

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume 36

Reference on Pondicherry

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To KM. Panikkar¹

My dear Panikkar²

New Delhi, February 4, 1957

I have just received your letter of the 1st February and have read the report attached to it.³ This makes very interesting reading. The tendencies you mention are obviously there, and I have little doubt that the pressure of events will add to them. There is no future for Western Europe except in some form of a union, whatever that form may take.

Nevertheless, I rather doubt if the process will be as rapid as you have indicated. The more difficulties will be from Germany, which you have mentioned, as also from the United Kingdom. But Europe, or rather Western Europe, will inevitably be driven in that direction. What happens in the future will primarily depend on the avoidance of war, because a war will

¹ JN Collection

² Indian Ambassador in France

³ . Panikkar stated in his letter that he had studied "the major changes that France is planning, in association with others, to re-establish a balance in the affairs of the world." He said he had 'tried to analyse ... the three basic proposals which are about to take shape-the European economic union, known as the Common Market, Eurafrica and Euratom, the three together constituting in a solid base for a new European structure." He added: "Whether it takes 5 years or 10 years, it is now fairly obvious that the three major European counties-France, Germany and Italy-together with the Benelux area will come together for economic and industrial development and naturally their political orientation will also under a radical change... It will undoubtedly mean a shift in the balance of power", with Europe achieving "in a short time under Franco-German leadership...a position at least equality with the other two Great Powers."

create entirely new conditions for the people that survive. Also in the course of the next ten years or so many other developments will take place in Asia and elsewhere. Any European Union is bound to be dominated by Germany. Apart from everything else, the Germans are a very vital and hard working people, and I fear that the French and the British have, to some extent, lost their vitality and capacity for hard work. In any event, Germany will not take any step which comes in the way of her reunification, and that reunification will not take place till there is some more understanding between the Eastern and the Western blocs.

I think that your note deserves circulation to some of our major Missions.⁴ The question of the de jure transfer of Pondicherry to India has been pending for a long time.⁵ The present position is very unsatisfactory and it comes in the way of many things being done. The other day I was in Madras⁶ and met many people from Pondicherry who complained of this delay. I think that you should keep on reminding the French Government of this. It is hardly becoming for a decision to be arrived at and not to be given effect to for years.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

⁴ The same day Nehru minuted S. Dutt, Foreign Secretary, that Panikkar's note should be printed for circulation to members of the Cabinet and to the major missions. Nehru added "Shri Panikkar is a keen observer, but he tends rather to go ahead of facts and difficulties and slightly to dramatize events. What he says is, I think, true in essence, but I rather doubt if his timetable is at all correct."

⁵ The de facto transfer of Pondicherry and three other French territories took place on 1 November 1954. On 28 May 1956, India and France signed a treaty providing for the de jure transfer of these territories to India. While the Government of India ratified the treaty on the same day, the Government of France did so on 27 July 1962.

⁶ . On 31 January 1957

Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon⁷

French ambassador⁸ saw me this evening and said that French Government were rather distressed at our general attitude in recent weeks towards France. What distressed them was not that we were critical, which we had every right to be, but that we appeared to be hostile to France. As an instance, he said that relations of the French delegates in the UN during this crisis had actually been more friendly with the Egyptian representative⁹ than with the Indian.

I told him that there was no question of hostility against France. It is true that we had reacted strongly to what had happened and had criticized it, but whether it was England or France, there was no question of hostility. Public feeling was strong and in fact we had tried to check it and to distinguish between countries as such and some of their acts that we disapproved of. I could not say what had happened in the UN, but there was so much burden on our delegation there during these days that it might have been difficult for them to keep up normal contacts.¹⁰

⁷ New Delhi, 7 December 1956. JN Collection

⁸ Stanislav Ostorog

⁹ Omar Loutfi

¹⁰ In his reply of 9 December, Krishna Menon regretted that the information given by the French Ambassador was incorrect and pointed out that there was "a concerted attempt here in view of issues and the importance of Asia and India to put us in the wrong." He stated: "Ali Yavar Jung) tells me that he gets on very well with the French representative on the Second Committee... (Arthur S.) Lall often talks to the people he knows ... Several members of our delegation meet them socially as well as any other. When Pineau was here during the Security Council meetings I asked to see him more than once. Various excuses were given including that he had a cold. He saw me more than once but he would not

I assured him that we were as friendly as ever to France. In fact during recent speeches I had especially referred to our friendly agreements in regard to Pondicherry, etc. As a matter of fact criticism of England had been much sharper here than of France.

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LETTERS TO CHIEF MINISTERS

December 8, 1956

...18. While we seek and work for peace, Pakistan is again resounding with warlike cries and threats against India.¹¹ I am distressed about this, as it comes in the way of our normal relations and embitters them. There are all kinds of rumours of Pakistan indulging in trouble on the ceasefire line in Kashmir or the Indian border.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

recognize me. The same thing happened this time also their delegation sits right in front of us in the Assembly and we smile to each other ... last week or so when Ambassador Alphand came here from Washington, I went up and spoke to him and renewed our acquaintance" Krishna Menon added: "The Egyptians having broken off the diplomatic relations do not want (to) talk to the French and also avoid them."

¹¹ For example, on 7 December, Pakistan's Foreign Minister charged that Nehru was himself an invader "of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Pondicherry". He said that India was spending Rs 300 crores on her armed forces "which I call a force of aggression."