

March 16, 1955
**Record of 'A Chat with K. M. Panikkar at the Quai
D'Orsay'**

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Summary:

A representative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports on his conversation with former Indian Ambassador K.M. Panikkar. Panikkar avowed that the Indian government firmly believes that Germany will eventually reunify, while it increasingly fears that Germany will unify by means of war, which would threaten India's own future development. Panikkar suggests that Nehru may discuss this issue in his upcoming meeting with Khrushchev.

Credits:

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Record

During a visit [at the French Foreign Ministry] at Quai d'Orsay today, I met by chance former Indian Ambassador [Kavalam Madhava] Panikkar whom I knew from my stint at the United Nations in the winter of 1951/1952. For many years, Mr. Panikkar had been Indian ambassador in Beijing and later in Cairo. According to his own words, he currently has some assignments on domestic policy and also serves as a special adviser to Prime Minister Nehru. Mr. Panikkar, whom I just met in the anteroom of [French Foreign Ministry Secretary-General] Mr. [Rene] Massigli, said that he is on a very brief visit only to Paris and London. On 26 March, he already has to be back in Delhi for a meeting with the prime minister. When I asked him for the reason behind his visit, he said he is in Paris in his private capacity as a historian in order to have some talks at UNESCO; in London he wants to talk with his publisher about the edition of his latest book.

Asked whether he also talked about UNESCO issues with Mr. Massigli, he smiled and said he went primarily on a political "tour d'horizon" and especially talked about the situation in Asia and Europe. In a subsequent long conversation, Ambassador Panikkar then conveyed his thoughts about the relevance of the German question to India. In his remarks, he mostly focused on the problem of German reunification. The Indian government is convinced that German unification will definitely occur sooner or later. Yet it is concerned that with each passing year the likelihood is increasing that Germany will be unified by means of war. This is not in India's interest, which needs the preservation of world peace to secure its own future. Thus it is only logical and obvious that the Indian government takes a high interest in the problem of German reunification. This is especially true for Prime Minister Nehru.

However, there is also an additional reason why India is interested in German reunification: It needs a second power in Europe besides England with which it can establish very close economic and political relations. Only Germany would fit this description; however, preferably a united Germany. Also, the role Germany could play for the economic build-up and industrialization of India would only become available in full force after it has overcome the state of division.

Asked whether he had voiced those thoughts also to Mr. Massigli, Mr. Panikkar first hesitated but then confirmed in the affirmative. To the next question whether Prime Minister Nehru will also address these problems during his forthcoming visit to Moscow, Mr. Panikkar opined, this might certainly be the case. Mr. Panikkar asserted to be rather uninformed about Prime Minister Nehru's talks in London in February. He, Panikkar, would now work on domestic Indian issues (reorganization of individual Indian states) and recently had just one talk with Nehru on foreign policy issues.

Judging [from] the overall behavior of Ambassador Panikkar, it does not look unlikely to me that, under the pretext of private business, he is exploring with Paris and London Nehru's forthcoming visit to Moscow.

Paris, 16 March 1955. Signed (illegible). Respectfully forwarded to Mr. Ambassador via Embassy Counselor von Walther.