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"If our Prime Minister's advice in regard to Viet Nam were to be followed by the United States, the result would be the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam and its incorporation in the Chinese Communist empire, the loss of Laos, the destruction of Malaysia which would be caught in a nutcracker between the Chinese Communist satellites in the North and Indonesia in the South, and the encirclement of India by Communist China and her satellites all the way from Karachi to Singapore," observed Mr. M.R. Masani, M.P., General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, while delivering an address at the Annual General Meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs on "Our Neglected Backyard" this evening. "How long would it be," asked the speaker, "before men of Indian origin, who form ten percent of the population of Malaysia, are brainwashed and trained as guerillas and landed on the coast of Madras in order to support a 'war of national liberation' in India also?"

Mr. Masani pointed out that the picture on India's borders was not an encouraging one and that the only friendly neighbours India had were Afghanistan and Malaysia, and more recently Ceylon under its new government. This was the result of fifteen years of mistaken foreign policies which had collapsed at the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962. Unfortunately, judging by present indications, the lessons of that debacle had not been learnt by those in office. Even today, while our eyes were glued to Kutch and the Himalayas, the enemy was slowly creeping in on this country from its backyard in Southeast Asia which our government had neglected ever since Independence.

Mr. Masani described the hostilities in Vietnam as a new type of war which the communists euphemistically described as a "war of national liberation," but which was in fact naked armed aggression. There was ample evidence to show that the hard core of Viet Cong forces were trained in the North and ordered to infiltrate into the South, that the leadership of the Viet Cong forces consisted of professional officers of the North Viet Nam Army, that the operations were directed from Hanoi, and that the Viet Cong forces were armed with new types of weapons manufactured in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Communist China. The International Control Commission had, with the participation of the Indian Member, in a special report to the Co-Chairmen on 2nd June 1962, endorsed the findings of its Legal Committee that the North Viet Namese regime had violated no less than four Articles of the Geneva Convention.

The United States had all these years mistakenly allowed North Viet Nam to be a "privileged sanctuary" with the result that South Viet Nam and Laos were being gradually eaten into. The recent measures taken by President Lyndon Johnson to end this absurd situation and to punish the aggressors deserved to be welcomed by all lovers of freedom in Asia. These measures were comparable to President Kennedy's action in Cuba, when he had called Khrushchev's bluff. It had now been demonstrated to the free countries that it was not the United States that was a paper tiger but Communist China that was a Paper Dragon.

In so far as Malaysia was concerned, the admission made in the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs that "the Government of India have refrained from taking sides in the specific dispute" between Malaysia and Indonesia displayed an attitude of base ingratitude when it was recalled that Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysian Prime Minister, had without a moment's delay lined up behind India when it was invaded by Communist China in October 1962.

Although South Korea and South Viet Nam were founding members of the Afro-Asian Conference and had participated in the last Conference in 1955, they were being denied an invitation to the forthcoming Conference in Algiers in response to the Chinese Communist demand for recognition of the Viet Cong. "If the Indian Government participate in the Algiers Conference on these terms, they will be

striking a blow at the freedom and stability of democratic countries in Asia including our own. At a later Conference, the Indian Government may find itself denied admission while the Left Communists who might then be engaged in a 'war of national liberation' in India might well claim recognition," observed Mr. Masani.

Mr. Masani did not think that these misguided policies flowed from the concept of non-alignment. Nonalignment did not mean being neutral against oneself nor denying oneself assistance in one's own defence. Pandit Nehru, the architect of nonalignment, had accepted American and British assistance in October 1962 although the Soviet Union was sitting on the fence. Mr. Masani quoted a book by Professor W.E. Griffith entitled "The Sino-Soviet Rift" which made the sensational disclosure that Khrushchev had, on October 13 and 14, 1962, given the green light to the Chinese Ambassador in Moscow for the Chinese attack on India which followed on October 20.

The speaker was inclined to think that the motivation for the suicidal policies being followed by New Delhi was twofold. The first factor was that the Indian Government had become a prisoner of the Soviet Veto in the Security Council of the U.N. in regard to Kashmir and was terrified of doing anything that might lead to the withdrawal of that veto. The other factor was craven appeasement of communist expansionism, illustrated by the terms of the Joint Communique issued at the end of Prime Minister Shastri's visit to Moscow which reflected no credit on the good sense, independence or self-respect of the Indian Government. "Indeed, today," said the speaker, "the international attitudes of the Indian Government are often dictated by remote control by the Communists on the one hand and obscurantist and chauvinistic elements on the other."

The solution, according to the speaker, was that India should invite the free countries of Asia to join with it in a regional security arrangement underwritten by the Western Democracies in terms of President Lyndon Johnson's offer of October 18, 1964. "With India and Japan as the bastions at each end, the smaller and weaker countries in between can be sustained in resisting the Chinese communist assault on their freedom," concluded Mr. Masani.

M. R. Masani
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