

# Doklam final report lauds government

But MPs' panel concerned that Chinese infrastructure near India-Bhutan-China tri-junction remains

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A report by the parliamentary panel on External Affairs, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, has expressed concern that Chinese infrastructure built close to the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction has not been dismantled, but “commended” the overall handling of the Doklam crisis by the Narendra Modi government.

The committee was unable to table the report in the monsoon session of Parliament after protests from BJP members.

The members objected to reproduction of the testimony of the Foreign Secretaries verbatim since it could have revealed some deficiencies in the Indian approach.

## Sections removed

To address the BJP members concerns, Mr. Tharoor met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and removed the contentious portions.

The tone and tenor of the report is distinctly different



A view of Kupup, the closest point to Doklam. The panel suggested that military infrastructure, especially the roads on the Indian side, need to be improved. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from the critical views expressed by many members during the deliberations. During the debate, the Congress members on the committee, including party president Rahul Gandhi, expressed concern that a setback has been spun by the government as a victory.

However, sources said, it was decided not to include these concerns in the final report. At least two members of the committee confirmed that the Opposition

members on the committee had said that while the Army's reaction to the crisis was laudable, Indian diplomacy failed to measure up to the task, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “no-agenda” meeting in Wuhan where he failed to even raise the Doklam incident.

The final report, however, pats the government for resolving the Doklam crisis.

“The Committee would commend the government's overall handling of the crisis

as it managed to send necessary signals to China that India will not acquiesce in its unilateral and forceful attempts to change the status quo at any of India's territorial boundaries,” the report said. The panel also appreciated the “brave and timely” action of security forces for checking the PLA troops from continuing with their road construction.

## Note of caution

It though adds a caveat by expressing concern that Chinese infrastructure built uncomfortably close to the tri-junction has not yet been dismantled.

“The Committee is concerned about the multiple reports which allude to Chinese presence around Doklam plateau and the statements from Chinese authorities about chances of similar happenings in future also, even after the stand-off ended,” the panel noted.

The committee said the government's stand was “ambivalent” on construction activities in other areas

on the Doklam plateau. The panel said the Indian government should not take the Chinese lightly at any point and “continue to monitor the Chinese activities along the border in general and the area in particular very intensely”.

The panel also suggested that military infrastructure, especially the roads on the Indian side, need to be improved. There is also an urgent need for high-technology gear to prepare our security forces to respond befittingly.

“Even if they have withdrawn their troops from Doklam for the time being, China's strategic intentions should not be taken casually. The Committee would, therefore, urge the Government not to let its vigil down in order to prevent any untoward incident in future,” the panel warned.

Asked on which portions were removed from the report, Mr. Tharoor refused to comment. “The report speaks for itself and I have nothing to add,” he said.