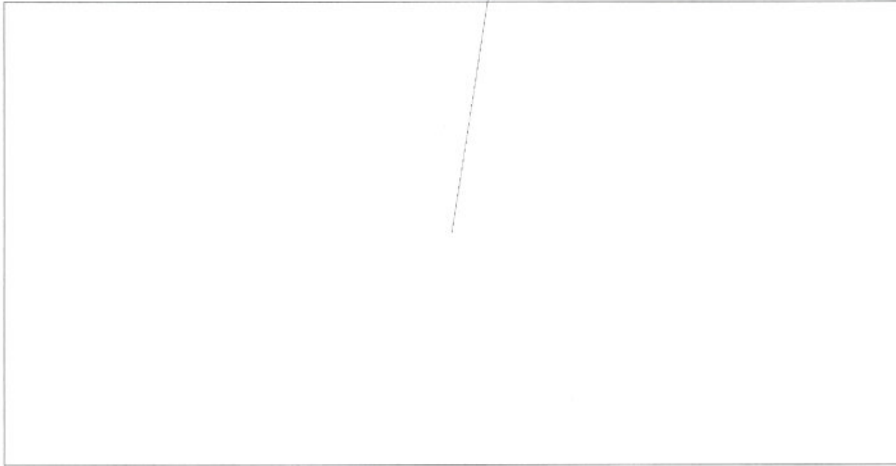


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RUEACMC/CMC WASHINGTON DC

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/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) AUSTRALIA (AS); INDIA (IN); SOUTH AFRICA (SF).

SUBJ: [Redacted] INDO-SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE

COOPERATION (U)

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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B. DAILY NEWSPAPER, "TIMES OF INDIA", NEW DELHI, INDIA, 950330, (U), IN ENGLISH. INDEPENDENT- COUNTRY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ENGLISH DAILY, KNOWN FOR ITS STRONG EDITORIAL VIEWS ON NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

SUMMARY: (U) THE SOUTH AFRICAN FLEET REPLENISHMENT SHIP SAS DRAKENSBERG CONDUCTS PORT CALL IN BOMBAY. SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE AND MILITARY ATTACHE STATES THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS LOOKING FORWARD TO CONDUCTING A JOINT NAVAL EXERCISE WITH THE INDIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

TEXT: (U) SOURCE B REPORTS THE ARRIVAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN FLEET REPLENISHMENT SHIP SAS DRAKENSBERG (A 301) IN BOMBAY AND IS QUOTED IN ITS ENTIRETY FOR INFORMATION.

TITLE: SA PROPOSES NAVAL EXERCISES WITH INDIA. TEXT: QUOTE. SOUTH AFRICA IS LOOKING FORWARD TO HOLDING JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES WITH INDIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO HELP GUARD THE INDIAN OCEAN, SAID CAPTAIN DENNIS FORREST,

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DEFENSE AND MILITARY ADVISER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH COMMISSION.

HE WAS SPEAKING ON BOARD THE SAS DRAKENSBERG, A HI-TECH NAVAL COMBAT SUPPORT VESSEL TODAY. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME A SOUTH AFRICAN WARSHIP HAS VISITED INDIA.

CAPTAIN PRESTON BARNARD, OFFICER COMMANDING OF THE SAS DRAKENSBERG, CLARIFIED THAT ALTHOUGH THIS WAS JUST A GOODWILL VISIT, IT COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO LARGE-SCALE NAVAL EXERCISES.

TALKING ABOUT SECURITY PERCEPTIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION, THE TWO CAPTAINS INDICATED THAT AUSTRALIA MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN THESE JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES SINCE IT TOO WAS A REGIONAL POWER.

AUSTRALIA SEES ITSELF AS A PLAYER IN THE FORMATION OF INDIAN OCEAN RIM OF REGIONAL POWERS. THIS COULD JUST POSSIBLY BE THE START OF MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND AUSTRALIA, HE ADDED.

CAPTAIN BARNARD SAID SOUTH AFRICA HAD A SMALL NAVY COMPARED WITH INDIA'S LARGER NAVY. THE BIGGER NAVY HAD THE POTENTIAL TO DICTATE TO THE SMALLER ONE, HE SAID. HOWEVER, IF YOU HAVE TWO REGIONAL POWERS WORKING TOGETHER, THIS WILL MAKE THE BIG POWERS AND A SUPERPOWER LIKE THE U.S. SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE. THE U.S. EXPECTS REGIONAL POWERS LIKE SOUTH AFRICA AND INDIA TO PLAY A MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THEIR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE, OBSERVED CAPTAIN BARNARD.

BOTH THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND INDIAN NAVIES HAVE MANY THINGS IN COMMON. BOTH NAVIES HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN THE ROYAL NAVY AND BOTH COUNTRIES BELONG TO THE COMMONWEALTH, SAID CAPTAIN BARNARD. INCIDENTALLY, IT WAS A PLEASURE TO MEET OLD FRIENDS FROM THE INDIAN NAVY WHOM I HAD MET EARLIER WHEN TWO INDIAN WARSHIPS VISITED SOUTH AFRICA, HE ADDED.

CLARIFYING THAT THE SAS DRAKENSBERG HAD ALREADY MADE A TWO-DAY VISIT TO PAKISTAN BEFORE VISITING INDIA, CAPTAIN FORREST SAID PAKISTAN HAD NO REASON TO DRAW ANY ADVERSE INFERENCES FROM ANY JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES BETWEEN INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. OUR COUNTRY IS NOT ONLY NEUTRAL BUT

SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE SO, HE ASSERTED.

IN FACT, ACCORDING TO CAPTAIN BARNARD, THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH COMMISSION HAD EARLIER STATED THAT PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA WOULD NOT MIND ACTING AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN ON THE KASHMIR DISPUTE.

ON THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT), CAPTAIN BARNARD SAID THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD RECEIVED CERTAIN BENEFITS BY SAYING IT. WE CERTAINLY HAD THE NUCLEAR BOMB BUT WE DISMANTLED IT AND NOW WE ARE CONCENTRATING MORE ON A RE-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. IN FACT, OUR DEFENSE BUDGET HAS BEEN DRASTICALLY CUT AND THE FUNDS FROM THERE HAVE BEEN USED IN THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SECTORS,

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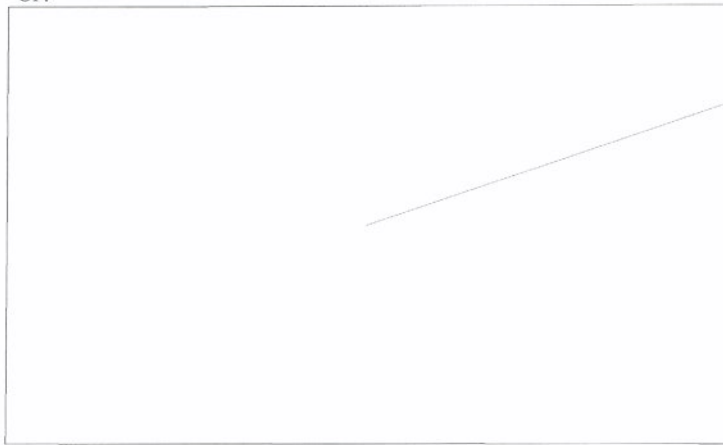
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HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON INDIA'S REFUSAL TO SIGN THE NPT, BOTH CAPTAIN FORREST AND CAPTAIN BARNARD SAID THIS TOO HAD CERTAIN ADVANTAGES SINCE HOSTILE COUNTRIES WOULD THINK TWICE BEFORE ATTACKING INDIA. THERE HAS TO BE AN ELEMENT OF DETERRENCE IN SECURITY PERCEPTIONS. IT IS LIKE TAKING OUT A FIRE INSURANCE ON YOUR HOME ALTHOUGH YOU MAY FIND THAT THIS MONEY MIGHT BE USED MORE PROFITABLY ELSEWHERE, HE ADDED.

THE SAS DRAKENBERG HAS A MIXED CREW OF BLACKS, WHITES AND COLOREDS. IN FACT, IT EVEN HAS A LIEUTENANT FROM KERALA, MALCOLM PILLAY, WHOSE ANCESTORS MIGRATED FROM INDIA MORE THAN 100 YEARS AGO. THE NAVY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE AREA WHERE THERE HAS BEEN TOTAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN ALL RACES, SAID CAPTAIN BARNARD. I AM NOT BOTHERED ABOUT WHICH COMMUNITY MY SAILORS OR OFFICERS COME FROM. WHAT I LOOK AT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS AND INTEGRITY, HE ADDED. BESIDES LIEUTENANT PILLAY, THERE ARE FOUR OTHER INDIAN CREW MEMBERS ON BOARD THE SHIP. LIKE HIM, THEY ARE VISITING INDIA FOR THE FIRST TIME. END QUOTE.

COMMENTS: 1. (C) FIELD COMMENTS. GIVEN THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA HAVE RE-ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY TIES, TO INCLUDE RECIPROCAL NAVAL SHIP PORT CALLS (CITE: IIR 6 844 0034 95, INDO-SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE COOPERATION), IT WOULD APPEAR BOTH PARTIES ARE ANXIOUS TO RESUME A CLOSE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. RO SUSPECTS THAT THE INDIANS ARE ANXIOUS TO RE-ESTABLISH CLOSE TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY/DEFENSE INDUSTRY IN AN EFFORT TO OPEN UP OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR THE PLETHORA OF DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS THAT THE INDIAN MILITARY IS IN NEED OF.



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