

November 2, 1962

**Entry from the Journal of Soviet ambassador to India
Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Foreign
Ministry General-Secretary R.K. Nehru**

Citation:

"Entry from the Journal of Soviet ambassador to India Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Foreign Ministry General-Secretary R.K. Nehru", November 2, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVPRF), f. 90, op. 24, d. 5, p. 44, ll. 120-12. Obtained by James Hershberg and translated by Kathryn Weathersby. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/113003>

Summary:

Journal entry by Benediktov describing a conversation with Indian Foreign Ministry General-Secretary R.K. Nehru regarding border disputes with China. Approaching the Soviet envoy at a social gathering, the Indian official relayed an oral message to Khrushchev from Indian Prime Minister Nehru (whom he described as "exceptionally busy, very tired"), giving his analysis of the underlying motives behind China's actions in the border dispute. The Indian leader assessed that Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai--with whom Nehru had cooperated in championing the rise of the non-aligned movement only a few years earlier--opposed the current militant policy toward India, but that leftist dogmatists-sectarians within the Chinese leadership, such as Liu Shaoqi, supported it. They did so, Nehru reportedly maintained, not because of the border dispute, but to strike a blow against the general phenomenon of neutrality in order to discredit Moscow's line of peaceful coexistence and competition with the West, and avoiding general nuclear war. In fact, Nehru was said to declare, the Chinese threatened to embroil the entire world in war, and had divided the globe into two new camps: not East and West, but "one - for the continuation of the human species, the other (the Chinese sectarians) - against."

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

At a reception I met R.K. Nehru, who approached me and began a conversation. He set forth in great detail his views on the Indian-Chinese border conflict, noting that he had expressed them to the prime minister. R.K. Nehru said that the prime minister gave him a letter to N.S. Khrushchev and spoke about his conversation with the Soviet ambassador. In his words, the prime minister greatly appreciates the concern and anxiety of the government of the USSR and the general approach of N.S. Khrushchev to the problem of the Indian-Chinese conflict. "At another time, noted R.K. Nehru, it is possible that the prime minister himself would have spoken about this problem in detail, but now he is exceptionally busy, very tired and we must help him. Therefore I myself will tell you our views."

1. "After my return from China two years ago I personally did everything possible for the peaceful settlement of the border dispute. No one else has played a more important role in this matter than I. To some degree I have weakened my authority by having taken the hardest line on resolving the conflict by means of negotiations. The foreign policy leaders of India tried to the best of their abilities to solve this dispute and preserve friendly relations with the PRC. We did not cease to hope for a peaceful settlement of the dispute and did not make any military preparations, completely not supposing that military actions on the border were possible. The result is our present retreat."

2. "After many years in China, I know very well and am closely acquainted with all the leaders of China and with all the main party leaders. I [can] clearly present the views of each of them. I am convinced, for example, that Zhou Enlai does not approve the policy of the PRC regarding India, while Liu Shaoqi can approve it."

3. "I am absolutely convinced that the given events are not simply a border conflict, but something more. This is part of a general strategy of Chinese leftist dogmatists - sectarians who obviously now have the upper hand in the leadership of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party). This is the mainspring of the events. These sectarian elements in the CCP are trying to prove their thesis that India, as a capitalist country, will surely join the bloc of western countries, that it cannot conduct a policy of nonalignment for any length of time. They regard Nehru not as a nationalist leader but as a reactionary bourgeois. They are trying by their actions to force India to reject the policy of nonalignment, to draw it into the western bloc, to strike a blow at the entire policy of neutrality, nonalignment, peaceful coexistence. India, as the largest of the neutral countries of Asia, is their first and main target. Thus the issue is not this or that border or territory; the essence of the events is the attempts of the party sectarians of the CCP to prove in practice their theoretical position, an attempt to cross over to the offensive on the ideological front."

4. "I am convinced that their actions are an extension of the CCP's ideological disputes with the CPSU, and that the Chinese sectarians are directing the main blow against the Soviet Union and its foreign policy principles--against peaceful coexistence, the possibility of avoiding war in our atomic age, the possibility of the victory of communism not through war but through peaceful economic competition with the West. We value highly these principles of Soviet policy. I personally don't have anything against the establishment of communism in the entire world, if communism proves its superiority by means of economic, social, and cultural achievements, but not by bombs."

5. "However, the Chinese fanatics, who apparently have gained strength recently, are conducting (and intend to conduct in the future) a senseless course for achieving their goals by any means, including military actions, which is dangerous for all peoples. They, unlike the USSR and even the USA, do not understand the danger of nuclear war. The world is now divided not into East and West, but into two camps: one - for the continuation of the human species, the other (the Chinese sectarians) - against."

6. "We are on the leading edge of the struggle against the realization in practice by these fanatics of their theoretical program, which is a threat to the entire world, to all peoples. Therefore, everyone must assist our struggle. Therefore we must not in any case retreat before them, not submit to their threats, not agree to conditions which they dictate on the basis of force and seizure of our territory. On the contrary, we must without fail defeat them, smash their first practical attempt to prove their thesis. Only their defeat and the preservation by India of its policy of nonalignment can teach them a lesson and force them to reconsider their theoretical convictions."...