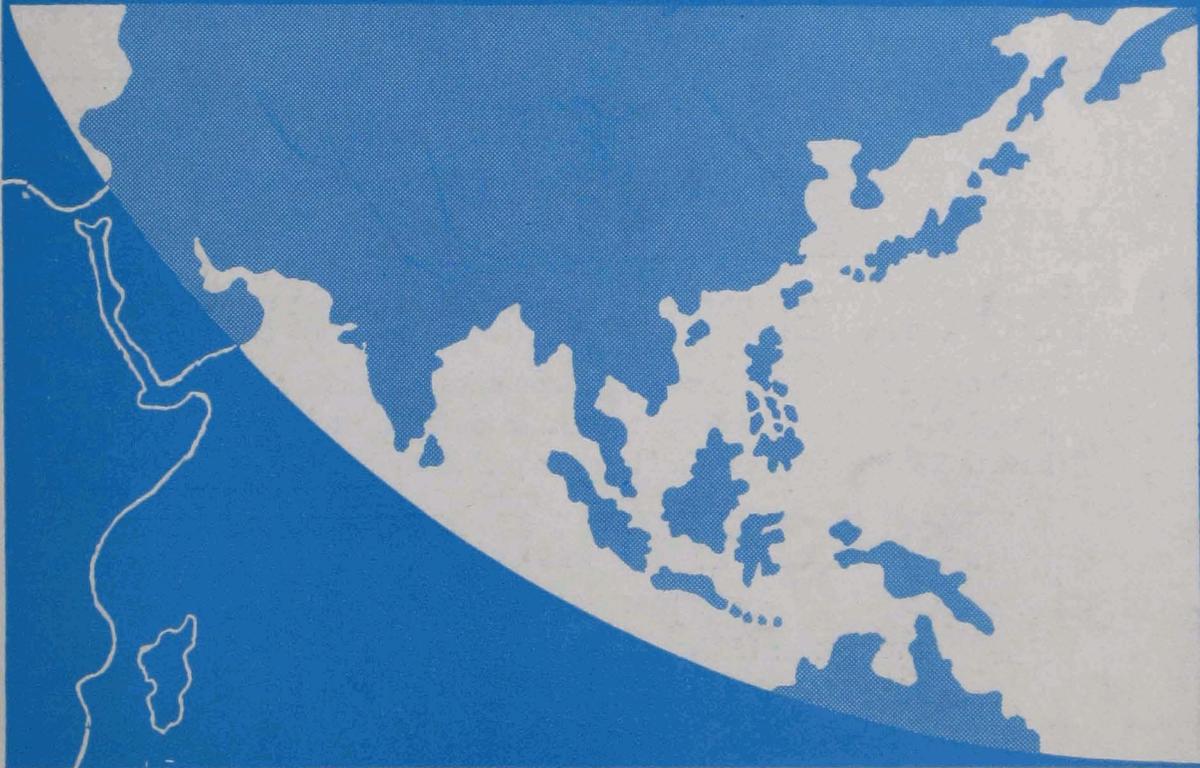


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# Crisis in South Asia

By Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS, CIE

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**T**HERE must have been very few dates in modern history more dramatic than the 20th of November. On the 19th of November everybody took it for granted—and when I say everybody, I mean officials, non-officials, Indians, and British took it for granted—that Assam up to the river Brahmaputra was gone, and that it was more than probable that the Chinese would go beyond that river and overrun a great deal of the south bank too. Then on the 20th, when these gloomy thoughts were all in people's minds, there suddenly came that dramatic announcement of the cease fire—about which I shall have more to say presently—and the whole atmosphere changed: India breathed a sigh of relief, and the people concerned with the great tea interests and the oil interests in Assam suddenly realized that they were not going to lose those tremendously important and valuable properties. There are not many dates in history which can supply a parallel to that degree of drama. In fact, when I was trying to think of one the other day my mind went back in history 1,500 years to when the Huns were moving on towards Rome and they had reached the town of Aquileia and for reasons which have never been explained they turned back. That is comparable in dramatic intensity to the 20th of November last year.

In Pakistan too there was a sense of drama, and a sense of tension though in rather a different way. In the early part of November the political struggle, the struggle between the President and those who oppose his constitution seemed to be mounting. It looked as though a crisis was at hand, everybody felt that crisis was certain to burst when the assembly met as was then planned in Dacca at the beginning of December; and then suddenly China came down into the Assam Valley and thoughts and feelings in Pakistan switched overnight from domestic politics to international affairs. Pakistanis began to think at once what effect this would have on the dispute about Kashmir, and what their relations with India would be, what British aid to India might portend for the future, and for the time being domestic strife disappeared. It soon came back again, the disappearance was very temporary, but for the moment there was a dramatic change.

I was extremely lucky in the timing of my tour. I was as I said in Pakistan when these dramatic changes were taking place, and then I

went on to Delhi where I was staying with the High Commissioner when the Chief of the Imperial Staff and the Secretary of State arrived there to consider the problem of helping India, and then I was in Calcutta when many problems arising out of the evacuation of planters, both British and Indian were under consideration; and then I went up to Assam, I was lucky enough to go to Digboi, Tezpur and all the intervening country. It was a strange experience in some ways because the ladies, wives of planters, wives of people in the oil fields had all been moved away, and you found yourself in a completely bachelor Assam Valley. The ladies will be delighted to know that the men were getting thoroughly fed up, I don't think they minded their own wives being away, but they disliked the absence of feminine society from the place as a whole.

Well I am going to try and talk in some detail about what gave rise to these various dramatic events and incidents, but of course when we are talking and thinking about them, we must not forget the undramatic, we must not forget that all the time unspectacular developments were going on. Industry was still developing, all the ordinary economic processes are still at work and we must not yield to the temptation of forgetting those things in order just to concentrate on the dramatic, but we will begin with the dramatic, and we will begin, of course, with the Chinese attack on India.

#### CHINESE IMPERIALISM

I don't propose to go into the history of what happened because that is too well known. I want to make some rather more general comments, and my first comment is this, that there was nothing surprising at all about the fact that China attacked India. There was much that was surprising about the timing, there was much that was surprising about her relatively easy success on the Frontier. But to those of us who have been wandering round south and south-east Asia for some years we have been conscious for a very long time of the build-up of Chinese imperialism. You go to Burma for example and whatever the Government may say about their friendship with their great Chinese big brother, if you talk to any educated man in Rangoon and see what he thinks about the Chinese big brother, he is terrified the whole time, and you go to Indonesia and there too you find the same kind of feeling all the way through, that China is in an expansionist mood, and that by one means or another, either military or commercial she has every intention of stretching out her tentacles to control south and south-east Asia. When I make a forecast which I very rarely do I am nearly always wrong; I am particularly pleased when I find one which was not wrong. I've got a son in Calcutta; when I was in

Calcutta this last time he produced a piece of paper which I had written in 1952. He had apparently said to me then, "What do you think of the future of India from the point of view of a young man in business?" and I put down the bull points and the bear points, and I notice that at the end of my bear points I put down, "In my judgment the greatest danger to people like yourself in the future is Chinese imperialism, because I have very little doubt at all that sooner or later there will be a great struggle between China and India." Well if I just thought about that now and had not had this evidence I should have believed I was making it up, but this was produced by my son, and it is a very rare thing for a son to tell his father that he was right. But the only point really is that I think many of us have been conscious for a long time that this imperialist attitude was being built up.

It is not surprising that it should have been so. I suppose history suggests that revolutions very, very often breed an expansionist imperialist spirit, and when the revolution happens to be a communist revolution, then the particular philosophy underlying it makes it even more likely that that spirit will develop. And then I suppose too China must have been looking at India with a very jealous eye because India has been providing the one non-communist example in Asia of really first-rate industrial progress, and as it is part of the communist theory that you can only achieve this rapid progress under a communist system, so it is not unnatural that China should have regarded India with a good deal of distaste.

#### C H I N E S E   A I M S

Although I have said that I think that the long term characteristic of China is imperialism and expansionism I do not mean by that that in 1962 she set out to conquer India or even to make a massive invasion of India. I do not think anything could be further from the truth. I think that if China had begun with the intention of a massive invasion of India the one route she would not have chosen would have been the route through the North East Frontier Agency. It is an extraordinarily difficult route, there are many easier ways into India than that particular one. I think her immediate aims last year were very much more local. I think her first aim was to take what she claimed—let's put it as simply as that, and you will remember that there were two areas, two important areas—really there were three areas, but we can for the moment forget the central one—there were two important areas in which there were territorial disputes between India and China. First of all there was Ladakh, where as far back as 1956 the Chinese had put forward certain claims. They had then in the next two or three years moved steadily into Ladakh.

Then in 1960 they put forward an additional claim, and in the following two years they moved still further forward. Ladakh of course was important because it was a wedge between two Chinese controlled territories and because it contained the Aksai-Chin road. On the other side of India there was the dispute as to the boundary of the North Eastern Frontier Agency, and the dispute at different times has taken two forms. There was a time when the Chinese began by denying the validity of the MacMahon line—they pointed out that the treaty never had been ratified by China, in fact it had been repudiated by China, and then apart from denying the validity of that conceptual line they disagreed with India as to where that line came on the map. I do not think that the North East Frontier Agency dispute matters to China or looms large in the Chinese mind in the way that Ladakh does. It is quite true that it would be very nice to walk into Assam and have the Digboi oil fields, but I have very little doubt that what China is really concerned with is Ladakh, and that the real importance from her point of view of the advance into NEFA was to strengthen her bargaining position with regard to Ladakh, and as she would put it rather offensively, to teach India a lesson. I am pretty clear too that her second object was to inflict a humiliation on the one country which might be her rival in the struggle for the mastery of Asia. I start from the thesis that China does intend sooner or later to be the master of south and south-east Asia, and the one country whose resources and might and ability might stand in the way is India. Linked up with that desire to humiliate India was the desire to dislocate the Indian economy by diverting resources away from the third five year plan to the very much less profitable business of defence. If you accept that these were the objects China had in mind, then her sudden cease fire at a time when Assam was within her grasp—at a time when as an alternative she could have walked into Bhutan and come down into India over that very much easier frontier—her retirement at that time makes sense because she had in fact achieved what she set out to do. She had taken what she claimed, she had inflicted on India through the army a very humiliating defeat, and she had made it absolutely certain, whatever the politicians may say, that a very considerable proportion of India's resources will in fact have to be diverted from the third plan to the business of building up defence. Having done all that she put forward proposals which were clever because they sounded reasonable; she said "We will go back twelve and a half miles. In NEFA we will go back behind the 1959 line, in Ladakh we will go back behind the September line; we will retire; you also get twelve and a half miles back behind these lines and then we can leave the situation as it is while we talk it all over." Of course in practice it is not as simple as that sounds; the proposals meant that India would lose her forward

posts in Ladakh, and that she would not have the Tangla ridge which is of considerable strategic importance in the North East Frontier Agency. It was cleverly thought out and from China's point of view she had nothing to lose by that withdrawal at that time; because quite apart from anything else massive aid was beginning to pour in from Britain and America. It was very, very impressive to be on some of the air fields of India at that time, and see these great Hercules aircraft pouring in carrying military stores of all kinds; you had a very impressive ocular demonstration of the way in which Britain and America were springing to the rescue; and it must have become pretty clear to China that Britain and America had no intention whatsoever of letting India be defeated. China had everything to gain having achieved her tactical objectives, by withdrawing.

#### INDIAN REACTIONS

Well now what were the Indian reactions to all this? I suppose the first reaction was the inevitable one of shock, of a sense of humiliation. We in this country have had experiences of the same kind of thing when we suddenly discovered that our defences were not adequate for the job, and as you went about India you felt that this was weighing on the mind and the conscience of all kinds of thinking Indians. They knew that the Indian Army had had great traditions, they had great faith in it and suddenly they found that it had not been able to defend this important frontier—the shock was profound. When a shock is profound you generally want to find somebody else to put the blame on, and you look round for a scapegoat, and so Indian politicians were very quick to find in Mr. Krishna Menon a very suitable scapegoat. Now it is not for me as a foreigner to express judgment on the accuracy of their choice, but I have no intention of springing rapidly and fervently to Mr. Krishna Menon's defence. At any rate let us leave it at that the Indian Congress Party decided that Mr. Krishna Menon was the scapegoat and Mr. Krishna Menon must go. And of course Mr. Krishna Menon did go, but the shock to the Prime Minister was very great, and for a time you could say that Mr. Nehru's own position was to some extent shaken. There were people talking in a way that they would never have talked before—along the lines that perhaps the Prime Minister was a man of peace, and was therefore perhaps not the right man for leading India in war, that perhaps he was getting on in years and ought to make way for somebody more vigorous. You could never have heard that kind of talk in the circles in which it was being bandied about a year before, and for a time it was not at all certain that Mr. Nehru would not in fact find it necessary to go. That soon passed. The danger receded, tempers quietened

down a little bit and people began to realize how much they depended on Mr. Nehru, as the focal point, the uniting influence of the masses of India and they concluded that they really could not do without him.

And then I think the next reaction was the extraordinary spontaneous way in which India turned to Britain and America for aid. Britain's response of course was magnificent. Mr. Macmillan's statement that India should have what she needed and the fact that there was no arguing about money, and that arms, military stores, equipment were poured into India without even any discussion as to how they were to be paid for or if they were to be paid for; all this of course did make a very great impression on the Indian mind. And then out came the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to assist in advising India as to what their needs were, and no doubt to discuss with them the plan for dealing with the Chinese attack if it were repeated. A year ago it would have been quite unthinkable that the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff should be asked out to Delhi, and should go there to assist with them in concerting plans for defence. There is no doubt that this did a good deal to cement relationships between Britain and India. But all my life I have been tremendously nervous of ever taking good relationships for granted; one must never assume that because something good has happened, that because there is a sense of gratitude that that will last unless the sentiment is very, very carefully nurtured. And there are at work other factors which might upset some of this overflow upsurge of goodwill in India towards Britain. One of those of course is the part which the Secretary of State found it necessary to play in trying to persuade India and Pakistan to come to a settlement of the Kashmir issue. I will come back to that point a little bit later, but you can quite understand that kind of thing might well be an occasion of stress and strain and that if we were not careful it might undo some of the goodwill which had been generated by the spontaneous aid.

I think the third reaction in India was an extraordinary feeling of solidarity—people who had been fighting about all kinds of things suddenly began to get together; the Sikhs began to put aside their claim for a Sikh State for the time being. The Dravidians, the D.M.K. down in the South began to say openly that this is no time for arguing about such things; we will postpone all our talk about a separate Dravidian State. The only people who were really confused were the Communists; they were confused because they were split into two parties—one group who condemned China outright and the other group who preferred to preserve their Communist character by not condemning the Chinese. And then there was an upsurge of public feeling against the Communists, and shortly after the critical day many of those Communists who did not oppose

Chinese action found themselves in gaol. They were not put in gaol by the Central Government, they were not put in gaol even on the advice of the Central Government, they were put in gaol by several separate States acting almost independently because those States were reflecting public feeling. It was a feeling of anger against the Communists. Well again this change too may be transient; the most difficult of all times in a war is a long period with nothing happening. We know that in this country; and it is in such a phase that this solidarity might begin to loosen up again.

These effects may be permanent or transient, and one cannot help asking the question as to whether there is to be any permanent effect on India's policy of non-alignment. Now that India has Communist China as an enemy will she pursue the policy of non-alignment? Well I would like to make one point first. I do not think that from our point of view or from the point of view of anybody in the world there would be any value whatsoever in a renunciation by India, a sudden renunciation by India of the policy of non-alignment. That policy, though for a long time it was a source of embarrassment to our American friends, has in fact had very great advantages. It has enabled a number of other countries—Asian and African countries to be brought together under one umbrella, and if India had not had that non-alignment policy there would not have been any umbrella under which they could have been all brought together to some extent outside the Communist fold. So don't think for one minute that I want to see India get up and make speeches and say we are joining the Western Bloc, we are abandoning our policy of non-alignment. But I think a very great change has come over the minds of the educated Indian public. Mr. Nehru himself I think still clings very passionately to the theory of non-alignment, I think he still looks very anxiously towards Russia for help of one kind or another. My impression is that the ordinary educated Indian, certainly in North India says that non-alignment may be a useful label to apply, but it does not really mean anything at all now, because we have in fact seen who our friends are. And I have heard a great many Indians say during these past few weeks, "It is Britain and America who came to the rescue, what did Russia do for us?" And so although non-alignment will be maintained as a public policy, I think its content is quite different from what it was before.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION

Well now passing on from policy to administration—who is running India today? There has been an agitation—I do not use that word in

the bad sense—in some quarters for the setting up of a war Cabinet definitely charged with the business of running India while the Crisis lasts. That has not been done, but it has not made very much difference because in practice there are really six people who really count in the Central Government. There is the Prime Minister himself, there is Mr. Morarji Desai, there is Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, there is our old friend T.T.K., there is Mr. Nanda, and there is a newcomer, Mr. Chavan. Mr. Morarji Desai I think has grown in stature very considerably in recent years; he has got far more command of his own ministry than at one time he had and he is an extremely good administrator. He has not I do not think built himself up in the parts of India where he is not known in the way that one hoped that he would, and I think he has not altogether recovered from the damage he did to his own position and reputation in Gujerat by his intervention in local politics there last year, but he is nevertheless a man of considerably increased stature in his own job.

Lal Bahadur Shastri is not an administrator; if one met him for the first time one would think he was rather a timid, meek man, but his influence inside the Congress Party is very great indeed and is growing all the time, and it is still the case as it was two years ago that if trouble arises anywhere, if there is a quarrel he is the one man who can be sent to settle it in the knowledge that all those concerned will respect what he says and carry it out. T.T.K., our old friend T.T.K., an old friend of a great many of us here; I do not think he is in the right job, he is in a job which really means co-ordination of defence production. Well now T.T.K.'s great gifts are, not so much co-ordination as dynamic. I think he would be very much happier running something himself rather than trying to keep together a number of different ministries which may have their different ideas. The really interesting member of the team is the newcomer, Mr. Chavan. Very few of us know him very well; I personally had hardly met him until we had a session together in the British High Commissioner's House in Delhi some time in November, but he is a man who impresses you straight away as being practical minded with his feet on the ground, and he has, of course, come from Maharashtra with a very considerable reputation. In fact, there are a great many people who say that if Mr. Nehru were to go that Mr. Chavan would be as likely as anybody to succeed him. It is not much use making guesses about that; there would I suppose be three potential candidates—Mr. Morarji Desai, Mr. Lal Bahdur Shastri and Mr. Chavan, and what would happen, which of them would be chosen would, I suppose, depend very largely on the circumstances of the Prime Minister's going, and the time when it happened. They are the three chaps whom people generally tip off as being likely successors. The President is, of course, a man of very great

distinction, a very great man indeed. And I think it is very obvious that his authority is growing all the time. I think his advice will count for more and more as the years go by. Many people think that when in due course Mr. Nehru does go then if Radhakrishnan is still the President then his authority will be very great indeed. But in spite of all these first class men, there is something wrong in the administration in Delhi—there is no directing will. You are conscious of a great many good men working separately and nobody pulling them altogether. You are conscious of fifteen or sixteen, or whatever the number may be of different ministries going their own separate ways; you are conscious of the fact that there is hardly a thing you can call the Government of India. There are sixteen jolly good ministries, and it was borne on me very much this time by one's attempts to get orders passed over particular things. You get one order from one ministry and another order from another ministry; and this with regard to subjects directly related to the Chinese aggression. And I feel that somehow or other there has to be a rehabilitation of the whole setup in Delhi—somebody has to take control, there has to be once again a Government of India and not just fifteen or sixteen ministries.

#### THE EVACUATION OF PLANTERS

Now let me pass from that to the area where the fighting took place. Here again I am not going to talk about the fighting and the events concerned with it, but very briefly about some of its repercussions. When the Chinese were approaching Tezpur and it was pretty obvious that if they chose to come on there was nothing whatsoever to stop them from getting right down to the Brahmaputra, the Governor of Assam gave directions—or perhaps we had better call it advice because there was perhaps no statutory power to direct—but he gave either directions or advice that the planters and their wives should get out from the Brahmaputra valley while there was time. That order did not in fact reach the North bank when the crisis supervened, but a local military Officer, Brigadier, General Staff, a man of courage who was prepared to take decisions sent for the Chairman of the Branch Association and said, “Mobilize your women and children; you must be ready to move out tomorrow morning.” Tomorrow morning came and the aeroplanes were there, and the Brigadier, General Staff said, “Get out now, for God's sake while there is time.” It was a perfectly sensible and right thing to say. But I rather want to emphasize it because since all this has been over, since the danger and the excitement has died down there have been people telling rather different stories; there have been people with ends of their own to serve who have been saying that the planters went out of their own volition because they did

not think it was safe. Well now I have been able to document this very carefully indeed and I would like to place on record, and I am going to use quite blunt language here, that any statement that the planters went out of their own volition and not because they were told to is a lie; there is no other word for it at all. It is documented up to the hilt and there is no room for doubt about it at all. I think it is important to nail that lie once for all. Another point I would like to make is that this was not a matter of race, it was not the British planters, it was the planters, the British planters and the Indian planters and their wives were all told to go for the perfectly good sensible reason that if the Chinese had come down into those valleys they would not have been very interested in oppressing the labour force, but they would have been interested in breaking the influence of the management classes. It is the same sort of policy that the Japanese followed when they invaded various parts of the Far East during the war. So the advice given by the military authorities was sensible, it was right and it was carried out. But so often when these dangers are over people, who in some cases have not been too conspicuous for their own gallantry begin to say that other people should not have run away. And some of the people in Assam who began to talk like this were not conspicuous for their own particular gallantry in the critical moment when the danger was there. And I think it is very important to place this on record. The planters went back extremely quickly; on the North Bank for example the move out took place on the twentieth, the cease fire began that night and on the twenty-second the first batch of planters went back to the North Bank; bit by bit they trickled back and their wives went back as soon as they were allowed to. We had a lot of trouble over some of the ladies because they were determined to go back even when the order was that they must not do so. One or two went as far as the airport and had to be pulled off aeroplanes and told "You can not go back now because the Government order is that they do not want you back yet." The Government were quite frank about this, they said that the presence of ladies and children who would have to be looked after would embarrass the fighting forces if there were a comeback of the Chinese; but planters wives, whether they are Indian or British, are people of spirit as a rule, and it was quite difficult to stop them from going back.

The actual physical business of the evacuation was done extraordinarily well; first of all by the Indian Air Force, who did quite a magnificent job over it, and then their efforts were supplemented by a certain number of Royal Air Force planes which, with the permission of the Government of India, were brought over from Singapore for this particular purpose. But I would like to pay a very high tribute indeed to the work done by the Indian Air Force under rather difficult conditions. Labour on the

tea gardens behaved extraordinarily well. When the planters went back they found there had been no looting, there had been no breaking down of the bonds of discipline; people had carried on quietly and they were very soon able to take up their old established places. In most places they were welcomed back, and when the ladies went back they were welcomed even more; so that labour behaved with extraordinary steadiness and deserved very, very great credit indeed.

#### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CHINESE AGGRESSION

Well I have not time to talk any more about the very colourful incidents connected with the Chinese attack, but it is worthwhile spending a minute or so on considering the possible economic aftermath of this attack. India obviously has to go in now for very considerable defence—defence on a massive scale. Now what is that going to entail? I suppose in the first place it will entail some increase in taxation; it is a very unpleasant and unpopular thing to suggest, but I think it is pretty clear that if India has to meet this additional expense over and above what she had in mind for the Third Plan some increase in taxation will take place. And the important thing I think is that the increase should be put in the right form; there has been a growing volume of opinion amongst people who study economics and business in India of late that direct taxation has perhaps reached very nearly a maximum. There is hardly any scope for more personal direct taxation, there is not much—in fact there is not any scope for more Company taxation if the Companies are to plough back their profits into reserves and build up for the future. And I think that it is perfectly right to say that if there has to be an increase in taxation it has to be in the form of indirect taxation. The National Council of applied economic research did give some indication some little time ago that that was its view too, that it was in that field that any increase of revenue would have to be found.

I think another effect of all this defence business is going to be that imports are going to become tighter; the foreign exchange position is bound to be strained more than would otherwise have been the case, and India is bound to look with a more jealous eye upon all use of that foreign exchange. People carrying on industries in India will find increasing difficulty in getting their imports. That of course will pose a very difficult problem for the Government of India; if you have a time when there is inadequate foreign exchange for all the needs of existing and new industry what do you do? Do you let existing industry run short so that some new industries can start or do you look after existing industry and be very niggardly about granting permission to new industries to start?

I do not know which of those lines will be taken it is a difficult problem; I myself would take the view that consolidation is even more important than new development, but that view may be wrong and I am not putting it forward dogmatically. But I suppose it is clear beyond doubt, although no politician will yet admit this, that there has to be some modification of the Third Five Year Plan. Even before the Chinese attack the Third Five Year Plan was beginning to run into financial difficulties. India's export earnings were not increasing as rapidly as had been hoped, and it was pretty clear from the last figures that I saw that her export earnings during the period of the Third Five Year Plan would fall very considerably short of the target figures set up by the planners. There is nothing surprising about that, it has always been clear to a good many of us that there is not the scope for a rapid sensational increase in India's export earnings. I wish to God that there were, but there is not; and one felt all along that they would fall below the target, and they are in fact doing so. And now on top of that defence has to be financed; well nobody yet knows how much it will be possible for the rest of the world to do. The Consortium will be meeting again—the Consortium that deals with foreign aid to India will be meeting again perhaps in March, and I have no idea how much it will be possible for the Countries concerned to put up. As far as we who are friends of India's are concerned we go on pressing the whole time on our own Government for the maximum possible help that can be given to India and to Pakistan, which I will come to presently, must be given, but what that maximum is I do not know. My own guess is that with the extra foreign exchange needs for defence India will have to draw in her horns in the matter of the Plan as it stands. So I would guess that there will be some modification of the Plan.

#### POLITICS IN PAKISTAN

Now I am going to switch quite inconsequently from India to Pakistan, and I am going to begin by talking about Pakistan's Internal Affairs. When I spoke some months ago on this subject I had the temerity to express some regrets that the President had found it necessary to move away from the system which it seemed to me had served Pakistan well for three years, and I expressed some doubts as to whether the halfway house between Presidential rule and democracy would in fact work. I must say that my recent visit to Pakistan fully confirmed me in those doubts. There have in fact already been some changes which make it very clear how difficult it is to maintain the halfway house that the President tried to establish. One of the most important changes was with regard to the relations of Ministers to the Legislatures. The President's plan was

to keep the Ministers free from the pressure of public opinion, to keep them as his men, and for that reason it was his intention that they should not be members of the Legislatures at all. He had to give way over that very soon after the new Constitution came into force, and he agreed that Ministers could be members of the Legislatures. Then again the President's original view was that things should not work on the party system; you remember his theory of Basic Democracies—everybody should be elected on personal grounds, politics in Pakistan should not get back on to party lines. That may have been an impossible dream; I do not myself believe you can have even a faint imitation of the parliamentary system without having parties working. There too the President before very long had to recognize that it was not workable and parties are in fact operating in Pakistan today. Then again the President's view was that the Legislature itself must be the sole judge as to whether the law is right and proper and is in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution or not. He was basically opposed to the idea that the Law Courts should pronounce on the validity or otherwise of Parliamentary Legislation. Well he has had to say already that he will agree under certain circumstances that Legislation shall be justiciable with regard to its constitutional validity. And all this means that the Constitution is changing—that the pattern we have now is something quite different from the pattern that was in the President's mind when he set out to frame the present Constitution. I said that parties were operating—just a few words about what those parties are. Soon after the new Constitution came into force the Moslem League Convention decided that it would support the Constitution, it would support the President. That view was not regarded with favour by a great many people in the Moslem League, and so a separate body, the Moslem League Council came into being in opposition to the Convention, and it built its programme round the idea of opposing the Constitution, refusing to take office until the Constitution was amended and demanding that everything should be based on direct election. And a very old friend of yours, Sir John, and of mine Khwaja Nazimuddin, was brought in as the Head of that Council. Khwaja Nazimuddin was a very much respected man. He was at one time Governor General and at another time Prime Minister, and is respected for his tremendous integrity; he is an old personal friend of mine and I think he would not mind my saying that I doubt very much whether he is up to the subtleties of some of those with whom he will have to work in the Moslem League Council, but he was at any rate a very respectable figurehead.

Then Mr. Suhrawardy, as soon as he was released from his detention became very active indeed in political organization. He is a remarkable man is Mr. Suhrawardy. Many of us here know him, I remember saying

here some four or five years ago that the last chance of democracy, parliamentary democracy, working in Pakistan would be if Mr. Suhrawardy, who was then Prime Minister and the President who was then General Mirza, could get on well together—well they did not, and the thing came to an end. But Suhrawardy is an extremely remarkable man, very dynamic, lives for nothing but politics and work, and he has set up a body called the National Democratic Front. It is not a party in one sense, it has not got a particular policy for the future, it is a collection of those people, other than the Moslem League Council, who are opposed to the present Constitution and are determined to get back the full form of parliamentary government. Recently Mr. Suhrawardy has been taken ill, but before his illness he was stumping the country using all that dynamic energy of his to stir people up against the present state of things and to try to force the President's hand.

In the National Assembly itself you have the rather piquant position that the Opposition is led by the President's brother, Sardar Bahadur Khan, who is at the Head of a group known as the People's Coalition. But the real strength of the Opposition is not inside the Legislatures—because you remember that many of the most important political leaders in Pakistan are still disqualified from membership of the various assemblies. They are running things from outside; and the real strength of the Opposition is outside; and that of course is a basic weakness of the present position, that many of those people who are the natural leaders of politics in Pakistan cannot at present hold seats in the Assemblies because of the electoral Bodies Disqualification Ordinance which still operates against them. Now the President is very, very determined not to remove these disqualifications. He said, and I think he said rightly that the whole object of the exercise was to get rid of corruption in Pakistan and I will not have back the people who led Pakistan into the parlous situation that it occupied in 1958. On the other hand you have a very unreal situation—if all the real political ability is outside the Legislatures how can you run a democratic system? At present the real leaders are represented by (I do not use the term disrespectfully) by stooges inside the various Legislatures. This is a point on which there will be a trial of strength in due course between the President and those who oppose the present Constitution.

There are in fact three main issues: first whether the various legislative bodies and the President himself are to be elected by the Basic Democracies or by direct suffrage; second whether there is to be responsible Government in the technical sense, are the Ministers to have to go on an adverse vote in the Legislature? or are they to be the President's men kept there just as long as he wants them?; third, are the financial powers of the Legislature

to be as restricted as they are at present or are they to be financially omniscient like Parliament here? Now all this really boils down to the question, Who is to be the boss? Is the President to be the boss or is the National Assembly to be the boss? This is a strange position because nobody wants the President to go—the President is tremendously respected, tremendously popular, and even those who are fighting hardest to try to make him give way on these Constitutional points would be extremely worried if he were to decide to go. They want him there, but they want the power in their own hands, and that had produced a sort of situation in November last which was getting pretty explosive. The general feeling of competent observers then was that it could not last very long. As I said earlier the expectation was that boiling point would come when the Assembly met in December. Well that did not happen, because when the international situation began to dominate everything the President decided to call the Assembly in November; a session was held which began with a day's secret session, and at that session both the secret session and the open session were devoted almost entirely to international affairs, which means very largely relations with India. And so for the time being the crisis was put off. But it has only been put off. I think there are signs already that people's minds have begun to turn back again to domestic issues, and it will not be very long before the whole question is fought out again.

#### PAKISTAN AND INDIA

I have said that people's attentions were distracted to international affairs—well international relations with Pakistan means one thing, and one thing only really or rather two things, it means relations with India with regard to Kashmir, and it means the Afghanistan problem. As far as Kashmir is concerned it is the keypoint always to the feeling between India and Pakistan. When Kashmir comes into prominence, perhaps because it is raised again at the United Nations, feeling begins to mount. Kashmir you remember was raised again before the United Nations last year, and in the middle of the year feeling in Pakistan was beginning to rise, Pakistanis were beginning to feel more and more that this issue must be settled, and when they begin to feel that then of course they meant that India must give in over it—just as in India when people say the issue must be settled they say that Pakistan must give in over it. Well this feeling began to mount. Then came the China episode and India was in difficulties, and there were certain irresponsible people in Pakistan who said this is grand, this gives us our opportunity, let us deal with India while the going is good. The President of course does not give in to that

sort of talk. He is a man of sound common sense and balanced judgment and he kept his head all the time, and he would have nothing to do with that kind of approach. And then a rather more difficult situation arose because people in Pakistan began to be quite genuinely alarmed at the British aid to India for use against the Chinese. They began to say that aid may be given to India for use against the Chinese, but in due course it will be used against us. There is a conviction on the part of a great many Pakistanis that India is determined to attack Pakistan, and this time I stayed in the houses of quite a number of my Pakistani friends instead of staying with officials, and met dozens and dozens and dozens of educated Pakistanis and found 90 per cent of them obsessed with this idea that some day India will attack us. Now I do not believe that idea to have any foundation at all, but I think it extremely important that my Indian friends should realize and should believe that that idea is genuinely entertained by most Pakistanis. So they began to say when Britain supplies arms to India without settling our quarrel she is endangering us and she has no right to do it. I do not accept that view at all. I think it would have been quite wrong from every point of view on Britain's part not to give prompt aid to India when India was threatened by China. Let us suppose it had been the other way round. Supposing Pakistan had been threatened by Russia through Afghanistan, would my Pakistani friends think that Britain should have said we cannot help you because you have a quarrel with India? It is unthinkable, and the one possibility at some time or other might be just as real as the other. I think whether India or Pakistan is threatened by a Communist power there is no question about it at all, Britain has to come to the rescue, and I would have been ashamed to stand here today if Britain had not come to the rescue. And I do ask my Pakistani friends to do their best to make this understood by their compatriots in Pakistan. Britain has no choice—India or Pakistan must have assistance from us in defence if they are threatened from outside by a Communist power.

But of course the whole situation has been to some extent complicated by what you might call Pakistan's China line, by the increasing ties of friendship between Pakistan and China. I am not criticizing Pakistan for building up those ties of friendship—it is a good sensible thing to do—if you have a powerful neighbour next door and you have no particular quarrel with him, well obviously you ought to build up friendship to the greatest possible extent. But of course it did complicate things coming at that particular time because it was regarded in India as a deliberate move against India. It is a curious situation. You have India today very strongly anti-China, but her Prime Minister still very disposed to try and keep in close with Russia; and you have Pakistan worried about Afghanistan and

therefore nervous of Russia, but building up a friendship with China. It is a curious reversal in the one country of the situation in the other. And it is a situation which might become delicate, and even dangerous. None of us know how real the rift is between Russia and China. We guess about it but none of us really know. If that rift were real it would be a very serious thing if we found Pakistan in alliance with China, India very close to Russia, and Russia and China disposed to have it out with one another. I only mention that to show how delicate the whole of this business is, and how extremely careful both India and Pakistan need to be

#### K A S H M I R

Now there is one subject about which you will expect me to say a great deal, and about which I am going to say nothing, and that is the subject of the forthcoming Kashmir talks. Or I will correct what I have said—I will not say nothing, I will say one thing, that in the judgment of everybody who has watched these things carefully some kind of settlement between India and Pakistan is absolutely vital. I do not believe that, on a long view, in the absence of a settlement of that kind India can defend herself against China. And I do not believe that if India were to fall a victim to Chinese aggression that it would be very long before Pakistan fell too. I do not believe that alliance between Pakistan and China would count for that much if China once found herself in possession of the Assam valley. I cannot imagine the Chinese not taking East Pakistan if they were in possession of Assam. And as I see it therefore a settlement of the quarrel between India and Pakistan is absolutely vital to both countries. It was for this reason that the Secretary of State, Mr. Duncan Sandys, took tremendous pains and trouble—he spent two whole nights without sleep to my knowledge in the process—trying to persuade both countries that they must get together and settle their quarrels. Being a wise man he did not try to tell them what the settlement should be. He tried to impress on both of them that a settlement was essential and to beg them to get together for talks. Well the first two rounds of those talks have already taken place, and as far as one can tell there is not very much information available about them yet—as far as one can tell there has not been a very great deal of progress made. But everybody who cares about both countries must hope beyond everything, that at the next round an attempt really will be made to find some way of settling this tremendously important problem. We cannot afford to have a row between the two countries in that place right up where Sinkiang comes in, where you have China on one side and Russia on the other side, you simply cannot afford to have a bitter quarrel going on between the two countries about that particular

area. But as I say I am going to be thoroughly mean, I am going to express no opinion whatsoever as to what the settlement should be. I expect after I have sat down someone will get up and ask what I think about the rights and wrongs of the Kashmir question and I shall have to invent my twentieth different reason for saying why I won't give any opinion at all.

But I would like to end on this note—I am not going to stop today to talk about the economic affairs, there is not time—but I would like to end on this note, that to us in this room both India and Pakistan matter tremendously, and because they matter tremendously I think there are few things that we want in the world more than to see them get together. They cannot afford not to get together. The issue which separates them is one which it ought to be possible to solve and the whole needs of the West democratic world, not the Western world only but the democratic world including India, demands that this cause of friction should be brought to an end. I am afraid I have talked at some considerable length. Even so I have left out many things that I would have liked to have said, but I think you will agree that I was extremely lucky to be in India and Pakistan at this particular time, and I think you will also agree with me that it was one of the most dramatic moments in history, I will end as I began by saying I wish you could have had a really first class journalistic reporter to convey this sense of drama and tension to you.

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## **The Sino-Burmese Border Agreement**

SIR. The author of the article in the January issue of the journal on the Sino-Burmese frontiers thinks it a mystery, and a great tribute to China, that she has made a generous frontier settlement with Burma. What can be the reason, other than China's magnanimity, is the question asked. The question is, perhaps of design, naïve.

The answer is that Peking is determined to isolate India by showing how 'reasonable' the Chinese can be to other neighbours with frontier questions to settle. With this in view a settlement has been made not only with Burma (along the very McMahon Line in the north that China will not accept for India), but with Nepal also along the Himalayan crest (which again China will not accept for India). Not only that, but China has it seems, now made a settlement with Pakistan west of the Karakoram

# Lecture Discussion

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## The Sino-Indian Frontier Dispute

SIR OLAF CAROE, KCSI, KCIE, addressed a joint meeting of the East India Association and the Royal Over-Seas League on Wednesday, 21st November, 1962, at Over-Seas House, St. James's, s.w.1. The Rt. Hon. Lord SPENS presided and introducing the speaker said: As usual when I preside at these meetings of this Association, I never have to say anything about the person who is going to lecture because he is, as a rule, far better known to all of you than he is personally to me. This time I hope to be able to claim to know our lecturer as well as anybody here. I never had the advantage of serving with him in India, although I have once or twice been entertained by him there, which perhaps is better than serving with him, but Sir Olaf Caroe needs absolutely no introduction to this audience at all. We are exceedingly fortunate at this particular moment to have got someone who knows the Frontier as well as he does, and who not only knows the Frontier physically, but has been in the history of the Frontier for a large number of recent years and knows a great deal about the negotiations, and the claims, and so forth. At

this particular moment a talk from Sir Olaf, I believe, would have as great value as a talk from anybody who has appeared on the B.B.C. or anywhere else, or has written to *The Times* or any of our great newspapers.

### DISCUSSION

Dr. BRAMLEY: Referring to your remark that Canada is sending a lot of grain to China, surely it is a very good thing because if you feed the population rather than starve it they may not have an aggressive future. If you feed them and house them, then there will not be a revolution.

Sir OLAF CAROE: There has been a revolution already. I do not think I can answer that effectively. I do think it should be considered in Canada, at any rate, whether Canada should send grain.

Mr. LIONEL JARDINE: Is there any special significance in the date March 1962, which I think the Indian Government has adopted, rather than November, 1959.

Sir OLAF CAROE: I think it is September 8th, 1962, that was the beginning of the Chinese offensive on the McMahon Line. It started

really on September 8th, and what India said, in effect, was that the Chinese must vacate the gains made since then before India could talk. The difference is that the Indians cannot contemplate going back in what they regard as their territory, and the Chinese say that both sides must go back. As regards the McMahon Line, as I tried to show, this question does not only concern the McMahon Line in the eastern sector, but also Ladakh. The two things act and interact the whole time and the Chinese would be left in occupation of even larger parts of Ladakh if the Indians were to accept this, even if it meant that the Chinese went back behind the McMahon Line.

Mr. H. H. HOOD: Would Sir Olaf tell us a little more about the Ladakh area, which is featured a good deal in the newspapers? For instance, the total area and what would be the advantages to China by taking possession of that territory.

Sir OLAF CAROE: To take the last point first, the advantage to China is that the road from Sinkiang into Tibet crosses that territory. The territory itself, except for its value in communications, is almost completely valueless. If you want to know something about the history of why India is in Ladakh, it is roughly this. The Mughals, as you know, took Kashmir in the time of Akbar towards the end of the 16th century when Queen Elizabeth was

on the throne here, but they never penetrated into Ladakh at that time. Ladakh appears in later local records in Aurangzeb's time a century later as paying tribute to the Governor of Kashmir, about 1690. When the Mughal Empire began to break up on Nadir Shah's capture of Delhi in 1739, the founder of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Abduli, the Durrani, took Kashmir in 1752. The Durrani held it over 50 years, but they never got up into Ladakh. Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, conquered Ladakh again for India through his feudatory, the ancestor of the Marajahs of Kashmir. Gulab Singh was his agent in Kashmir, and one of his generals, his name was Zorawar Singh, took Baltistan and Ladakh and made them dependencies of Kashmir. Zorawar himself was killed when he invaded Tibet. Then there was an agreement in 1842 between the Sikh Government of the Punjab in Kashmir and the Chinese and Tibetans—the Tibetans were under a vague Chinese suzerainty—which laid down the frontiers of Ladakh between Kashmir and Tibet. That was in 1842, before the Sikh wars and before Kashmir came under British suzerainty. In 1847, after the first Sikh war, when the British became the suzerains of Kashmir, they asked the Chinese "What about this frontier between Ladakh and Tibet?" And the Chinese said: "We will stand on the 1842 agreement made with Ranjit Singh's Government and the frontier is very well known and that shall be

the frontier." That is roughly the position, and since then any one of you who has been in Kashmir—and some of you, no doubt, have been to Leh, the capital of Ladakh—will know that Ladakh was a dependency of Kashmir.

A MEMBER: May I ask about a report I read in the British Press that the Chinese had an arrangement for building a road from Lhasa to Katmandu and that it was due to be completed in October. Is this a fact?

SIR OLAF CAROE: I would not know the details. I do not know whether any of our Indian friends here, or anyone from Nepal, can give us actual information on the state of that, but certainly the work on the road has been begun and it is part of the understanding between China and Nepal reached as a result of their frontier demarcation. The Nepal situation is very interesting because when the Ranas who ruled Nepal for over 100 years were pushed out in 1950, the watch-word was representative Government rather on the lines of India, and the King was the person under whom it was expected that this result would be attained. But as we have all seen, once the King had got his power back—during the time of the Ranas he was only a puppet—it was not very long before the King himself got rid of representative Government in Nepal and he is strongly supported by the Chinese and by the Russians. You have the very odd situation

of a King being supported against his people by the Communist Powers.

SIR CYRIL JONES: A big question mark which some of us feel in trying to interpret what lies behind recent Chinese actions is whether they are indicative of a deliberate policy of expansionism on the part of China, or whether it is, as the Chinese have persistently maintained, a question of frontier rectification. The encroachment into Northern Assam seems to indicate a deliberate policy of expansion. Would it be legitimate to assume from this recent Chinese withdrawal offer, which I think Sir Olaf said indicates a willingness on the part of the Chinese to trade in recognition of the McMahon Line on the East with securing a position in Ladakh on the West, that the latest of their actions is in fact frontier rectification and not a policy of expansionism?

SIR OLAF CAROE: I wish I knew China better. I spent 34 years in India and two days in China, but I think Sir Cyril Jones's questions are so pertinent that I feel he could probably give you a much better answer than I can. I still feel that what I tried to describe as a certain atavistic attitude to history is probably at the root of Chinese minds, and it may be good tactics at the moment to persuade the world, especially India, that this is only frontier rectification and that all that the Chinese really want is the chunk of Ladakh where their road is.

But I would not put it past them, when they have won the first round, to work for a resuscitation of all the shaded areas on the map—all the shaded areas together are about the size of England—that surely must be termed expansionism.

Mr. W. E. R. GURNEY: You told us that China may well be playing a diplomatic game in attacking India through Assam, and she might well be willing to recognize the McMahon Line in exchange for the chunk of Ladakh which includes Aksai Chin. Apart from that, you have also said that this is a much greater question, which it obviously is, and I would like to ask: If you get a settlement of the Kashmir dispute, would Field Marshal Ayub Khan's suggestion that Pakistan and India have a common defence policy for the Northern Frontier help things along? In that case medical supplies could go through Pakistan, and so on. Also the question arises whether this part of Ladakh is of very much use to India. The United Nations proposal is that there should be a plebiscite in Kashmir. If there was a plebiscite it is quite possible that the Ladakhis who, I gather, are ethnically Tibetans, Buddhist by religion and speak Tibetan, might very well elect almost unanimously—if they were allowed to make the choice—to go to Tibet, in which case Mr. Nehru would not have to give a portion of India away to China, but would make a virtue of self-determination.

Sir OLAF CAROE: I have never heard anyone else suggest that there should be a plebiscite in any part of Kashmir to allow any part of Kashmir to go out of the Sub-Continent altogether. It is quite a new idea, and I would have said it was an idea which neither India nor Pakistan would look at for a moment. If you will forgive me, I do not propose to get into a discussion on the Kashmir question or a settlement of it. I would like to put forward one constructive idea, if I may, on the frontiers generally which springs out of this premise that any assault on the perimeter of the Sub-Continent is a matter of equal interest to both States. That is that. If India could say that the frontiers on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line are as vital to India as they are to Pakistan, in fact vital to the security and survival of both States, and Pakistan in return could say that the McMahon Line is of equal importance to them as it is to India, then they could be as one absolutely on the sacrosanctity of the frontiers of the Sub-Continent. I believe that is an approach which would be really constructive.

Lieut.-General Sir THOMAS HUTTON: I have only two points to make, on one of which I feel rather strongly. I have met a few people—I am sure there are none of them here today—who have been very critical of India in regard to its policy in the past of non-alignment, neutrality or whatever you like to call it. They

have said almost, in so many words, "It serves them right!" I would ask if you meet any people like that to ask them to read certain memoirs which are now appearing in *The Times*, to visit, if they like, Grosvenor Square and see the 'Ban the Bomb' people, or else, if they are of my age, to cast their minds back to the peace campaign which was so fervent in this country between the wars. We have also gone through our period of neutrality and non-alignment and we paid the penalty, and we ought not be critical of other people with similar ideals.

Finally, I want to do my duty quickly and to pay a tribute—with which I am sure you will all agree—to our speaker's amazing knowledge of this subject. I do not think I could stand up and remember even one of those names, let alone numbers of them. He has made the whole thing extremely clear to us, he has shown that he has an encyclopedic knowledge of it, and I am sure we have enjoyed his talk today as much, if not more, than anything we have ever heard.

## **A Visit to India after the Chinese Invasion**

Mr. JOHN TILNEY, MP, TD, spoke at a joint meeting of the East India Association and the Royal Overseas League on Tuesday, 8th January, 1963, at Over-Seas House,

St. James's, s.w.1. The Rt. Hon. Lord SPENS, KBE, presided.

### DISCUSSION

Dr. BRAMLEY: You passed through Russia. Now all this is very serious not only for the West, but I think for Russia. Do you think that the Russian Government will acquiesce if the Chinese Government think it fit to do what they like to do? Do you not think that perhaps the great Comintern of Russia will help in the freedom of the world?

Mr. TILNEY: I wish I knew. But I am reminded that when I was in Moscow, when I was asking questions about China, the conversation was immediately turned to something else, and when I was in Peking and asking about Russia, again the conversation was immediately altered.

Dr. BRAMLEY: It seems extraordinary that the Indian Government did not have enough military intelligence to know what the Chinese were about to do, and they seek aid and arms at the last moment, when it is almost too late nearly. Why did they not fortify themselves a year before to be ready for this catastrophe?

Mr. TILNEY: I imagine that it is not all that easy to know what is going on in China and certainly up in Tibet. There had, of course, been the Tibetan refugees, but that was a little time ago, and that is the

great strength unfortunately of Communist tyranny; they stop people from finding out. I know in our Embassy in Peking, if anyone wanted to go anywhere—outside the great Wall, the Ming Tombs, Tienbin or more than about eight miles outside Peking—they had to give about three weeks or a month's notice as to where they wanted to go, so everyone is aware of exactly where they go. It is not all that easy. Whereas in India anyone can go wherever they like. It is one of the disadvantages of democracy.

Mr. RADCLIFF: I would like to ask Mr. Tilney how he thinks India could improve her public image in certain countries that feel that they have been victims of Indian military attack. For example how can India convince the Portuguese that she is a victim of military force and a friend in Rhodesia tells me that India has a very bad public image and also in Katanga. How can India improve her public image in those countries?

Mr. TILNEY: I would not like to comment on that. I think that there are many in India who may now regret what happened in Goa, but it is not for me to comment or even to give advice.

Mrs. ZINKIN: When you were in Delhi did you get the impression that the people in command, perhaps the President more than the other people, or the Defence Minister were considering the problems that

face India on two borders: the possible Pakistani aggression in Kashmir and that forces would therefore not be available for defence in Ladakh. How seriously were they looking at it?

Mr. TILNEY: I think they are well aware of that problem, and I think a lot of troops have been moved from the frontier south of Kashmir. Everyone is very well aware of the cost, in terms of military might and of actual economics, of what it means to be fighting on two fronts. The prizes of an agreement over Kashmir are very big indeed.

Dr. BRAMLEY: Do you think it a good idea to send arms to Pakistan now that they seem to be worried that only India is getting arms?

Mr. TILNEY: Surely what one wants really to do is eliminate the causes of friction between the two countries rather than to arm both, possibly against each other. That must be wrong. It is the causes of that friction that, I think, one wants to eliminate. But we have got to be awfully careful in giving advice. It is rather like interfering in a row between one's own family; they may turn ultimately on you. It really is not our job to interfere unless we are asked by both sides to do so. I remember in my first election, if I may tell a short story, that there were a number of spoilt votes. One of the voting papers had noughts for all three candidates,

and another one in my favour had not one cross but two crosses against my name, and underneath my name was "Love from Olga." Unfortunately, that was disallowed too. The crosses showed that she wanted to do something badly, but you have got to be very careful how you do it!

A MEMBER: Has Mr. Tilney any comments to make on the Colombo proposals, particularly with regard to Mrs. Bandaranaike's mission in relation to the Chinese and Indian agreement. And secondly would he like to make any comments on the historical background of the McMahon Line which does give a certain measure of support to perhaps the Chinese case or perhaps more a matter of argument than sometimes thought.

Mr. TILNEY: In front of this audience, who must know far more about the McMahon Line than I do, I really do hesitate to make any comment on the second part. As regards Mrs. Bandaranaike's mission and the proposals, these are not really yet known, and so one cannot make a comment on them.

Sir OLAF CAROE: I think we are agreed that we have had an extraordinary deep and far reaching talk from Mr. John Tilney. When I saw the picture of him and that he was going out to India, I said to my wife: "Good Lord! John Tilney will have a time, and he will have an awful lot of homework to do." It is fright-

fully difficult to even understand the beginnings of these lines, but I think that we are all agreed that we have heard reason to believe and think that this is far more than a border dispute. It is a tremendous thing, it is probably the biggest thing that has happened since 1950, this rivalry between India and China and whether, as Mr. Tilney said, India and indeed the sub-Continent can remain in the free world is really the issue. And I think that we all rise to the challenge of his last remarks: That this is a matter which demands statesmanship of the very highest order on the parts of everybody, in India, Pakistan, Gt. Britain in the United States and elsewhere. I think we will also agree that he has shown us the line to statesmanship.

## **Crisis in South Asia**

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS, CIE. addressed a joint-meeting of the East India Association, Pakistan Society, and the Royal Over-Seas League at Over-Seas House, St. James's, s.w.1, on Tuesday, 22nd January, 1963.

Sir JOHN WOODHEAD presided and introducing the speaker said: Sir Percival Griffiths is well known to you all and no introduction by me is necessary, but I would like to say one thing that this his last visit to India was the forty-eighth visit he has made to India to the sub-Continent since Independence: so

he should know something about India and Pakistan should he not? And Sir Percival I am rather glad to be in the Chair today because it will be the last occasion in which I shall be able to keep you in order. I was up to the 1st of January this year President of the India, Pakistan, Burma Association and Sir Percival has succeeded me, so I shall be able to keep him in order today, but I shall not be able to keep him in order in future; but Sir Percival's knowledge of India and Pakistan is quite astounding. He went out to India, to the sub-Continent in October last year and was there until the end of December. He visited many parts of India and Pakistan. He went up to the Assam and saw the tea garden areas, and I am sure he will be able to give us a most interesting account of what happened in India during those two months. When he went out I do not suppose that he ever expected that there would be a crisis such as has happened—he arrived out there in October, but soon after he got there of course the invasion of India by China took place and he spent a very active time between India and Pakistan.

You know Sir Percival well enough, I am sure he will give you a most lucid account of what has happened.

#### DISCUSSION

Mrs. ZINKIN: How much would the Third Five Year Plan have to be cut?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: I am afraid I cannot even guess that yet because I do not know the starting point. I have no idea what the Budget of defence would have to be for India until the strategists, or whatever the right word is, have worked out what they are going to need in the way of defence one does not know where to begin to start guessing about that; you will get perhaps a better idea in a few months time. I am sorry I cannot give an intelligent answer at the moment.

Mr. ZAMAN: You have said that China has already achieved its objective and that is why she stopped the war. Do you think that in view of this situation during the next Spring there will be no war?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: I said that China had achieved her immediate objective. I have very little doubt that China's long term objective is to be the boss of Asia, but there may be many things to be done in the process of becoming that before a massive attack on India—she may find it necessary to get a position in Burma, she may find it necessary to occupy many parts of South Asia before she is ready to try any real crossing of swords with India. Well now if I were China that would be my line, but I am not China and I do not know. If you make me guess I would guess that there will not be a fresh attack in the Spring because I do not see what China has to gain by it yet,

but that is a very wild guess and I may have to confess to you next year that I was wrong. My guess would be no, not next Spring.

Mr. ISLAM: Does the Speaker think that the West should now bring more pressure to bear on India so that the negotiations will not fail?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: Well, I would disapprove of pressure being brought to bear on India and not on Pakistan, or on Pakistan and not on India. The job of the West is to say to both countries "You have jolly well got to find a settlement."

Mr. H. A. MEDD: There was one thing that Sir Percival said that surprised me and I think may have surprised several other people and that was that in the Government of India as organized at present the fifteen or sixteen people who were extremely good at their own individual jobs, but they were not under any unitary rule from anybody. Now we have always been given to understand that is for some years that if ever there was a Prime Minister who has led pre-eminently that country it was Mr. Nehru, it seems then that this failure if it is a failure being evident does it date from before the time when you said that his reputation possibly suffered a setback due to the Chinese business or was it evident before that?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: It was not very evident before that Sir, it began to be evident really when the China thing began to be the dominant factor, and I suspect that there are perhaps two reasons for it. One is that Mr. Nehru all his life has striven for peace with China and has had to see the collapse of his foreign policy. That by itself must have been a very undermining factor for him, and on top of that I think that it is over and over again the case in international affairs that the man who is pretty good at directing people in peace has not got quite the militant drive for directing them in war; I doubt whether Mr. Nehru could ever make a great war leader, could take quick decisions about the kind of thing that have to be decided in times of war.

Mr. BRANDER: Would Sir Percival tell us something about that quarrel between Pakistan and Afghanistan, whether they settled it in any way because their trade was altogether stopped so perhaps they have come to some practical decision to let it go on again; it was stopping all the imports and exports.

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: No, there has been no settlement so the quarrel continues and in a general way the embargo continues; there have been certain exceptions made with regard to cargoes of particular kinds, but there is no general resumption of trade there yet at all and feeling is still quite bad.

Mr. A. REID: Does Sir Percival think that the proposals that Mrs. Banderanaike has brought to Delhi recently will succeed?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: May we put it this way. If I were India I don't think I would be very unhappy about them. They differ from what India had in mind in that they would not allow India to occupy the areas from which the Chinese had withdrawn. I think that if I were India I would say that does not really matter very much, that the areas are of no importance to anybody at all and what really matters to India is to buy time, and personally if I were the Prime Minister of India I would not be too unhappy about accepting them because that would give me time to build up my defences. What China's reaction will be I have no idea at all, but I would not be worried about accepting them if I were the Prime Minister of India—I am very glad I am not!

Lady STOKES: Could Sir Percival tell us why India was so ill prepared for this Chinese invasion?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: Well, I think there were several reasons for it. I do not think that until a relatively short time ago anybody took the Chinese danger seriously. Mr. Krishna Menon has been the scapegoat and I think perhaps rightly so, but in the same way in this country when we were not prepared either in the first or second war we had to

find scapegoats. Really the fault here was the lack of will on the part of the people to be ready, and I think the same thing was true in India. That people were not willing to face up to the fact that there might in fact be a war. For one thing that many people in India had an entirely false idea of the protection afforded by the great Himalayan barrier. I remember talking to a very senior official about that as far back as 1951 or 1952 and telling him some of my anxieties and he brushed them all aside and said the Himalayas were a tremendous barrier, and no army could really operate across it. Well, of course, it is nonsense when you have seen thousands of mule men—I have said this in this room before—when you have seen thousands of mule men come down over those hills year by year you realize that where mule men can come armies can come too. A false idea of security was built up. Secondly, there is no doubt at all that Mr. Krishna Menon was to a great extent responsible by his political promotions in the Army, by his failure to provide the necessary equipment—it is a shocking thing that the Indian Army was sent to fight in those hills with no warm clothing of any kind at all. There were terrible failures of preparation for which you must blame entirely Mr. Krishna Menon; I suppose that Mr. Nehru must take some of the blame too, because he for a long time refused to recognize that China might be belicose in her

intentions so you have to share the blame I think between Mr. Nehru, Mr. Krishna Menon and the public, just as we in this country had to take a great share of the blame for not being prepared for the last two wars.

Mr. ZAMAN: Do you not agree Sir Percival that they were prepared for the war. That they were prepared and were arming, but they thought that the fighting would be in the plains against some country in the plains—not China?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: I would answer that by saying that I think if they had not been hypnotized by these fallacies and these false ideas they could not have failed to see that their fighting would have to be in the hills. China was obviously the enemy, and fighting China was going to be very, very largely in the hills, and I think they were blind just as we were blind in this country.

Mr. ALAM: Did India take advantage of border clashes to cover up internal troubles?

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: With very great respect sir, I think that that is quite an unrealistic idea. I think to suggest that India can have arranged that the Chinese could have been in a position where they could have wiped out the North Indian tea industry, they could have wiped out Digboi, they could have taken away some of the biggest sources of India's wealth, I think it

is with very great respect utterly and completely unrealistic.

Mr. ALAM: I suggest the whole took place at a time when, if you go back, it was at such a time that a large scale invasion was impossible. It was also at a time when the question of the United Nations was coming up, so in that respect, keeping in view, the question of military aid and keeping in view that they would have more aid for the Third Five Year Plan the whole incident was bolstered up to make it an international issue.

Sir PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS: I am sorry but I can only repeat that that in my judgment is quite fantastic. A large scale military invasion at that time was impossible, but a complete annexation of Assam was a very, very practicable possibility indeed. And do you really seriously think that India would assist her Third Five Year Plan by losing the whole of her North Indian tea industry, by losing her Digboi oil, by losing some of the most fertile land in the country? With very great respect sir, I think that you are being led astray by your feelings into an error of judgment.

Sir CYRIL JONES: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is just as unnecessary to propose a vote of thanks to Sir Percival Griffiths for his address as it is for our Chairman to introduce him to this audience, nonetheless it is a very pleasant

duty that falls to me because as you all know there is no person or very few people who by knowledge, experience access to people that matter out in South East Asia who can speak with a greater breadth of experience and authority than Sir Percival Griffiths. I think the East India Association and the Pakistan Society are extremely for-

tunate in having the benefit of Sir Percival's periodical addresses to us and the interest that they arouse is evident every time he comes by the size of the audience who comes to hear him. It is a very great pleasure for me to propose a hearty vote of thanks to Sir Percival for his most interesting, penetrating and informative address to us.

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## **The Objects of the East India Association**

(INDIA PAKISTAN AND BURMA)

IN 1866, eight years after the assumption of the government of India by the Crown, the East India Association was formed with the object of "the promotion of the public interest and welfare of the inhabitants of India generally." This object was steadfastly pursued during the ensuing eighty-one years. The Independence of India and Pakistan attained in 1947, while modifying the original conception, has increased the need for strengthening the bonds of friendship and the importance of mutual understanding between the people of Britain and the inhabitants of the countries formerly comprising the India Empire—namely, India, Pakistan, and Burma. The Association therefore is continuing its work, with the assistance of all those who are interested in the welfare and progress of these countries, by the methods which have proved so helpful in the past, namely:

1. By lectures on current questions affecting those countries and publication of the same.
2. By providing opportunities for the free discussion of important questions affecting India, Pakistan, and Burma.
3. By promoting friendly contact between the peoples of these countries and of Britain through the medium of social and other gatherings.
4. Generally by the promulgation of reliable information regarding the countries named.

The Association is essentially non-official in character and has no connexion with any political party. It seeks to provide an open platform for the consideration of current problems relating to India, Pakistan, and Burma. It welcomes as members all those who are interested in their welfare and progress.

Papers are read and discussed throughout the year, except in the months of August and September. Members are entitled to invite friends to these meetings.