



Seychelles template

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Highlights

- Assumption Island agreement, The pact to build a naval base on the island, was seen as a major strategic enhancement of India's IOR naval capacities and had been under discussion since 2003
- Due to oppositions questioning Seychelles government on its loss of sovereignty and populous opinion against the agreement the pact was sidelined Instead, Seychelles would build the naval facility "on its own"
- India also announced a credit line of \$100 million for Seychelles to purchase defence equipment from India to build its maritime capacity, offered to finance civilian infrastructure including the official buildings, and handed over a Dornier aircraft for maritime surveillance purposes.

Analysis

- This softer approach adopted by the government is in remarkable contrast to the strong-arm tactics it has used in the past with other countries in the IOR, such as the Maldives.
- India's very public statements against the Abdulla Yameen government have now led to a considerable setback to its strategic position there, with the Maldives insisting on sending back Indian naval and coast guard helicopters from its atolls.
- A less confrontational approach in the case of Seychelles, with quiet negotiations instead of public recrimination, indeed appears to have had a more salutary effect.

Source: The Hindu

