

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

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Reference on Pondicherry

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Fundamentals of India's Foreign Policy

8. I told the [US] Ambassador that the argument that Portugal had been there 400 years might have been applied equally to the British rule in India for a long period of years or to the French possessions here. The Portuguese came to Goa because of superior sea power. Later, they continued in Goa under the protection of the British. It is obvious that they could not remain in Goa but for British protection, just as the French could not have remained in India but for British protection here. When the British left India, that protection was removed and normally the Portuguese should also have departed. Their position was more or less that of an Indian State under British protection.

9. The French had been wiser because they were more civilized and had accepted this new position. I mentioned that I had recently been to Mahe, where rather an extraordinary changeover took place even before our agreement with the French Government. Owing to large scale peaceful noncooperation and almost every employee of the French resigning, Government became impossible. The Governor, no doubt under instructions from his Government, decided to hand over charge of the Settlement to the nationalist leaders who actually were in prison at the time. This transfer took place not only peacefully but in a cordial way with speeches of congratulation and farewell parties, etc.

That was the civilised approach to these problems.

10. I pointed out further that we had repeatedly stated that we wanted a peaceful settlement. But what could we do if the Portuguese even refused to talk in spite of our best efforts during the last four or five years. We were not prepared to accept the status quo and the Portuguese refusal to negotiate prevented any peaceful solution. It should be the interest of other powers to see that there was a peaceful solution and end a deadlock of this kind created by Portuguese action.

11. Mr Cooper appeared to agree.