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For favour of publication

"As a result of my talks with President Chiang Kai-shek and other leaders of the Republic of China during my visit to Taiwan last month, I found that the impression widely prevalent in India that the positions of the Peking and Taiwan regimes in regard to Tibet and the Indian border are the same is unfounded," observed Mr. M.R. Masani, M.P., General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, while addressing the Indian Council of World Affairs here today, with Sir B. Rama Rau in the Chair.

Giving a gist of his conversation with the Head of the Republic of China, Mr. Masani disclosed that President Chiang was good enough to permit him to quote the President as reaffirming the declaration made by him in his message to the Tibetan people on March 26, 1959, that the Government of the Republic of China accepts the right of self-determination of the people of Tibet as soon as conditions permit them to exercise that right. Mr. Masani said that from this it was clear that the position of the Republic of China was contrary to that of the communist regime in Peking and was in accord with the wish of the Indian people to see Tibet free.

In so far as relations between China and India were concerned, Mr. Masani said that President Chiang recalled his advocacy during World War II for immediate Independence for India and assured him that his friendly sentiments for the Indian people were still as warm and had not in any way been affected by the attitude of the present Indian Government. President Chiang had no doubt that when the Republic of China is re-established on the Mainland there would be no difficulty whatsoever in the outstanding issues between the two countries being settled amicably.

Mr. Masani said that he had been received very warmly by people in all walks of life, by the Speaker and members of the Legislative Yuan of Parliament and by leaders of the Government of the Republic of China, such as the Foreign and Defence Ministers and General Chiang Ching-kuo. Everywhere he had been assured that Indians were welcome to Free China whether as tourists, businessmen or otherwise.

In his address at the Taiwan National University and his discussions elsewhere, Mr. Masani said that he had stressed the fact that they in India were proud of having a free Opposition in Parliament and of enjoying the fullest freedom of discussion on the platform and in the press, and that credit for this achievement went to all concerned, including those who had been in power in India during the last fifteen years. He also assured his listeners that the people of India had learnt, since last year's communist attack, to distinguish between the Chinese people and the bandit regime in Peking.

Referring to his visit to the battle front on the island of Quemoy, which lay under the jaws of the enemy covered by enemy artillery on three sides, the speaker referred to the excellent morale of the valiant defenders and their battle readiness. The islands of Quemoy and Matsu, apart from acting as a shield for Taiwan, played an important part in the security of the Free World since they bar communist expansion in the Western Pacific. They could also serve as a valuable jumping off ground when the time came for the Chinese Nationalists to land on the mainland for its liberation from the communist yoke.

Most neutral observers were of the view that, both on land and in the air, the Chinese Nationalists were stronger than the Communists and that the real obstacle to an attempt at liberation of the mainland comes from the U.S. Government's reluctance, which in turn is probably motivated by the fear of Soviet involvement. Referring to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 14th February 1950, Mr. Masani pointed out that there was no obligation

on the Soviet Union to go to the defence of the Peking regime in the face of a Nationalist landing on the mainland, since the Treaty only referred to aggression from Japan or aggression by any other country in alliance with Japan.

By pinning down half a million men of the Communist armies, 400 naval vessels of various sizes and 250 MIG 17 planes on the Southeast coast facing Quemoy and Matsu, the Republic of China was helping to deter any major aggression by Peking in India or elsewhere and thus playing a helpful role in furthering stability and peace in Asia.

In such a situation it was obvious that the interests of India and the Republic of China coincided. A realistic foreign policy would take note of this identity of interests and build on it. The first step towards such a reorientation would be to sever diplomatic relations with Peking, a step which all democratic Opposition parties in India had demanded. India would thus be in a position to resume its freedom of action. Even the dictates of non-alignment call for such a stand. Once our hands were freed in this manner, steps can be taken to establish an understanding with the Republic of China which would be of mutual advantage to both countries.

Irrespective of developments at the diplomatic level, Mr. Masani said that there was no reason why people-to-people contact should not be developed between Taiwan and India and he expressed the hope that journalists, educationists, businessmen and tourists from each country could visit the other in large numbers and benefit from such contacts.

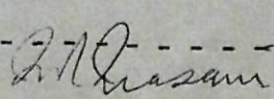
Visitors to Taiwan would see that there was a story there of remarkable achievement, particularly in the economic, social and educational fields. The standard of living had risen considerably, the increase in GNP averaging 7.7% per year. According to the FAO, Taiwan, thanks to the excellent land reforms and heavy capital investment in agriculture, has the highest crop of rice per acre in the world, providing a sharp contrast to the misery and starvation attendant on the communes on the mainland.

The Indian farmer and agricultural authorities in India could learn a lot by sending a study team to Taiwan. There were no less than 1,600 trainees in Taiwan from the countries of Asia and Africa and teams had been sent out from Taiwan to various countries of Africa who wished to benefit from such experience. India could also learn from the success of Taiwan in developing its exports of agricultural produce, fruit and raw materials earning valuable foreign exchange.

In the field of education, the percentage of children in schools was 96.5% while there was 90 per cent literacy in the country.

According to Chinese Nationalist intelligence, which was largely based on the information of guerilla infiltrators who spend several months on the mainland and then return to their base, the condition of the Chinese people on the mainland was deplorable. Heavy industry had come to a standstill and even in light industries, only 35 to 40 per cent of industrial capacity was in use as a result of the Great Leap Backwards to the land in 1961. Even on the land, there was famine and starvation leading to imports of grain from Canada and Australia. The military situation of the Chinese communists was deteriorating. Owing to the absence of replacements and shipment of parts for the Air Force since 1959, the Communists had to resort to cannibalisation which had reduced their Air Force by a third. Even the 2,700 semi-operational planes that remained were obsolete or obsolescent. Due to lack of gasoline, training for pilots had dropped to five hours a month. The morale of the Communist armies, apart from a few crack divisions, was low.

Not for publication:


(M.R. Masani)