GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

STARRED   QUESTION NO: 102

ANSWERED ON:17.08.2012

DISPUTE OVER PETROLEUM BLOCK

K. SUDHAKARAN

(a)whether the Government has taken note of the Chinese claim over a Vietnamese petroleum block under exploration by an Indian entity;

(b)if so, the details thereof;

(c)whether Vietnam has contested the Chinese claim on the grounds that all the blocks offered by China for global bidding including Block No. 128 currently under exploration by the Indian entity, fall in the Exclusive Economic Zone and is in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of Sea;

(d)if so, the details thereof and response of the Government thereto;

(e)whether India has also countered the Chinese claim at the recently held ASEAN Regional Forum meet in Cambodia staking its claim for access to resources in accordance with the principles of International Law; and

(f)if so, the details along with the outcome thereof?

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRSbe pleased to state:-

ANSWER

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

 (a) to (f) On June 23, 2012, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) issued a notification offering nine blocks in the South China Sea for foreign collaboration. This includes part of a Block currently with ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) in collaboration with a Vietnamese company. OVL has been engaged in exploration activity in the South China Sea since 1988. India has clearly conveyed that its hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation projects in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam are purely commercial in nature and have no political connotation. India has on several occasions reiterated its position that it supports freedom of navigation, right of passage and access to resources in accordance with accepted principles of international law. These principles should be respected by all. Sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea must be resolved peacefully by the countries concerned in accordance with international law and practice.