

A VISIT TO NATIONALIST CHINA

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for Bureau

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The Portuguese have a habit of discovering attractive little islands and giving them nice names. When they found my own city, they called it Bon Bahia - beautiful bay - and when they found Taiwan they called it Ilya Formosa - which means a beautiful island. That was far away in 1583 when the island was first discovered.

My visit to Taiwan was a private visit as a citizen at the invitation of the National Taiwan University, the leading University located in the Capital, Taipei. The invitation was to visit Taiwan for a few days and to give a talk there to the University on "India After the Chinese Communist Attack."

Having given my talk, I met a lot of people and saw as much as I could in those five days. I met educationists and journalists. I met the Speaker and some Members of Parliament including the spokesmen of the Opposition parties - there are two Opposition parties - and various Ministers. I was received by President Chiang Kai-shek, the Head of the State.

The men in Peking don't seem to understand that a private citizen can visit another country. They seem to think that if anyone goes abroad, he only goes on the order of his government. That is undoubtedly true of the communist countries. In fact I visited a country which our government insists does not exist! It is a non-existent part of the world which I visited. It is very real, I assure you, and I wondered when I was there how the non-recognition of the Republic of China is consistent with the thesis of "universality" which is supposed to underlie the policy of our Government, according to which the Peking regime exists, but the Republic of China does not exist!

In Taiwan, in Hongkong, in Bangkok, there was one point which I stressed both in my public speeches and in private conversation. That was to explain the concept of freedom and the fact of freedom which we in India enjoy. When we travel around Asia, we have reason to feel proud. Political freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of discussion, freedom of Opposition is something that we enjoy in a measure that, except for Japan or may be one or two other countries like Malaya and the Philippines, is not practised in Asia to the same extent. Therefore I took the opportunity to say how proud we were of this freedom and the fact that a citizen like me could exercise it in the way that I was doing. I made no secret of saying that, inspite of my other criticisms of our government, this was something for which all of us in India, including our government, have reason to be proud.

Now, let me say a little about Taiwan as a country, taking the economic and social side first. The rate of growth of the GNP, the Gross National Product, is at around 7.7 per cent per year. Ours is 2.2 per cent. The

standard of life in Formosa is next only to Japan, the highest in Asia.

The real strength of Taiwan lies in agriculture. They are an agricultural people, very proud of it, and building their economic strength on their agriculture. This is something that stands out. The figures put out by the Food and Agriculture Organisation show that the people in Taiwan grow the highest crop of rice per acre in the world. Japan comes second.

Now how has this been achieved? The answer is two-fold. First, a very fine piece of land reform which was put through in the years after 1949. In 1949 was the first phase - rent control. Two years later, in 1951, public land belonging to the State was sold to tenants in small lots so that more and more peasants were settled on the land as peasant proprietors. A kind of national bhoodan, if you like. And thirdly, in 1953, a Land to the Tiller Act was passed by the Provincial Assembly elected by the people of Taiwan which fixed a ceiling of 7 acres per head for riceland and 14 acres per head for dry land. Of course you would multiply by four or five according to the size of the family. The point they make there was that full compensation was paid to those whose surplus land was thus taken away and given to other landless farmers. The result of this reform is that today 86 per cent of the farmers own their own land. This is the first reason for the high agricultural yield. The other is the heavy capital investment. Land reform without capital investment, they say, would not have given these results. They pump a lot of money into the land and that money is pumped largely in the form of fertilisers, chemical fertilisers. They say that, through this chemical fertiliser, yield has gone up very much. Instead of one crop or two crops a year they now have four crops a year. They have a winter crop, then the first rice crop, then a summer crop and then a second rice crop. Now, apart from the two rice crops, they grow cash crops in between the two rice crops. Some of the things they grow in summer are watermelons, jute, soya beans; some of the things they grow in winter are tobacco, wheat, sweet potato, soya beans, corn, flax, vegetables and barley. As you can imagine, with two rice crops/year and two cash crops /per in between, the Taiwanese farmer makes a very good living.

The export trade which has been developing in the last two years is mostly of a rural or raw material kind. Their biggest export is, of course, sugar. The total exports are of the order of a hundred and forty million dollars last year, and of this a third is sugar. Formosa makes ten million dollars a year from the export of mushrooms. Twelve million dollars from the export of pineapples which has developed only in the last two years as a major crop. They earn a lot of foreign exchange from the by-products of agriculture.

The African countries, the new countries of Africa, have been more intelligent than us. They have realised what Taiwan is doing. The result is that between the countries of Asia and Africa there are about 1600 trainees, farmer trainees in Taiwan today, learning about the Taiwanese experience. The African countries are asking for teams of agricultural experts and farmers to be sent to Africa. When I was there, there were four teams of 40 farmers from Taiwan in Liberia, Libya, Dohomey and the Ivory Coast. Other African nations are in queue waiting for their

turn. A veterinary team was about to leave for Ethiopia in the next few days.

The transport and communications system is one of the best in Asia. There are excellent highways before which ours look terrible in comparison. Power installations have gone up tenfold in the last fifteen years. There is electricity in the larger number of farmhouses. More farmers have electric power to light their homes and turn little machines for processing their stuff.

I met some intelligent German observers who have been lecturing there at the Universities and observing and writing on Taiwan. They said that the standard of life in the last five or seven years had gone up perceptibly.

Another success is in the field of education. 96.52 per cent of the children of school-going age are in schools. Literacy among the population as a whole is 90 per cent, second only to Japan which leads by a little head. For a poor country by world standards, they have television. They have two networks covering the whole island and a great deal of education is carried on through television networks.

Now we come to the military position. On the military front, by all account the Chinese Nationalist Army is one of the finest in Asia. The Air Force is equipped with the most modern jets. Most observers there believe that the Chinese Nationalist Army and Air Force are, man to man, superior to the Chinese Communist Army and Air Force.

I visited Quemoy or, as the Chinese call it, Kinmen, which is a little island off the port of Amoy. It lies in the mouth of the harbour. Our plane flew very low over the water as we approached the island for fear of shelling from the Mainland. We landed safely and spent a most exciting day in this front line of the defences of Free Asia. The island is 50 square miles, encircled on three sides by the Mainland. The batteries on the Mainland are turned on the island and the island's batteries are turned on the Mainland. The minimum distance from the Mainland is 2300 metres or about a mile and a half. The artillery on the Mainland can raze everything on the island from three sides. The result is that most of the installations are underground. The batteries are underground, the barracks for the soldiers are underground, the Army Headquarters are underground, the dining rooms are underground, the clubs are underground and there is a wonderful underground cave, the largest man-made cave in the world. This is a big theatre and amphitheatre where drama, music, concert, speeches, everything takes place. It is beautifully done for a cave. The aesthetic element is visible all over the island. You would not think you are in the front line of battle. Everything is beautifully painted and decorated. And I can understand why. With men sitting there month after month, year after year, waiting to be attacked and waiting to attack, it must be difficult to keep morale up to the point it is maintained. From all one could see, that morale was excellent. The soldiers looked as smart as our own soldiers on parade. I notice that Peking, according to its diplomatic note to our Government, thinks that I was there to boost the morale of the KMT forces on the island. I can assure you that needed no boosting from me. But if my going there as an Indian who fraternised with them raised their morale a little, I am delighted because I do look forward to the day when these brave troops will land on the Mainland and liberate the people of China from the brutal Chinese yoke.

Now, several thousand guerillas have been dropped on the mainland in the

last twelve months. Some of them have been caught and executed; others have survived, stayed for several months and come back. The information they bring back is very interesting. This February the Chinese Nationalists got so bold that they took a few foreign correspondents on the Mainland, kept them there for twentyfour hours and brought them back safely to show how easily this operation can be performed.

Now, Quemoy and Matsu have four major purposes: one, of course, is to act as a shield to defend Taiwan from attack from the Mainland; the second is to block the port of Amoy from carrying on any trade, which has been successfully done; the third is to prevent the Communist Chinese from expanding into the Western Pacific; and the fourth is to act as a jumping off point for an invasion of the Mainland, as and when that time comes.

So far as we are concerned, however, whether they land or not, Quemoy and Matsu are really performing a very helpful function. They are pinning down very major communist forces which might otherwise be free to come to Tibet and place themselves on our border. According to the Chinese Nationalists, the number of communist troops pinned down opposite Quemoy and Matsu on the Southeast Coast is about half a million men of the army, forty naval vessels of various types including destroyers and about 250 aircraft, mostly MIG 17s, opposite the islands. So, quite a large part of the crack air force and army of the Chinese communists is pinned down at these two points to stop an attack on the Mainland.

Now, the intelligence that is brought back by the guerillas who come back from the Mainland is of this nature: According to them, heavy industry has come to a standstill and, of light industries or consumer goods industries, the factories are only working 35 to 40 per cent of capacity. This was due to what is called the Great Leap Backwards in 1961. You will remember that in 1961, the Chinese Communists, having tried forced industrialisation, decided that they were making a mistake and then decided to reverse the engines. But being communists they went from one extreme to the other. The result was that Chou En-lai announced in March 1962 the new order of priority: first agriculture, then light industry, then heavy industry - the Swatantra order of priorities. Having done that, they literally transplanted millions of people from the cities and drove them into the villages to work on the land, thus denuding the factories of skilled labour and creating unskilled labour in the villages! Just as mad as they were earlier when they were forcing people into big factories trying to produce steel.

Now, with no spare parts or replacements coming from the Soviet Union since 1959, Chinese Communist industry is running down very rapidly and today the Chinese communists are turning to the West for industrial replacements. Judging by the queue that is forming there from the countries of the West, they will no doubt be able to get these in course of time.

On the military plane, according to Chinese Nationalist Intelligence, the Air Force is in a very bad state. There are no new planes or air craft available and since 1959 the Soviet Government has given them no replacements or spare parts. The result is that in order to keep their planes in the air they are resorting to what is known as cannibalisation. They break up one plane in order to get the parts to put into another plane. By this process of cannibalisation, they have eaten up one third of their air force already. Two thirds still remains and the two thirds, according to the Nationalists, consist of 2700 planes. Now these 2700 are called

semi-operational, as many of them are not fit to go into battle. All of them are now obsolete Ilyushins or old MIG models. None of them are in a position to meet the modern jets that the Nationalist Chinese can put into the air. They are so short on gasoline that the pilots are not being trained any more. According to the Nationalists, the number of flying hours of training given to the pilots has dropped to five hours per month. The Army is not in very much better condition. There are some crack regiments in Tibet and some crack regiments on the Southeast Coast but the bulk of the Army is not in a very good condition. Here again, trucks are being cannibalised, weapons are getting out of date, they are very short on modern equipment and, except for the best units which are on the Southeast Coast and in Tibet, most of the Chinese Communist army has very low morale and efficiency. If you remember that in 1954, when the United Nations gave the Chinese Communist Prisoners of War the option to go back to China or to be repatriated to Taiwan and recall that 14,000 out of 21,000 chose to go to Taiwan and not to go back to the Mainland, you can imagine how the morale today must be after this deterioration in the military and economic situation.

On the diplomatic front, in 1962, 59 countries had recognised the Chinese Republic in Taiwan and 39 countries the communist regime in Peking. What is interesting is that the new African States are able to exercise their choice in a manner which shows greater maturity than our own. Eighteen African States have established fresh diplomatic relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan, while only ten have recognised Peking. This is interesting. It is not an old habit of carrying over from the past, as may be true of the American or European countries. Here are new States arriving in the comity of nations making an intelligent and civilised choice. The result is that in the United Nations, as you know, last month they had the highest majority for the recognition of the Nationalist regime, 57 votes for the Republic of China and only 41 for Peking, with 12 abstentions. This is an improvement on the vote last year. Among the countries which switched from abstention to supporting the Republic of China was our gallant little neighbour in Malaya, which is leading us all in Asia today in many respects. Among the overseas Chinese also, the Communists are losing out and the Nationalists are gaining. I made enquiries in Hongkong on my way out from Taiwan about the Double Tenth which has just taken place on the 10th of October. They said that in all the last ten years, never had there been so many Nationalist flags and never had there been so few communist flags as on the 10th of October this year. So the overseas Chinese are also voting in their own way for the Republic of China.

The topics that I covered in my talks with the Government leaders in Taipei were Tibet, relations with India and the liberation of the Mainland. I put them in that order because frankly, for me, Tibet was the most important of the lot. I felt that anything that could be done to draw attention to the right of the people of Tibet to self-determination and freedom was the best that I could do during my short stay there and the contacts that I was making. And so I made that my first priority.

My first appointment, immediately on arriving, was with President Chiang Kai-shek. I started by recalling President Chiang's friendship for India ~~the~~ and told him that we Indians were not an ungrateful people, even though we might look as if we were. Many of us had been completely unreconciled to all that had been done in our name for the last ten or twelve years. I also told him that, last October-November, when the communists were attacking, my own remarks that we owed an apology to him, that we should make amends to him for the injustice done to him and that we should now ask him to come to our assistance by opening a

second front had evoked applause from big gatherings in Bombay and Delhi; /in which is what happened. I told him that we/India had learnt last year to distinguish between the Peking regime and the Chinese people and that we did not hate the Chinese people at all. Even our Prime Minister had said more than once that our fight was with the Chinese Communist Government, it was not with the people of China. I assured him that our regard for Chinese restaurants in Bombay and elsewhere was undiminished! I also told him that all Democratic Opposition parties representing about 39 per cent of the electorate had demanded the severance of diplomatic relations with the bandit regime in Peking.

At the same time, I told him that the position of the Republic of China in regard to Tibet was neither explained nor properly understood in my country and I would be grateful if he would throw some light on it so that those of us who were friends of the Chinese Nationalists and of the freedom of Tibet and China could carry these facts to the Indian people. I, therefore, put to him three questions. One about the position in regard to Tibet, one in regard to the relations with India, and the third was to ask him what was his understanding of the Chinese communist attack and the cease fire that followed.

The President said that he was very deeply moved that at least some people in India still regarded him as a friend and remembered what he had been able to do for India. He was very happy always to meet someone from India and assured me of his friendship for the Indian people.

The President answered my questions very clearly. On the first question on Tibet, he reaffirmed the declaration that he had made in March 1959 in a message to the people of Tibet where he had said that as soon as he had got back to the Mainland he would help the people of Tibet to assert their right of self-determination and choose their own destiny. I asked him whether he would authorise me to repeat on his behalf his reaffirmation that the Republic of China accepted the right of the Tibetan people to full self-determination and he said he reaffirmed that declaration and I was welcome to quote it. He was absolutely categorical on this question.

On the second question of relations with India, he said with great emotion that he recalled that he had stood out alone among the War Leaders in World War II in arguing for immediate freedom for India. He said he had paid a very heavy price for it because the British were antagonised. They had never forgiven him for this and the hostility of the British was symbolised by their rushing forward to recognise the Communist regime. This was a legacy he had incurred because of his friendship for the Indian people. He said, however, he did not regret it for one moment; he was glad he had done this because it was the principled thing to do to stand for the freedom of another people and the fact that it had hurt did not in any way make him bitter. He said that in all ten years he had not said a word in public or in private against the leaders of our government or anyone in India at all, that he had always regarded the Indian people as his friends. He mentioned that the Republic of China, like India, had a record of peace and good neighbourliness and he felt sure that when the Republic of China was reestablished on the Mainland there would be no difficulty whatsoever in solving whatever outstanding issues there were between India and China in the most friendly and amicable way and that he for one would be very happy to pick up where they had broken off in 1949-50. He felt that India and China, both free, could work together for peace and freedom in Asia.

On the third question I had asked - why he thought the Chinese Communists had

attacked and then stopped fighting - he said that he never believed that the Chinese Communists had the capability of going deep into India. They simply did not have what it takes to attack India in a big way. He said that so long as the Nationalist strength was poised on the Southeast Coast, so long as the pressure was kept up by the Republic of China through the threat to land any time when they could get the opportunity, there was an obvious limitation on the capabilities of the Chinese Communists to expand into India or anywhere else along the Chinese Communist frontiers. So his understanding was that all that the Chinese Communists wanted to do was to indulge in a limited show of force designed to intimidate our Government into submission.

I came away from the interview feeling that I had met a big man. I was very glad that Mr. Joseph Alsop, the leading American commentator, who saw him just about ten days earlier, in the closing paragraph of his article in the New York Herald Tribune says: "Chiang will have his revenge in the end on the fashionable twaddlers who have denounced and belittled him. He has his own great faults. He had the great handicap of one who stands between two eras and two cultures and does not fully belong to either. Yet he is a big man, a major figure of the sort that twaddlers can never understand, and history will laugh at the twaddlers rather than at Chiang Kai-shek." I believe this is a fair verdict.

Now, by the time I reached Hongkong, something that the President had said had already come true. He had told me that anything he had said in favour of Tibet or India would be used against him by his enemies, the communists. When I got to Hongkong, I found the day I landed that the Ta Kung Pao, the leading communist paper there, already had headlines and an editorial denouncing Chiang Kai-shek as a Chinese traitor to India. These are the headlines of Ta Kung Pao: "India-Chiang intensify Plot" "Indian Liberal Party Chieftain holds discussions with Chiang at Taipei" and "Tibetan problem is to be settled by national self-determination, says Chiang". As if this was a crime that he had committed. And then there was a long editorial where there were some very amusing facts which will interest you. One is that when Mr. Nehru was in trouble last month over the vote of No-Confidence, the Swatantra Party helped him to tide over his difficulties! And then the editorial proceeds: "Once one knows this relationship, one cannot but come to the conclusion that Masani's visit to Taipei and his activities are not isolated and that Nehru must have made the arrangements behind the scene." This is all very unfair to our Prime Minister as it is to myself. But the main passage is this: "If Chiang Kai-shek has been so stupid with Masani, then this interview amounts to a selling out of the Fatherland's interests and secession of Chinese territory. It is bound to meet with the determined opposition of 65 crores of Chinese people, including our brothers abroad and in Tibet and Taiwan. It will only add one more inglorious mark on his already long record of ignominious sell out. According to Masani, Chiang Kai-shek told him the Tibet question will be decided on the basis of national self-determination. Chiang even went so far as to allow Masani to quote him to that effect. To judge from the tenor of his talk, not only is he willing to offer on a platter the disputed territory to India but in the words of Masani, he is willing to consider even the question of granting independence to Tibet." So the whole article went on and on, maligning the President for daring to say that the people of Tibet had a right to determine their future. Another Communist newspaper said: "Chiang wants to change the Chinese Nationalist Party into the Indian Nationalist Party."

I raised with other people than the President the question of the liberation

of the Mainland and how serious they were about it, because many people outside think that they are not serious. I can assure you that all of them are in dead earnest about getting back. In fact, it is an immutable policy of the Republic of China that they must get back to the Mainland. The Americans, who formerly were sceptical about the military situation, now appear to agree that the Nationalist army and air force could defeat the Chinese Communist army and air force if they were allowed to land. But they were worried about what the Soviets would do. The real obstacle to liberation of China by the Nationalists today is not so much the Chinese Communist opposition as the American reluctance to co-operate in this effort. The question arises whether time is running with the Nationalists, because the Chinese Communist regime is getting weaker and weaker; there is more and more readiness on the part of the people to overthrow the regime. The Chinese Defence Minister with whom I talked, for instance was very frank. He said: "We can only play a small part. The people of China have to liberate themselves. We can only light the fuse, we are the detonators, but the explosion has to be made by the people. The military operation is subsidiary, political liberation is the main thing." And in this perspective I would say that time is running in favour of liberation.

The question whether the Soviets will come in when the Nationalists land is really a 64,000 dollar question. I took the trouble to read the text of the Sino-Soviet Treaty for Mutual Defence to find out what the implications were and, according to Article One of the Treaty between Soviet Russia and Communist China signed on 14th February 1950, the position is very clear. The Soviet Union is under no obligation to go the defence of Peking if the Chinese Nationalists land, and obviously they will not do so in alliance with Japan, then the Soviet Government will have a perfectly good right to say it has nothing to do with them. Therefore, legally speaking, there is no reason to assume that the Soviets will be drawn into a big war. A great deal will depend on the relationships within the Moscow-Peking axis. The position might change one way or the other in the coming months. One thing is clear. The Chinese Nationalists say that the moment they land, Tibet will be free. They are in touch with the Khampas, they are giving assistance to the Tibetan guerillas, the liberation fighters, and they say there is no doubt that the moment they land, the Chinese troops in Tibet will be massacred by the Tibetans and Tibet will have its freedom immediately.

Now, what are the implications of all that I have tried to put before you? There was an ancient or classical theory of Hindu political science that you read about in Jaiswal that your neighbour's neighbour is your potential ally. In other words, it is good to be friendly with that neighbour because, if necessary, you can always have a two front war and catch your hostile neighbour in between. It appears to me that this classical Hindu doctrine is particularly applicable to the situation that exists between India, Peking and the Republic of China. It is a pity that our Government and our press have so far neglected the tremendous potentialities that exist there for us and the room for manoeuvre that it gives us in defending our country.

The starting point obviously is to learn to differentiate between friendly Chinese and hostile Chinese, just as we have yet to learn to differentiate between friends and enemies in other parts of the world. The second step is to break off

diplomatic relations with the regime in Peking and the third step obviously would be to arrive at an understanding with the Republic of China.

There is of course a Two-China theory that is being ventilated these days. I would like to say that to me this makes no sense whatsoever. A Two-China theory, as things are today, means that the whole of China is to remain under the Communists, while Formosa should alone be allowed to remain free. As one who wants to see the Chinese people free from Communism, just as I want to see all human beings free, to me this appears to be a very cowardly betrayal of the rights of the people of China. It is to hand over the Chinese people to permanent Communist tyranny. Naturally the Chinese Nationalists will not even look at such a solution. They are not prepared to have diplomatic relations with any regime that accepts the legitimacy of the Peking bandit regime, as they call it. I think they are right.

I realise that the measures I have suggested do not stand much chance of acceptance so long as the policy in Delhi or the personnel in Delhi is not changed. I would say that the immediate remedy would, therefore, be for people to people rather than government to government approach. There is no reason why we in India and the Free Chinese in Formosa should not behave in a friendly manner, should not visit each other, should not make friends, should not correspond, should not exchange ideas, should not trade and have other relations between ourselves. As far as I can see there is no obstacle for this whatsoever. The Chinese National Government wants Indians to visit Formosa. They say they will welcome tourists, they will welcome businessmen, they will welcome ducationists, they would like to see an exchange of journalists. Our own Government, as I said, is a free government. There is no ban on anyone going from here. The Indian Government's position is that, if the Formosan Government gives entry, they have nothing to say about it. And so any Indian, anyone of you, would be perfectly free to go to Taiwan any time that you may like and at any time that you can make it. There is no reason why there should not be business. There is no real reason why even without diplomatic relations, we should not jump this barrier or curtain that has been erected between those Chinese who are free and ourselves.

I was distressed to see that there was not a single Indian correspondent in Taiwan. Not only that, there is not even a stringer representing a single Indian newspaper. Even local journalists have not been appointed stringers to send occasional stories to this country. The Chinese have nothing on their part. And I suggested to them to send a news agency representative to Delhi so at least our news can get to them and later on perhaps our newspapers can appoint people at the other end if they can't afford to send them. We have correspondents in Tokyo and Hongkong, but the gentlemen who interviewed me in Hongkong said that he had not been there for five years. I hope that Indian editors will encourage their local correspondents in the region to pay more visits there - flying visits to report on what is happening there. Information certainly can do no harm even if we do not have diplomatic relations.
