

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-10 EA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02
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R 181241Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3488
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 12615

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PARM, IN, XO
SUBJECT: A PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE ON DIEGO GARCIA

1. IN THE LOK SABHA AUGUST 17, STATE MINISTER FOR
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SAMARENDRA KUNDU WAS ASKED IF THE
GOVERNMENT HAD NOTED REPORTS THAT THE USA WAS INCREASING
ITS MILITARY STRENGTH AT DIEGO GARCIA, WHETHER THERE
WERE 10,000 COMBATANT TROOPS "WITH LATEST WEAPONS"
GARRISONED THERE, AND WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN
ANY ACTION IN THE MATTER. IN HIS PREPARED ANSWER KUNDU
SAID THAT THE GOI DID NOT HAVE ANY INFORMATION TO CON-
FIRM THE REPORT AND REITERATED THE INDIAN POLICY ON
ELIMINATION OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASED IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN. IN ANSWER TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS, KUNDU
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SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S INFORMATION WAS THAT THERE
IS ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF TROOPS ON DIEGO GARCIA, NOT
THE 10,000 REPORTED IN A NEWS STORY.

2. ASKED IF THE PRIME MINISTER DURING HIS VISIT TO THE
USA HAD PROTESTED AGAINST THE MILITARY INSTALLATION AT
DIEGO GARCIA, KUNDU SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD

TAKEN UP THIS ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND "WE CON-
VEYED OUR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE MILITARY
BASE IN DIEGO GARCIA AND ... THEY HAVE ASSURED US THAT
THEY ARE TRYING TO FREEZE THE SITUATION." CONGRESS LEADER
AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER Y.B. CHAVAN THEN ASKED IF IT
WAS TRUE OR A MISTAKE TO SAY THAT THE USA HAD GIVEN
ASSURANCES "TO FREEZE THE MILITARY BASES" BECAUSE IF
TRUE, "IT IS AN ACHIEVEMENT." KUNDU REPLIED: "I KNOW
WHAT IS IN THE MIND OF MR. CHAVAN. THE POSITION IS THIS.
EARLIER MR. CARTER HAD MENTIONED THAT THEY WANTED TO
DEMILITARIZE. BUT OF LATE, WE FIND THAT THEIR DECISION
IS THAT THEY WANT TO FREEZE THE POSITION." ASKED BY CHAVAN
AT WHAT LEVEL, KUNDU SAID, "AT THE LEVEL OF CONSTRUCTION,
WHICH PERHAPS, THEY WERE ASKED (SIC) TO CONSTRUCT IN 1975.
GOHEEN

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