GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1821
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2011
INDIA-VIETNAM AGREEMENT FOR OIL EXPLORATION
Dhanaplan Shri K. P.;Mani Shri Jose K.;Shetkar Shri Suresh Kumar

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Vietnam have signed an agreement on oil exploration and ONGC Videsh Ltd. is exploring oil and natural gas in two Vietnamese Blocks situated in the South China Seas;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the objections raised by China, if any, in this regard;

(c) whether the Government is taking adequate steps to provide safety and safeguard in the interests of ONGC Videsh Ltd. in case of Chinese intervention; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH)

(a) Yes, Madam. ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Vietnam Oil Gas Group (Petro Vietnam), a National Oil Company (NOC) of Socialist Republic of Vietnam have signed an Agreement of Cooperation in October, 2011. OVL had also signed a Production Sharing Contract in June, 2006 for two Vietnamese offshore exploratory Blocks-127 and 128, situated in South China Sea. OVL has informed that it has relinquished the Block-127.

(b) to (d) Sovereignty over areas of the South China Sea is disputed between many countries in the region. India is not a party to this dispute. As two developing countries with growing energy needs, India and Vietnam have been cooperating in the oil and gas sector to enhance energy security. China, which is a party to the South China Sea dispute, has raised its concerns on India's hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation projects in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam. Government has clearly conveyed that such activity by Indian companies is purely commercial in nature and the sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with international law and practice.