹ Sandy Gordon, *India's Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), p. 337.

and vulnerable countries of the South Asian region including the Maldives. Its military powers are the fourth largest in the world, but the Indian armed forces did not succeed in quelling the LTTE, the non-state guerrilla forces in Sri Lanka. This failure after a prolonged struggle between 1987 and 1989 was a major setback to any hegemonic aspirations that India might have had. This setback in Sri Lanka demonstrated that Indian military hegemony can not always provide stability in the region.

Also, the South Asian countries are cautious about concluding a bilateral security treaty with India. They are aware that any arrangement with a bigger power will not be on equal terms. It may pose threats to independence of smaller states. India has only concluded bilateral security pacts with two Himalayan kingdoms: Bhutan in 1949 and Nepal in 1950. According to Samuel Huntington, Pakistan, Bangladesh and even Sri Lanka will not accept India as the order-provider in South Asia.²² The Maldives also wants to avoid entering into any institutionalized military arrangements with India. This shows that the Maldives does not want to depend entirely on India for the protection of its security.

Diversifying Bilateral Arrangements

In terms of the size of territory, population, security forces, economy and other national power elements, it is not surprising that the Maldives is the weakest of all the seven South Asian countries. Shrikant Paranjpe and Raju Thomas classified the nation as a 'peripheral dependent' country of the South Asian region.²³ According to Myer, peripheral dependents are those countries which possess little capability to resist power projected by their region's hegemon or aspiring hegemon, or micro states which are often linguistically, culturally or religiously distinct from others in the region. Maldives may be a peripheral dependent country of South Asia in the

²² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 156.

²³ Shrikant Paranjpe and Raju G.C. Thomas, "India and South Asia: Resolving the Problems of Regional Dominance and Diversity" in Myer, *op. cit.*, p. 164-65.

latter respect. It is not necessary that the peripheral dependent countries always depend on the hegemon for security and economic assistance. As mentioned in the previous section, the Maldives has not depended either for security or economic growth on an aspiring hegemon of South Asia.

Instead of denying India's hegemony, the Maldives has succeeded in diversifying its bilateral arrangements with many countries including India. The U.K. provided six patrol vessels since the beginning of 1980s²⁴, while joint naval exercises, namely Flash Metal, have been conducted between the United States Navy and the Maldivian National Security Service since 1993.²⁵ Malé is now protected against tidal waves by a seawall constructed by the Japanese Official Development Assistance. Japan has been the largest donor of the Maldives for over a decade.²⁶ India also contributed to the Maldivian national security by not only sending armed forces in times of a crisis, but also constructed a huge hospital in Malé. After the completion of Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in 1995, health care facilities improved drastically as two hundred beds were added and sophisticated medical equipment was introduced.²⁷

This tendency of not relying on a single power for assistance was evident even when a group of mercenaries invaded Malé in November 1988. President Gayoom sought military assistance from several countries. According to Royston Ellis, six countries, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United States, offered help before the country accepted the Indian military intervention.²⁸ He adds that President Gayoom maintained telephonic contacts with James Spain, the then U.S. ambassador in Colombo, who acting on the instructions issued by

²⁴ Captain Richard Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1999-2000* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1999), p. 449.

²⁵ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, "NSS and US Navy Joint Exercises Underway" *Maldives News Bulletin* (Malé), No. 748, 15th May 2000, p. 2.

²⁶ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of External Resources, *External Aid Disbursement 1994-1999* (Malé: Department of External Resources, 2000), p. 1. In 1998, Japanese aid amounted to \$10.5 million, 26.7 percent of total external aid.

²⁷ According to the Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1995 and 1999, population per hospital bed ratio declined from 1,193 in 1993 to 684 in 1998.

²⁸ Royston Ellis, *A Man of All Islands: A Biography of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives* (Singapore: Times Editions Pvt. Ltd., 1998), p. 206.

Washington, suggested that military intervention from India be accepted.²⁹ In addition, Sri Lanka also prepared to deploy 150 elite police commands to Malé.³⁰

INITIATIVES FOR MULTILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Maldives' efforts at gaining maximum benefit through diversifying bilateral contacts, do not make an impact on international relations. The nation just diversified its dependence for protection and security on big nations. Its dependence on security matters appears permanent as it will not be able to develop its infrastructure. After all, for Maldives and other micro states, bilateral diplomacy will do little to improve its status in world politics.

Thus, the atoll nation has attempted to overcome its dependence through active multilateral diplomacy. Among the fifty-seven international organizations in which Maldives has membership³¹, it could successfully initiate discussion on the issue of security of Small States at a few international organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the SAARC. In fact, the Maldivians hope that they will soon establish multilateral security arrangements. An advantage with multilateral security arrangement is that it is not only the ideal way to protect micro states, but also greatly reduces dependence on big powers. At the forty-fifth General Assembly of the U.N. on 27th September 1990, President Gayoom asserted that "self-help cannot be the only answer. Efforts have to be undertaken by the international community as a whole under the aegis of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations"³²

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁰ Anthony Dyson (ed.), *Asia Yearbook 1989* (Hongkong: Far Eastern Economic Review Publishing Company Ltd., 1989), p. 176.

³¹ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic and Consular Corps with Other Representations January 2000* (Malé: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000), pp. 24-25.

³² Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information and Culture, *Maldives Foreign Policy in Perspective: Speeches delivered at the United Nations on behalf of the Maldives 1965-1990* (Malé: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1995), p. 194.

Multilateral Security Policy –Before 1988

Between 1976 and 1988, the Maldives was neither an assertive country with regard to international affairs nor was it concerned over the issue of Small States' security. It merely supported the initiatives of other countries at the U.N., Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Commonwealth. On the one hand, the country hoped that the "Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" (IOZP) arrangement would secure its sovereignty and eliminate superpowers' militarization in the Indian Ocean. This proposal was first tabled at the third NAM summit at Lusaka in 1970, and a year later, the resolution was adopted at the General Assembly of the U.N. It was the outcome of the Sri Lankan initiative and Maldives merely supported since 1972. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, President Gayoom told the General Assembly in October 1985 that "the Maldives, which is surrounded on all sides by the Indian Ocean, is convinced that the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean is absolutely essential for the progress and stability of the region".³³

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the atoll state rejected offers for leasing the Gan island. It exemplified the strong non-aligned stance adopted by the nation. It is important to mention here that the Maldives prefers to maintain such a non-aligned stand and is not influenced by any other nation. Furthermore, it is worth noting that security concerns of the Maldives have not been given due importance and discussed either at the U.N. or the NAM. The international community failed to implement the IOZP resolution by the mid-1980s. At the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries at Harare in September 1986, Gayoom regretted that the process of demilitarization was slow and urged that "we strongly feel that something must be done towards the early demilitarization of the Indian Ocean before it is too late".³⁴

³³ Republic of Maldives, Department of Information and Broadcasting, *Maldives a Global View: Excerpts from President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's Speeches 1979-1987* (Malé: Department of Information and Broadcasting, 1990), p. 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

However, the Maldives, which joined the Commonwealth in 1982 as a special member, strongly supported the Commonwealth's initiatives on protection of Small States' security. Less than a year after the U.S. intervened in Grenada, at the Conference on the Commonwealth and the Small States held by the Royal Commonwealth Society, London in June 1984, President Gayoom vociferously demanded for protection of Small States. At the opening ceremony of the 1985 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Malé on October 1985, he asserted:

If more Grenada are to be avoided, the best manner in which the long term security can be obtained is to introduce without delay economic and trading reforms in the international market place which will in turn introduce economic justice and equity. For without such a remedy, the possibility that small states will look to measures to solve their economic and social ills, that would be regarded by others as extreme, remains very real.³⁵

Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel was one of fourteen members of Commonwealth Consultative Group on the Special Needs of Small States between 1983 and 1985.³⁶ The Commonwealth is the first active organization that discusses problems of Small States' security. This is so because those whose population is less than one and a half million, constitute the majority of the Commonwealth. However, the organization has been limited to implementing socio-economic programs such as establishment of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), dispatch of the Commonwealth Experts to small developing countries and setting up a Joint Office for Commonwealth Permanent Missions at the United Nations for overcoming the problems of small states.

Active Maldivian Security Policies

The 1988 mercenary invasion completely altered the threat perception and security policies of the atoll state. Along with the danger posed by environmental threats, Maldivians realized that the NAM and the Commonwealth could no longer safeguard its sovereignty against irregular military and non-military threats. At the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁶ The Group later published the first report on security of Small States, namely *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* in August 1985.

same time, they realized that the multilateral security policy should be more assertive for its protection. In the post-1988 era, the Maldivian government has initiated measures for achieving multilateral security assistance for protecting itself militarily. It has relied on organizations such as the United Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Initiatives at the United Nations

The country has achieved a diplomatic success at the United Nations in 1989 when the latter adopted resolutions on protection of Small States' military security. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki maintained the need to take effective multilateral actions for protection and security of Small States arose because of its extreme vulnerable security situation and inability to go for further armament.³⁷ It could achieve the unanimous support of all member countries. This resolution was backed by fifty-five countries that included the non-aligned countries and some developed countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Three resolutions on the issue have been adopted at the General Assembly until now.³⁸ All three resolutions not only recognized vulnerability and insecurity of Small States, especially military aspect, but also appeal to the relevant regional and international organizations to provide assistance to strengthen their (Small States') security, upon being approached to do so. It urged the U.N. Secretary General to pay special attention to monitor the security situation of Small States as well. In addition, the latter two resolutions stress the importance of strengthening the regional security arrangements by interaction, cooperation and consultation.

Besides, the country, together with forty-three members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) has acquired a stronger bargaining power at several U.N. environmental conferences such as the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187-89. At that time, Mr. Zaki served as permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Maldives.

³⁸ The second resolution, namely 44/51 was adopted on 9th December 1991. The third resolution (49/31) was adopted on 9th December 1994.

Development (widely known as the Earth Summit 92') at Rio de Janeiro, the 1994 U.N. Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States at Bridgetown, Barbados, and the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the 1992 U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change at Kyoto, Japan. The AOSIS group is one of the largest and strongest caucuses of the conferences. For example, at the Kyoto Conference, while the United States tried to maintain the status quo, the AOSIS demanded twenty or more drastic cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases by developed countries by 2005. Members of the conference finally agreed to the 'Kyoto Protocol', which agreed on a 5.2 percent reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases by developed countries.³⁹ The Maldives and AOSIS members were not satisfied with the insufficient measure,⁴⁰ but they, together with some low-lying coastal countries and numerous environmental NGOs, persuaded the U.S. and other developed countries to agree to some cuts in the emission of harmful gases for the prevention of the continual global warming and sea-level rise. The AOSIS was formally established at the Second World Climate Conference in 1990 at Geneva. However, fourteen Small States had already decided to coordinate a joint approach on the issue of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise in the previous year.⁴¹ The Maldives is widely known as the 'founding father' of AOSIS since it convened the first Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise in November 1989.

In addition, for over a decade, President Gayoom has been widely acknowledged as the champion advocating the cause of small states on the issue of sea-level rise and other environmental issues. In the Earth Summit 1992, he asserted that "Do not

³⁹ By April 1999, 84 countries finished signing the Protocol; however, the number of parties of the Protocol amounted to only eight countries, Antigua and Barbuda, El Salvador, Fiji, the Maldives, Norway, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tuvalu. The Maldives signed the Protocol in 16th March 1998, and ratified it on 30th December 1998.

⁴⁰ Neroni Slade, "The Size of the Problem" *Our Planet* (Nairobi), Vol. 10, No. 3, 1999, p. 8.

⁴¹ All fourteen participating small states are members of the Commonwealth, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago from the Caribbean region, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu from the Asia-Pacific region, Cyprus and Malta from the Mediterranean region, and the Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles from the Indian Ocean region.

let our voice go unheard. For, if you do, it might be forever".⁴² On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in October 1995, he also strongly demanded the industrialized countries to drastically cut down on the emission of greenhouse gases with immediate effect.

Initiatives at the SAARC

Maldives realized that it is important to play an active role in the SAARC. It hopes that the SAARC will play an important role in securing multilateral support for its security. P. Sahadevan observed that "Maldives considers the SAARC as a multilateral regional security framework for its security, even though it is not built upon an agenda of evolving itself into a security community".⁴³ The country always calls for the SAARC to formulate and implement special military and socio-economic measures for the protection of the security of small states. However, the role of the organization is merely limited to publicizing the issue, since the majority view is that the issue of protection and security of small states is a political one which is excluded from the SAARC discussion. In the Joint Press Release issued on 31st December, 1988 at the end of the fourth SAARC summit in Islamabad, all the heads of state in South Asia were deeply shocked over the armed attack on Maldives. As a result of the Maldivian demands, made since the fifth SAARC summit in Malé in November 1990, member states have recognized that small states require special measures for safeguarding their sovereign independence and territorial integrity. However, at the ninth SAARC summit in Malé in 1997, the organization declined to assert itself and expand its influence from a 'regional community' to an 'international community'.

⁴² Republic of Maldives. Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, *Speech Addressed by His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (Malé: Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, 1992), p. 15.

⁴³ P. Sahadevan, "Maldives: Search for Security" in Major General Dipankar Bannerjee (ed.), *Security in South Asia: Comprehensive and Cooperative* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 1999), p. 270.

Evaluation of the Post-1988 Maldivian Initiatives

As stated earlier, the Maldives has successfully taken several initiatives to publicize the issue of the protection and security of Small States since 1989. The Commonwealth Advisory Group observed that “the Maldivian initiative has been useful in clarifying positions but clearly limited in its outcome”.⁴⁴

The Maldivian efforts on environmental issues met with considerable success. However, its failure to establish multilateral military security arrangements is worthy of close examination. Firstly, the past experience has made nation-states very wary of entering into collective military security measures. It is not easy to defend sovereignty, and it is even more difficult to create a new, a more effective and legally authorized security structures. A worldwide collective security system under the League of Nations completely failed as a result of the withdrawal of three axis powers, Germany, Italy and Japan by the end of 1930s. A similar measure was envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations. However, it was never implemented. Instead, the U.N. prefers to adopt customary security measures like U.N. peace-keeping operations and multilateral coalition forces authorized by the Security Council resolutions rather than special ones under multilateral treaties.

Secondly, the country has not initiated the implementation of security measure since 1989. All three Maldivian-initiated U.N. resolutions have not been implemented. There are no concrete methods of providing security assistance by relevant regional and international organizations. In reality, only a few regional organizations such as the NATO, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) are equipped to provide security and military assistance. Other micro states have made diplomatic advantages on the security issue. For example, in the 1960s, Malta, a micro state in the Mediterranean Sea, not only demanded a new ocean regime, but also proposed a concrete measure for a new ocean regime: the deep seabed as a

⁴⁴ The Commonwealth Advisory Group, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997), p. 145.

common heritage of mankind. Malta succeeded in mobilizing support among the U.N. members, and finally a proposal was legalized by the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). A major achievement of this proposal was that it carried such clauses on the resource management of the deep seabed.

Thirdly, the country could not succeed in convincing the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, particularly the United States, on the problems peculiar to small states and the urgent need to establish special security measures to counter the same. The Security Council, however, took a serious view of mercenary attack of Congo (1960-61), Benin (1977) and the Seychelles (1981).⁴⁵ In the 1981 Seychelles case, the Council unanimously agreed to set up an investigative commission consisting of three Security Council members. In contrast, the situation in Maldives in November 1988, evoked neither a presidential statement nor a resolution. Neither did the Maldivian representatives in the U.N. initiate any motion on the mercenary aggression at the Security Council in 1988.

Fourthly, the Maldives failed to make the entire international community to sign and ratify the treaty on mercenary activities. The nation expects the Convention to be one of the effective measures of protecting the small states from military threats, and mercenary aggression in particular. 'International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries' was adopted without vote at the General Assembly of the U.N. in December 1989. The nation signed the Convention on 17th July 1990, the sixth nation to do so.⁴⁶ Later on, the country ratified it on 11th September 1991, the fourth nation to do so. However, only sixteen countries signed the Convention, while only seventeen countries ratified it by April 1999.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The U.N. Security Council Res. 405 called upon all states not only to exercise the utmost vigilance against the danger posed by international mercenaries, but also to consider taking necessary measures to prohibit such activity under their respective domestic laws.

⁴⁶ Source of data is: The United Nations, *Multilateral Treaties deposited with the Secretary General* (New York: United Nations Publications, 1999), p. 661.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Finally, as compared to other regions such as the Caribbean and the South Pacific regions, peculiar political and geographical location of the Maldives in the South Asian region makes it difficult for the country to arrive at any concrete security arrangement in the region. The atoll state is not only a peripheral dependent of the South Asian region,⁴⁸ but also far away from three western Indian Ocean island states: the Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles. The Maldives may be a geographical core of the entire Indian Ocean region; however, it is not a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).

STRENGTHENING DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

Micro states and other sovereign nation-states in general are hesitant in concluding military alliances with big powers for fear that this might put constraints on their independence. In order to safeguard their independent status, some nation-states initiate the formation of international or regional collective security measures, others resort to further armament and strengthen their defense capabilities.

Since the 17th century, the Maldives sought to secure its sovereignty through two major security moves: enhancing its defense capabilities, and relying on European naval powers like Holland, France and Britain for security by concluding bilateral security arrangements. During the era of sultan Mohamed Imaduddin (1620-48), the nation built strong walls encircling Malé, facing the sea, strong forts were constructed with cannons that were installed at regular intervals, and, at the same time, annual tributes were also sent to Goa.⁴⁹

During the post-Cold War era, the country has not entered into any institutionalized security pact with any big power, nor did it establish multilateral military security measures to protect the atoll state. The nation's defense forces, namely the National Security Service (NSS), are therefore required to be prepared in the event of mercenary attack or military aggression. In case of failure, the atoll state will have to look to military assistance from India or other big nations again.

⁴⁸ Paranjpe and Thomas, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ Subash Chawla, *The New Maldives* (Colombo: Diana Agencies Ltd., 1986), p. 21.

As a matter of fact, it is difficult to estimate defense capabilities of the NSS since official data is very scanty. Two reliable military reports of the world, *Military Balance* and *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook*, do not provide any information on the defense forces of the Maldives.⁵⁰

Data from other publications indicate that the atoll state has enhanced its defense capabilities, especially human resource and military equipment since 1989. On the one hand, the NSS improved its standards drastically. The total number of the NSS personnel amounted to one thousand men, while the Coast Guard, a part of the NSS, consisted of two hundred military personnel before the mercenary invasion.⁵¹ Within a decade, the total number increased to two thousand armed personnel, with the Coast Guard numbering about four hundred servicemen.⁵² Recruitment of women in the NSS is another achievement of the self defense policy of the Maldivian authorities.⁵³

In comparison, the military equipment of the NSS has only increased marginally. It is equipped with four armored personnel cars, and has improved its airborne surveillance by training pilots abroad.⁵⁴ The Maldivian authority is especially keen on improving naval capabilities of the Coast Guard to patrol illegal fishermen. Until 1988, the Coast Guard had one *Tracker II* patrol craft and one *Cheverton* class patrol craft. It acquired two more *Tracker II* crafts in 1989, and later on, another *Tracker II* was added in 1991. One *Dagger* class patrol boat has also been commissioned since 1993. Equipped with surface search radar, both 12.7mm and 7.12mm machine guns are the only arms equipment of these ships. These six ships,

⁵⁰ According to *The Military Balance 1998-99*, some data of both small states' and micro states' defense capabilities are available. It includes Mauritius, the Seychelles, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and Malta.

⁵¹ Captain Richard Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1988-89* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1988), p. 362.

⁵² Captain Richard Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1999-2000* (Surrey: Jane's Information Group Ltd., 1999), p. 449.

⁵³ Both Michael Malik (ed.), *Asia 1990 Yearbook* (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review Publishing Company Ltd., 1989), p. 177, and Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, *Progress in Pictures* (Malé: Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, 1997), p. 55.

⁵⁴ Masqsd Ul Hasan Nuri, "Maldives in the 1990s" in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of SAARC nations: Maldives* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1997), p. 79-80.

ordered from Britain, are too small to carry other sophisticated naval weapons such as cannons, torpedoes and surface to surface missiles (SSMs).⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

Although we know that the Maldives is one of sovereign independent countries of the world, many Maldivian officials and many official publications repeatedly stress its sovereign independence. Safeguarding the sovereignty and independence, and protecting its territorial integrity and resources are the two major national interests of the atoll state.⁵⁶ In order to achieve them, the Maldivian people have great expectations from the National Security Service. Recently, President Gayoom asserted that “the National Security Service is the shield of the nation and people”.⁵⁷

However, the Maldivians also acknowledge that the national security is still under threat; the Maldivians are incapable of defending their independence. These threats include terrorist activities, spread of piracy in the Indian Ocean, spread of arms-drug trafficking, sea-level rise, ocean-related natural disasters and so on. They also realized that the NSS alone is not powerful enough to combat against irregular military threats such as mercenary attack. Therefore, the vulnerable atoll state has also managed to diversify its security policies at bilateral and multilateral levels. At the bilateral level, the Maldives has accepted military and economic assistance of bigger powers such as India, Japan, U.K. and U.S., but has not concluded a security or economic pact with any of them. At the multilateral level, the Maldives has extensively worked for establishing multilateral security arrangements, especially for protecting Small States’ military security and preventing from further rise in the sea-level.

⁵⁵ Data source: *Jane’s Fighting Ships 1999-2000*, p. 449.

⁵⁶ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, *Facing the Challenge of the New Millennium* (Malé: Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, 1998), p. 9.

⁵⁷ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture, “National Security Service is the Shield of the Nation and the people –President Gayoom” *Maldivian News Bulletin* (Malé), No. 746, 1st May 2000, p. 3. He said this at the 108th anniversary of the founding of the National Security Service on April 23rd, 2000.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Although all the countries are considered equal, the international scenario quite clearly presents hierarchies among them. Powerful states, especially superpowers, great powers and middle powers, have been major actors in international politics. These powers can be considered to have belonged to the upper layer of the hierarchy. Most analyses of international relations deal with the relations among countries in the upper layer. On the contrary, most countries in the lower layer, such as weak states and small states, either stand proxies in conflicts between powerful countries, or maintain a neutral or non-aligned stance.

The lower layer of the hierarchy is comprised of very small states, i.e. micro states. It is almost impossible for them to acquire a position of power in international relations. It can be safely said that micro states are the weakest of all nation-states. They are distinctly different from other small states; however, defining very small countries has always been problematic. Taking into consideration two major components of a state i.e. population and area, this study defines micro states with a clear and more consistent cut-off line by proposing three criteria: indigenous labor force of less than three hundred thousand, the absence of any strategically important natural resource, and territory that is less than six thousand square kilometers in size. Keeping these criteria in view, 26 countries can be classified as micro states.

Scholars of international relations recognize that security problem of very small micro states is very different from other weak and small states. They lack sufficient human and natural resources. They are endowed with limited areas human and social capital, and economic resources. Due to this situation, they even struggle to counter threats

posed mainly by irregular military forces and non-military challenges. Finally, no matter how micro states attempt to raise the issue at international organizations, the international community has invariably given less importance to their security problems. Apart from a few multilateral achievements in environmental issues, most micro states have been dependent on bilateral arrangements with a big power for their military security and economic growth.

The Republic of Maldives is one of the vulnerable micro states in the central Indian Ocean with indigenous labor forces totaling 67,476 (1995)¹ and a territorial size of 298 square kilometers.² It does not possess strategically important natural resources like petroleum, coal and gold.

A VULNERABLE ATOLL STATE

Following the analysis of Palmer and Perkins on national power, one can say that military vulnerability is not so much an element as an end product of more fundamental aspects of national vulnerability.³ The defenselessness is no longer the only vulnerability of the Maldivian national security. The nation is vulnerable on three aspects: geography, society and economy.

The country consists of 1,190 small and low-lying islands, that makes it prone to irregular military threats, and environmental challenges such as sea-level rise and ocean-based natural disaster. It is very difficult to rectify the imbalance in socio-economic development between Malé and outer atolls because of the inherent internal insularity, another geographical source.

¹ Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999* (Malé: Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. 9.

² Europa Publication Limited, *The Europa World Yearbook 1997* (London: Europa Publication Ltd., 1997), p. 2158. No Maldivian official publications disclose the exact size of territory.

³ Norman Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, *International Relations: The World Community in Transition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), pp. 34-82.

Like most micro states, the Maldives lacks infrastructure and trained manpower, especially in the education sector. The country does not have either a university or any other higher institute. At the primary and secondary level of education, one can find few teachers and staff members who have received tertiary education. In addition, the nation struggles to develop other social service sectors such as health, telecommunications and electricity in the outer atolls.

Maldivian economy is not entirely primary commodity-oriented economy since the nation has a flourishing tourism industry, but it depends largely on export of fish products for export revenues. The atoll state imports tremendous amounts of food and other items. The amount of imports has always exceeded exports for over a decade. Tourism industry is also unstable as there was a sharp drop in tourist arrivals due to war in neighboring states and recession in developed countries.

THE NATURE OF THREATS TO THE MALDIVES

The terms, 'vulnerability' (defined as susceptibility to risk or harm) and 'threat' (defined as any type of specific action or situation that could damage national security) are closely related to each other. The higher vulnerability of a country, the greater the threat to its national security. For securing the country, the Maldives has to overcome its vulnerability; however, it is almost impossible to implement an alternative measure to overcome it.

Given this situation, the country faces two kinds of threats to its national security i.e. irregular military threats and non-military threats. Irregular military activities of illegitimate non-state actors such as 'coup strike mercenary forces', transnational guerrillas and pirates, have been immediate problems to the atoll state since the sovereignty of Maldives was threatened by a group of mercenaries in 1980 and 1988. It is also widely known that most mercenaries involved in the 1988 coup attempt were members of one of the guerrilla groups in Sri Lanka. Some reports indicate that

instances of piracy near the archipelago are common, while several others maintained that piracy and other transnational criminal activities has spread to the entire Indian Ocean region. It is possible that uninhabited Maldivian atolls can be used as a base for criminal activities.

Non-military threats are often more worrying than military threats. The environmental threats posed to the country are a case in point. The rise in sea-level and ocean-related natural disasters resulting in beach erosion and flood affect the daily life of the Maldivians. The Maldivian economy can be weakened by external economic shocks and pressures. Illegal fishing, money laundering and drug-trafficking are non-militaristic organized crimes which can create setbacks for the national security.

BILATERALISM, MULTILATERALISM OR SELF-HELP?

Security policies can be formulated by the government only after the nature of threats to the national security of a country have been analyzed. The Maldivian authority has identified two vital threats to its national security: irregular military activities in the short run, and environmental threats in the long run.

Taking serious note of two crucial threats, the Maldivian government has initiated various steps to enlist multilateral security assistance. At the same time, it succeeded in diversifying bilateral security and economic contacts. In addition, the nation, together with forty-three members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), some low-lying coastal countries and environmental NGOs, has succeeded in persuading developed countries to cut greenhouse gases to a certain level by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. At the bilateral level, unlike most micro states, the atoll state has not entered into any security pact with military strong powers since 1976. Instead, it has accepted military and economic assistance from big powers like U.K., U.S., Japan and India. The country was given aid by Japan for enhancing its environmental security by the construction of a sea-wall around Malé. Although the Indian efforts at quelling the

1988 coup attempt was greatly appreciated by the Maldivian authorities, the Maldives has been reluctant to let its national security and other matters depend totally on the most powerful neighbor.

Not much headway has been made in establishing a multilateral military security policy. Although the Maldives hopes that international organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the SAARC will ensure the security of the country by concluding a multilateral military pact; it has only succeeded in publicizing the issue of protection and (military) security of small states. Maldivian multilateral diplomacy failed to attract the attention of the international community to the issue. Implementation of concrete multilateral military measures such as the establishment of rapid reaction forces for securing small states in times of crisis has not been done.

Furthermore, it is doubtful whether the current National Security Service (NSS), consisting of two thousand men and women with a few armored personnel cars and several patrol crafts, are really sufficient in defending the country against any military threats and organized crimes. A current view of the Maldivian authority is that the country's defense forces have to counter these threats. They think that direct military help from big countries should be the last option.

MICRO STATES IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY

Emerging Maritime Security

Some security issues share the common concern of all human beings in the world. Some issues can be described as purely global ones; others could reflect the national interests of particular countries. Several global issues like sea-level rise caused by greenhouse effects, the ultra-violet radiation (UV-B) caused by the ozone depletion, link between deforestation and desertification, acid rain, global food shortage caused by massive population growth and climate change concern all the countries. Other global issues like nuclear disarmament, human rights, status of refugees, poverty and

gender issues have been viewed differently by nation-states and NGOs as reflecting national interest or as being a subject of common concern to all.

It can not be denied that maritime security is also a common security of all mankind. There are two issues that concern the world community at present. A major maritime issue is the environmental degradation of the oceans caused by oil spill from oil tankers, climate changes and so on. These events may also cause changes in the marine ecosystem. For example, oil spill affects catches of sea fish and other marine creatures. These are not only the staple food of coastal people, but also an important source of protein for all human beings.

Another issue is related to the security of maritime transportation. The entire world is dependent on ship transportation for external trade. Their commercial vessels usually sail the high seas, when they transport commodities from one country to another. In recent years, the irregular military activities of illegitimate non-state actors have posed threats to freedom of navigation on the high seas. The Independent World Commission on the Oceans (IWCO) identified four illegal activities:

- (1) international carriage of slaves;
- (2) illegal trade like drugs, arms, protected animals, toxic materials and nuclear waste;
- (3) organized crime and piracy, and;
- (4) dumping of environmentally harmful and hazardous substances banned under international agreements.⁴

During the process of securing the oceans, and finally establishing the Ocean Governance regime, some parts of oceans have gradually become recognized as global public zones of the world. No state may validly purport to subject any part of the high seas to its sovereignty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) regime. Article 136 of the UNCLOS also asserted that the deep seabed and its resources are the 'common heritage of mankind'. A dream of Arvid Pardo, a former

⁴ Mario Soares (chaired), *The Ocean Our Future: The Report of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 39.

Maltese ambassador to the United Nations, was partially fulfilled in 1982 when the U.N. General Assembly adopted the UNCLOS resolution.

The Maldives' Maritime Security

Maritime security and micro island security are closely related to each other. Scholars of international relations usually put micro island security issue aside because they judge it to be of little significance. However, looking back at the entire history of the Indian Ocean, all great naval powers have competed to gain control over strategically important islands like the Maldives, Mauritius and the Andaman and Nicobar islands until the end of 20th century. Major sources of insecurity in the Indian Ocean in recent years are not great powers or littoral states any more, but defenseless micro islands that have become the targets and bases of activities for illegitimate non-state actors. They are a threat not only to merchants, sailors and people inhabiting these islands, but also to governments and people of the littoral and hinterland states.

The protection and security of the Maldives is therefore, not a problem to be solved by the Maldivian authorities, but a concern of all the littoral and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. If the international and regional community fails to protect the security of Maldivian archipelago, the territory runs the risk of being occupied by non-state actors as a base for their illegal activities. The occupation of even a small islet means that the militarily vulnerable Maldivian territory may pose serious threats to the security of other littoral and hinterland countries of the ocean by acts of terrorism, piracy, hijacking and arms-drug trading.

At the same time, the atoll state itself has three important obligations to fulfill by virtue of being a sovereign nation-state in the Indian Ocean region. One obligation is to protect its nationals from the destructive terrorist activities of mercenaries by strengthening its defense forces. It is essential, therefore, that the Maldives enhances the defense capabilities of the NSS substantially, especially the Coast Guard.

Strengthening bilateral arrangements is another obligation of the atoll state. It is important that the country accepts military and economic assistance for enhancing the defense capabilities of the NSS and join hands with other Indian Ocean littoral states and external maritime users for securing high seas and deep seabed of the ocean. Till now, the country has conducted a joint naval exercise with the U.S. Similar exercises with other naval powers like India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Australia will also be vital in the near future for further diversifying the military link.

Finally, the Maldives is obliged to participate in international and regional maritime security initiatives, including ocean-related environmental issues. In reality, it is much more effective for the Maldivians to promote these maritime issues than military security of small states themselves. The atoll state has already signed the UNCLOS, but has not yet completed the process of its ratification. A speedy ratification is required in order to join the worldwide ocean regime. In addition, the nation must continue to work on issues of sea-level rise and marine pollution at several international fora.

As one of the member states, Maldives has a duty to alter the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) into a more effective and useful organization. At the regional level, this country may have more chances to take initiatives at the organization than at the SAARC due to the crucial geographical location. The Indian Ocean is the only ocean that has a regional maritime organization, though it has played only a minor role in the maritime security since its emergence. The SAARC is very important for the Maldives too, but other member states pay little attention to peculiar problems of the atoll state. As a matter of fact, the SAARC cannot afford to deal with the issue of security of small states, because it handles many other crucial issues in the region such as poverty eradication, food security, free trade and so on. The IOMAC's major areas of cooperation are marine natural resources, ocean-related environment and maritime transportation that are all extremely vital in ensuring the Maldivian national interest.

APPENDICES

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Basic Indicators for Select Small States and Micro States

	Indigenous Labour Force	Strategically Important Natural Resource	Area (square kilometer)
Andorra	28,516 (97)		468
Antigua and Barbuda	26,753 (91)		442
<i>The Bahamas</i>	138,700 (94)		13,939
<i>Bahrain</i>	90,662 (91)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	707
<i>Barbados</i>	136,800 (95)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	430
<i>Belizee</i>	70,680 (97)		22,965
<i>Brunei</i>	111,955 (91)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	5,765
Cape Verde	151,614 (90)		4,033
Comoros	126,510 (91)		1,862
<i>Cyprus</i>	285,100 (95)		9,251
<i>Djibouti</i>	282,000 (91)		23,200
Dominica	26,355 (91)		751
<i>Equatorial Guinea</i>	102,565 (83)		28,051
<i>Fiji Islands</i>	268,900 (93)	<i>Gold and Silver</i>	18,376
<i>The Gambia</i>	576,000 (96)		11,295
Grenada	24,650 (95)		345
<i>Guyana</i>	270,074 (87)	<i>Bauxite, and Gold</i>	214,969
<i>Iceland</i>	141,800 (95)		103,000
Kiribati	32,627 (90)		811
<i>Kuwait</i>	112,959 (88)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	17,818
Liechtenstein	22,187 (95)		160
Luxembourg	219,000 (96)		2,586
Maldives	56,435 (90)		298
Malta	143,700 (97)		316
Marshall Islands	11,488 (88)		181
<i>Mauritius</i>	460,500 (95)		2,040
F.S. Micronesia	23,190 (94)		707
Monaco	29,972 (95)*		1.9
Nauru	11,000 (95)*		21.3
<i>Oman</i>	272,379 (93)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	309,500
Palau	10,686 (95)		508
St. Christopher Nevis	16,608 (94)		262
St. Lucia	53,148 (91)		616
St Vincent Grenadines	41,682 (91)		389
Samoa	57,142 (91)		2,831
San Marino	16,073 (95)		60.5
São Tomé Príncipe	36,789 (94)		1,001
Seychelles	26,276 (96)		454

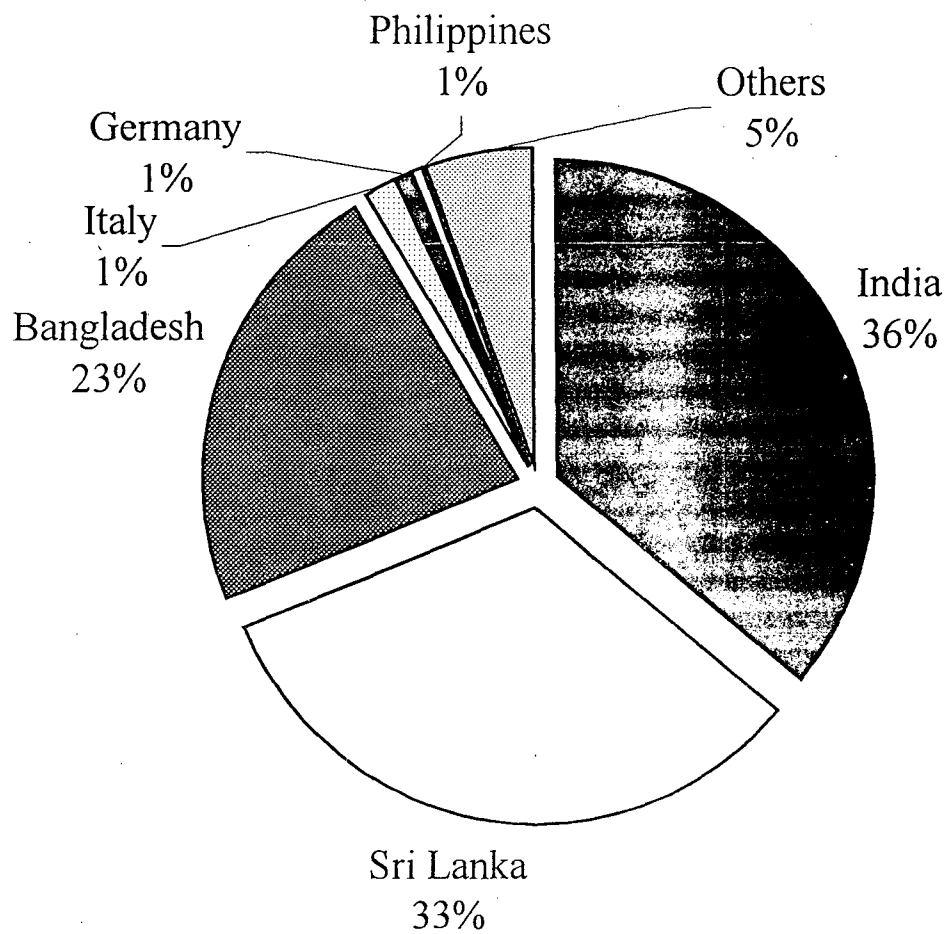
Appendix 1

<i>Singapore</i>	1,801,900 (96)		648
<i>Solomon Islands</i>	29,577 (93)		27,556
<i>Suriname</i>	85,876 (95)	<i>Oil and Bauxite</i>	163,265
Tonga	32,013 (90)		748
<i>Trinidad Tobago</i>	520,900 (95)	<i>Oil and Natural Gas</i>	5,128
Tuvalu	9,500 (95)*		26
<i>Vanuatu</i>	66,597 (89)		12,190
Vatican City	900 (99)		0.44

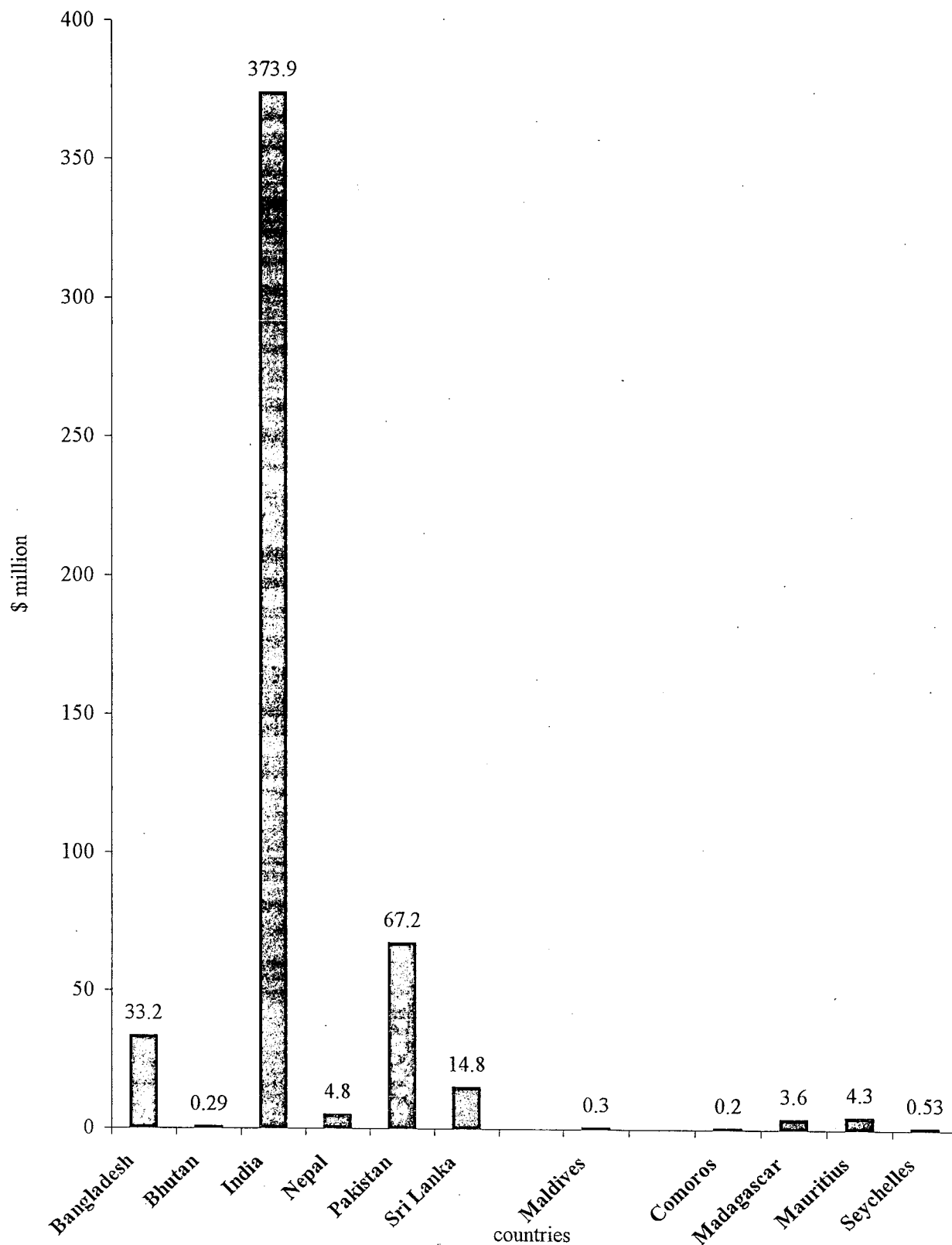
* Data of indigenous labour forces are not available. These figures are the total size of population.

Source: Europa Publications Ltd., *The Europa Yearbook 1998* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1998).
Barry Turner (ed.), *The Statesman's Yearbook 2000* (London: Macmillan Reference Ltd., 2000).

Expatriate Employment by Nationality, 1998
(Total: 20595)

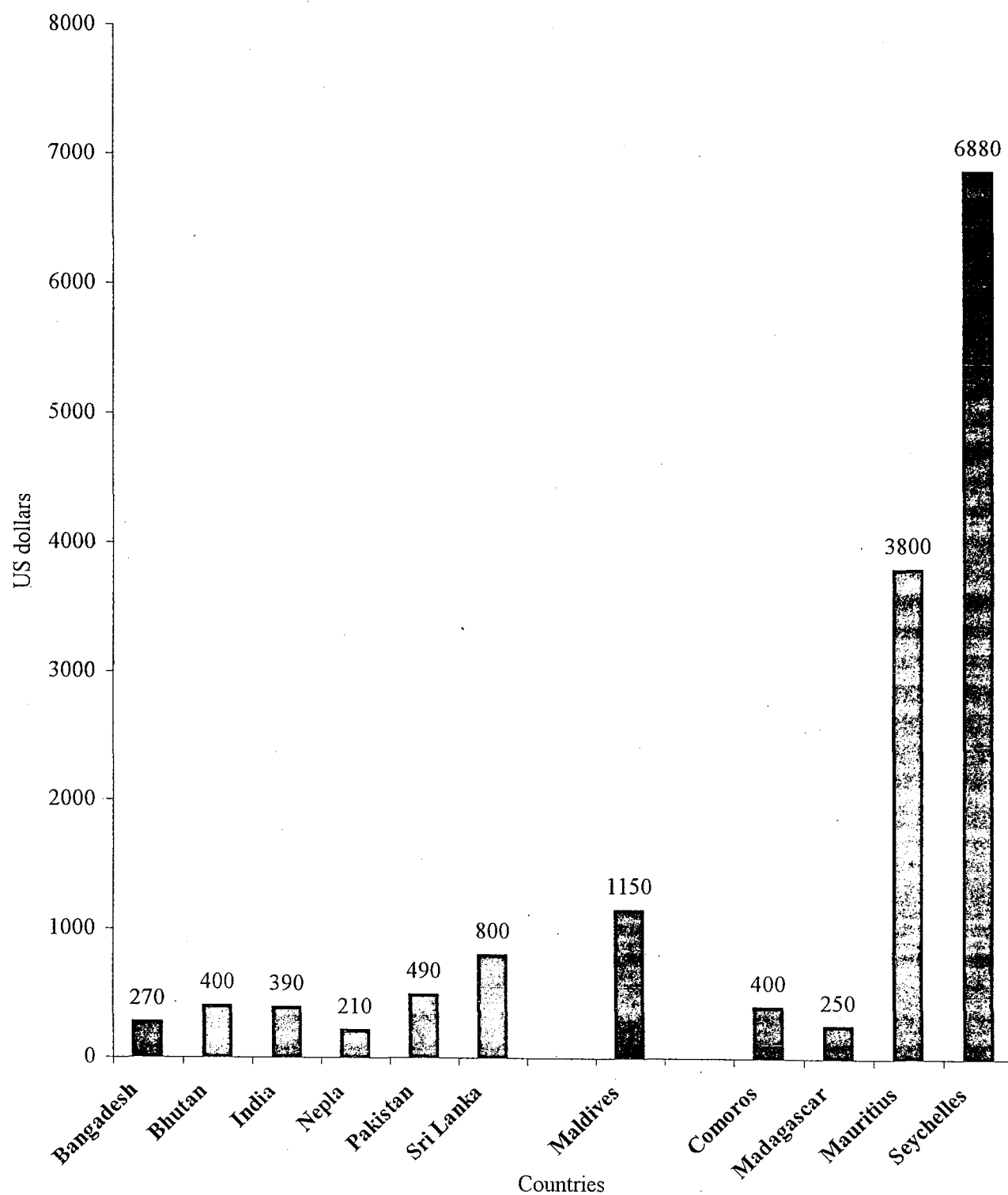


*Total Amount of GNP in South Asian and
Indian Ocean Island countries, 1998*



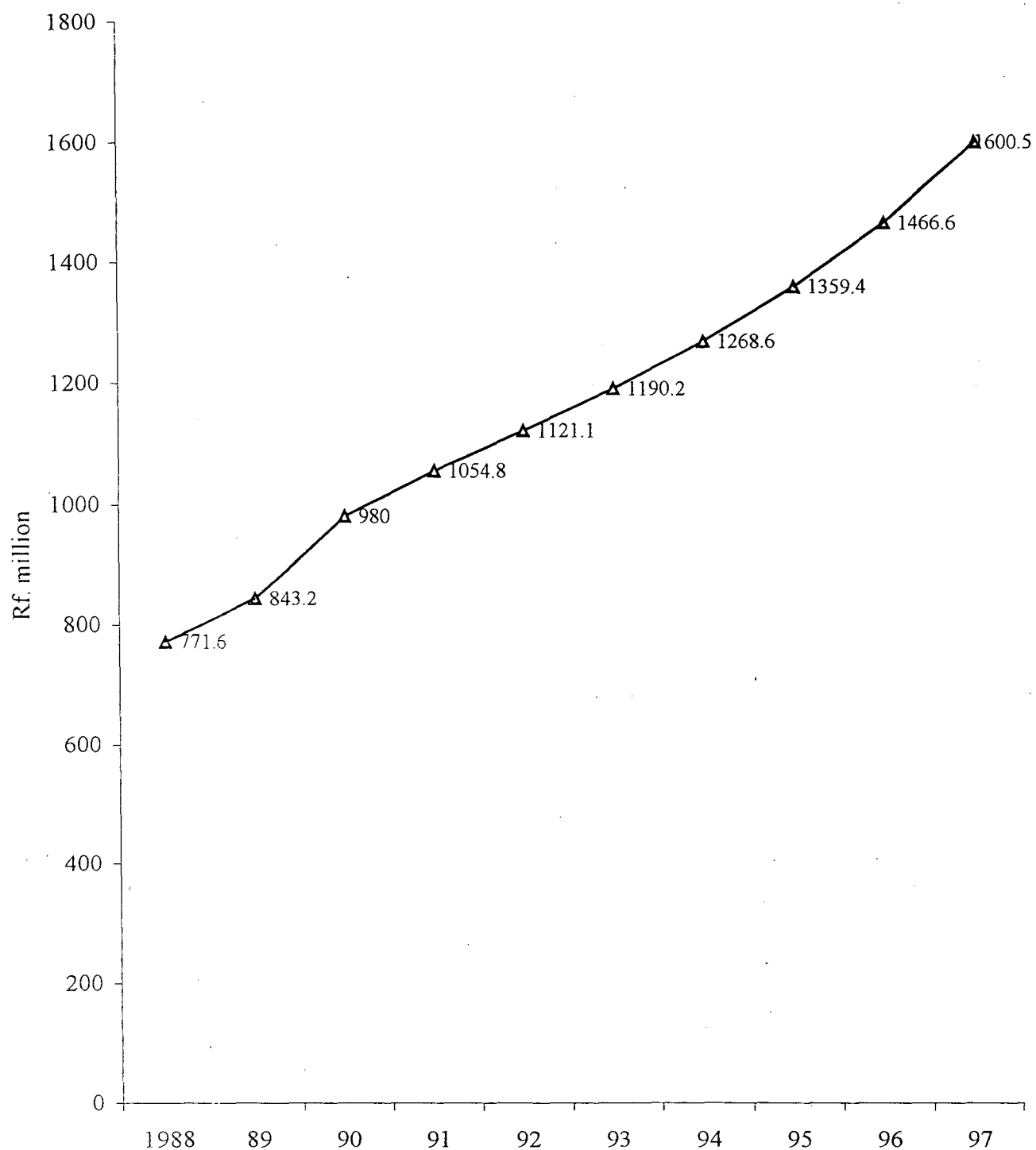
Source: The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, "World Development Report 1998/99" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 190-91 and p. 232.

The amount of GNP per capita in South Asian and Indian Ocean island countries, 1998



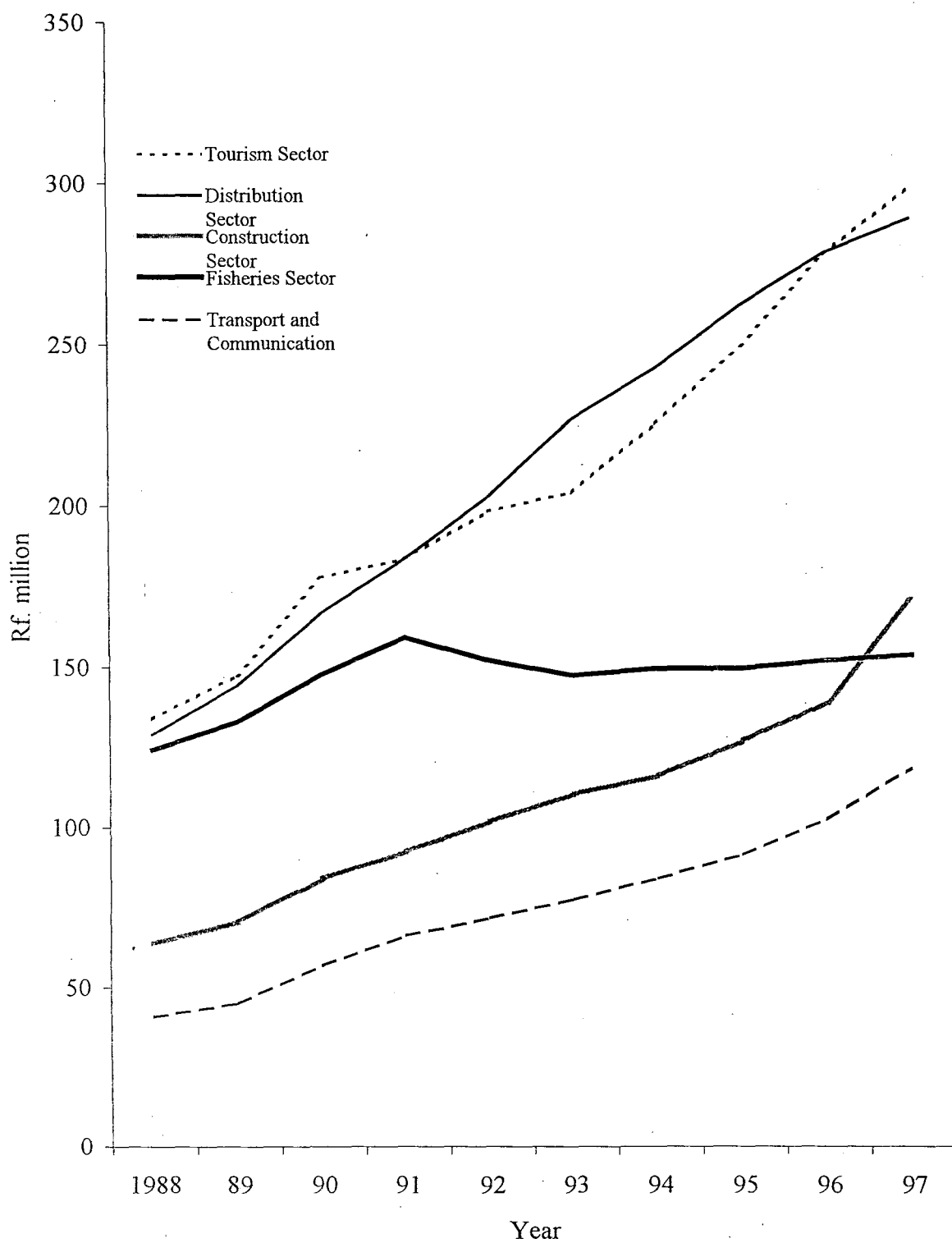
Source: The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, "World Development Report 1998/99" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 190-91 and p. 232.

Maldivian Gross National Product, 1988-1997
(in million rufiyaa)

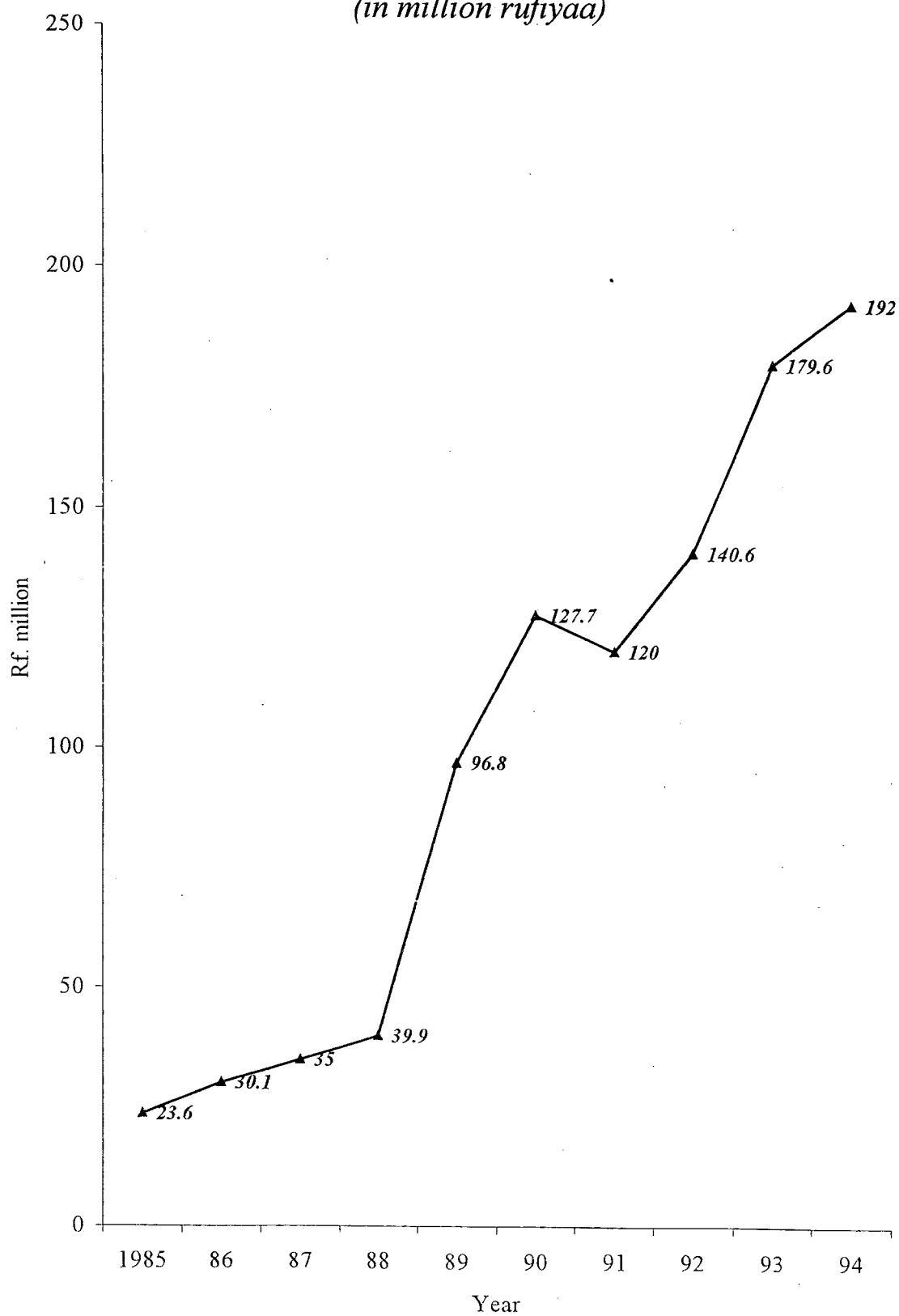


Source: Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, "Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999" (Male': Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. 322.

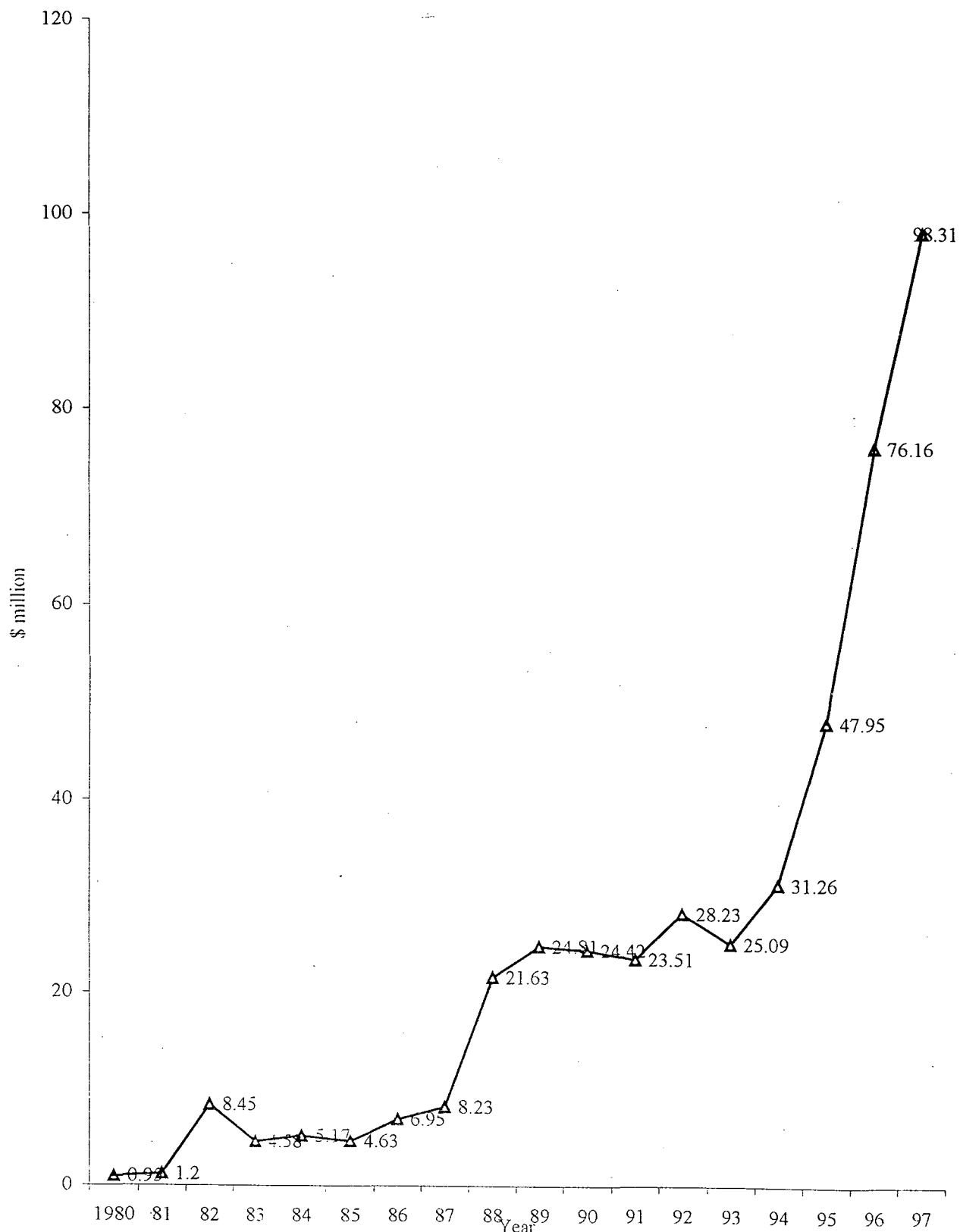
Maldivian Gross National Products by Industry, 1988-1997
(in million rufiyaa)



*Maldivian Government's Expenditure on
Public Order and Internal Security, 1985-94
(in million rufiyaa)*

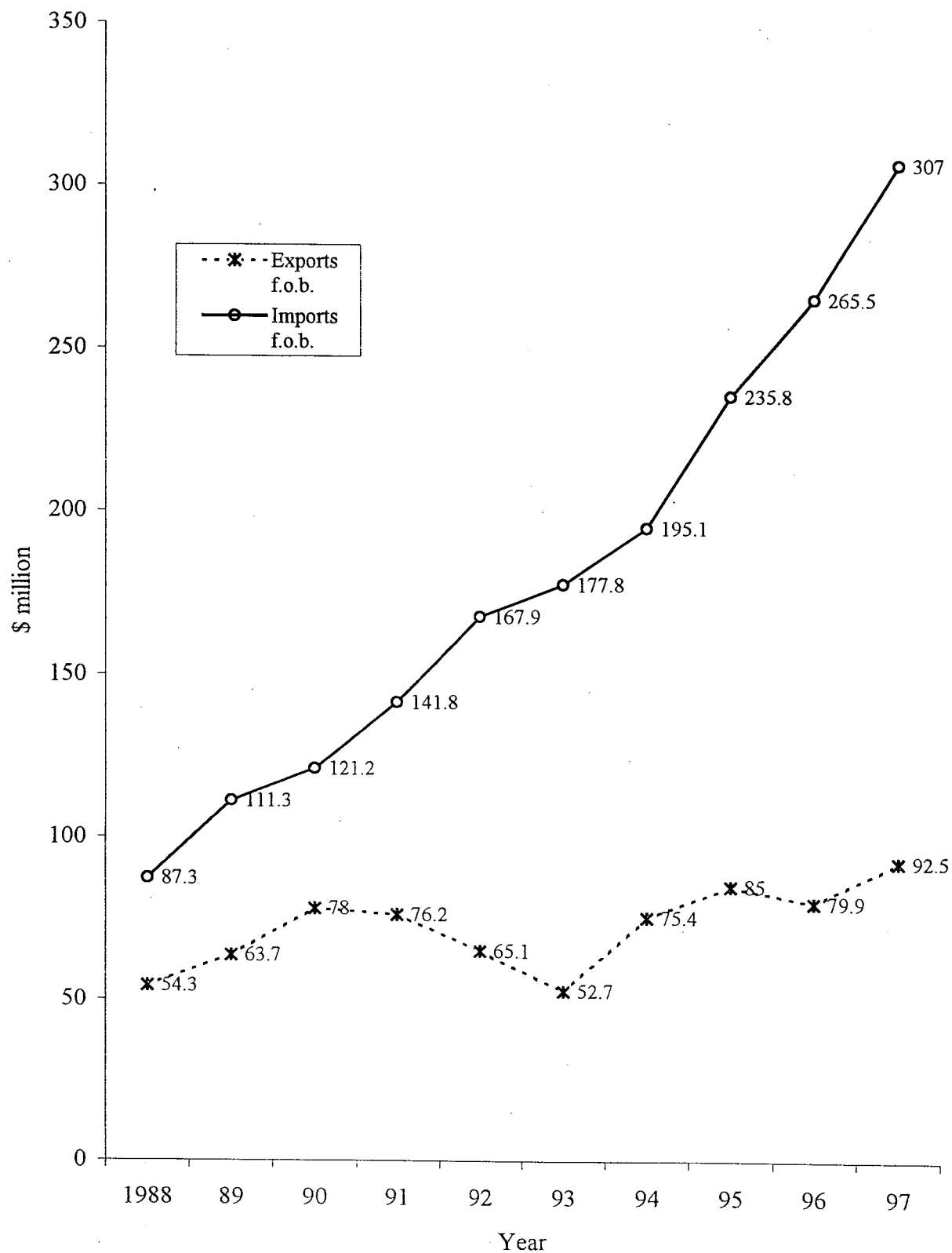


International Reserve in the Maldives, 1980-1997
(in \$ million)



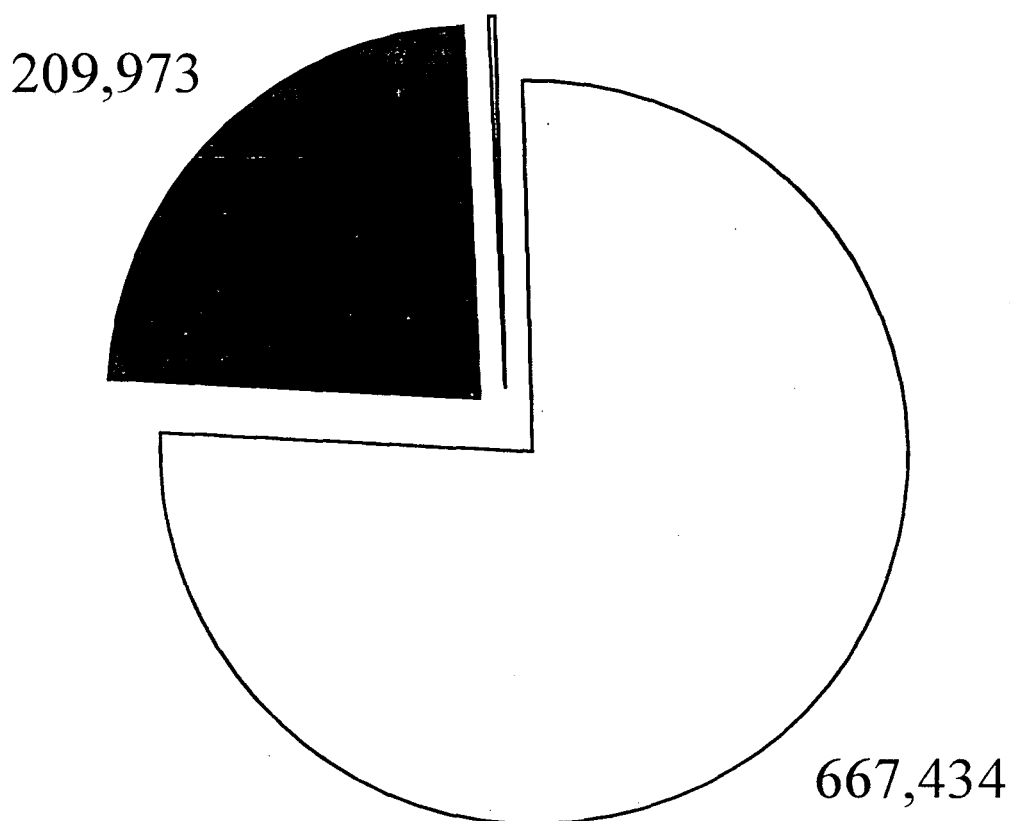
Source: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 1991 and 1998" (New York: United Nations Publication, 1991 and 1998), p. 237 (1991) and p. 318 (1998).

Balance of Payments in the Maldives, 1988-1997
(in \$ million)



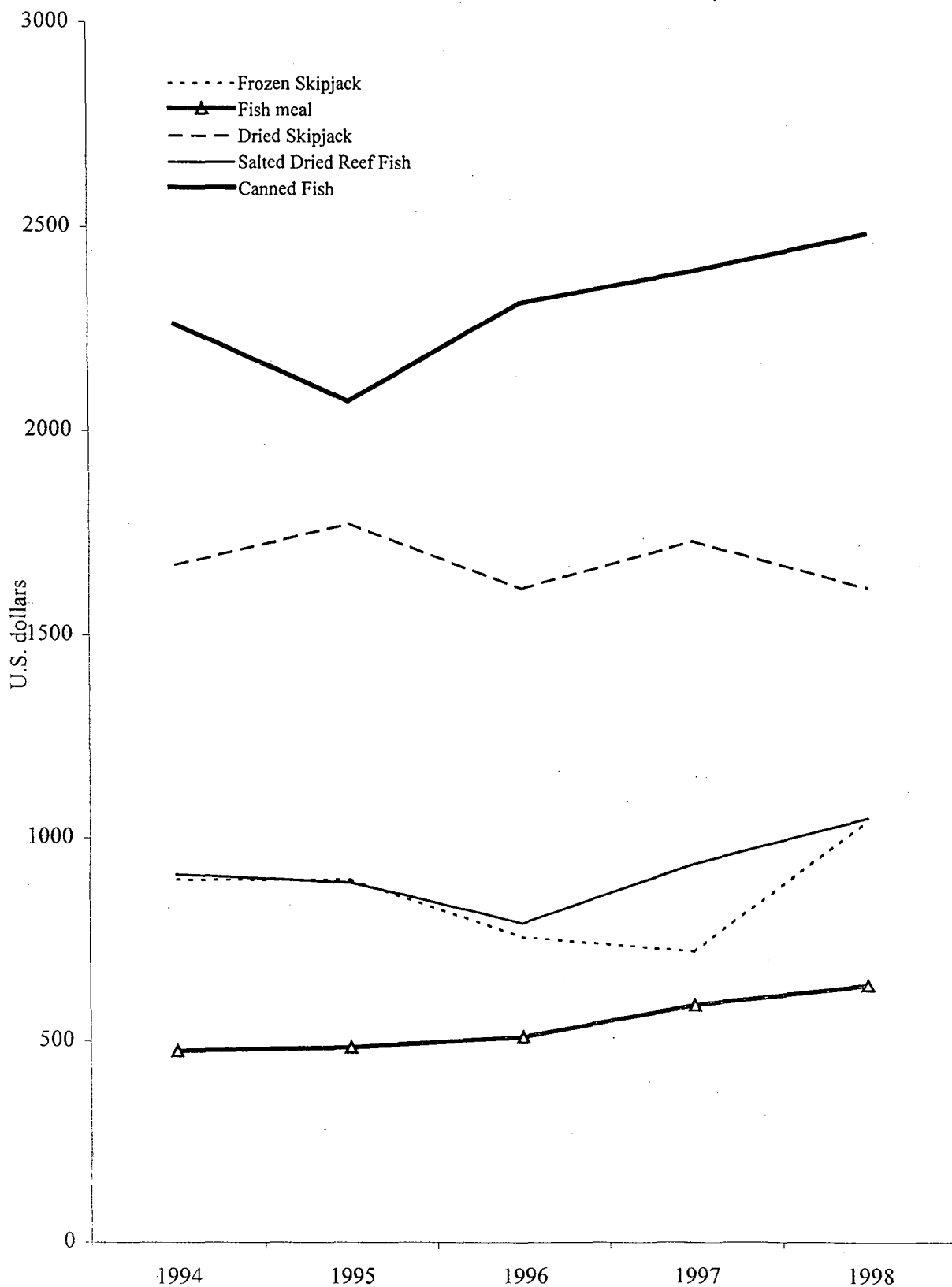
Source: Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, "Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999" (Male: Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. 326.

*Maldivian Export by Commodity, 1998
(in Rf. Thousand)*



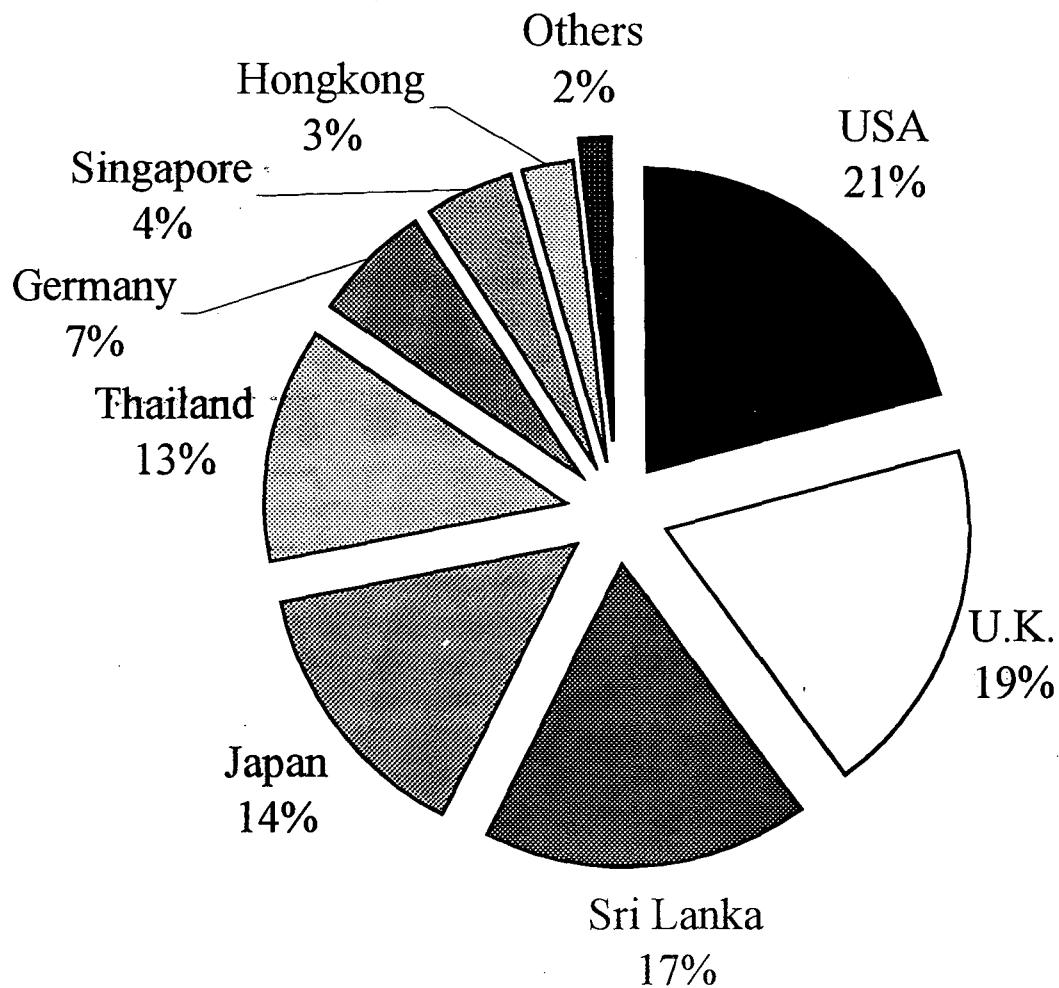
- Fish Products (Skipjack, Reef Fish, Shark, Grouper etc.)
- Apparel and Clothing Accessories
- Others

Maldivian Export Fish Prices 1994-1998
(U.S. dollars per metric tons)

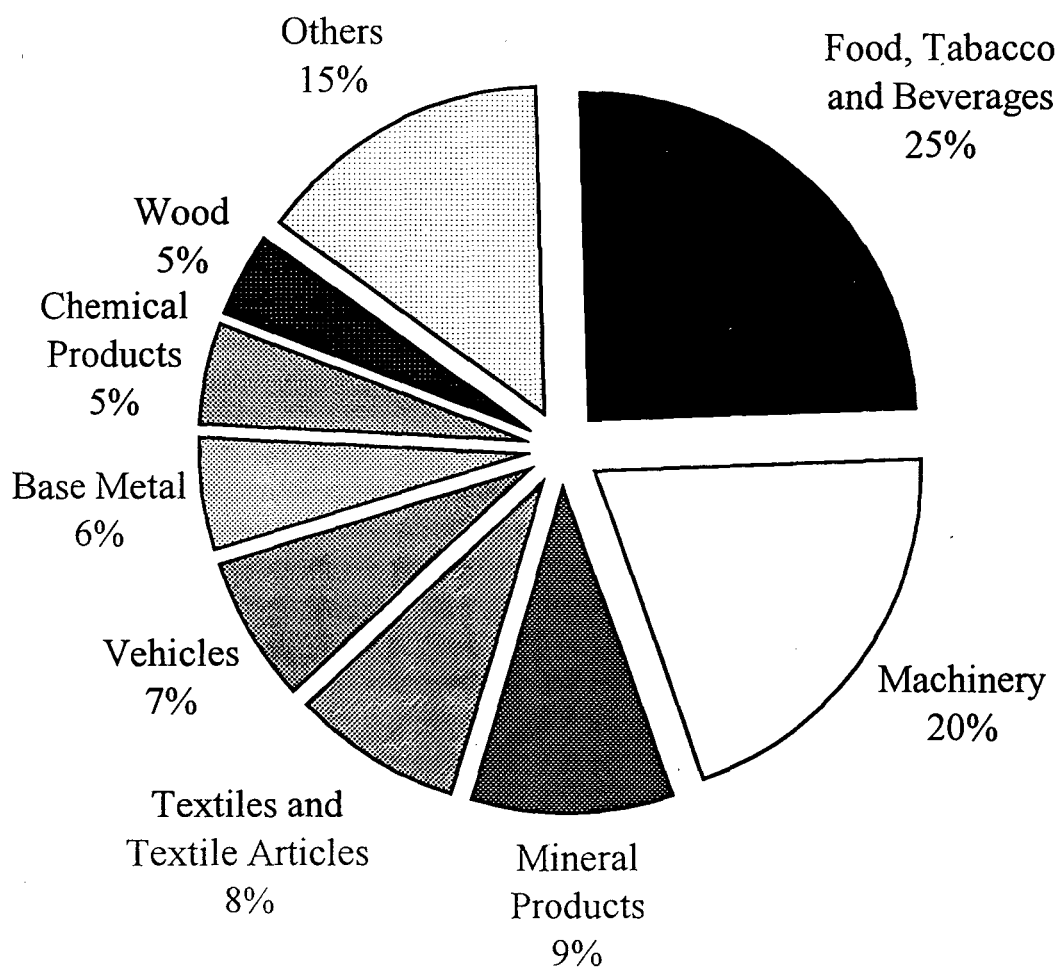


Source: Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, "Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999" (Male: Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. 216.

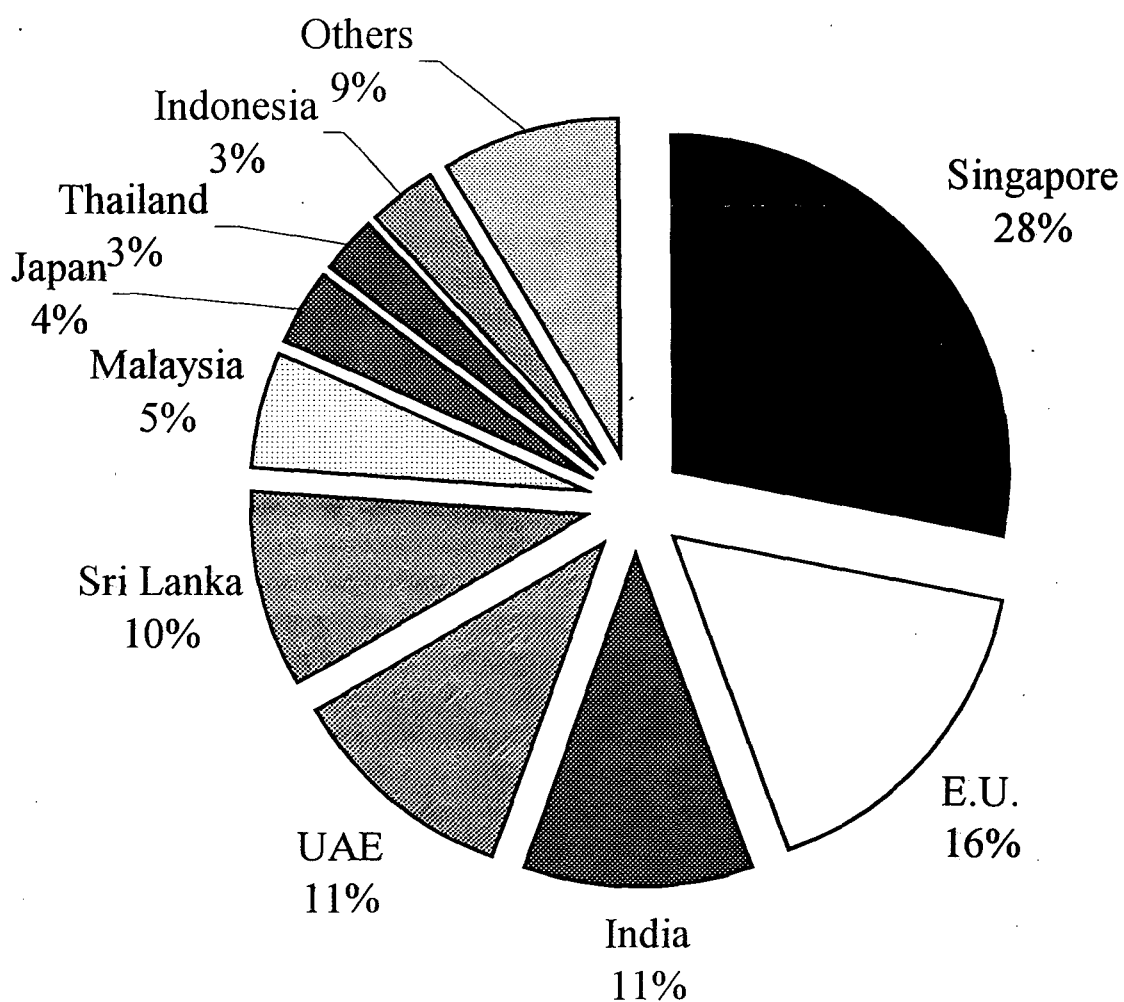
Maldivian Exports by Country of Destination, 1998
(Total Amount: 878 million rufiyaa)



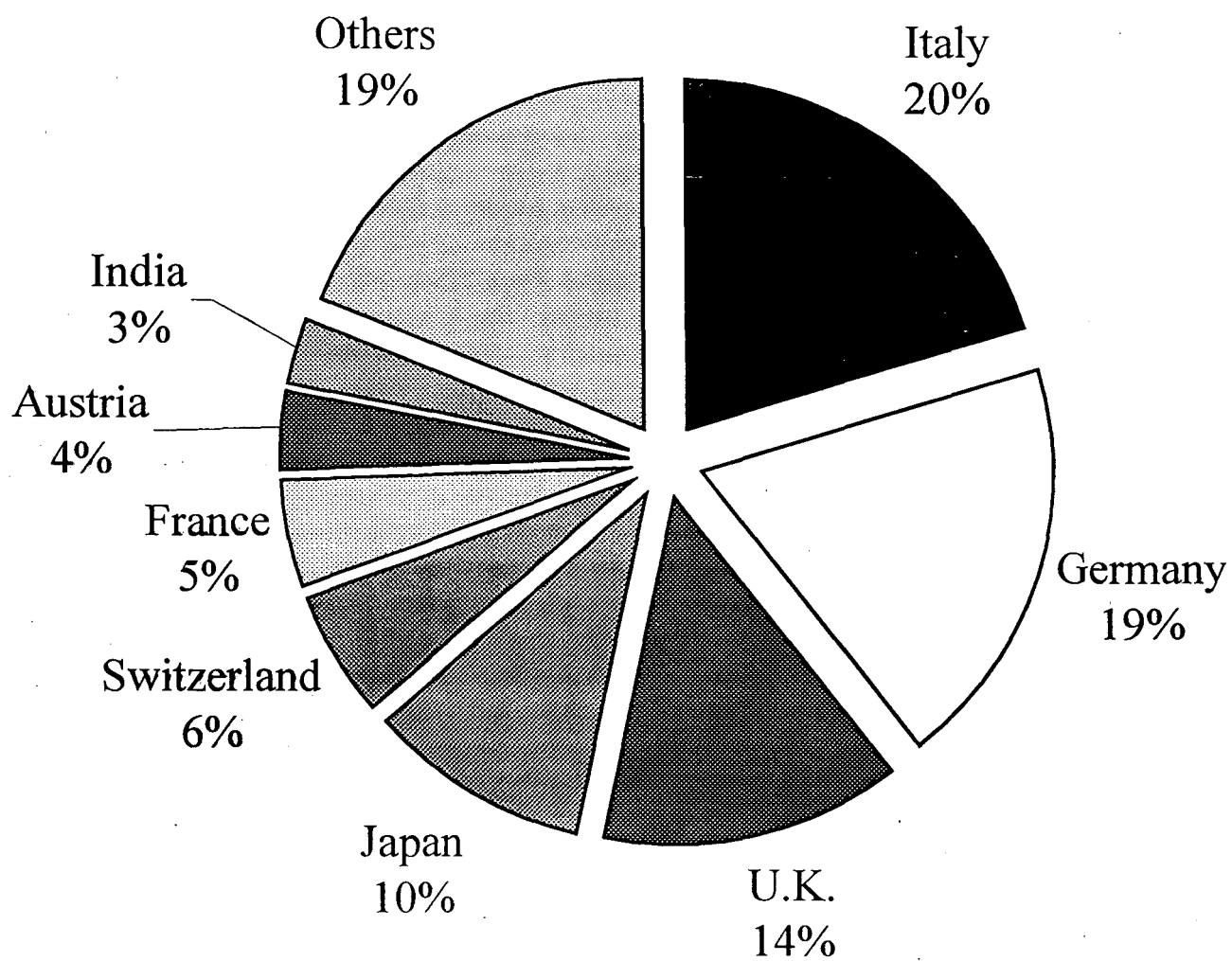
Maldivian Import by Commodity, 1998
(Total Amount: 4,166 million rufiyaa)



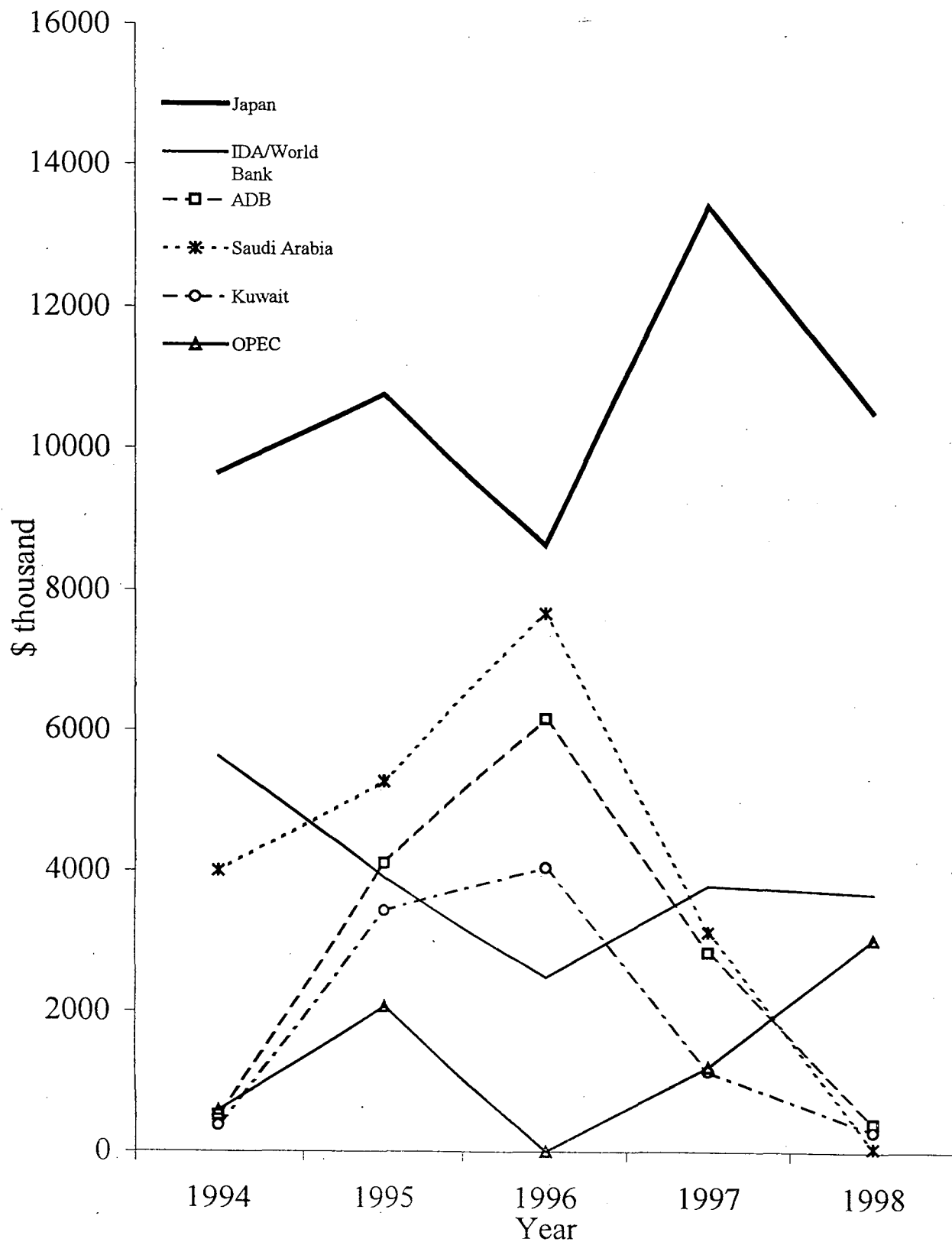
Maldivian Imports by Country of Consignment, 1998
(Total Amount: 4,166 million rufiyaa)



Flow of Tourists by Nationality in the Maldives, 1998
 (Total: 395,725)

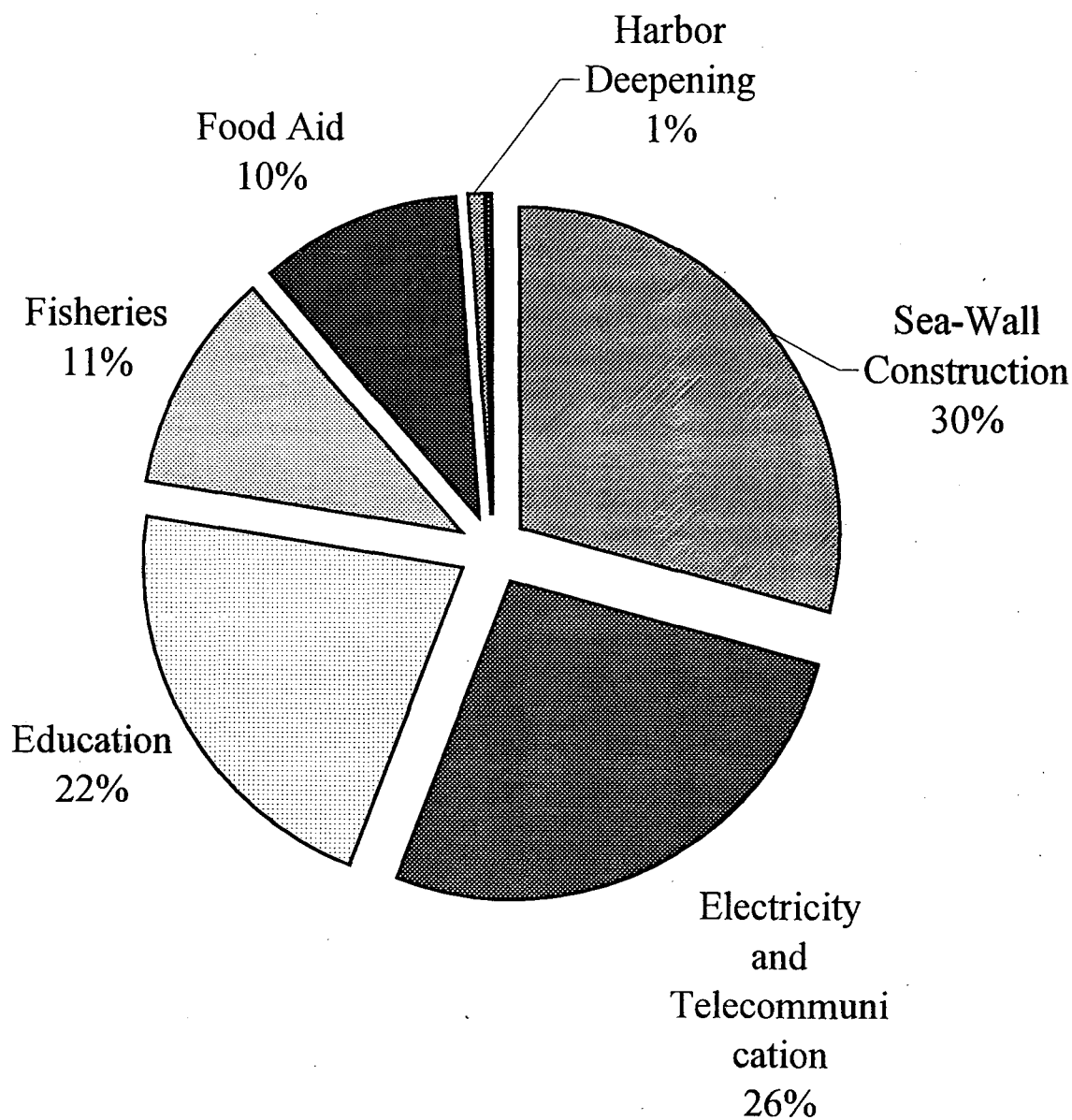


External Aid Disbursements 1994-1999
(in U.S. dollars)



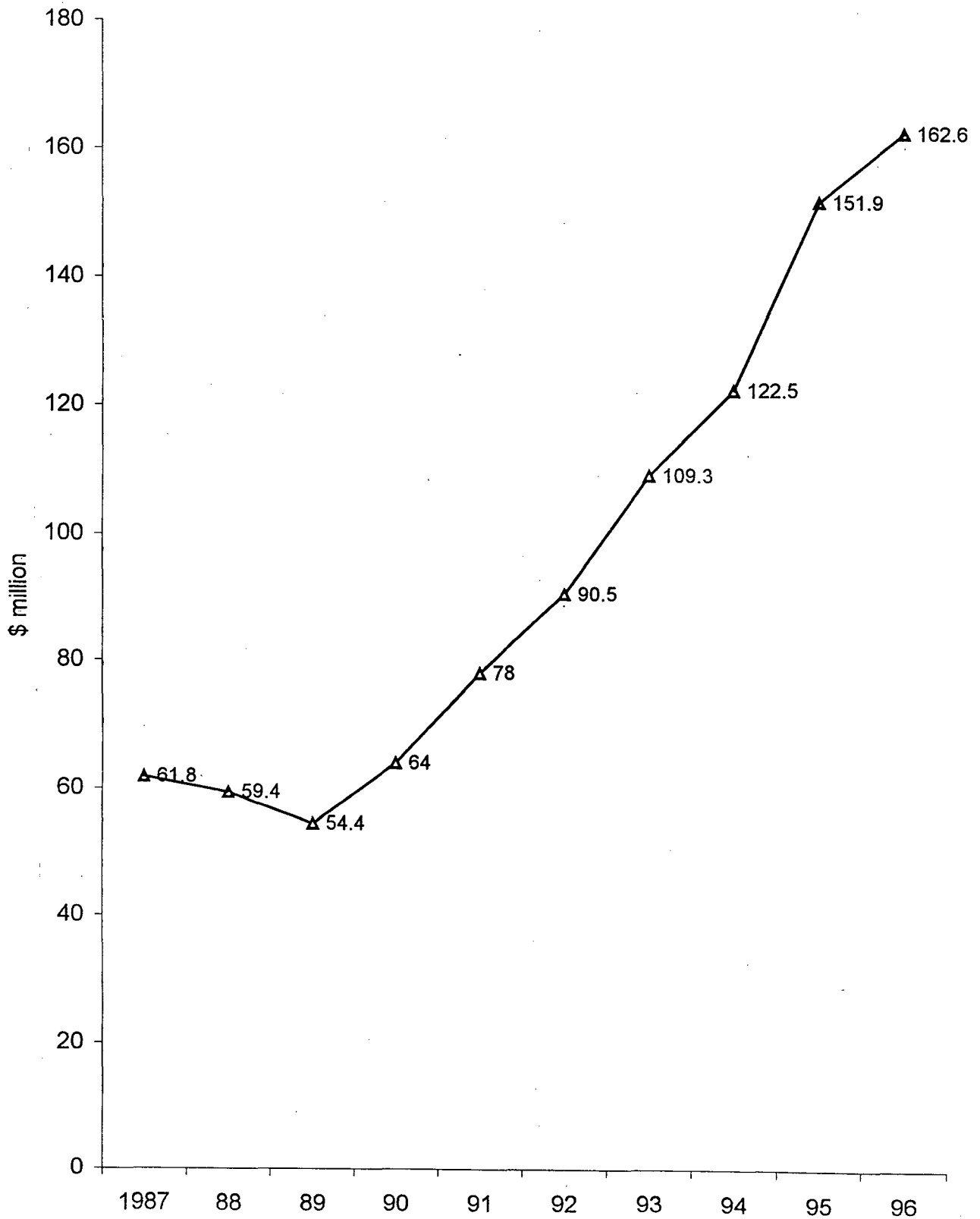
Source: Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of External Resources, "External Aid Disbursement 1994-1999" (Male: Department of External Resources, 2000), p.1.

Japanese ODA to the Maldives by Sector, 1980-98
(Total ODA amount: 173.45 million yen)



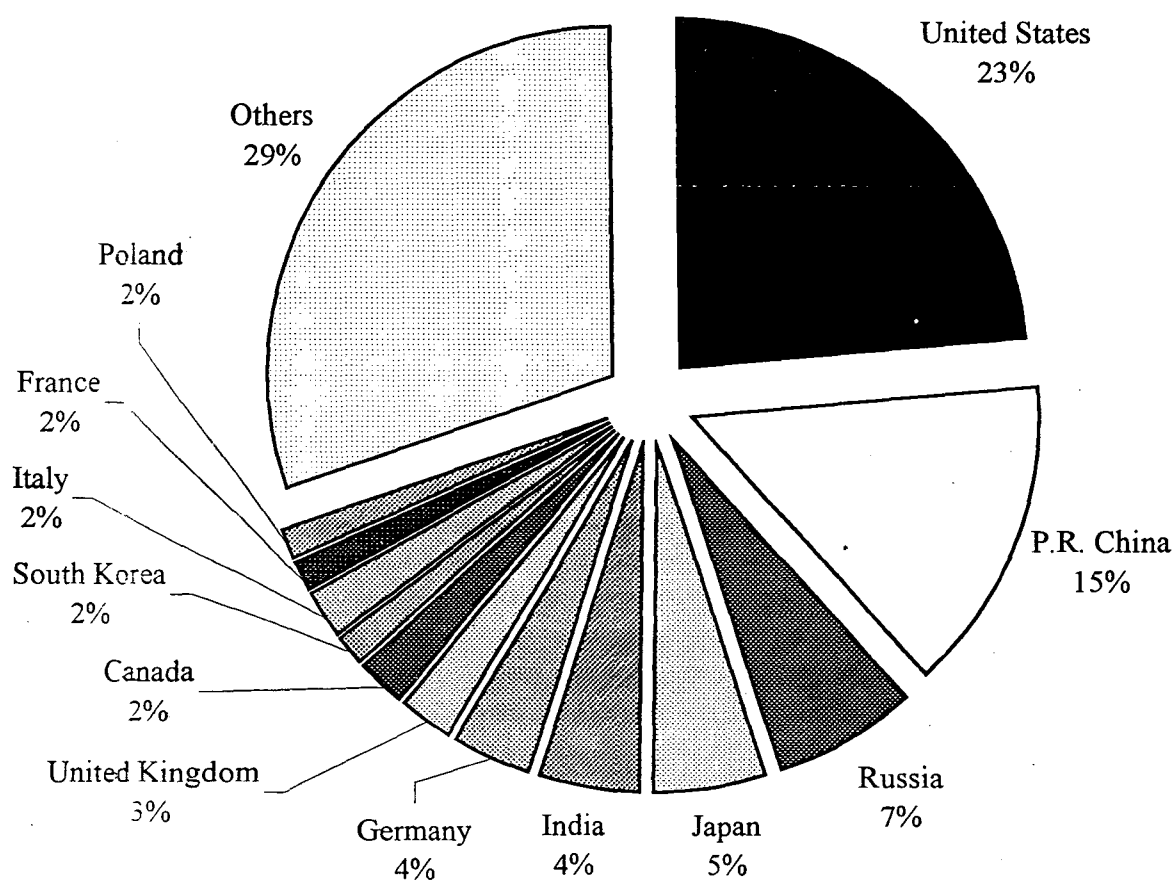
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan's ODA Annual Report 1984 et al." (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Cooperation, 1985 et al.), pp. 43-44 (1984), p. 159 (1988), pp. 231-32 (1992), pp. 321-22 (1994) and pp. 282-83 (1997).

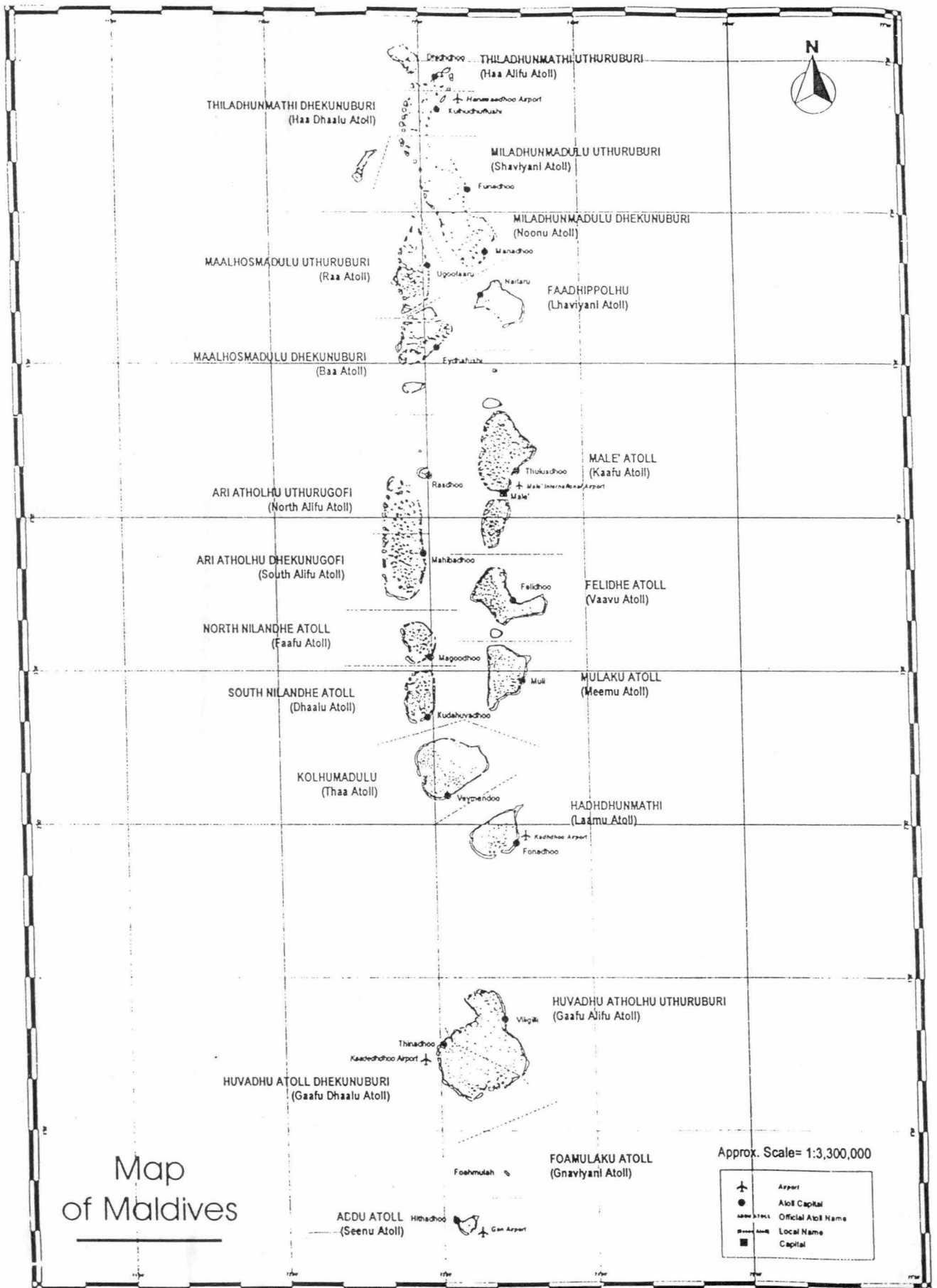
External Debt in the Maldives, 1987-96
(in \$ millions)



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistic Division, "Statistical Yearbook 1996" (New York: United Nations Publications, 1999), p. 832.

Carbon Dioxide Emission of the world, 1999
 (Total amount: 22,654 million tons)





Source: Republic of Maldives, Ministry of Planning and National Development, "Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 1999" (Male': Ministry of Planning and National Development, 1999), p. XII.

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