

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:303
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2011
EXPLORATION IN INDIAN OCEAN
Mirdha Dr. Jyoti

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the defence intelligence agencies have voiced their concerns over China gaining exploration rights in an international seabed region in the Indian Ocean;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the threat potential and other implications of this development; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) to (d) Government is aware that the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has approved the plan of work for exploration of polymetallic sulphides by China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA). ISA is an institution established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) mandated for governance of areas lying beyond national maritime jurisdictions of States. The Chinese plan of work for exploration in the southwest Indian Ocean Ridge is in an area beyond the national jurisdiction of any State. It will be carried out under the regulatory framework adopted by ISA for polymetallic sulphide exploration. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's national interest and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.