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ORAL HISTORY

The Evolution of the Indian Foreign Service Establishment

K. S. Bajpai

K. S. Bajpai, former Ambassador of India, shares the contribution of his father, G.S. Bajpai, who, as its Secretary General, was the first head of independent India's Foreign Office and of the IFS, to the Foreign Service Establishment.

Indian Foreign Affairs Journal (IFAJ): Thank you Sir, for agreeing to talk to us for the Journal as we are recording Oral History. We would be grateful if you tell us something about the evolution and establishment of the Foreign Office and the very significant contribution made by your father, Sir G.S. Bajpai (GSB).

K.S. Bajpai (KSB): Thank you so much for your interest – your very flattering interest. We badly need more public information about so many aspects of our national evolution. Your Oral History project is both important and interesting. How we handled particular issues or crises, as you have brought out in your first two contributions, are no doubt what readers would prefer to hear about. When you offered me a choice between Sikkim and the present subject, I was tempted to talk on the former, especially as much nonsense has been written about it and all kinds of wrong ideas still prevail.

IFAJ: Another time, perhaps.

KSB: Thanks. But thanks also for raising this question of how we started. My father's role was well-known at the time, and it is gratifying to have a chance like this to recall it. But I don't want to be too personal about it, what your readers might – or should – be more interested in is some broader issues that arise.

IFAJ: Such as…?

KSB: Two or three things, come to mind. First, when setting up the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), what did those concerned see as the need that was to be

met? What were the problems then faced? Except for a handful of them, even most of my seniors and contemporaries seem not to have retained a sense of the pulls and pressures, the constraints involved. I decided to talk about this because we, as a Service, even more, we as a nation or a state, are still subject to them. In a nutshell, there was – and is – no constituency in India for the Foreign Service.

IFAJ: Meaning?

KSB: That there is not only no supporting base, such as our internal services have, but no – or hardly any – sense of the nature or extent of the work a Foreign Service has to do and the backing we need. Of course, we are all lumped together, both IFS and Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and other domestic cadres, as being all kinds of bad or useless things – diplomats having the additional honour of being considered just fancy pants at fancy parties – now happily saris too. But for all the criticism heaped on them by politicians and public, our home colleagues are so indispensable, both to their elected masters and to the lives of our people, that they exercise a power in regard to themselves that the IFS cannot have. And I don't mean over perks or conditions of service, I mean over defining our professional role. I do not underestimate the benefits of isolation, since we are out there on our own. We can as individuals shape what we do; and because we have been fortunate to have had limited – and the most enlightened available – political control, that has enabled us to manage our work well enough up to a point – we have basically had to deal with only a few political masters, who have mostly been sympathetic – though hardly, alas, fighting for us.

Paradoxically, because we were so isolated, but even more because for so many years the Prime Minister was also our minister, we originally enjoyed a certain latitude. But ultimately, we have to fit into the total machine, including the public's realisation of what our work is. As GSB – let me refer to my father as that from here on – he anticipated the danger that Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) would have the responsibility for working out our international relations but the authority for the action required would rest with our ministries – as has happened increasingly. He always stressed the need for constant interaction with other parts of government, and especially with the other services, both civil and military – not least with the media, with whom he had a very useful rapport.

IFAJ: But doesn't what you say about no constituency for the IFS apply in all countries?

KSB: May be in some like ours where dealing with the world is still a learning experience and people haven't grasped what a Foreign Service does. But in all the older established states, even in those where revolutions have created new power structures, there is a basic understanding of a diplomat's work among those that count, and even some public regard. For all the jokes, and even despite the turf battles inevitable in all bureaucratic structures, in the countries that matter our counterparts carry a weight that has been persistently nibbled at in our case, leaving us much more dependent on having a strong minister to take on some of that weight. May be it was all inevitable, a side effect of our, otherwise, truly remarkable political evolution, which has so admirably widened the power base but at the price of narrowed horizons and parochialism, affecting so many other things but also the standing and functioning of a Foreign Service.

IFAJ: Are you saying that "all this", as you have put it ….

KSB: In shorthand….

IFAJ: All this goes back to the founding?

KSB: Very considerably. I started by raising the question – what did those looking at our needs at Independence see as the need which was to be fulfilled by creating a Foreign Service? Before anyone dismisses that as hardly a question – every country has a Foreign Service. So obviously our founding fathers must have realised we needed one – yes but that does not allow for the kind of service, which involved, on the one hand, attitudes towards services as a whole, and in our case conceptions regarding the work to be done – our world view and sense of world role.

Both these factors reinforced each other and combined in a view which is hardly remembered today but which was strong and widespread in our founding days, that our representation abroad was best left to people from public life, leaving servicemen to a kind of *babudom*. It was not just the important countries – UK, USA, USSR, China, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, Nepal – that were given to political appointees – even to a country then very remote from our main concerns, like Brazil, we sent a non-official. Partly, of course, it was a question of rewarding veterans of the nationalist movement, but more importantly, there was a basic attitude that service people are good for little.

On top of which was another prejudice, now part of history but very relevant to our origins. Have you ever reflected on the curious phenomenon that,

of the two instruments through which our colonial masters exercised their rule over us, one has become our national pride and the other, violently condemned at the time, remains suspect?

IFAJ: You are referring to…?

KSB: British control rested on the Army and on the administrative structure, with the former obviously the main arm of state power. This is by no means a matter of petty service rivalry, much less of envy or jealousy. It is just a fact of history that of the two instruments of foreign domination one was immediately accepted – approvingly – while the other was thoroughly disapproved of, to put it mildly. Thank God for the first part – we are singularly fortunate that our soldiers were immediately accepted as loyal instruments of the new India. They of course never interacted so directly with the public as the civil services; and their heroic actions at the time of partition – Kashmir especially – earned them instant respect. But against the civil services there was a profound prejudice – not just of the kind bureaucracies attract everywhere, not least among us today, but to the extent of truly serious calls to "punish" the civilians.

The needs of running the country soon made the new political heads realise they needed the domestic services – many Congress Chief Ministers (CMs), like Pantji or B.G. Kher had worked with them, and of course they had the immense practicality of Sardar Patel to back them. But there was this great feeling against them and calls for a totally new type of services. In the atmosphere of those days it was by no means clear that we could have the kind of IFS that eventually evolved. And in our case, on top of general public prejudice, there was the specific handicap that there was hardly any sense of what a Foreign Service was supposed to do.

IFAJ: What was Prime Minister Nehru's view?

KSB: Panditji was of course the one leader who had thought about international affairs and for many years. He had a very clear approach – not always clear on individual issues but on basics. It has been said often enough that it was a mixture of idealism, Gandhiji's influence, his own reading of history, view of the world's need and of course the destiny of India. He used to say, "we may be poor or backward, good or bad, this or that, but India counts." So, he from the start, envisaged a very active role for India in the world, and of course realised that we would have to develop the means for that – a service – but what kind?

He not only had that aversion developed over the years, particularly regarding the ICS, but found the officials he came across singularly, lacking his intellectual curiousity, not to mention his knowledge or breadth of vision. So there was a sort of instinctive preference on his part to look for new instruments. But he also had both magnanimity and a sense of quality, and both enabled GSB – who as a leading member of the ICS, and one who in particular had aroused nationalist ire – to become his closest collaborator. In fact, the relationship helped make Panditji quickly into the best civil servant himself.

IFAJ: Could you tell us some more about that?

KSB: First let me see about finishing the IFS founding part. There was, on the one hand, the lack of experience. Panditji himself chafed at the fact that there was no body of public thinking, and certainly no body of experts, who had dealt with world affairs before we became independent. Delhi had dealt with some of our neighbouring states but that had been from positions of overwhelming strength, with no Indian involved. Even those few Indians who had been chosen for the Indian Political Service – the nearest thing to people dealing with other states – K.P.S. Menon Sr., Balraj Kapur, I.S. Chopra – who came to us as members of the Foreign Service had been accustomed to dealing with essentially subordinate states. KPS did of course have the China experience, but wartime Chunking was pretty hemmed in. We lacked the basic, shall I say, preparation for engaging with the world as a whole and also there was no tradition of strategic thinking about foreign policy matters.

So there you had these obstacles – ignorance about world affairs, plus prejudice against services, with the *swadeshi* element in our nationalist movement wanting a new approach and a new type of public servant. But without ever going as far as the Sardar in willingly relying on the services, Panditji did accept the need for an IFS, and entrusted GSB with the task of creating one, readily accepting the latter's choice, to do all the spadework, of his former number two in Washington, Humphrey – later Lord – Trevelyan, one of the last British civilians to stay – briefly – with our new Government (who, incidentally went on to fame as the Ambassador to Egypt who resigned over the British attack on that country – and then got back by sheer ability to receive what I believe is the only award of Britain's highest knighthood – the Garter – to an ICS officer). Trevelyan worked out basic rules and schemes, largely borrowing from the British Foreign Office almost automatically in those

circumstances, but the problem was where to recruit from, to begin with. There was no natural pool so the old generalist approach prevailed – take from the ICS and allied services. Originally some 150 officers were to be recruited from there mainly but with a number of people who might have entered the civil services but for the war which had given them short service military spells. Panditji was not entirely happy, and GSB also felt a wider base was needed. As it happened, because of the tremendous strains of partition, the administrative requirement kept many possible entrants from other services from coming, so space was found for people from academia and other professionals, P.N. Haksar and Dr. Khosla to name just two. Someone had the bright idea – I think it was V.P. Menon that the princely houses of India had sophisticated youngsters who might be the nearest to fitting a diplomat's mould, so some half dozen came. Some who had suffered in the national movement were also recruited. There was also pressure to accommodate ex-INA personnel, but I believe we only got one in the end.

It was all rather ad hoc and hurried, the limitation being the source constraint. Where do you get the right aptitude and at different levels? All in all, it was a mixed bag. Many people were not happy. GSB had frankly wanted something different – in later years when, as Governor of the Bombay, he was often introduced at functions as the "father of the Foreign Service" he took to clarifying – "only of two of its members." He did feel he had obtained the right structure, if not all the right personnel. However, his real interest as far as the service was concerned was in building up the new part, in ensuring in particular a proper grounding in international relations. Initially his idea was to have a small service of highly trained professionals who would be the core of strategic thinking and provide the foreign policy inputs and then for specific jobs we would take on people from other services. Of course gradually that was overtaken by the sense in the service that all our people should be allowed to do all kinds of jobs. I think in theory that sounds good but it imposes added responsibilities without our having the authority to discharge those responsibilities.

He was very keen on our all having that academic year in a good centre abroad – everyone then decided on Oxbridge. But while admiring his old university, he wanted to broaden the range. Harvard or Fletcher was added. I myself got sent to the International School in Geneva since I already knew

French. Unfortunately, many of our new recruits found it all a waste of time – it does seem that nobody at Oxbridge organised a course, so it all fell apart. However, the original concept of a wider grounding was surely worthwhile.

IFAJ: Did Nehru really envisage creating a Foreign Office that was basically different from what the British Foreign Office was?

KSB: Well, Foreign Offices are much alike. And Panditji, as is well known, had mixed feelings about the Brits – many he resented or disliked, several he admired. What he would really get upset about was if somebody aped the Brits – in thinking, especially. Here, oddly enough, he found a truly kindred spirit in GSB, who was often thought of as British – in his accent, dress and of course having served them, but Ambassador Tyabji noted he was far more European – France especially attracted him – its language no less than its food – and in fact the title he got Trevelyan to propose for his own position was borrowed from the Quai Dorsay – Secretary General (SG). But, above all, he had this great sense of India's destiny. Panditji, of course, had come to it through a very different way, after all he had fought for and suffered. GSB was a devoted – if often differing – lieutenant, but had the same ideal grounded on *realpolitik*.

IFAJ: You were saying something about differences.

KSB: It was a strange mixture of similarity and difference. Both were students of history, with Oxbridge backgrounds. Both also had a real feel for poetry – GSB for Persian in particular. Panditji's stature of course was unique. It is now the fashion to blame almost everything that is wrong today – or went wrong along the way – on him but what we owe him is incalculable. He made mistakes – of judgement and of action, but of whom is that not true? Perhaps he was also the victim of his unique stature. Shri Jagat Mehta, who was GSB's first Private Secretary, tells me that everyone – except GSB – looked upon Panditji as a sort of oracle, a one man think tank, never questioning or arguing. GSB alone would express a different view. I don't know if anyone still reads Shri Y.D. Gundevia's memoirs (*Outside the Archives*, Hyderabad: Sangam Books India (Pvt.) Ltd., 1984) – they are the most delightful – along with Tyabji's – of the few left to us by those who served in the IFS – I commend them to anyone who wants to get the flavour of his times.

I think I should also add he attached great importance to our representation abroad being worthy of India. When he went to Washington as Agent General in

1941, although the Brits allowed us to function as a separate mission, since we were not independent, he was technically a minister in the British Embassy. So the Brits had picked out a house which he promptly rejected – we all lived in a hotel for three months while he got what is now – and what he foresaw one day would be our Embassy. Incidentally, he almost got another great house – now the Cosmos Club – as our Chancery but Delhi stopped him. He also personally chose our residences in London and Paris, as well as ensuring the Astor House in New York, and encouraged our Ambassadors elsewhere to choose worthy places. Of course he was fortunate in that our first three Finance Ministers had worked with him, the second and third under him, so he had a certain benefit.

IFAJ: Apart from starting the IFS, what were Sir Bajpai's main contributions to the evolution of our foreign policy?

KSB: Looking back, I would cite one passing achievement, one lasting one and one failed effort. He used to say that perhaps the best service he ever rendered was the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. That may seem a peculiar if not perverse claim to fame – the pact is long since buried and forgotten, and so too is the principle embodied in it – wholly unacceptable today, that each side has a responsibility for the minority in the other country. But we must not forget now how tense the situation was at that time. There was real danger of huge confrontation and even a war. Liaquat was not agreeing to what we were asking him to help tame tensions. I remember GSB coming back from office and saying "this is getting bad now." Clearly worried in the middle of dinner, he said, "I think I will go and see Liaquat." They had known each other in the old Legislative Assembly days. And he went and spent nearly two hours. I remember his returning and saying, "Perhaps this is the best he had ever been able to do for my government." The next day, they agreed, it calmed things down. Later on it could be disregarded but at that time it was essential for that calm.

IFAJ: That is what you call the passing achievement?

KSB: Yes, it was needed at that moment. Of more lasting value is perhaps GSB's drafting of the formula enabling India – and then many others – to remain in the Commonwealth after becoming a Republic. All kinds of claims have been made about who drafted it; again, one could argue its no big deal – the Commonwealth's continuing significance being debatable. Still, it is a unique institution and, again, at the time it was of great historic interest. Of course, the statesmanship of our Prime Minister was the key, but there was strong opposition – particularly from Australia and New Zealand. All

concerning the relationship of a member to the Crown. We were dependent on rejecting any element of alien sovereignty over us. But Panditji was very clear, he wanted to remain in the Commonwealth and on this Krishna Menon was a strong supporter. The formula eventually was evolved by my father. In fact, Jagat tells me that at the conference, he said, "Why don't we use the Statute of Westminster phraseology?" It had the phrase, "The Crown is the symbol of the free association of member states." Attlee asked, "how do you remember?" GSB could answer, "I suppose I am the only one in this room who was also present at that time." But anyway, GSB used the phrase to build up "the Crown is the symbol of the free association of the member states and, as such, Head of the Commonwealth." The British and some others thought this was not dignified enough but in the end agreed. Sir Norman Brook, then UK Cabinet Secretary and Attlee himself, both old friends of GSB, were extremely helpful.

IFAJ: And that facilitated India's republican status within the Commonwealth.

KSB: That's right. That the Crown would not be sovereign of India, as of the white dominions, but would be the head of the Commonwealth. Well, these are phrases, but as the Manchester Guardian, as it then was, crediting GSB with the formula, whimsically added, "Sir Girja is known for his passion for precision in words, which no doubt is why he has produced a formula which will puzzle the outside world."

IFAJ: What about China? It has long been said that Bajpai and Nehru differed on that.

KSB: That is the failed effort I referred to. There was never any difference over the benefits of seeking good relations. But GSB felt we should not ignore warning signs that China's attitudes and intentions were not reciprocating ours. The Chinese assertion of authority over Tibet GSB felt ended any notion of a buffer zone that had for a century been developed to minimise friction possibilities. He felt we should take precautions regarding protecting our borders. First he tried to persuade Panditji on his own. Feeling he was not succeeding, he went to Sardar Patel, who did agree with him and who asked him to draft a letter – the famous letter which, as was known at the time and as can be seen from Patel's collected correspondence, and the letter's style – Sardar added only the bit about his fear of Communists in India – was GSB's draft. Which was why Panditji, who was normally meticulous in these matters,

specially with Sardar, given their differences, never replied to this letter. I recall GSB telling me that the PM, who never stood on any protocol, often walked over to his office carrying Patel's letter and laughing: "So now you are rallying the other guns behind you" and just filed it away, explaining his rationale for his China policy in a long letter to the Chief Ministers some weeks later.

IFAJ: But what was the line which your father…?

KSB: GSB's main point was that the Chinese had never recognised our frontiers, so we should take up the issue for negotiation. He saw no reason why we should hesitate to do so. From what he told me, and from the records to which I have had access, before retiring from MEA in June 1952, he had persuaded Panditji to include the issue in the negotiations we were getting ready for, regarding Tibet, what was to be the famous 1954 Agreement proclaiming Panch Sheel. At some stage, our Ambassador in Beijing came and persuaded the PM otherwise – as was his own preference. GSB was still consulted – there was frequent correspondence between him and his successor – and reminded Delhi, and Pannikar was asked to reply. Some of this is already public, I would only add GSB's final word was that he was "convinced neither by the arguments nor by the conclusion" about not negotiating.

IFAJ: Did he have any ideas, if you recollect, on how to negotiate the border with China?

KSB: Yes, he was very clear that we should first substantiate our position, both from the records and on the ground. He wanted a careful check of our old historical records. In fact, he had created the historical division and appointed Dr. Zakaria, an old Oxford historian. This historical division of course later on produced those volumes. But the fact of the matter is that it was in his view quite clear on the paper position and the position on the ground had to be reconciled. Well, I suppose it will always be argued, was he right or not?

IFAJ: But by then of course the Aksai Chin and the other issues had not come up?

KSB: That's right. He felt long before they came up there was a very important need for us to be prepared for certain eventualities because we had to adjust to the way other powers deal with these things.

IFAJ: Did he also have some ideas about our continuing links with Tibet at that time, which we withdrew under the 1954 agreement?

KSB: I do not think he felt that we could maintain our old position once the Chinese had taken control. Of course he did feel that India was a much stronger military power than we had allowed ourselves to think in those times; as he kept saying, we had one of the world's largest standing armies, we had one of the world's largest industrial bases and a very good administrative structure, etc. But as I said earlier, it was not in the ethos of India at that time to think in military or power terms. Not that we were going to invade, but we were in a stronger position to assert our rights than ….

IFAJ: We conceded too easily in his views?

KSB: More or less, yes.

IFAJ: Coming back to Pakistan, apart from the Nehru-Liaquat Pact, your father was in America at a time when the initial shaping of Kashmir was taking place.

KSB: No, he was already here. In fact, he was supposed to go in the initial delegation to the UN when we went out with our case to the Security Council. But Panditji needed him here and in fact said in the Parliament that, "I have to have him here as he has been a tower of strength", but then when things began to go wrong at Lake Success, unfortunately, in March 1947, he was sent and tried to retrieve some of the lost ground. Because Zafarullah had meanwhile, by turn of the year, turned the debate into an Indo-Pakistan issue rather than a question only of aggression in Kashmir. To begin with, the Americans were quite sympathetic. I mean they never questioned the legality of accession and Senator Austin was, initially, quite understanding of India's case. The most helpful person was the Chinese, who of course, was the KMT Chinese, not the China that we recognised. And his formulation would have been very helpful. But then gradually the politics of other countries started to intrude. It has been well brought out notably in Chandrashekhar Dasgupta's excellent study in his book, *War and Diplomacy in Kashmir 1947–48* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), that the British were less than helpful. GSB was asked twice to go to London, where he saw Attlee, whom he had known, who in fact stayed with my uncle here in Delhi when he came out in the 1920s. They had a good relationship. There is a record of his talk, which corrected some of the British mischief but too little and too late. But by that time, the international community – the euphemism for the prevailing powers – had taken sides.

IFAJ: Any recollection of any idea on resolving the Kashmir issue which may have a bearing on the present negotiations?

KSB: No, things have changed so much. At that time, of course he felt that the quicker we could have a plebiscite, the better. And he was quite sure that at that time, the valley sentiment was really in our favour. Yes you are right, Kashmir became very much his subject, he argued the case with the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). And then even after he had retired and gone to Bombay, he was recalled for the last serious effort. He was sent to Geneva, to have one last round with Zafarullah in January 1953. And at that time, I remember he was telling me afterwards that they had come as close to I think eight thousand troops, as a difference. How many Indian troops should remain and he and Zaf had come to that point that I think we were sticking for twenty-four thousand and Pakistan was insisting on not more than ten thousand. And we had come down to eighteen thousand and that eight thousand could never be bridged. But who knows whether it would have worked anyway. GSB felt the Pakistanis were only stalling for time and had no intention of negotiating a settlement with us.

IFAJ: But Pakistan in a way accepted that Indian troops would continue to be in Kashmir while Pakistan troops are withdrawn.

KSB: That's right, but that's another story.

IFAJ: So how would you sum up your father's contribution?

KSB: First, let me say it is very gratifying to have this opportunity to talk about all this. Panditji was such a towering figure, one forgets what lesser men might have contributed. I find it difficult to talk about my father, I could so easily be seen to be glorifying him beyond his desserts. I would say he was in part the right counterpoise to Panditji; he often quoted to me an observation of Herman Finer, the political scientist, that the prime "duty of the civil servant is to provide the influence of fact upon desire" but it went beyond that, he had his own vision and a unique grounding in his profession. It was remarkable enough in the ICS – he came to Delhi as an Under Secretary – when there were only six – in 1921 and never left, going straight up to be Secretary in his 12th year of service, in 1928, then member of the Executive Council, or Vice Regal cabinet in his 19th. It made him so senior to all the others that the post of SG was created for him. There was indeed a suggestion that he be SG to the Government of India, as Ghulam Mohammed became in Pakistan, but he was the first to veto the idea as both inappropriate and impractical. It lapsed with him and was only revived for some bizarre reasons I would rather not go into. But his main usefulness

derived from his being almost the only man with any firsthand experience of international affairs. It began even as Under Secretary, when he was sent as the adviser on India's interest to Lord Balfour's delegation to the 1922 Washington Conference on Naval Disarmament – where, he said long before Pearl Harbour, the seeds of Japan's war on the West were sown by the crass arrogance of the latter towards a proud aspiring Asian power. He was then sent round the world – with Srinivas Sastri, his mentor, to deal with the problem of Indians in the white Dominions – from Australia to Canada – not exactly world affairs but a lesson in negotiating which he developed further when attached to our delegation to the League of Nations. And then his five wartime years in Washington, when it was becoming the most important capital in the world was a fascinating experience of world politics. So, on the one hand, he had this unmatched experience, on the other, he came back to Delhi to horrendous criticism. Unlike KPS in Chunking, where there was no media to speak of, in America he had to face questions about British rule, the imprisonment of our nationalist leaders, our war posture – all of which he had to answer. Apart from being an official of British India – and perhaps the most interesting part of that whole period relates to the question where does a civil servant's loyalty lie? Also, he was genuinely convinced that our independence was only a matter of time, and the Quit India movement badly misconceived and even more badly conducted. Even now it is not politically correct to say that – though, thankfully, some realism is coming up, but at that time it was pure treason. It was, above all, Panditji's greatness that saw the need for a GSB. If I can find it, I think Panditji's tribute to him in Parliament, the last of several, on his death summarises it all.

While I look for it, let me say, that what makes GSB worth thinking about today is that his range of knowledge and concepts, his approach to handling India's interests, still need the kind of strategic mind that he wanted to encourage. He was extremely conscious of our security horizons – that he covered the area from the Hindu Kush to the Mekong absolutely, but even from Suez to Shangai. He was equally conscious of our need to develop an understanding of the role of power in the world. Not that he underestimated the need for moral considerations. As he said in one of his lectures, "Power exercised without regard to morality is a crime against humanity. But morality cannot prevail, even eventually, without the backing of power."

IFAJ: There are some of his old articles on subjects like Indo-Nepal relations, balance of power…. Would you like to say something on the balance

of power since we are now really dealing with some of these issues in a far more practical way then we did earlier?

KSB: Yes indeed, I think his approach is even more relevant today because we are – at last, as we hope – in a position to play the kind of role he envisaged for us – that is precisely why I welcomed this opportunity to talk about him. He was a great believer in the study of diplomatic history. And although he always insisted that the use of power without morality an affront to humanity, he did not believe that you can ignore the role of power. He would often refer me to Thucydides. There is a chapter which I wish everyone could read. It is one of the most remarkable lessons in Political Science, called the Melian dialogues. The island of Melos sent its delegation to negotiate with the Athenians who were threatening to invade them. When all other arguments failed to move the Athenians, the Melian delegate asked, "What about justice?" The Athenian replied, "You and I both know that in the affairs of the world the element of justice only arises when the element of power is equal; otherwise, the strong take what they will and the weak yield what they must." It is not nice, it goes against our grain, but it is a lesson that we should always bear in mind.

Let me end with that obituary note in Parliament. Panditji said:

> … *[T]hese seven years (of working with him) had made me realise his high qualities in many respects and in some respects particularly rare in India. We had often criticised him in the past because we differed from him, he was a very able servant of the old British Government in India and supported their policies in those days and naturally there was, if I may say so, a certain prejudice against him. But in these years we came in closer contact, not only I, but many of our colleagues realised, not only his outstanding ability but also, if I may use the word, his sincerity. It is not that he transferred his allegiance from one to the other merely, he was the type of the good public servant who always expressed his opinions freely and frankly and then carried out the decisions that government made. Persons of such high quality and ability are always rare and certainly rare in India.*

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