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Jr BBC Meeting
(Interviewed by Mr DRC Hutchinson,
Senior Script Writer, BBC, on 19/1/65)

Q. 1. What does non-alignment mean today?

A. Non-alignment, when the concept was devised around 1948/49, meant abstaining from participation in the cold war between the two Blocs, namely, the Anglo-American on the one hand and the Soviet on the other. Assuming that the concept was a legitimate one, which I for one never accepted, it has no relevance to India's situation today. India was attacked in October/November 1962 by the Chinese Communist regime and the aggressors are still in occupation of thousands of miles of our territory. Non-alignment surely cannot mean that a country that is attacked cannot ask for help from those who might be willing to offer it. Neither Tito who took American assistance against Soviet Russia while remaining non-aligned, nor Nasser nor Sukarno have insisted on it that way. Prime Minister Nehru, the originator of this concept, himself showed that acceptance of assistance from one Power or a set of Powers was not incompatible with Non-alignment when he accepted British and American assistance during the dark days of October and November 1962, when Soviet Russia was advising peaceful solution of the dispute ~~and~~ without giving any military assistance. Today, some people understand non-alignment to mean that we must not accept military assistance from America or Britain unless some similar military assistance is also forthcoming from the Soviet Union. For similar reasons, the Nuclear deterrent offered by America or Britain cannot be accepted unless the USSR also joins in such a guarantee. This is a new fangled concept of non-alignment which must be rejected even by those who believe in that policy.

Q. 2. Is the policy of Non-alignment desirable?

A. The Swatantra Party does not accept the policy of non-alignment and since 1960, when the Chinese communist threat became obvious, has urged that the security of the country be ensured through regional security arrangements with our neighbours in South and Southeast Asia and by the acceptance of mutual security arrangements with Western Democracies. At a time when the country has been attacked and is continuously threatened by Chinese communist imperialism, the concept of non-alignment has lost all

meaning and relevance.

I for one have never accepted non-alignment even as a concept. While State neutrality of the Swiss or Swedish kind is perfectly understandable, intellectual neutrality between democracy on the one side and international communism on the other appears to me to be an unprincipled and dishonest stance. It amounts to a policy of equidistance from right and wrong and between freedom and slavery. Such intellectual neutrality is best described by the term "neutralism". Neutralism is in fact objectively pro-communist because by failing to discriminate between white and black or, if you like, gray and ~~has~~ black, it takes the side of the black. It is, therefore, not surprising that Soviet foreign policy, in so far as the new countries of Asia and Africa are concerned, has always been to view neutralism as in its own interests. What happens to neutralist countries has been shown by the fate of Laos and the pathetic confession of General Kong that "I do not like the communists. I like neutralism, but the communists try to destroy the neutralists every time, so from now on, I announce that all who are against communists I will support and my neutralist forces will join them in the fight."

Q. 3. Ought India to have a nuclear deterrent? If so, how?

A. The Chinese nuclear explosion, while it may not cause any immediate physical threat to India, places the Chinese communist regime in a position to exercise powerful diplomatic blackmail against this country and other free countries of the region. If this threat is not met with a nuclear deterrent which takes away its blackmailing power, India will increasingly be at the mercy of dictation by communist China resulting in a gradual erosion of its independence and its democratic way of life.

The Swatantra Party rules out India having its own independent nuclear deterrent. Apart from the psychological factor that the Indian people are not prepared to accept the idea of the first strike in a preventive war and the logistical factor that, while our Capital and industrial heartland are within 300 miles from Chinese bases in Tibet, Peking and Shanghai are some 2500 miles away, the economic

factor is the decisive one. India cannot launch on the manufacture of its own nuclear bombs and a delivery system consisting of supersonic jet air force without further retarding its agricultural and industrial development resulting in people's discontent, when the only beneficiary would be the Chinese Fifth Column in India, namely, the Communist Party of India.

In this situation, there is only one answer and that is for India to accept President Lyndon Johnson's offer of October 18 and to ask for a guarantee of protection against nuclear attack from Communist China. Since the deterrent has to be unconditional and automatic, the only way in which this can be obtained is by India entering into a mutual security arrangement with the United States which provides for such a guarantee. This is the stand that the Swatantra Party has taken in Parliament and proposes to advocate in the coming months and years.

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