

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2376  
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2003  
TWO AMBASSADORS IN US  
PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) the reasons for having two Ambassadors in the United States;
- (b) the functions of the Ambassador at large of NRIs and PIOs and whether the same should be applicable to the Missions of Germany, U.K., Russia and France;
- (c) whether the present Ambassador Mr. Agnihotri has been an RSS Cadre and a strong propagandist of VHP;
- (d) whether it was the direction of the Union Government to hold an inter-religious leaders' meeting on June 15, 2003; and
- (e) if so, the relevance of the said meeting for NRIs and trade promotions?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA)

- (a) There is only one official designated as the Ambassador of India to USA. However, two other officials are designated in the rank of 'Ambassador' for functional reasons which include Permanent Representative of India to UN, New York and Special Adviser Permanent Mission of India and Ambassador-at-Large to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)/ Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) based in New York.
- (b) Ambassador-at-Large for NRIs and PIOs is entrusted with the task to strategically promote better coordination within the NRI/PIO community as well as economic cooperation, investment and commerce by NRIs/PIOs with India and other countries. Interactions of the Ambassador-at-Large with Diaspora covers also the countries other than USA where there are Indian communities.
- (c) Ambassador Shri Agnihotri has conveyed that he was associated with RSS/Sangh Parivar in the past prior to his assuming charge as the Ambassador-at-Large for NRIs/PIOs.
- (d) The inter-religious leaders' meeting convened by the Office of Ambassador-at-Large for NRIs and PIOs is broadly within the nature of the work of Ambassador-at-Large and did not require the direction of the Government.
- (e) The meeting was convened to compile and articulate recommendations of Indo-American religious leaders of various communities on how to forge cultural awareness among the second and third generation Diaspora youth, based on multi-religious heritage of India.