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Personal & Confidential

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Ratilal Ukabhai Patel,
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13th March, 1968

My dear Masani,

I returned last night to Rajkot after attending the meeting of State Council and State Executive of Gujarat Party at Ahmedabad.

In the meeting of State Executive in presence of Shri Dandekar some members strongly objected for selecting Babubhai Vaidya as a candidate for Rajya Sabha on behalf of Swatantra Party on the ground that Shri Babubhai Vaidya does not believe in the ideology of Swatantra Party and he is not a member of Swatantra Party. Some members alleged that Babubhai Vaidya has criticised our party and he had stood against Dr. Antani of Cutch as a rival candidate in 1966 Rajya Sabha elections. Some argued that Central Party imposed on Gujarat Party the candidature of Dr. Antani against the selection of Shri C.C.Desai made by Gujarat Party. But this time if the same attitude is taken up by the Central Party and if the party member is not selected then the result of the election will be different from the expectation of the Central Party.

In this meeting of the State Executive, I tried to explain that Swatantra Pragati of Babubhai Vaidya had helped twice in electing party candidates for Rajya Sabha and this commitment made at that time by the General Secretary Shri Maharaja Jaideepsinhji and confirmed by the Central Party Secretary at that time should be honoured by the Party MLAs and we should explain to them the background of this commitment.

In spite of this explanation, even Dharamsinh Patel of Junagadh stated that the atmosphere is such that majority of MLAs will not vote for Babubhai Vaidya.

Shri H.N.Patel cautiously tried to impress the house that this commitment is made with due consideration and we should carry out this commitment. However I will convey your feelings to the Central Parliamentary Board and the decision of the Central Parliamentary Board should be carried out by us.

Mr Udaysinh Mahida's name was also put up for the consideration of Central Parliamentary Board.

At the time of State Council meeting again some members opposed the name of Babubhai Vaidya and I found that it was an organised manipulation by the supporters of Mr. Mahida. A third name of Professor Shenoy was also proposed by Shri R.K.Amin.

I had a talk with Shiva Bhadrasinhji of Bhavnagar in the presence of Babubhai Vaidya and he had assured us that the commitment for Babubhai Vaidya should be honoured and he assured further to call Baria Maharaja by sending a telegram.

Mr Bhagwanji Patel of Bhoraji is now in Ahmedabad and he is taking keen interest in opposing Babubhai Vaidya's name. His relative Mr. Nathabhai Patel, M.L.A. of Jamjodhpur has started a campaign to get signatures of MLAs against Shri Babubhai Vaidya and support Mr. Mahida. As a counter move yesterday, Shri Shivabhadrasinhji of Bhavnagar has started to take signatures of MLAs to support

Babubhai Vaidya, to honour the commitment of Party leaders.

It is a surprising thing that Mr. Mahida expressed his determination to fight out this election even though the Central Party's decision is not in his favour. He has already submitted his nomination form without awaiting the final selection declared by the Central Party. He openly told before us that the Party leaders of Gujarat had committed for him before three years and now if this commitment is not carried out, I will fight out and I do not care for allegiance to the party.

Mr. Mahida also disclosed before us that he had also seen Baria Maharaja before submitting his nomination paper and Mr. Pravinsinh Solanki was called by him to come to Ahmedabad from Delhi immediately. From his talk we understand that some Kshatriya MLAs, including Mr. Vadodia, Party Whip are supporting him.

Congress people are keenly watching the situation and they are trying secretly to encourage and exploit the situation to their advantage and unfortunately some of our Party men become their tools and I am afraid that some of our party men will not understand the importance of observance of party discipline.

I am sure Central Party will try its best to stick to the commitment for Babubhai Vaidya and will try its all influence to carry out and it will be a test how far the party discipline is observed by Gujarat Party.

I am writing this letter also to draw your attention to the fact that the Central Party's line of action about Cutch Award is not befitting the people's feeling throughout Cutch and Saurashtra. Jansangh workers are taking advantage of this situation and instead of attacking Congress and Congress Govt. they are vehemently attacking Swatantra Party in General and particularly the M.P. of Rajkot and Rajaji.

Yesterday Mr. Chiman Shukla arranged a meeting for Madhu Limaye, M.P. who openly attacked you and Rajaji and told in strong words that I have specially come to address the intelligent people of Rajkot and ask you how you have voted for Mr. Masani. Mr. Masani has no tinge of patriotism. He will give "Bharat Dana", give away whole India to Pakistan. He has no interest for the sentiments of his constituency. He is there for the protection of the interest of Big Capitalists. I am surprised how you have selected such a representative for you and Shri Rajaji is always against some good works. Shri Bhalkaka and H.M. Patel are opposing Cutch Award but I do not put trust on them so long as they do not bring Mr. Masani and Mr. Rajaji to senses.

Mr. Chiman Shukla is taking full advantage to abuse Swatantra Party, particularly yourself and Shri Rajaji and I have received a letter from Maharaj-kumar Himmatsinhji of Cutch who is also very much worried by the attitude of the Central Party on Cutch Award and he is afraid that Swatantra Party will be wiped out in Cutch and Jan Sangh will get hold in Cutch if our Central Party leaders will not change their attitude on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

ed/ Ratibhai Patel.

P.S. Only the findings of enquiry committee about Bhagwanji Patel were read before the executive. Shri Dandekar should ask for detailed report of this committee. It is proved that Mr. Bhagwanji had done work against Party candidates.