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PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

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Proposed file

My dear Jiju:

I thought I had to write and pass on to you the uneasiness and anxiety that I feel after my visit to Ahmedabad. As you know, for years I have been the most vociferous opponent of Rightist Congressmen and the Syndicate, the reasons for which are well known to you. What time the Congress monolith existed, it was impossible for any political party to make any headway; but that situation fortunately has now changed. I had very much hoped that when this event will transpire, the Swatantra Party would be strong enough to act as a catalytic agent for the forces moving away from the Ruling Congress. Unfortunately we failed and the Swatantra Party did not live up to my hopes. In the changed context, it has become necessary for all political parties to do a lot of soul searching and make the adjustments demanded by the present circumstances.

In Gujarat I entirely agree that we should continue our efforts to oppose the Government and if possible, to replace it. But I am very much clear in my mind as to the direction into which such efforts should be made. And, therefore, I fervently pray that in case we form a Government in Gujarat, no stone should be left unturned to establish a Government which is not at the mercy of any major party, but derives its strength independent of them. And therefore your job after toppling the Gujarat Government is going to be many times more difficult than the actual process of toppling.

What emerges in Gujarat should be something in which all of us can take pride and not something which we are at pains to explain away. And therefore for your guidance and my peace of mind, I have jotted down a few points which, if accepted by you, would greatly relieve my tensions.

- 1) Whatever happens in Gujarat should be the action of the Swatantra Party as a whole and should have the blessings of the national leadership.
- 2) Guidance will be sought, willingly given and accepted on all matters connected with government-forming, cabinet-making, etc.



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- 3) That while accepting the support of all other parties, we should stay clear of making any commitments to anyone of them and for swearing any fraternization at all costs.

I realise that some of these must be very odious to many members of the Gujarat Party and particularly to you in the mistaken belief that the Centre is in many ways hostile to Gujarat. If this is true at all, it is entirely because of a break in dialogue and communication between the State and the Centre. If personal chemistry has to triumph over reason, atleast the mal-effects of it can be substantially reduced if people like Viren, RK and I were used as go-betweens to soften whatever personal antagonisms may exist. I, for one, do not relish the role and but for my very deep concern, would refuse the honour! But there is not only the Party to think of, but also the Nation.

In the past we have succeeded to very large extent in getting Central approval for a great many things, which without proper explanation would have created misunderstanding instead of trust. And I think that it can be repeated in future; but only if there is any manifestation of goodwill on either side.

I hope you will read this letter not once, but often. I pen it because it gives me an opportunity of saying what I want without any back-talk!

cc to: Mr M R Masani
President
Swatantra Party
New Delhi

NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY PURPOSE WHATSOEVER.

Please
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