

Swatantra Party

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C O P Y

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From: 18, Ferozshah Road,
NEW DELHI-1.

22nd November, 1967

When replying, please quote our Reference No.

My dear Chandubhai,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 16th November addressed to H.M. Patel concerning what you regard as the urgent need for the "seizure of power" at any cost in Gujarat. Viren Shah was kind enough to send me copies of your earlier correspondence on the subject.

2. It was, indeed, after a complete review of the results of the efforts of the kind you suggest, attempted in participation with all and sundry, and by all manner of means, in a scramble to seize power in Rajasthan and Gujarat that the Central Parliamentary Board, supported by the National Executive of the Party, came to the conclusion it did. The Board felt convinced that apart from being altogether futile, this sort of hankering after "power at any price" did our Party, and our public reputation and image, far more harm than any good we may have achieved. Moreover, subsequent but very recent events in Bengal, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab have re-inforced the complete instability of such coalition governments formed on the shifting sands of opportunist defections.

3. The worst example of what can only be described as a "fish market" in this respect was of course Haryana where, may heaven be praised, we were not involved. On the other hand, the best example of the sort of thing we should strive for is the sensible and dignified type of coalition government now in office in Orissa, under our leadership because we are in a majority, in alliance with dissident Congressmen who had the courage to leave the Congress before the general election. For that, or something similar, I would go a long way. But the Haryana and the Punjab models, -- which you would apparently copy "if necessary" without any reservation, -- I feel sure the Central Parliamentary Board and the National Executive would feel bound to reject without much hesitation.

4. I am sorry to have to disagree with you so emphatically. But perhaps you are not so acutely aware as I am of the utter contempt and loathing with which even the not very highly educated or well informed public throughout India have been following the antics of the legislators in Haryana and the course of events in that State. Hardly, I suggest, an example for Gujarat to emulate.

Yours sincerely,

(N. Dandekar)

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Copy 6. M.H.R. Masani