

LOK SABHA

Monday, May 31, 1971 Jyaishta 10,
1893 (SAKA)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Symposium Re : activities of big powers
in Indian Ocean

*152, SHRI H.M. PATEL : Will the
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(VIDESH MANTRI) be pleased to state :

(a) whether recently there was a symposium in Washington regarding the activities of big powers in the India Ocean ;

(b) whether it was observed by several speakers that India had extended naval facilities to the Soviet Union at Visakhapatnam ; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(VIDESH MANTRALAYA MEN UP-
MANTRI) (SHRI SURENDRA PAL
SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is understood that some references were made during the discussions to the extension of facilities to the Soviet Union at Visakhapatnam.

(c) There is no basis for such observations. As has already been stated in this House, Government extends the same facilities to naval vessels of all friendly countries including those of the Soviet Union at Indian ports including Visakhapatnam.

SHRI H. M. PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this was a very responsible seminar where experts were present, and when they made reference to these facilities having been afforded, it must have been made with some sense of responsibility. Could the Government say what was the evidence they adduced ? They must have referred to some evidence on the basis of which they made these references in the seminar.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (VIDESH MANTRI) (SHRI SWARAN SINGH) : This was a seminar and we are not aware of any reference or evidence which formed the basis of these observations, but we know ourselves that we have not given any facilities. That I think, should be accepted against any reference with might or might not have been made by foreigners.

SHRI H. M. PATEL : May we request the hon. Minister to re-state—he has already stated—the policy of this Government regarding the activities of the powers in the Indian Ocean ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : We have taken the view that the big powers should leave the Indian Ocean free of tension, free of big power rivalries, and free from deployment of nuclear weapons. This has been the consensus of opinion amongst the vast majority of littoral powers surrounding the Indian Ocean.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA : Has the Government any information as to which power has got the largest naval fleet in the Indian Ocean.

MR. SPEAKER : That is a different question.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : It is difficult to answer that question because the presence of a fleet is something which continues changing.

MR. SPEAKER : It is not relevant to this.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH : May I know whether Government has taken note of the subversive activities that are being undertaken by China in collusion with Pakistan and that it will have any adverse effect on our position in Indian Ocean ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : According to our information at present, there is not much of Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean.

SHRI B. S. MURTHY : What is the consensus of the opinion at the seminar and how does it reflect about India ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : I am not aware of consensus because seminars are seminars, and they seldom try to arrive at a consensus. These are academic discussions.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA : May I know whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in today's *Hindustan Times* on the last page regarding the presence of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean and, if so what is the reaction of the Government thereto.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : Soviet naval ships do patrol the Indian Ocean and so do the naval ships of other countries. In accordance with the so well-recognised principle of the freedom of the high seas ; there is very little that can be done about it.

SHRI P. K. DEO : I would like to ask a supplementary regarding my statement which has been quoted by Mr. Chavda. It is a very important question which affects the security of the country. Since the decision of the British navy to withdraw from east of Suez, there has been a competition between the various powers to fill up the

vacuum in the Indian Ocean. Some photographs have been brought to me and I would like to know if these photographs which have been supposed to have been taken by the South African Defence Ministry probably by the satellites giving the bearings—latitude and longitude.....

MR. SPEAKER : How can you rope in all these things in this question ? Kindly give notice of a separate question.

SHRI P. K. DEO : The Russian flags are flying all over in the Indian Ocean, but so far as the bearing are concerned, they particularly point particular region, i.e. Socotra which is a South Yemini port. Will the Defence ministry verify the authenticity of these pictures ? With your permission, I would like to lay them on the Table.

MR. SPEAKER : I am not allowing it. Next question. Mr. Banerjee.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : Send the pictures to me.

SHRI P. K. DEO : I do not have any extra-territorial loyalty like him.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : He should withdraw it. I have no extra-territorial loyalty. I am more loyal to my country than the ex-princes.

They will write to the Britishers, not to the Indian Government.

MR. SPEAKER : That remark was not in good taste, if is the same as what the hon. member says. You may have some very good pictures. You can pass them on to the Minister. You can show it to everybody, even to me. Now, next question.

Reduction in work-load in Ordnance Factories

*153. **SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** Will the MINISTER OF DEFENCE (RAKSHA MANTRI) be pleased to state :

(a) whether some of the workers in Ordnance Clothing Factory, Shahjahanpur ; Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur ;