

4866

SWATANTRA PARTY

Resolution of Parliamentary Board

The Swatantra Party has always stood for Indo-Pakistan amity and good understanding as essential for the security of the country and for the progress and prosperity of both countries. The General Council of the Swatantra Party at a meeting in December 1959 recorded its opinion that measures for ensuring the country's security and defence should include the settlement of outstanding issues with Pakistan and serious consideration of the offer made by Pakistan for the joint defence of the subcontinent.

2. In March 1960 the National Convention of the Party adopted a resolution reaffirming the desirability of forging bonds of cooperation with neighbouring Asian nations and recorded its disapproval of the unresponsive attitude of the Government to the proposals and approaches of Pakistan.

3. In February 1963, the General Council of the Party recorded and published its opinion that "Prime Minister should be left free to achieve friendship and understanding with Pakistan on such terms as he thinks fit, so as to enable the defence of the Sub-Continent to be secured against Communist aggression."

4. The Parliamentary Board reiterates this view. It welcomes the release of Sheikh Abdullah who had been kept in prison for many years as an undertrial prisoner on charges which have now been withdrawn as a preliminary to his acquittal. The Parliamentary Board is glad to note that the Prime Minister and Sheikh Abdullah have held long parleys over the Kashmir problem and on India-Pakistan relationship. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Prime Minister has encouraged Sheikh Abdullah to accept President Ayub Khan's invitation to meet him. The solution of the Kashmir problem should be such as to reduce if not end Indo-Pakistan ill-feeling, and such as to promote good understanding and amity between the two countries, and therefore the solution should not be such as to amount to a defeat for the one or the other, while it should provide an honourable status for the people of Kashmir. The Board is glad that Mr. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah are also of this view.

5. Neither the Party nor any of its members propose, as has been wrongly alleged in some quarters, that Kashmir should be handed over to Pakistan as part of a pact of amity between India and Pakistan. But public opinion in Kashmir today can only be met by a fair and conciliatory attitude. It is common ground that Kashmir cannot be held by compulsion against the wishes of its people.

6. This Board is of the view that, whether the accession of Kashmir to India be considered in the light of the statements made by India's Representatives before the Security Council in February-March 1948 as provisional or, as a result of what has happened later, a completed accession to India, it should not stand in the way of a re-consideration and re-adjustment in order to attain Indo-Pakistan amity, thereby strengthening India's security against foreign aggression and helping the progress and prosperity of both India and Pakistan.

7. No decision in politics, particularly when it relates to matters which involve India's security against foreign aggression, should be deemed final or irrevocable, so as to prevent re-thinking and revision for advancing the welfare and security of the country.

8. The causes of the present state of feeling in Pakistan as well as in India are no doubt mutual mistrust and fear; but these psychological causes produce effects which become causes again for further effects. This process goes on with increasingly vicious force. The circle must be cut at some crucial effective point, if we are bent on achieving amity as the primary requisite for organising the security and welfare of the Sub-continent. This requires courage, sacrifice and determined resistance to the forces both in Pakistan and India which contribute to the maintenance of ill-will and mutual fear. The Prime Minister and the Congress Party who have contributed not a little, both positively and negatively, to this unfortunate state of things should take full advantage of the present opportunity for reconciliation and not allow any further drift.
