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15th September 1967.

My dear Dandekar,

Further to my letter to you of the 6th instant in which I conveyed my inability to attend the forthcoming Meeting of the National Executive in view of certain important commitments I had made, I am enclosing herewith a Note which outlines my thinking on the position and prospects of the Party.

I have asked Mr. Raju to carry extra copies of the Note to Madras and distribute them to the Members of the National Executive.

I understand you have undergone an operation and hope you will soon be restored to complete health and vigour.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Homi Mody.

Shri N. Dandekar,  
Member, Lok Sabha,  
Bombay.

Encl:

## N O T E

I think the fact has to be faced that the image of the Swatantra Party has suffered somewhat since the last General Elections. Apart from some defections that have taken place in various States, the performance of the Party in the Legislatures of the country does not seem to have come up to the general expectation. Different people have different ideas about the reasons for this decline, but the view that is gaining ground is that the organisation is weak and lacks unity and sense of purpose.

We are all agreed that we must fight the Congress on every front and weaken, and in time, destroy its hold over the country. But I am not sure there is not some confusion about the ways and means to be adopted to achieve that end. There is known to be a section in the Party which is toying with the idea that we must seek to establish Coalition governments wherever we can, in which the Swatantra Party would have an influential and even decisive role to play.

To those of this way of thinking, it is legitimate to ask, in what conditions can such a Government be possible and workable, and to what extent the Party would have to sacrifice in the process some of the fundamentals of its political and economic policies. How many Congressmen, for instance, if the attempt is to wean away Congressmen from their Party, will join in such a Coalition, and on what terms? For one thing, will they not constitute numerically the largest element in the Coalition?

Looking at it from another angle, what would be the strength and position of the groups which are in the Opposition today? Is our Party to admit to the alliance any and every group, excluding the Left communists? And what sort of cohesion do we expect from a conglomeration of Right communists, the Jan Sangh, the two Socialist Parties and other such elements?

On the other hand, there can be no objection to the kind of arrangement we have entered into with another Party in Orissa, made up of dissident Congressmen, where the Coalition partners agreed on a common programme before the Elections and thus obtained a mandate from the people. There, the common programme has not involved any ideological sacrifice on our part. Thus, what I object to are opportunistic alliances having little in common, which, while appearing attractive in the short term, will do considerable harm to the Party's image and organisation in the long run.

If any of our leaders were to say the Party has no such ideas and that I am merely tilting at a windmill, my reply would be I would be only too happy if that were so.

Apart from the question of coalitions, what do we propose to do about the working arrangements we have reached with other groups in Parliament with regard to voting on particular issues? Isn't it time we gave them up? While they may have served their purpose, are they not proving embarrassing and should we not keep clear of all such understandings? My own view is that, except on some such fundamental issue as a vote of no-confidence, we should break away from any active association with disparate elements.

All that has happened in the last few months is leading us increasingly to the conclusion that, if our Party is to have a future, it should either go it alone or work for some such arrangement as the one operating in Orissa. It may mean our continuing to be in the political wilderness for a few years longer; but this

is the only way in which we can build up an Opposition Party, able some day to challenge the Congress and acquire power without seeking any doubtful alliances. I am certain in my mind that if we pursue that path, even at the next Elections, we would see a considerable accretion of strength to our ranks.

The Party has done much to fill the role for which it was created, but I think it is not unfair to say that it has not made such an impact on the country and the Legislatures as may be expected from the brilliance and dedication of our leaders, and of not a few of the rank and file. In particular, the Party's performance in some of the States, particularly Gujarat and Rajasthan, has been disappointing, and the time has come to devise measures to enforce stricter discipline and unity of purpose, even though we may have to lose some of our adherents in the process. The difficulties are there, but they have to be resolved, if the Party is to function at its full strength.

I have thrown out just a few ideas in this Note, and I hope they will not be found somewhat didactic and impracticable, or based on an incorrect reading of the situation.

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