

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:563
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2014
DISPUTE OVER ISLANDS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA
Patil Shri Chandrakant Raghunath

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether China has allegedly objected to India's involvement in the South China Sea dispute between China and Vietnam;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether Vietnam has also invited India to carry out oil exploration in South China Sea and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to amicably resolve the issue by maintaining bilateral ties with both the countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (d) India and Vietnam have been cooperating in the field of oil and gas. ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) has been engaged in exploration activity in blocks off the coast of Vietnam since 1988. Sovereignty over South China Sea is disputed between many countries in the region. India is not a party to this dispute. 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. India's position on South China Sea issue is consistent and has been reiterated bilaterally and in multilateral fora on several occasions. India supports freedom of navigation in international waters while maintaining that sovereignty issues must be resolved peacefully by the countries which are parties to the dispute in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.