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"In defending our Ladakh and NEFA borders against the Chinese offensive, we are also defending the borders of Pakistan. At the same time, we can more easily achieve victory against the Chinese if we are assured of the goodwill of Pakistan," observed Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, while addressing a public meeting at Napoo Gardens this evening. Mr. N. Dandekar, Chairman of the Party in Bombay, presided.

Mr. Masani explained that Indo-Pakistani friendship had become a matter of considerable urgency for two reasons. First, because with the great number of Indian troops deployed in and around Kashmir, India was fighting the battle against the Chinese with one arm tied behind her back. The link between Assam and the rest of India, which the Chinese forces were now approaching, was a very narrow one and East Pakistan lay between the two. This meant that, on the one hand, the defence of Assam was also the defence of East Pakistan and, on the other, that Assam could not be easily defended without a friendly Pakistan. In this context, the speaker expressed the hope that our Prime Minister would take the initiative in the matter and that President Ayub would prove to be a far-sighted statesman by assuring India that Pakistan would not take advantage of India's involvement with the Chinese and that Indian troops deployed on Pakistani borders could be withdrawn and shifted to repel the Chinese offensive without any fear.

Mr. Masani welcomed the Prime Minister's statement that those in authority in India had been getting "out of touch with reality in the modern world" and had been living in an artificial atmosphere of their own creation, and expressed the hope that the necessary rectification in policy would be made without further delay so that final victory against the Chinese may be assured. If such measures were taken, the whole country would line up behind the Government. Among these measures, he mentioned the acceptance of military aid from friendly countries which was entirely consistent even with a policy of non-alignment, learning to distinguish between friends and enemies, isolating the communist Fifth Column within the country, and giving the country and the Armed Forces a new Defence Minister in whom they would have confidence and who could give the dynamic leadership that the present incumbent had signally failed to provide.

Not for publication

M. R. Masani
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