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Mr. M. R. Masani's speech in the course of the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address in the Lok Sabha on February 16, 1960.

Shri M.R.Masani (Ranchi-East) rose -

Mr. Speaker: Has nobody spoken from his party yesterday?

Shri M.R.Masani: No, Sir,

Mr. Speaker: All right. Shri Masani.

Shri M.R.Masani: Mr.Speaker, Sir, I had intended yesterday, when the debate started, to speak, on behalf of the Swatantra Party, in support of amendment No.155 moved by my hon. friend, Shri Asoka Mehta, on behalf of several Parties in this House. Unfortunately, as has been appreciated this morning, the course of events has overtaken the terms of that amendment. But the principles on which the amendment was founded are as valid today, if not more valid, than they were yesterday.

I think this country has received with the most unpleasant shock the news of the invitation to this country extended on our behalf by the Prime Minister to Mr. Chou En-lai. That shock is heightened by the fact that only a few days ago, replying to the debate in the Rajya Sabha on 12th February, the Prime Minister actually said something that had misled public opinion into what has now apparently proved to be a false sense of complacency and satisfaction. I read the words of the Prime Minister in the Upper House to show that on this occasion, as indeed on previous occasions in this series of events, the Prime Minister has been less fair to the Parliament than is his usual custom as the very fine parliamentarian that he is. What did he say in the Rajya Sabha on the 12th February?

"Let it be understood quite clearly that though we talk about friendly settlement, I see no ground whatever at the present moment, no bridge between the Chinese position and ours. That is to say, our present positions are such that there is no room for negotiations on that basis. There is nothing to negotiate at present. It may arise later, I don't know."

Well, the Prime Minister did know, and it is now clear that his letter was on its way to Peking when he was uttering these words. I wonder whether it is a fair kind of enlightenment or facts to give to one of the Houses of Parliament? That is why the shock to public opinion has been even worse than it might have been otherwise.

I listened this morning to the little debate between the Prime Minister and Shri Asoka Mehta. May I say humbly that I thought the Prime Minister utterly failed to reply to the charge that was made by Shri Asoka Mehta that this invitation marked a complete reversal of our basic policy which Parliament, not thanks to us but against our wishes, was made to accept by the Prime Minister last November and December?

There are three arguments advanced in favour of this move, such as it is. The first is that this meeting will not be negotiation. A morning paper this morning in an editorial has not gone too far when it says that this plea of the Prime Minister and his supporters - I am quoting the words of the newspaper - "is not entirely honest". I think this is a British understatement in this context. It is quite clear that this meeting is negotiations and nothing else; it cannot be otherwise in the present context.

An attempt has been made to say that we should separate the border dispute from the wider complex of Indo-Chinese relations - a very clever argument, but a completely unconvincing one. At a time when foreign troops are on our soil, at a time when one country has committed an act of war against another, to say that we can discuss in the abstract, in the vacuum, Indo-Chinese relations while keeping aside the subject of the aggression and occupation of our territory, is asking too much of the credulity of our public, and I do not think the Indian population will swallow this kind of fiction which is sought to be imposed on it. Let us be quite clear that this invitation is a climb down.

The second argument is that "It cannot do any harm. Why do you object? After all what harm can happen?" Many good friends have argued along these lines. I

can only say that not only do I feel that a meeting in this context, at this time, is fraught with grave consequences but, if I may say so, it can do nothing but harm. I cannot, for the life of me, see any good coming out of this meeting in this context, and I shall give two or three good reasons for this feeling.

First of all, this meeting has to be looked on in the psychological context. What will the effect on the opponent? What kind of opponent are we up against? We are up against an expansionist, imperialist, communist Power of the most ruthless kind, a power that has before our eyes murdered our neighbouring country of Tibet, a power that, under the guise of volunteers, invaded the Republic of South Korea, a power that even today is infiltrating through its North Viet Nam satellite regime into the country of Laos, a power that is striving to expand in every possible direction. This power showed its understanding of negotiations at the time when there was a truce in Korea, and we all recall those agonising months at Pan Mun Jon, where a new kind of diplomacy was revealed, a diplomacy which used the negotiating table for nothing else than waging a war of nerves. The Chinese communist regime does not believe in negotiations and it has never negotiated in good faith till now. Every promise which it has made, it has violated, whether in Tibet or elsewhere. For the Chinese communist regime, negotiation is an act of war, an act of war at the conference table, a continuation of war by other ways.

It is with such an opponent that we are now dealing, and to say that a friendly meeting between the two Prime Ministers will be used by the Chinese communists for any other purpose than to push forward the process of intimidating us further is to revel in an illusion which is long past its time. All that I can say is that, in future, this will encourage toughness on the part of the Chinese communist regime. They will say: "Ah! We have got them down. These people refused to come to talks except under certain conditions they laid down - the recognition of the McMahon line and the vacating of aggression on their territory - as preconditions for negotiations and talks. Now, look, within three or four months, they have come down to talk to us unconditionally, as we demanded all along." To a good Christian or a kindly Hindu gentleman, the Gandhian approach of "All right, you have your own way; I will meet you on your grounds" may be all right. But, then, we have to remember the character of the opponent when we are dealing with this problem and there is nothing in the character of the Chinese communist regime that gives us any reason to hope that this gracious surrender is going to have anything but the most unfortunate consequences on the psychology of the other side.

Then, let us look at our psychology. What is it going to do to us? There is no doubt in my mind that this country will regard this invitation as a national humiliation. I wonder if there is any instance in history where a country has been attacked, a country whose territory has been occupied, has gone out of the way to make a friendly invitation to the opponent? People have sent armies, navies and air forces into action, people have sent ultimatums, people have broken off diplomatic relations, as Nasser did when Britain and France attacked his country during the Suez incident. Here is a brave and patriotic country which is being attacked and pushed around, its men killed, the blood of its troops and policemen on the hands of the other side, and what we do is to invite them to come here as our honoured guest. This, I think, is certainly breaking new ground in history. What we are doing is to perpetuate the illusions about the Chinese Communist regime which unfortunately has already been created for the last ten years and which it is high time our people were encouraged to shed. We are trying to perpetuate those illusions which were embodied in our earlier misguided acts.

Then, what will we do to our armed forces? What effect is it going to have on our policemen and our armed forces, who have been killed or maimed, or tortured, by the Chinese. What are going to be the sentiments of that brave man, Karam Singh, a man who in any other country would have been built up as a national hero, whom our government, to our shame, has relegated to obscurity during the last few weeks? That man would have been taken by any patriotic government round the country to educate the people as to what negotiating with the Chinese really means. What effect is this kind of diplomacy going to have on those to whom we look for the defence of our country against aggressions of this nature?

I regret to say this but to me it seems that this invitation is the result of a complete bankruptcy of policy which we have reached. That feeling was there in

the minds of many of us as we listened to the Prime Minister winding up the debate on the penultimate day of the last session when he said that he had no answer to the problem with which we are faced, and this letter has made it clear that there is no answer.

We may be in a hopeless minority in this House today, though we are not in this country, and I want to repeat this warning. Many of us gave this warning in similar terms on December 6 and 7, 1950, and I invite any hon. Members who have the time and patience to go through that debate in the proceedings available in the library of this House. There were nine or ten of us who warned our Prime Minister that the selling out of Tibet was going to lead to an attack on this country, and I say again that the continuation of that weak policy, the policy of appeasement, which has found its expression in the latest communication will take this country farther and farther away from our goal.

Now, the third argument that has been advanced is: "What can we do? what else is there to do?" Many good friends have put this question: "What else can we do?" That is a counsel of despair.

I believe there are many things which this country can do. We are not privileged to have adequate data from our military forces on which we can recommend specific policies. We do not have enough knowledge to judge. That is a monopoly of the Government, and that must be left to the Government. But it is quite clear that there are two broad alternatives before this country.

One is, if we have the power, to eject by police action the Chinese aggressors from the territory they have occupied. This is what a country normally does. Whether we have the power to do it or not I do not know. Judging by the very optimistic and ~~high~~ hopeful announcements made by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Defence Minister, who tell us that the country's armed forces have never been in better condition, that they are adequately equipped to drive out any aggressor from our territory, which we would like to believe, there is no reason why they should not be asked to do their duty. There are many of us, however, who have doubts on that subject. If they were so adequately armed and equipped, why are we where we are today? Why have we allowed to happen what has happened? So, there are grave doubts among the public. The hon. Prime Minister could usefully enlighten these Houses of Parliament about the nature of the equipment and the logistical support which may or may not be available to our armed forces for fighting in such terrain. But, as I say, we do not know and therefore we can only make the hypothetical statement that if we have the strength to do what we should be able to do, then there is only one honourable course and that is to give the order to the armed forces to do their duty.

But let us assume for a moment that we are not in that position. Before I move on to that, I would refer to the question that is raised: "But that will lead to war". I do not know if there is any logic in that statement. It will certainly not be an act of war on our part. It has never been held in history that a country that has been invaded, while repelling foreign troops from its territory, is guilty of an act of war. It is an act of defence, of a police nature. But it is possible that the other party will then make it an act of war by broadening the front or by making it a general action. That is possible. But we seem so preoccupied with our own difficulties that one would imagine that the Chinese Government is all dying and ready to launch a major war on India. I would like to question that ready assumption.

Why do we assume that the Chinese Communist Government is prepared to have a major war with this country any more than we are prepared to have it with them? We certainly do not want a war. Nobody wants it in this country. But why do we assume that they want it? I am not depending on any peaceful professions of theirs. I am depending on the situation in which they find themselves. They are encountering a severe draught. The regimented communes in which they have penned their people - like animals in a zoo - those people are doing for an opportunity to rise. They have a National Government outside their boundaries which is almost certain to try and land and liberate the mainland. That threat may or may not be a serious one. But are the Chinese Communist Government prepared to shift their main forces thousands of miles to our frontiers, leave their mainland and home territory exposed either to internal revolution from discontented people in the country or to a landing from the Nationalist Government outside? I doubt it. I doubt if Communist China is prepared to fight a major war on two fronts, today. So, when we think so much of our own weakness, let us also consider the element of bluff on the other side.

If, however, we have not got the fighting force, what do we do? There again, I think there is a great deal that this country can do. Assuming that we have not got the strength to eject the aggressor, does it mean that we have to invite him to come to meet us in our territory? Does it mean that we have in any way to have any dealings with him? A brave nation has not been known to connive or acquiesce in the aggression or the occupation of its territory. I am not saying that the hon. Prime Minister's letter and the Note - and the Note is a very fine note; it evokes a responsive echo in the hearts of all of us - concedes anything. But where is the need to meet when you are not prepared to concede anything? If we are not in a position to restore the status quo before the aggression, let us be dignified enough to stay where we are, to say we will not give up this territory, we shall retake it as and when it becomes possible for us to retake it. Many countries in history have bided their time for years and decades before they were able to get back their territory which had been filched from them by superior military power. But they do not negotiate with the other power. They do not invite them to come and sit in Conference with them. They say: "You have taken something that is mine. You are too strong for me to take it back. Please note that it is mine and I shall take it back when I can." There you stop. You leave the thing where it is.

It is like asking what does an honest citizen do if a bandit comes and occupies his verandah? Does he go and ask him to come to his drawing room, have a cup of tea and discuss the matter with him? Or does he go the telephone, if there is one, and telephone to the Police? Does he raise a shout and call his neighbours to help? Does he barricade his door and say: "I will hang out till somebody comes to my rescue"? Why are we not doing what a prudent housekeeper would do in any part of the world? Which is what? To break off diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communist Government, to open negotiations, which we have not done, with our friendly neighbours in South and South East Asia, who also are menaced by the same menace and who are very worried about the way in which we are meeting the threat to our own frontiers. People who have been in South and South East Asia from this country have come back and said that they are very worried. They have pointed out that the Himalayas are the frontiers of free Asia and that in not defending them actively enough, we are imperilling their own freedom. Why do we not call a Bandung Conference and tell where we stand? Why do we not invite them to a pact - to say that an attack on one is an attack on all? Why do we not do that? Leave all the foreign powers and the so-called imperialists out. Why do we not call our fellow nations, the uncommitted nations in Asia to get into a group?

Why do we not equip our armed forces better than they are? The hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Defence Minister have, in their wisdom, said that they will not accept military equipment without payment. Acharya Kripalani in a previous debate pointed out that between accepting military equipment and adhering to a policy of non-alignment there is no contradiction. Marshal Tito took military assistance from America as long as he needed it, discontinued it when he did not need it any more and nobody has ever suggested that he sacrificed non-alignment for even a minute. If Tito could do it, we can do it. But if we do not want to do it individually or unilaterally, let us do it multilaterally. [Let us form a regional organisation of the countries of South and South East Asia and let that organisation invite assistance and aid from other parts of the world so that the independence of judgement and the independent foreign policy of any single country is not endangered in the slightest.]

When I say that, I am aware that the hon Prime Minister is apt to read too much into these statements as indeed he did at Bangalore at the annual session of the Congress Party where, when an innocent amendment was moved asking for a reconsideration of certain things, he attacked his critics - respectable members of the Congress Party - for daring to suggest that foreign troops should march up and down India trying to defend us from Chinese aggression.

An Hon. Member. Really they are marching.

Shri M.R.Masani: Nobody is asking for foreign troops to be invited to this country. But when this question is raised and the hon. Prime Minister says that he would not agree to one inch of our territory being occupied by foreign troops, the fact remains that 5,000 to 10,000 square miles of our territory are already under foreign occu-

pation. It is a popular game that is going on in certain quarters when people ask: "How many thousand square miles make a square inch?" What kind of arithmetic is this? Therefore, I am not suggesting inviting foreign troops. I am not suggesting alliances. I am suggesting a regional organisation of the countries of South and South East Asia for common security and defence.

Shri Kalika Singh (Azamgarh): Does the hon. Member suggest that we should join military blocs?

Shri M.R.Masani: No, I do not suggest anything of the kind. I am saying that the uncommitted countries of Asia, like Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon and others, should be asked to come and sit with us to find out as to what can be done for the greater security of the region from external aggression. Let such a group - it will not be a military block, it will be a group for common consultation - be the channel through which foreign equipment can come into the country without foreign troops or without foreign interference. Therefore, I hope that this bogey of foreign troops marching up and down will not be needlessly raised here as was done in Bangalore.

This is the line of thought that I would suggest. Now, I will be told, "Are you not suggesting something extreme, when you suggest that diplomatic relations should be broken off with this aggressor regime?" Without any provocation, or much less, we have done as much. We have broken off diplomatic relations with South Africa and Portugal without anything comparable to what we have endured at the hands of the Chinese Communist Government. Even worse, we have no diplomatic relations with a friendly, helpful, cooperative country like Israel - a country that has done nothing to us, whose existence we recognise but, for good reasons that the Government alone knows, whom we fail to recognise in the sense of accrediting a diplomatic mission. If we can desist from having diplomatic relations with Israel, surely it is not asking too much that that very mild act of displeasure might be endowed on those who are aggressing against us, who have killed our people and who have on their hands our men's blood.

The Prime Minister's letter ends by saying to Mr. Chou En-lai: "You will be an honoured guest when you come here". Undoubtedly the Prime Minister and the Government are entitled to invite whoever they like as their honoured guests, but may I say that Mr. Chou En-lai will not be the honoured guest of the Indian people? He is not wanted here. If he comes, he will come as the guest of the Government, we cannot help it, but the Indian people do not want to shake hands with murder, with those on whose hands is the blood of our policemen and armed forces. Therefore I do want to dissociate those of us who feel differently on this subject from this unfortunate invitation which, in my view, is a national humiliation.

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