

February 7, 1955

Memorandum of Conversation between Indian Prime Minister Nehru and Yugoslav President Marshal Tito

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Summary:

In this meeting Nehru and Tito exchange their opinion on European security.

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Talks Held at Belgrade on 2.7.1955 at 10:30 am (July 2, '55)

Present:

India: Prime Minister Nehru,
Shri N.R. Pillai,
Ambassador R. Dayal,
Shri M.A. Husain

Yugoslavia: Marshal Tito

Mr. Edvard Kardelj, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council
Mr. Alexander Rankovic, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council
Mr. Koca Popovic, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Ambassador Rogdam Crnobrnja
Mr. Jovo Kopicic, Counsellor of State in the Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs

Tito: ...Regarding your question about room for maneuver about Germany's re-unification, I wish to revert to the question of neutrality. A neutral Germany is not possible because it is not acceptable to the West. Even if USSR want neutrality of Germany, they would not be able to obtain this result. The fact is that the neutrality of Germany would be fictitious because of its potentialities, economic and military. Germany is bound to come either to one side or the other. I would not, therefore, look for the solution of the German question in the direction of a neutral Germany. The impression of our people is that the Germans have not learnt much from their past experiences and they still persist in their old ideas though at present they do not talk much about them. Fascism has not been rooted out of their soul. The form of fascism will not of course be the same as before but will be different, though Deutschland uber alles will still be their ideal and policy. There has to be, therefore, some system of European security which will prevent German aggressiveness. The French and the Belgian ambassadors expressed genuine fears of Germans and the USSR is afraid of them. We also feel that in the future there is genuine danger from the Germans. Any system of European security must, therefore, place some limitations on Germany. The conclusion is that the question of European security, disarmament and Germany has to be dealt with together and not separately.

Nehru: Did you find that the attitude of the Western Ambassadors was the same or was there any difference of opinion among them?

Tito: UK has often views similar to ours but the United States are very rigid and hard and follow their own line and in this way they are similar to the Russians.

Nehru: What do you think of the USSR proposal for European security?

Tito: A world system of security would be preferable because peace in Europe is only possible if things change in other parts of the world also. A system of European security can only arise from a settlement of problems, not a petrification of existing positions. The Molotov proposals do not fulfill the essential conditions of European security and are, therefore, unacceptable to us. It is not possible to have European security without a system of world security. Both are tied together.

Nehru: What changes do you envisage as a condition precedent to the settlement of the question of European security?

Tito: The central problem is that of Germany. The substance of the USSR idea is two blocks and a disarmed Germany which is unacceptable to the West because Germany is their mainstay. If this basic conflict between the two sides is to be resolved, the reduction of armaments is essential.

.....

Nehru: As for Germany, some security is necessary because both sides do not know which way it may go. And no pact or any other measures would be of any use after Germany is strong. There was a strong section in Germany who believed in a war with Russia. And this section may still exist.

Tito: In Germany, there is one question you can always discuss and that is to have war on one or two fronts.

Nehru: Some of the Generals blamed Hitler for fighting on two fronts.

Tito: The Germans are always prepared for war at least on one front.

{NOTES TAKEN BY M.A. Husain, Joint Secretary}