Wilson Center | Digital Archive
International History Declassified
digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org

December 12, 1962

Entry from the Journal of Soviet Ambassador to India Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru

Citation:

"Entry from the Journal of Soviet Ambassador to India Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru", December 12, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVPRF), f. 090, op. 24, d. 6, p. 80, ll. 197-2. Obtained by James Hershberg and translated by Kathryn Weathersby. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110019

Summary:

Journal entry by Benediktov describing a conversation with Indian Prime Minister J. Nehru. In the excerpt presented here, Nehru expressed a positive evaluation of Soviet-Indian relations, complimenting Khrushchev for his role in resolving the Cuban crisis, but in response to the Soviet envoy's emphasis that the border crisis with China be settled peacefully he firmly defended India's stand that PRC forces must withdraw from recently-occupied positions (e.g., return to the line held on September 8) before talks could start.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

In accordance with the commission of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev today I visited prime minister of India J. Nehru. I gave him warm greetings and best wishes from N.S. Khrushchev and other members of the Soviet government.

Nehru first of all inquired about the health of N.S. Khrushchev...

I further set forth the substance of the questions which I was commissioned by Comrade N.S. Khrushchev to communicate to Nehru. I said to Nehru that the Soviet government appreciates the efforts of the Indian government and of Nehru personally which are aimed at preserving the policy of nonalignment, at preserving and further developing the friendly relations with the Soviet Union. I set forth the opinion of N.S. Khrushchev on questions of the necessity of activating in every way the struggle for peace and general disarmament, for carrying out the policy of peaceful coexistence and resolution of disputed international questions through negotiations. I expressed the wish of N.S. Khrushchev that the border conflict between India and the PRC also will be resolved through peaceful means, through negotiations.

Nehru listened to all of this attentively and with great interest, taking notes in his notebook. He expressed great satisfaction with the friendly relations which exist between the USSR and India, between the governments of both countries and also between Comrade N.S. Khrushchev and him personally. He expressed also the conviction that these relations will not only be preserved, but also will further develop in the future.

The prime minister stated further that he "fully agrees with Mr. Khrushchev in regard to the necessity of our general struggle for peace and disarmament." He gave us to understand that the USSR can count on the support of India in these questions.

Concerning the question of the peaceful resolution of sharp international problems, Nehru stated that "in this regard Mr. Khrushchev has given us all a great example during the incident with Cuba."

Nehru then dwelt in detail on the position of India in the Indian-Chinese border dispute. He said that "all this began not from our side, - it was thrust on us. We do not want it to be prolonged, we do not want to carry out military actions. We would like it to be settled...."

Nehru noted the truth of Khrushchev's observation about the presence of reactionary forces that are trying to push the government to a resolution of the border dispute by military means. He stated in this regard that the government knows about the activities of these forces, but does not consider this the main thing. In his words a very important point is the fact that all the people of India, simple peasants, workers and employees, "all feel the harshest feelings toward China, toward what it did against India. They, of course, do not want war (no one wants it), but they demand the withdrawal of Chinese from Indian territory, they demand the defense of our territory. We, of course, never will make an incursion into Chinese territory, but it is necessary to consider that the people insist on the liberation of the territory that belongs to India."

In answer to my statement about the necessity of a peaceful resolution of the problem and of explaining to the people the correctness of peaceful means, Nehru said: "We are trying to explain this necessity and will do this in the future." He noted in this regard that attempts at peaceful resolution of the dispute have not yet given results. "We would like to sit at the negotiating table with the Chinese. We are ready. But the government has explained to them that for this it is necessary that the position on the border that existed 3 months ago be restored - the position on 8 September."

Further J. Nehru in detail and confidentially illuminated the question of the relations of India with Pakistan...