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Washington and After

DEVELOPMENTS immediately after the talks between President Eisenhower and Pandit Nehru would seem to confirm the pessimists. That would be a hasty conclusion. Optimists who hoped for American endorsement of Panch Shila were foredoomed to disappointment. But it would be wrong to infer that nothing has been achieved as a result of discussions between the American President and the Indian Prime Minister. There was, and is, no issue in dispute between India and America. But in each country there was misunderstanding about the foreign policy of the other. New Delhi was suspect in Washington as a fellow-traveller. There is reason to believe that, as a sequel to full and frank discussions between President Eisenhower and Pandit Nehru, Washington has now a clearer understanding of New Delhi's foreign policy. Neither India nor America could be expected to pursue a different foreign policy as a result of talks between the two leaders. But it is evident that Washington now accepts neutralism as a possible foreign policy. It is equally to be presumed that President Eisenhower has informed Pandit Nehru that America's reliance on military alliances is no obstacle to more friendly relations and contacts between India and the United States. If understanding has been reached to agree to disagree, something tangible has been achieved.

Pandit Nehru's address before the United Nations was a clear indication that no basic change in either America's or India's attitude to world affairs was to be expected as a result of talks between him and President Eisenhower. In his speech before the United Nations, he was emphatic that negotiation was a better means than collective or regional security for maintaining world peace. In stressing this, he was only echoing the principles of the Charter. Many member-States, wedded to collective or regional security, must have realised the significance of Pandit Nehru's deliberate emphasis on world opinion as a means to ensure peace. No less significant was his condemnation of colonialism and of attempts by Big Powers to intervene in the internal affairs of small powers in the quest of friends and protectors. This was meant as an expression of India's disapproval of recent tragic events in both Egypt and Hungary. Pandit Nehru was equally significant in his emphasis that the United Nations could best attain the declared objectives only when all the countries were independent and as all such free countries were allowed proper representation in the world organisation.

With many of these aims, America is in full agreement. That does not necessarily mean that Pandit Nehru has succeeded in securing Washington's consent to admission of Communist China to the United Nations, or that India and America have reached an agreement about a common policy to west Asia. On many world issues, India and America differ. Latest developments in the United States underline the basic differences between India and America in their policies to west Asia. Even so, it is not without significance that both the British Prime Minister and the West German Chancellor have deemed it necessary to have discussions with Pandit Nehru immediately after talks with President Eisenhower. Nor is it without significance that Pandit Nehru has apprised the Chinese Premier of the former's talks with President Eisenhower and that the Chinese Premier will meet Pandit Nehru for the

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third time in quick succession after he returns from his visit to Moscow. From these various talks, it may not seem unreasonable to assume that both sides in the "cold war" expect India to function as a bridge.

Pandit Nehru's unscheduled talks with the West German Chancellor may indicate that Mr Walter Lippman's inference that India is not interested in Europe can be accepted only with some reservations. But it will not be denied that India, an Asian Power, is mainly interested in Afro-Asia. Not only because India is an Asian Power, but also because of the continuing tension in west Asia and far-east Asia, it is only natural to assume that Pandit Nehru has had elaborate discussions with President Eisenhower about west Asian problems and about the question of Communist China's admission into the United Nations. Some time must elapse before Pandit Nehru's talks with President Eisenhower are reflected in any changed American policy to Red China. But there is circumstantial evidence for the assumption that Pandit Nehru may not have been unsuccessful in his efforts to impress upon President Eisenhower of the need for a rea-

listic attitude to Communist China, Mr Chou En-lai's gesture to Chiang Kai-shek and the shift in the recently reshuffled Japanese Government's foreign policy equally demand a reappraisal of the American policy to far-east Asia.

Doubts about the outcome of the Nehru-Eisenhower talks stem from the enunciation of the Eisenhower Doctrine immediately after these discussions. Whether President Eisenhower or his Secretary of State is the sponsor of the interventionist policy to west Asia, it is undeniable that there has been a sudden reorientation in Washington's attitude to west Asia. It is, indeed, strange that Washington has announced a policy of military intervention in west Asia at a time when aggression or any threat of aggression in this region by the Soviet Union seems to have receded into the background. Can this new American policy be a belated reaction to the move of Soviet "volunteers" to go to Egypt at the time of the Anglo-French aggression? Or, does it represent an equally belated retaliation by Washington to Moscow's earlier proposal to America for joint military action to rapulse the Anglo-French aggression in Egypt? What-

ever be the reason or reasons for Washington's changed policy to west Asia, it will be resisted by Afro-Asian countries. Both London and Paris have welcomed this change in American policy. As neither Britain nor France is likely to regain prestige and influence in west Asia, the Eisenhower Doctrine is hailed as America's determination to fill the political vacuum in west Asia. London and Paris may feel jubilant about Washington's reaffirmation of the Atlantic Alliance against Communist Russia, but Afro-Asian powers will resent any revived attempts by either Western Powers or Communist States to perpetuate political, economic or military domination in west Asia. It is deeply to be deplored that, despite such spectacular effects of Washington's moral support to the United Nations at the time of the Anglo-French aggression in Egypt, President Eisenhower has been seduced by America's major NATO partners to reaffirm the policy of containing Communism in West Asia. Even as NATO has perpetuated the "cold war" in Europe, the Eisenhower Doctrine is likely to intensify the "cold war" in west Asia.

A Wage Commission before Wage Boards

SPEAKING at a Conference of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, Shri Khandubhai Desai, the Labour Minister, supported the demand for higher wages on the ground that planned increase of production would only lead to over production and glut, unless wages were raised simultaneously in order to enable labour to buy more of the goods which are produced. So inflation and deficit financing are not the only problems! While Gandhians assimilate theories of over-production, industrialists would do well to look up the speeches which they delivered at their company meetings on an earlier day, complaining about falling productivity of labour. This was before industrial production had begun to move up. In the last two or three years, when production has been steadily rising, they may have forgotten to compliment labour on its rising productivity, judged by the same criterion. There are signs, however, that labour was not forgotten. Wage policy is becoming a live issue. But before productivity is admitted as a factor in wage determi-

nation, the prior claim of subsistence has to be met and according to labour economists, it has not yet been met.

The trend towards collective bargaining which has been welcomed as a hopeful development may have to be reversed when it comes to be recognised that wages are not a matter of bargaining between employers and workers alone; a part of the increased product has also to be put back into development. But apart from productivity and subsistence, none of which are easy to apply in any concrete case of wage determination, the experience of the Industrial Tribunals have made it abundantly clear that adjudication without a clear code results not only in lack of uniformity but also in fantastic distortions. For there are other factors also which make the problem of wage determination so very complex e.g regional variations, job classification, conditions of work and cost of living.

Bearing all these in mind, it is difficult to feel enthusiastic about

the proposal accepted at a conference of Labour Ministers to set up Wage Boards for seven industries viz, plantations, cotton textiles, jute, electrical, mechanical and general engineering, cement, sugar and steel. These Boards, it is reported, will be set up by an executive order of the Government of India and will consist of a Chairman who will be a retired High Court Judge and members representing the employers and workers. In addition, there will be three independent members on the Board whose job will be to balance the sectional interests particularly the recommendations made in the Second Five Year Plan. The Boards will presumably be guided by all the good things that are mentioned in the section of wages in the Second Five Year Plan, which outlines the following "principles":

(i) A wage policy which aims at a structure with rising real wages requires to be evolved. The financial position of average units in a centre should be made the basis of wage fixation.