

Swatantra Party

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DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 6, AND WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 7, 1962, AT 40, CANNING LANE,
NEW DELHI.

A meeting of the Parliamentary Board of the Party was held on Tuesday, November 6, at 10.30 a.m. at 40, Canning Lane, New Delhi.

Present:

Prof. N.G. Ranga .. (in the Chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. K.M. Munshi
Mr. S.K.D. Paliwal
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel
Mr. Laxman Singh of Dungarpur
Mr. Raghavendra Pratap Singh of Mankapur
Mr. R.N. Singh Deo of Patna
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel
Mr. M.R. Masani

Col. H.R. Pasricha was present by special invitation.

The minutes of the last meeting held in Madras on July 21 and 22 were confirmed.

Arising out of the minutes, the General Secretary reported that Mr. Dharam Singh Rathi had, despite the instructions of the Parliamentary Board at its last meeting, repeated requests from the Central Office and his own promises to return the jeep, still not done so. It was decided that steps should be taken to recover possession of the Party's property from Mr. Rathi and Mr. Vijay Singh with whom, according to Mr. Rathi, the jeep was at present.

Chinese Offensive:

The Parliamentary Board discussed at considerable length the situation created by the Chinese offensive against India and, after a thorough examination of the situation, adopted unanimously the statement attached hereto (Annexure 'A')

The meeting then adjourned.

The Parliamentary Board resumed its deliberations at 11 a.m. on Wednesday November 7, 1962.

The Emergency:

The Parliamentary Board adopted the following three resolutions in connection with the Emergency:

1. "Banning of The Communist Party: The Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party is of the opinion that, despite the hypocritical resolution of its National Council, the Communist Party of India must by its nature function as a Fifth Column of Imperialism *(Communist)* in this country. It is therefore necessary that the Party should be banned under the Defence of India Ordinance and Regulations."

2. "Joint Committee: In order to prevent party politics entering into the Defence effort, it is desirable that the President of the Indian Union and the Governors of States should, as far as possible, preside over all joint committees concerning the Defence effort."
3. "Defence Effort: Taking note of the appointment and the constitution of the National Defence Council, the Parliamentary Board is of the view that there is still need for a smaller body consisting of senior serving and retired Generals and others to advise, assist and be in continual touch with the Defence Ministry."

The Parliamentary Board expressed the hope that, in the course of the current week, Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon's appointment as Minister for Defence Production and his membership of the Cabinet would be terminated. If this did not materialise, members of the Swatantra Party in both Houses of Parliament may join with the other Parties and groups in tabling a motion of no-confidence in the Minister for Defence Production and endeavour to secure that voting should be by secret ballot on this occasion.

Arising out of an enquiry received from the Mysore State Unit as to the participation of the unit and its members in collections for the National Defence Fund, the Parliamentary Board decided to provide the following guidance to members of the Party throughout the country:

(a) Where invited, members of the Party may become members of Joint Committees for the Defence Effort after consulting the relevant unit of the Party. Members of the Party will take care to ensure that contributions to the National Defence Fund are voluntary and that no coercion is brought to bear in this connection.

(b) In case members of the Communist Party are members of such joint committees, members of the Swatantra Party should not associate with them. Where such a situation arises, the local unit of the Party or its members may collect funds on their own and remit them to the Treasurer of the National Defence Fund in Delhi. The same principle should apply to Swatantra Party members of Parliament and the State Legislatures.

In response to Professor Ranga's enquiry, it was suggested that he should try in concert with the P.S.P., Jan Sangh and other groups, to arrange that Communist Party members are not invited on any joint committee of Parliament for Defence purposes but that, if this was not found possible, the Swatantra Party should in any event not be represented on a joint committee to which a representative of the Communist Parliamentary Group was also invited.

In response to an enquiry made by one/two members about the position the Party should take in respect of demands for additional taxation, both at the Union and State levels, the view was expressed that each such case should be judged on its own merits in the light of two considerations, i.e., (a) its necessity and utility for the defence effort, and (b) its effect on the economy, and on the standard of life and morale of the people.

Accounts of Election Funds:

A statement of the position in regard to the accounts of the Party's funds earmarked for use in connection with the last General Elections was placed before the meeting. It was decided that diversions from authorised purpose made as follows should be ratified by the Parliamentary Board:

Andhra	Rs. 22,632.42
Punjab	18,000.00
U.P. (West)	21,428.28
U.P. (East)	11,950.37

The Treasurer and the Central Office were asked to pursue the matter in so far as the accounts that remained unsettled were concerned, and to secure from the parties concerned satisfactory accounts where this had not already been done.

Arising out of the statement of accounts, the General Secretary reported on the misbehaviour of Mr. Punyanand Jha, President of the Purnea District unit of the Party in North Bihar, who, despite repeated requests from the Central Office, had refused to use the amount of Rs15,000.00 for the Kishanganj Parliamentary constituency for which it was earmarked by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee and had diverted the money, despite warnings from the Central Office, to the furtherance of his own candidature in Katihar constituency which had not been authorised by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. This was a flagrant case of indiscipline and mishandling of funds, and the General Secretary suggested that Mr. Punyanand Jha be expelled from membership of the Party. The Parliamentary Board after discussion decided, however, that no action be taken in the matter.

Arrangements re: Parliamentary Group:

In regard to arrangements for the next session of Parliament, the Parliamentary Board reviewed the position in regard to the nomination of Office-bearers of the Group in both Houses of Parliament. It was decided that there should be one Swatantra Party Parliamentary Group, with a Chairman and other office-bearers. In addition to these office-bearers, there should be a Leader of the Group and a Whip in each House. The office-bearers of the Group as a whole should henceforth be elected by the Members of the Party in Parliament as a whole, while the Leader of the Group in each House and the Whip should be elected separately by the members in each House.

These elections should be annual but (a) those who were elected during the current session of Parliament should hold office throughout the year 1963; and (b) the Leader of the Group in the Lok Sabha should hold office from now till the end of the life of the current Parliament, while the Leader of the Group in Rajya Sabha should hold office till the next biennial election in March 1964.

The Parliamentary Group would frame rules in regard to the procedure to be followed in regard to the election of the office-bearers and the conduct of its affairs.

The members of the Party in the State Legislatures would function in a similar manner to that laid down in Parliament, in that there would be one Legislature Group for members of both Chambers and their officers would be similarly elected.

Resignation of Deputy Leader, Rajasthan Assembly Group:

The resignation tendered by Mr. Man Singh of Bharatpur as Deputy Leader of the Party in the Rajasthan State Assembly was considered and Mr. Laxman Singh of Dungarpur explained the circumstances relevant to this unfortunate development. After discussion, it was agreed that the President or General Secretary should endeavour to discuss this matter jointly with the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Party in the Rajasthan Assembly and ascertain if a solution was not possible.

The meeting then terminated.

ANNEXURE A.

Statement on the current emergency.

1. The Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party has taken stock of the developments of the past few weeks and of the situation which the Indian people face as a result of the intensified offensive launched by China. This dangerous threat to the territorial integrity of the country and indeed to its independence has to be met. In this task, every patriotic Indian is ready to make any necessary sacrifice and give of his best, as has been demonstrated by spontaneous upsurge for the defence of the country.
2. The Swatantra Party is convinced that the initiative should not be left to the enemy. A defence strategy should now be adopted which will help to snatch and retain the initiative in our own hands. There is no half-way house in this conflict. Victory in this struggle has to be achieved by the adoption of sound military, political and international policies pursued with determination and singleness of purpose.
3. A Defence Council of senior serving and retired generals should be constituted to assist the Defence Ministry.
4. Our men at the front have fought with unrivalled heroism. They should be armed with the best weapons and equipment and supported by aircraft procured from friendly countries throughout the world. The insistence on maintaining the appearance of non-alignment when receiving this vital aid is altogether unrealistic and would cripple the defence effort, besides ruining the economy. Great countries like Britain and West Germany have accepted military aid without surrendering their sovereignty or independence of action.
5. Anti-aircraft defences should be set up at all vulnerable points and civil defence measures organized in adequate measure.
6. The Third Five-Year Plan should give way to a Victory Plan geared to the immediate purpose. A Ministry of Supply should be constituted for the period of the emergency with over-riding powers of direction over the Ministries of Industry and Commerce, Steel and Heavy Industries, Railways, Communications, Oil, Fuel and Gas, and the Department of Defence Production in the Defence Ministry.
7. When our country is attacked by a Communist power, the concept of non-alignment has little meaning, as the Swatantra Party has been pointing out since the beginning of 1960. If the Prime Minister's admission of a new awareness of realities is to have any meaning, our entire foreign policy has to be revised and brought into close relation with the requirements of the present critical situation.
8. Urgent efforts should be made to establish friendlier relations with Pakistan. President Ayub's offer of co-operation in the formation of a common defence of this sub-continent made two years ago, should be taken up and worked out. All disputes between India and Pakistan should be frozen by agreement for the duration of the emergency, so as to enable the release of substantial Indian armed forces for repelling the Chinese attack.

9. Completely friendly relations should be re-established with Nepal.

10. The Swatantra Party records its grateful appreciation of the spontaneous, prompt and generous manner in which the U.S.A., Britain, Canada and other countries have come to India's assistance by way of military equipment and otherwise.

11. The declaration of a state of emergency should not made into a charter for winding up parliamentary government. The Opposition should carry out its responsibility of free and frank criticism whenever it is necessary. There has been a commendable shift in the attitude and policies of Government. The Prime Minister's admissions in particular have given rise to considerable hope of change. On the other hand, there are disturbing signs that some old illusions still persist and that the dead hand of these illusions and out-moded policies still lies heavily on the present Government. The Press and the statesmen of the country should not hesitate to speak and write as they feel and advise the Government and guide the people from time to time for furtherance of the country's defence.

12. The Defence of India Ordinance, Bill and Regulations should be closely scrutinised and their administration watched so as to ensure that these do not involve a grater curtailment of fundamental rights, democratic processes and the Rule of Law than is strictly necessary in furtherance of the defence effort.

13. Consistent with the needs of security, the fullest information should be made available to the public, and the Press should be given facilities for accrediting correspondents at the front.

14. Steps should be taken for bringing the Chinese aggression before the U.N. for securing the assistance of the world organization and of world opinion in our defence.