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"While the Indian people have their eyes glued to the Himalayas watching to see whether the bandits advance further into our territory, the Chinese Communist enemy is busy setting our backyard in South-East Asia on fire and encircling our country without our Government moving even a finger to stop it", said Mr. M.R. Masani, M.P., General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, while addressing Rotary Club of Delhi North at Maiden's Hotel this evening.

Pakistan, whose offer of common defence was rebuffed by Pandit Nehru, was flirting with Communist China. Burma was in danger of becoming a Chinese satellite. Indo-China was in flames and Malaysia was being threatened with destruction by Indonesia backed by Communist China and Soviet Russia. "This", said the speaker, "is the nemesis of neutralism and part of the legacy of neglect of our neighbours left to us from the disastrous decade of Panchashila".

In reality, the Himalayas, Burma, Laos, Viet Nam and Malaysia were, according to Mr. Masani, all sectors of the same front and it was not at all intelligent to seek to defend one sector while refusing to help in the common fight against Chinese Communist expansionism on other sectors.

How was the situation to be rectified? The speaker had two basic solutions: The first was to detach Pakistan from the Chinese Communist entanglement by resolving our differences with Pakistan and ending this mutually disastrous quarrel. In this connection, Mr. Masani failed to understand the hullabaloo in certain quarters objecting to a harmless sentence in the Communique issued at the end of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference felicitating the Indian and Pakistan Prime Ministers on their efforts at cementing friendship between the two countries. At the same time, the absence of Chinese Communist aggression against India in the Communique was to be deplored.

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The other major step was to realise that the defence of Laos, Vietnam and Malaysia was vital to our survival and to undertake our part of the obligation to defend them. It was wrong to imagine that this area was just a bone of contention between the Communists and the U.S.A. "In fact in failing to line up against Communist expansionism there, we are once again, as in Tibet earlier, scuttling our own defences", concluded Mr. Masani.

M.R. Masani
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