

For favour of publication

Bombay, December 1.

The Prime Minister's statement in Parliament on Friday in regard to the basis for negotiations with Pakistan on Kashmir was described as "most unfortunate" by Mr. M.R. Masani, General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, at a public meeting organised by the Party at Mahajanwadi, Kalbadevi, this evening with Mr. Murarji Vaidya in the chair. Expressing the fear that, unless this position was rectified, the hope of Indo-Pakistani friendship that had been roused would be dashed, Mr. Masani asked: "How can an agreement to negotiate without any preconditions be reconciled with the Prime Minister's banging the door on any change in the status quo in Kashmir?"

Discussing the withdrawal of Chinese troops as a result of the cease-fire, the speaker observed that the cease-fire had proved more deadly than the military advance of the Chinese communist army. While the latter had geared the nation to fight on till victory, the former appeared to have paralysed the Indian Government's will to continue the fight. By allowing the Chinese troops to withdraw unmauled, the Indian Government had failed to give effect to the national will to reject the cease-fire and continue the fight. The people and the armed forces had been let down badly.

The immediate task before the Indian people was to press for a reference of the Chinese invasion of India to the United Nations so that China may be declared an aggressor and the military and material assistance coming to India may come under the banner of the United Nations. Public opinion should also demand a settlement of the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir in order to facilitate the common defence of the sub-continent.

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(M. R. MASANI)

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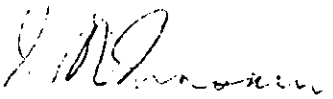
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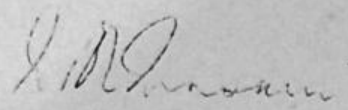
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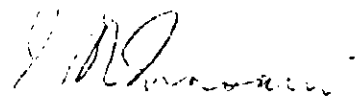
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