



swatantra party

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Friend,

By now you must have read in the newspapers the moves that are afoot in pursuance of the resolution passed by the National Executive, directing me to explore ways and means of bringing about a TWO-PARTY system in India. Unfortunately, the matter was given out to the Press creating a great deal of misunderstanding in the Party. Therefore, I thought I would write to you sharing our thoughts.

Most of you are aware of the conditions prevailing in the country, and therefore, I need not describe them to you. What you perhaps don't know is that all the institutions of democracy starting with the presidency, parliament, the cabinet system, the judiciary, the press and other mass media, public opinion, fundamental rights and even opposition parties have been destroyed and exist only in name, threatening our democracy with impending dictatorship.

A strong viable national alternative would never have permitted such erosion to our democratic way of life. Further it is our analysis that there will no longer be any free and fair elections from what we have witnessed in UP and Orissa. Every avenue of legitimate protest has been blocked and ultimately even the ballot box has been desecrated. Study the recent legislation being passed by Parliament and you will see a definite strain of fascism running through it in preparation for a dictatorship.

In such a situation the only worthwhile political activity remains to create a powerful, viable and credible national alternative bringing all non-Congress, non-Marxist, non-Communist parties together. This includes all national and state parties, communal parties, regional parties, fractional parties, personal parties, independents, new people with new hope, and, whatever else may exist. Naturally this cannot be done overnight. It is a long drawn out process of persuasion, reasoning, threatening, cajoling and even brow-beating. It is hoped that by doing so we might be able to stem the rot and with luck even police the system.

The moment has arrived when all of us will have to do some heart-searching and rise above petty issues and take a bold step forward in the national interest to save democracy.

If you find fault with this analysis I can only say that you are not fully aware of what is happening in Delhi and the line along which current political thinking is proceeding. I therefore, entreat you to accept the analysis even if you may differ with the conclusions. To those of you who are not agreed with the conclusion I can only say, please reconsider the matter. Of course I would prefer it if you could spend your time and energy more usefully in persuading other groups and people to join the National Alternative instead of wasting it in passing resolutions on the basis of insufficient information. ||

After all political parties exist to furnish answers to the urges of the people. How often have you heard : "If not Indira then who ?" "what is the alternative to the Congress?" "Why dont you all get together "?

Has it ever occurred to you that after 27 years of self-Government we have not been able to answer any of these questions with any degree of credibility ? That is the nature of our failure.

Therefore the only solution seems to us to be a TWO-PARTY system. The two-party system has a chance of succeeding where other efforts have failed for the simple reason that it breaks down old inhibitions and steers clear of ideological conflict. It also has a greater chance of survival as all alternatives are neatly obliterated leaving only two parties in the field.

The reason why the Swatantra Party has decided to pursue this "two-party" idea is to remove a vast number of inhibitions, political and personal, prevailing in our political parties in joining hands with each other.

The dichotomy of Indian politics is largely historical. We have inherited a coalition party in the form of the Congress which is based on the Anglo-American example and confronting it is a plethora of ideological or regional based parties on the Continental pattern. At no time is any opposition party attacking the entire political spectrum of the Congress, creating an anomaly in our parliamentary system.

The "two-party" system would therefore create a broad spectrum which will not only confront the Congress but present an alternative to the people.

The "two-party" idea is not based on merger, which tends to carry the old odiums attached to the existing parties into the new one, forcing the new party into compromises and bargaining amongst its constituent units. It implies a dissolution of all parties and the creation of a new party which would evolve a programme from time to time on the basis of consensus. Naturally within the party, all of us should and must fight to gain the

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predominance of our principles and policies. That is why, to keep Swatantra philosophy alive and enhancing its propaganda, the Swatantra members must remain together and join the new Party en masse to flood it with our ideas.

The advantages of a "two-party" system are too numerous to list in a letter of this length. Its most obvious advantages being that both parties, that is the ruling party and the opposition party, are not ideologically based but are programme based, permitting a large degree of regional deviation and a broad spectrum of individual opinion, in keeping with our 21st principle.

Our present democratic political system is fast approaching chaos without a visible or credible alternative to Congress misrule. The lack of an effective opposition or corrective has permitted the Congress to erode and weaken the institutions which safeguard democracy against dictatorial tendencies and permit the structures to withstand any onslaught or upsurge of temporary popularity such as the "Indira Wave".

This has resulted in arbitrary rule, destroying the economy and taking the democratic system to a breaking point.

It is in this state of emergency that my colleagues and I appeal to you to sink all differences and respond to the call of the nation and the cry of the people, who have been searching in vain for an alternative in which to build their hopes.

only/ So far we have made a beginning with SEVEN parties. It is now NINE parties. Two more are in the process of joining. Nevertheless this has to be expanded considerably to include parties like the Congress (O), Jan Sangh, DMK, Akalis, Jai Andhra, Telengana Praja Samiti, the separate Vidarba Party, Vishal Haryana Party, Jharkhand Party and many others.

The procedure that we are adopting is as under :

such/ A draft programme, a draft Constitution and a tentative name has to be agreed upon. You need have no apprehension with a programme, a draft of which is enclosed. As you will see, it largely incorporates Swatantra thinking and that we may have to compromise on a very few matters like agreeing to start trade unions and student organisations to pacify our partners. But then you know that even in our own party, opinions have been strongly divided on these matters. Further the new party will have a strong emphasis on decentralisation and would consequently have to frame its constitution permitting the state parties some measure of regional deviation and the expression of individual opinion. Again, our 21st Principle will also largely pacify those who believe in a federal party.

Having made the policy and the constitution we have to get it ratified from our Party for which a General Council has already met on the 9th and 10th of June and left the matter to a National Convention.

At the General Council meeting, opinions were largely divided. The Tamil Nadu Unit was totally opposed to it. Unfortunately, the Tamil Nadu State Council had already met, before they were in possession of all the facts, and passed a resolution opposing the move. This clearly queered the pitch of discussions, as the Tamil Nadu Unit found it impossible to change their views against their own resolution. Maharashtra had also discussed the matter but had kept an open mind although there was a basic resistance to changing name and symbol and to submerge our identity. The Delhi Unit had also met and passed a most offensive resolution as reported in the press and some of their speeches reflected this attitude, casting all manner of aspersions and imputing all sorts of motives on the leadership and particularly on me. One member from Gujarat was against it, three were in favour. Mr. H.M. Patel cautioned us against haste. Rajasthan, UP, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa were in favour of getting together. The final resolution was unanimous, leaving the matter to be decided by the National Convention.

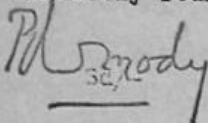
In the meanwhile, I would welcome it if you, your friends and your State Councils, would discuss this matter in full detail as supplied to you above, and apply your minds to the enclosed draft programme of policies and principles.

Let me reassure you and others that at all times we have had the best interests of the Swatantra Party at heart. Surely in matters like this a certain amount of faith is necessary which I feel should not be shaken by reading a few deliberately twisted or intentionally planted reports in the newspapers.

I will urge you to use your influence with other members of the party in having some patience and deciding the issue only after the full facts are before you.

With kind regards,

Sincerely Yours,



(Piloo Mody)

P.S. Today the Swatantra Party has 9 members in Parliament and 40 members in the State Legislatures. Under the new formation, we would have 18 members in Parliament and 174 members in the State Legislatures. However, with every new accretion our strength would increase.

