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The Indian Ocean through the Ages

Headmark

Issue 140 (June 2011)

Desilva-Ranasinghe, Serge

Abstract: As the third largest body of water in the world, the Indian Ocean beholds a mystique and uniqueness all of its own with an extraordinarily diverse and fascinating history. Presently, the Indian Ocean waters cover an estimated 73.5 million square kilometers, incorporating half the world's latitudes, seven of the world's time zones and 48 independent hinterland, littoral and island countries consisting of 2.6 billion people or 39% of the world's population. Throughout the ages, the Indian

Ocean has persistently attracted explorers and maritime powers from far and distant lands, eager to project their influence in order to exploit its wealth and resources. In the struggle for supremacy, the Indian Ocean has been the continuing scene of a 'Great Game', which has been played out for many centuries and by many different actors making it a critical arena of great power competition.



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