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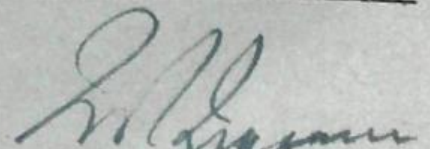
"Public opinion in India has already with impressive unanimity called for the rejection of the trap laid by the Chinese communists in their so-called cease-fire. The right thing for our Government to do is to reject the bait, ask our friends abroad to give us the interceptor planes, ground to air missiles and tactical air support required by our troops, move to the NEFA front the three or four crack divisions which are still frozen on our frontier with Pakistan and launch a massive counter-offensive which will throw the aggressors back across the Himalayan passes. If the Prime Minister, shedding his past inhibitions and pre-conceptions, takes this decision indicated by the national will, he will have the unanimous support of the nation," said Mr. M. R. Masani, General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, in the course of his address to the Commerce Graduates' Association here this evening.

According to the speaker, the enemy had extended himself fully. He has spread himself very thin. His logistical problems rule out any further advance. He has, therefore, now sought to lure us into a treacherous cease-fire to enforce his October 24 offer, which had been contemptuously rejected by our Government.

To accept the cease-fire terms dictated by the Chinese in their arrogant and offensive note by conforming to it would be to accept defeat, demoralise our armed forces and leave the country open to another attack in future at a time to be chosen by the enemy. The unanimous opinion of the press, the joint statement issued by the leaders of the democratic opposition parties in Parliament and the statement of the members of the ruling Party like Mr. Mahavir Tyagi, Mr. Kannamwar, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Shantilal Shah, the Education Minister of Maharashtra, and many others show that the nation was united in seeing this clearly.

Dealing with the role of an opposition in the present national emergency which was the result of a decade of misguided policies of neutralism and appeasement of communist expansionism, Mr. Masani said that the Praja Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh, the Socialist Party and the Swatantra Party had all taken a correct attitude in performing a dual role of giving all out support to the defence effort while adopting a critical attitude of judging governmental policy on its own merits, the touchstone being whether or not it would advance the cause of winning the victory over the enemy. Tracing a parallel with the situation in Britain during the last World War, Mr. Masani described how the British Labour Party then in Opposition had refused to join a coalition government or give support to the Conservative Government led by Mr. Chamberlain so long as that apostle of appeasement remained the Prime Minister. It was only after a year of defeats had led to Mr. Chamberlain's resignation that the Labour Party joined Mr. Churchill's war time coalition government. Undeterred by the timid maxim "You must not change horses in mid-stream", the mature British democracy had shown how the political dispositions necessary for the achievement of victory could be taken in war time.

Not to be published:


(M. R. Masani)

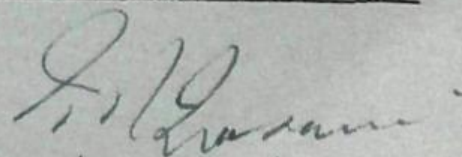
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