

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1911
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.03.2018

MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND CHINA

1911. SHRI B. SENGUTTUVAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether China is in talks with Afghanistan to develop a military base in the panhandle landscape of Wakhan corridor and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the newfound military cooperation between the two countries in the most volatile region of South Asia is likely to impact the existing state of balance of power and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether this diplomatic gambit on the part of China is to wean away Afghanistan from the Indian sphere of influence and to peddle the idea of one belt and one road initiative to Afghanistan and to sideline the strategic importance of India and the US in South Asia; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) Government has seen reports in this regard. Government has also noted that the Spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of National Defense stated on 25 January 2018 that the report on China's building of its own military base in Afghanistan was "ungrounded".

Under its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Government is committed to developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbours, including Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan share time-tested, friendly and strategic relations based on historical and cultural ties. The two countries entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement in October 2011, which *inter alia* provides for close and regular consultation of the leadership of the two countries on all bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual concern. The Agreement also provides for regular strategic dialogue and security cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, organized crime, trafficking in narcotics, money laundering and so on. Under the Agreement, India has agreed to assist Afghanistan, as is mutually determined, in training, equipping and capacity building programmes for Afghan National Security Forces.

India's relations with other countries stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries.

Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.
