Chapter-IV

The Simla Conference and its Impact on the Indian Political Scene.
Soon after assuming office, the new Viceroy, General Viscount Wavell considered the viability to initiate a political dialogue to prepare India for self-rule after the war. His efforts were mainly directed to set up an interim government on the lines of Cripps proposal constituting of different party leaders. He wanted an Indianised executive council with British Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy retaining the special powers. The purpose of the formation of the executive council was to draw India's constitution and negotiate treaty with the British government for the transfer of power.  

Wavell was convinced that the formation of the coalition government at the centre could not be possible without the participation of both Muslim League and the Congress. Wavell had reasons to be optimistic because many national leaders showed their willingness about the formation of a constituent assembly. When Viceroy held consultation with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, he found the Muslim League's sole spokesman inclined to participate in the proposed assembly.  

Wavell thought that the interim government should consist of equal number of Caste Hindus and Muslims with a representative each from the schedule caste and the Sikh community along with with the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief.

266 Draft by Wavell to Amery LPO&J \6\108\ October 2, 1944, Transfer of Power Series vol 5,  

267 Note by Wavell after conversation with Jinnah, Political series, Wavell papers. April-July 1944.
The next step was to consider the best possible means to restore popular government in all the British administered provinces in the country.\textsuperscript{268}

When efforts were being made to constitute a provisional government at the centre, a new thaw was attempted by two prominent parties members to rapprochement between Muslim League and Congress.

The seasoned Congress leader, Bllabh Bhai Desai discussed a scheme with Liaquat Ali Khan, the right hand of MA Jinnah to form an interim government during the war. Desai hoped that a successful coalition with the Muslim League at the centre and similar arrangement in the provinces would induce the latter to give up the idea of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{269}

The term of the pact illustrated, that Congress and the Muslim League would share power in the ratio of 40:40 per cent seats, while other 20 per cent would be reserved for rest of the minorities. The coalition government was to work under the Government of India Act of 1935 with the provision that Viceroy would not use his power of veto to block any legislation passed by the interim government.\textsuperscript{270}

\textsuperscript{268} Draft by Wavell to Amery LPO&J \textbackslash{6\textbackslash{}108\textbackslash{}4} October 2, 1944, Transfer of Power Series vol 5.

\textsuperscript{269} Home Secretary Mudie wrote to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy Evan Jenkins about the pact. Wavell papers, political series, April 1944-January 1945.

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid
It was believed that after the interim government had taken office, a long term settlement at the centre would be worked out between both the parties and till then no elections would be held, either at the centre or in the provinces. It was believed that once such coalition government starts functioning the dissenting voice like Pakistan would gradually fade away.

Viceroy considered, Liaquat- Desai proposal to be moderate and observed that the term of the parleys was exactly what HMG had been striving since the promulgation of government of India Act of 1935. Wavell requested the war cabinet not to delay in giving consent to the proposed rapprochement since the initiative had come from the two prominent Indian parties.  

Later, after going some distance, both Gandhi and Jinnah who had given green signal to the parleys withdrew their approval. Wavell observed that, Desai being such an experienced politician would not have gone ahead without the backing of Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Same was the case of his counterpart Liaquat Ali Khan.  

Viceroy could discern that both the leaders must be pressurised from the party’s high command, otherwise they would not have turned back

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271 Wavell to war Prime Minister Churchill (extract) private correspondence, Wavell papers Viceroy House, New Delhi April- July 1945.
272 Wavell to Amery \PO&J\8\521\ India office, December 7, 1944.
on their own promises. After meeting Desai, Wavell concluded that he was vague about Congress readiness to give Muslim League equal seats in the interim government. Later, Liaquat Ali Khan also denied his conversation with Desai, but privately confessed that he was obliged to do as a matter of political expediency.273

This was not a happy news for the Viceroy and he concluded that both Gandhi and Jinnah were playing their usual slippery game. The Secretary of State LS Amery observed that both Desai and Liaquat were unnecessarily being reduced to a "stalking horse."274

After a period of lull, the idea of provisional government was once again talked about in the Viceroy House at New Delhi. Viceroy pointed out that the decision taken by the British parliament about demobilization of the armed forces, post-war development, foreign trade and foreign relations would have a permanent effect on the future the British colonies. These decision could not be evaded and had to be taken by the government in power irrespective of the parties ideologies in two to three years. In that case, it was the responsibility of the Viceroy to form a reasonable council that would see India through the remaining period of

273 Wavell to Amery Tel L\PO&J\8\521\ October 23, 1944. Wavell papers, Viceroy House, New Delhi.
274 Amery to Wavell L\PO&J\8\521\ October 1944, Transfer of Power Series Vol 5.
war and prepare it to don the mantle of HMG government, if it wishes relinquish power. 275

The newly formed committee suggested modification to the initial Wavell's plan. It proposed more democratic backing to the executive council and asked the consent of Indian representatives for the retention of Viceroy's power to override the executive council. 276

At the outset Viceroy did not felt desirable to release the detained legislatures, even if the proposed members to the executive council were be chosen from the panel of provincial and central legislatures. About second suggestion, Wavell observed that it was likely that the representatives of the Indian political parties would make it difficult for the Viceroy to over ride the executive council. Therefore Viceory did not want change in power equation to avoid controversy. He was of the opinion that it would alienate Muslims and other minorities who look upon the post of Viceroy as a protector of their interest.

Wavell, therefore thought to tread cautiously in

275 Wavell to Amery Private and Secret LPO&J\10\22\ File no 22, Wavell Papers, July to December 1944, Viceroy House New Delhi.
276 LS Amery proposed modification in two important ways, retention of Viceroy's power and more democratic structure to the executive council, Brief of LS Amery to the Governors MSS\EURF\File\7\14, January 1945:
constituting the executive council which would prepare India for the home rule. 277

it was after some reluctance that white Hall gave consent to Wavell's request to hold a conference of political leaders in the summer capital at Simla. After the sanction, Wavell appealed to the Indian political leaders through a broadcast to take part in the new executive council which would be representative in character and prepare India for self-rule. 278

Wavell observed that he would go ahead with his proposed plan with Gandhi- Jinnah and others agreeing to the provisional government even if it meant loss of efficiency in administration by bringing new men at this juncture. Viceroy was convinced that HMG objective at this stage should be to rope in all the educated persons who were sick and tired of the present stalemate. 279

Wavell could discern, if Jinnah would not get a provisional government to his liking, he was likely to put a ban on the Muslim League joining the conference as he did in March 1941, for National Defence Council. Jinnah would insist for 50-50 per cent Congress-Muslin League composition in the council and would also object to the power resting with the central legislature.

277 Wavell to Amery LPO&J 8\521\ October 23, 1944, Wavell papers, Viceroy House, New Delhi.
278 Statement made by Wavell LPO&J\8\521\ Wavell papers April - December 1944, Viceroy House, New Delhi
279 Ibid.
At the same time Congress may also refuse to attend the conference till the provision of equal number of caste Hindus and Muslims was not removed. Gandhi would only agree on condition that the executive council was only an interim arrangement.

Wavell saw no reason why Hindus selection should come from the Congress and Muslims only from the Muslim League. However, he admitted that the communal composition was unavoidable and had to be initiated in consultation with the political leaders. He was convinced that no government was possible unless there was an agreement between Congress and the Muslim League.  

Wavell spelled out that except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-chief, the council would predominantly be Indian in character. It was for the first time home, finance and foreign affairs portfolios would rest with the Indian hands. The council would continue to wage war against Japan and tackle the post-war development till a permanent constitution was agreed upon.  

Viceroy thought that the executive council seat should constitute of 5:5:3 members. One would be a caste Hindu, two Muslims, one each of the two would either belong to the Congress or the Muslim League. Out of the rest three, one would be from the Sikh community and one or possibly two from the schedule caste. The viceroy's veto was to be retained in case of an arbitration.  

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280 Brief made by Wavell about the composition of the executive council LPO&J \8\522\ File no 19\Wavell papers, January - July 1945.
281 ibid.
282 ibid.
Congress showed its inclination to attend the conference, provided the arrangement of communal parity was for an interim period. Congress maintained that the principal of parity was an evil and could not be extended to the provinces. Congress also showed its reservation on the right of the Muslim League to nominate all the Muslim members and wanted to send religious and caste representatives from its own ranks. 283

Wavell reiterated the principal of religious parity to hold true but at the same time clarified that Muslims and schedule caste members of the Congress would also be entertained. 284

On the contrary, Jinnah recognised the complexities of framing a constitution and wanted to have a complete grip on the communal parity in the executive council. Jinnah feared that in case of Congress and other minorities ganging-up, they would out vote Muslims, Viceroy veto then would be redundant. Therefore, he did not agree to the composition of common central government and maintained that it should be preceded by the acceptance of Pakistan. 285

283 Confidential note pertaining instruction to the Congressmen attending the Simla conference, AICC file no 41, undated note titled Memorandum 1945.
284 Wavell to Amery LPO&J\ 8\520\ File no 23\ Viceroy House, New Delhi, April 3, 1945.
285 Note by Wavell after interview with Jinnah; See important interviews Wavell Papers July-December 1944.
At this juncture, Wavell tried to assure Jinnah that Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief would ensure full justice to the Muslims. He pointed out the necessity of the formation of a provisional government to carry India through the remaining period of the war and the critical years that was to follow. The best course for the Indian parties would be shelve the communal acrimony and work together without fear of any one's domination, felt the Viceroy. 286

Jinnah told Wavell that Muslim League had always been ready to take part in any such government. He talked about the coalition controversy in 1937 and added that in 1938-39, not more than one occasion he had long discussion with Gandhi and Nehru. He persuaded them to accept the office of HMG but they completely refused. He reasoned why Muslim League rejected the Cripps offer was because it proposed constitutional settlement after the war. 287

Jinnah wanted communal settlement in the first instance because, it would have disastrous effect on the Indian Muslims later. Jinnah dwelled at length to the Viceroy about Congress designs to usurp power through Quit-India at the time when HMG was engaged in the battle of existence. He also mentioned about his responses to the Rajgopalachari's proposal and the long drawn-out

286 Note by Wavell after interview with Jinnah; See important interviews Wavell Papers, July-December 1944.
287 Ibid.

148
conversation with Gandhi. He cited the example of Bllabh Bhai Desai's proposal and its subsequent denial by the Congress leaders. What Jinnah actually pleaded with conviction was the recognition of Pakistan as necessity prior to the formation of any such interim government. 288

Wavell tried to pacify Jinnah by arguing that whenever Hindus and Muslims had worked together for common purpose as in defence or in organising relief for natural disaster, communal question had never surfaced. He cited the example of Punjab where for seven years a coalition government had successfully functioned to address the common problems of the state. Viceroy wondered why the same could not be experimented at the centre and in other parts of the country. He requested Jinnah to step in the executive council in the present framework and render his valuable help in drafting the constitution of the country. 289

Despite all practical difficulties, Viceroy went ahead in his endeavor to constitute the executive council at Simla. Wavell clarified that Gandhi and Jinnah would be given the option to nominate their substitute, if they were not willing to attend the conference themselves and same would be asked to the representatives of the other parties. Viceroy pledged to start with a small

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288 See also Jinnah's press interview on January 22 1945, Indian Annual Register vol 2.
289 Note by Wavell after interview with Jinnah; See important interviews Wavell Papers, July-December 1944.
number but, actual composition was left for the future negotiations. The task of the executive council would be to carry on governance of India till the new constitution comes into force. Viceroy added that this would set an example to install popular government in the provinces. 290

On 29 th June 1945, Viceroy opened the Simla conference to paye the way for settlement of the communal problem. The central issue at Simla was the method of selecting new members of the executive council. In the light of Jinnah's claim, Wavell circulated a statement divided into two parts. Part A was for settlement between the parties and the Viceroy. This entailed the parties to set out the selection of men of ability to the council with all portfolios except that of Commander-in-Chief. Part B of the statement said that if all the parties agreed to part A, they would then decide the strength and the composition of the new executive council. They also had to agree to the method by which panel of names would be submitted to the Viceroy to enable him to make his recommendation to the British Government. 291

Wavell could discern that there were two issues that would come in the way of smooth functioning. First, whether the selection should be on parties or community basis, second was the question

290 Minutes about the meeting at Simla, Wavell Papers, LPO&J\8\524\File no 56\ Viceroy House New Delhi. January- July 1945.
291 Ibid.
of communal parity being maintained. He felt if the council consists of 16 members including the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, then there would be five members each from Hindu and Muslim community, four from other minority community. 292

The Secretary of state LS Amery reacting to this proposal said that this would be unfair to other minorities and may be rejected by the depressed class. On the contrary the major communities would resist four seats given to other minorities. Amery suggested for a council of 15, where five members each, should belong to the two major communities and three to other minority community plus the viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief. The other method could be six - six members each in the ratio of 40-40-20, by eliminating a portfolio. Amery pointed out to the hiccups to the Viceroy as depressed class demand three seats and suggested to be given two seats to be placated. 293

Secretary apprehended that Gandhi would object to the term caste-Hindus which may fore shadow any separate representation for the depressed class. So he suggested community as a basis to be more appropriate, then accepting the principle of parity between the parties. 294

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292 Wavell to Amery LPO&J\8\524\ Wavell Papers, June 29 1945,

293 Confidential note by LS Amery to Wavell, Private and Secret LPO&J\10\22\ File no 22, Viceroy Lodge Simla July 2 1945.

294 Ibid.
The Secretary of state LS Amery suggested that equality of caste Hindus and Muslims could only be achieved by allowing Congress to nominate its representatives. Secretary observed that Congress leaders were bound to object anything which would dub them as a Hindu party. 295

In a private interview, Amery proposed that Gandhi would only want Congress to participate in the executive council on the basis of political parity and not on communal basis. In that case Gandhi would deny the existence of depressed class in Ambedkar's party and would like to nominate a Muslim from its own rank to present secular image.

On the contrary Amery felt, Jinnah would insist on parity and press that all the Muslim members should belong to the Muslim League. He would object to the inclusion of minorities other than Muslims to be nominated by the Congress. Amery in the end suggested that the council should include adequate number of caste Hindus and Muslims. 296

Wavell tried to convince Gandhi that the proposal did not brand Congress as a communal organisation and there was no other way to go by then to have parity between Hindus and Muslims. 297

295 Confidential note by LS Amery to Wavell, Private and Secret LPO&J\8\572\ File no 22, Viceroy Lodge Simla July 2 1945.
296 Ibid.
297 Wavell's conversation with Gandhi, See important interviews Wavell Papers, January - July 1945.
in wake of Congress insistence on inclusion of a Muslim name from its rank and obvious objection by the Muslim League, Wavell resolved the problem by proposing to select a non-League, non-Congress Muslim in the executive council. He felt the necessity to include a Punjabi Muslim without party affiliation, some one like Firoz Khan Noon. 298

In the end Wavell was faced with the problem of selecting other Muslims members. Jinnah insisted that all the members in the council should belong to the Muslim League. He suggested a council of 14, with 5 Hindus 5 Muslims, a Sikh and a Schedule Caste representative. Jinnah pleaded that this was the only council where Muslims could not be outvoted. 299

Wavell reacted by saying, "Jinnah was assuming that every vote would be taken on communal lines and if that was the spirit with which Muslim League was entering into the council then the whole purpose was defeated." 300

In his reply Jinnah referred about August offer and the assurances made through Cripps proposal. He also dwelled at length on the composition of the Unionist party in Punjab and his own reception

\[\text{\textsuperscript{298}}\text{ Wavell to Amery LPO&J \textbackslash 8\textbackslash 524\ File no 29\ wavell Papers Viceroy lodge Simla July 28,1945.\]  
\[\text{\textsuperscript{299}}\text{ Jinnah to Wavell,Political Series July 1945, See also Jinnah's press interview in July 1945, Indian Annual Register vol 2.}\]  
\[\text{\textsuperscript{300}}\text{ opcit}\]
in the state during the journey back from Kashmir. What he wanted to impress upon the Viceroy that he commanded the allegiance of entire Muslims in the country. 301

On the other hand, Congress wanted to nominate two Muslims. It was opposed the parity principal and objected to the idea of nomination of all the Muslim members from the Muslim League. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was party's president during the war days said, Congress would not like to be a party to anything how temporary may be, that would prejudice its secular image. He resisted Congress being dubbed as caste Hindu organisation and wanted his party to be recognised as non-communal body. 302

Jinnah at this juncture retorted that Muslim League and Congress had entirely different angle of vision. the idea of Pakistan and united India were incompatible. He insisted that British government should give Muslims the status of equality not only vis-à-vis the Congress but against all the communities in the interim government. He pleaded that special safeguards for the Muslims could only be possible if they had the exclusive right of selecting all Muslim members to the proposed council. 303

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301 See also Jinnah's press interview in July 1945, Indian Annual Register vol 2.
302 Minutes of meeting with the Viceroy at the Simla conference, see MAK Azad's interview with the Viceroy on July 22 1945.
303 Ibid, meeting with the Jinnah
Wavell was convinced about the irrationality in Jinnah's arguments. He wanted other members of the conference to suggest a suitable panel of Muslim candidates, independent of Muslim League. He felt advantageous to select representatives of less bigoted elements from Unionist party or Military class with genuine public record them from Muslim League.

Viceroy was aware that Jinnah may reject such selection and Congress would press upon to go ahead without Muslim League. However, he was convinced that even a provisional council without Muslim Leagues would not work. Wavell wished to have a list of names which could satisfy all the parties and was anxious to give fair deal to all the parties, but felt that none should accept to have things on their own way.  

Reports from the provinces suggest that Jinnah was under heavy pressure from his own party men to agree to some working principle. Assam premier Saddullah was dependent on the Congress good will and did not want the Conference to breakdown.

Bengal Governor, Casey wanted to impress premier Khawaja Nazimuddin that Wavell's proposal would not prejudice Pakistan or any other settlement. He said that Viceroy's veto would take

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304 Wavell to Amery, Private and Secret LPO&J\10\22\ Viceroy Lodge 22 July 1945.
care of the Muslims interest. Nazimuddin therefore, was keen to have a settlement at the centre for stable government in Bengal with Congress support.  

In NWFP, over fifty per cent of educated Muslims did not thought prudent that Jinnah had the right to nominate all Muslim members from the Muslim League. In Punjab, some Muslim League members were keen to have an early League- Congress settlement at the centre.  

From Sindh Governor Dow reported Muslim League's hold in the province to be very tenuous and Hidayatullah required little persuasion to break away.  

A detailed report from the provinces suggest that there was almost an unanimity in reaching some sort of Congress - Muslim League agreement at the centre. Though there were mixed reports for the formation of provincial ministries in the British administrated states but there was more or less consensus to hold the general elections to know the party's strength, in case of a stalemate.  

Bihar, Governor, T. Rutherford wrote to Viceroy that before making any further move in fixing the strength and composition of the new council, the members other than Muslims and

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306 Governor of Bengal Casey to Viceory Wavell Political Series (secret) LPO&J 5\138 Government House Calcutta July 1945, Fortnightly Reports, IOL, London.
307 Ibid, Governor Cunningham from Peshawar NWFP.
308 Ibid, Governor Dow from Karachi, Sindh.

156
caste Hindus should be selected. Governor suggested that Jinnah might be more reasonable when convinced that in principle parity would not be nullified by the Congress. His next suggestion was to offer one seat less to both Muslim League and the Congress. Governor observed that, Viceroy acting as an arbitrator should nominate one Muslim and Hindu of his own choice. He added that if that was refused then Viceroy should make a temporary choice of a Muslim member.  

Assam Governor, Clow's reaction was on similar lines. He suggested that in case the offer was not accepted, Viceroy should nominate specified number of neutral candidates in the council. Governor quipped that in case of a disagreement, HMG may not rule out replacement of non-Muslim councillors by Congressmen but in the end confessed that the council without Muslim League would not work.  

Governor Levi's reaction from Orissa was, in case Muslim League declines to cooperate in forming the executive council, the only course for the HMG should be to maintain the status-quo. Governor felt that Congress and Muslim League
constitute two major political parties and an executive council constituting non-Muslim League members would not work. He warned that British government should not be a party to precipitate any communal crisis in India.\(^{311}\)

Madras Governor of A. Hope advised that, if Muslim League declined to cooperate, Viceroy should go ahead in constituting the new executive council comprising only of Congress members. The Governor realised the difficulty that would arise in such a case but felt that viceroy's veto would keep the dissenting element under check. Governor Hope advised that public opinion would be better placated if HMG seriously coordinate rather then listen to Congress allegation that "we offered to cooperate but refused because Viceroy succumbed to Jinnah's black-mail." Governor reported, in Madras, Muslim League had little influence and political reaction would be less vociferous here then north India.\(^{312}\)

Governor Cunningham reported from North West Frontier Provinces that more than half of the educated public opinion did not subscribe to the

\(^{311}\) Governor of Orissa Levis to Viceory Wavell Political Series(Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Bhulaswar, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.

\(^{312}\) Governor of Madras, A Hope, Political Series(Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Madras, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.
view that Muslim League had the right to nominate all Muslims to the executive council. They earnestly desire Congress-Muslim League settlement and would be satisfied with the induction of well known public figures even though they were not from the Muslim League. 313

Cunningham felt that if Jinnah put his foot down provincial Muslims would do intensive propaganda against the denial of Muslim rights. Governor further added, if HMG countered Muslim League's propaganda and allayed Muslims fear of injustice, then he may wean away public opinion to his favour. Cunningham briefed that since premier Aurangzeb was discredited and along with him the Muslim League, there would be no serious trouble, if HMG challenged Muslim League at this stage in NWFP. 314

From Sindh Governor Dow reported that if Jinnah continued to remain intransigent Viceroy should go ahead to form the executive council sans Muslim League. Governor briefed that in Sindh Jinnah's claim of success in the by-elections did not hold true, in one of the recent election Muslim League candidate withdrew its nomination to avoid certain defeat and in other its unofficially

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313 Cunningham Governor of NWFP, Political Series(Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Peshawar, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.

314 Ibid.
supported candidate was actually defeated. 315

Governor Glancy from Punjab wrote to the Viceroy that in the light of Muslim Leagues meager hold over the province, Jinnah's claim to nominate all Muslims appears preposterous. Here recently Unionist party had defeated a Muslim League candidate in the constituency of Dera Gazi Khan. "If he was given three out five Muslim seats, he should count himself fortunate indeed." Governor reported that there was widespread feeling that, if Jinnah insists on pressing further, the solidarity of Muslim League would greatly be shaken in Punjab. Glancy informed, Jinnah was evidently nervous and approached Unionist through various agents but all his advances were seriously rebuffed. 316

When Glancy sought Khaizar Hayat view, the Premier said that there always had been a Punjabi Muslim in the executive council since 1919 and its denial would amount to handing over power to the enemies. Governor believed that Jinnah would perhaps accept some one who was a Punjabi

315 Governor of Sindh H. Dow to Wavell Political Series (Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Karachi, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.

316 Governor of Punjab B. Glancy to Wavell Political Series (Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Lahore, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.
Muslim and not a Punjabi unionist. In that case Firoz Khan Noon would be the most suitable choice.\textsuperscript{117}

Glancy saw full justification in including a Punjabi Muslim who would neither belong to Congress or the Muslim League. He suggested modification in the council by excluding the post of Commander -in- Chief and its replacement by a Punjabi Muslim and induction of a a suitable neutral caste -Hindu. The substitution of Muslim League members would dilute the bogey of Pakistan, felt the Governor.

Glancy wrote that Congress would take serious objection if Muslim nominees were rejected from its rank. On the other hand, due to Jinnah's continued intransigence, any attempt to form the executive council without Muslim League representatives would not take off. Every Muslim member whether of Unionist or Congress, would be subjected to continued vilification from the Muslim League press.\textsuperscript{118}

Glancy added that if Jinnah continued to adhere to his fundamental demand it was necessary to discuss the names of the Muslim members with him.

\textsuperscript{117} Note by Wavell on Khizar -Glancy negotiation in Penderal Moon autobiography on Wavell ;The Viceory Journal ( revised edition published from Delhi in 1968)pp144.

\textsuperscript{118} Governor of Punjab B.Glancy to Wavell Political Series(Secret)LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Lahore, July1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.
In case of no agreement, Jinnah's intransigence should be made public. Glancy quipped that at the moment Jinnah projects himself as an "Islamic Hero" and it was high time that hollowness of his position be exposed.

Governor summarised that it would be better to suspend the conference for a while because e Jinnah would be forced to be reasonable due public pressur after a suitable interval.319

From Bengal Governor Casey reported that people like Khawaja Nazimuddin do not want the conference to breakdown and would be happy to see Congress -Muslim League settlement at the centre. Casey wrote that in wake of Muslim Leagues intransigence, any constructive move should not be thwarted. However he confessed that an executive council without Muslim League would not be a viable proposition. Bengali Muslims would stand firmly behind Jinnah in resisting any proposal to nominate Congress Muslim out of Muslim quota.320

Casey suggested some modification to the executive council by seeking parity between non-

319 Governor of Punjab B. Glancy to Wavell Political Series(Secret)LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Lahore, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.

320 Governor of Bengal Casey to Wavell Political Series(Secret)LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Calcutta, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.
League Muslim and the schedule caste. In that case Congress would be forced to choose between nomination of schedule caste or a Muslim from its rank but not both. Casey suggested the name of Maharajah of Burdwan as a neutral caste Hindu. This modified council would make Congress, Muslim League and the schedule caste to soften their stand.  

There were conflicting reports for the formation of provincial ministry. From Sindh, Governor Dow briefed that there would be no difficulty in running a non-Muslim League coalition ministry in the province since Jinnah's hold over the Muslim League was very tenuous. Here premier Hidaytulah require little persuasion to break away from the Muslim League. Glancy reported that a Congress-League ministry as a substitute to the Unionist would lead to chaos in Punjab. He observed that it would disastrous if a Punjabi Muslim independent of Muslim League was not included in the council.  

From Bombay, Governor Collivile reported that there was no risk in forming government without

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321 Governor of Bengal Casey to Wavell Political Series(Secret)LPO&J5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Calcutta, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.

322 See the Fortnightly reports from Sindh and Punjab. opcit 315 & 319.
the participation of Muslim League. He thought about the possibility to collect Congressmen, schedule caste and Muslims who neither belonged to Congress or Muslim League to establish a ministry here. Such ministry would be interpreted as another example of HMG honesty of purpose to hand over power to the natives. 323

Collvile reported that there was fairly strong opinion that Viceroy should go ahead to form the government in case Jinnah did not acquiesce. Though Muslim members would inspire limited confidence among the Muslims, reported Bombay Governor but this would help the government to function in a systematic way. Such government would not be under the pressure from Muslim League and Jinnah would be forced to come inside the ministry or give explanation to his supporters. 324

However, in United Provinces the situation was slightly different. Governor Hallet, reported the blame of the failure of negotiation at Simla on HMG would be a lesser evil, than the formation of provincial ministry without the participation of Muslim League. The prevailing situation in the province suggests that a coalition ministry of Muslims who did not belong to the Muslim

323 Governor Collvile of Bombay to Wavell Political Series (Secret) LPO&J\5\138\ File 73\ Government House, Bombay, July 1945. Fortnightly Report, India Office Library, London.
324 Ibid 164
League and the Congress would not work. Here bulk of the Muslim opinion would oppose by all means inclusion of non-League Muslims. In UP non-League Muslim consists of Congress men such as Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim who do not have any support among the Muslim masses. Such ministry, Hallet said would be regarded as a Hindu government and might lead to communal trouble in the state. Governor further added that Congress after taking office would make more stringent demand on the Muslim League as it did in 1937. He summarised that if Muslim League was excluded there was further trouble in store. 325

Reports from the provinces suggested that in case of the failure of negotiation at Simla, a general elections would know the strength and the weakness of the political parties that had not been tested since 1936-37.

Governor of Bihar T. Rutherford reported that in case of an stalemate, Viceroy should give a call for general elections both in the provinces, as well as at the centre. If Muslim League could muster substantial support then they should be given the opportunity to nominate Muslim members from the Muslim League. This would also test Congress claim to recommend Muslim names from its own rank. 326

326 See Fortnightly Report of Bihar opcit 309.

165
Similar view was expressed by Assam's Governor Clow who reported to the Viceroy that in case Muslim League did not cooperate, HMG should call for a general elections. If Muslim League did not returned specified number of seats in the Central legislature, then Congress claim was to be conceded, otherwise Jinnah would drive his point home.  

Governor Casey suggested that in the current situation status quo should be maintained and general election should be held to gauge the public opinion. Casey's hypothesis was general elections could answer two relevant questions. One, can Congress secure sufficient number of Muslim seats to justify its claim to nominate Congress Muslim. Second, can Muslim League establish its claim to be the sole representative of the Muslims to the exclusion of Congress and other political parties.

Bengal Governor reported that if Congress failed to secure Muslim seats, Muslim League demand should be conceded and if Congress still insists, the onus of failure should be placed on them. In wake of general elections, Jinnah may find himself in a difficult position while Congress when faced with the reality of being proved wrong would find it difficult to break off. In that case there was likelihood of Congress- Muslim League rapprochement.  

327 See Fortnightly Report, Assam opcit 310.  
328 See Fortnightly Report Bengal opcit 321.
Wavell tried to impress upon Jinnah, that he was faced with incompatible demands of Congress, Muslim League and the schedule caste. He made him realise the gravity of the situation and the importance of the decision that had to taken in next few days. 329

Wavell records that, for nearly one and half hours Jinnah tried to persuade him not to accept any Muslims in the council who were not members of the Muslim League. Jinnah also did not like to adhere to the procedure the way new constitution was to be framed. He pointed out that a majority of Muslims would oppose to any decision that would go by voting.

Jinnah expressed his difficult position and said that in the by- elections Muslim League candidate were emerging triumphant, Muslim India was showing signs of political regimentation, therefore Muslim League should be recognised as the true representative of the Indian Muslims. 330

At this juncture, Wavell found Jinnah to live in continued mental depression, he was having a difficult time with his followers, he certainly had no grip over them, and was also not sure of his ground. Not withstanding the fact, Viceroy had to

329 Note of Important Interviews recorded by Evan Jenkins, private secretary of the Viceory. Here Evan Jenkins dwells at length about Viceory's interview with Jinnah, April - July 1945, Circit House Simla.
330 Ibid.
ask Jinnah point blank, whether he would submit the names or not. Wavell found Jinnah to be in a high state of nervousness; he retorted "I am at the end of my tether. I ask you not to wreck the Muslim League." Jinnah continued to hedge the answer by postponing for consultation with the party's working committee. He wrote back to Wavell "it had been earnest desire of the Muslim League to assist the Viceroy in a reasonable way but it was impossible to depart from the fundamental position taken by the working committee, so he was not in a position to send names for the inclusion in the proposed executive council." Later, in a rejoinder, Jinnah reiterated his old position that "all Muslim members of the proposed executive-council should only be selected from the Muslim League." 331

At this juncture, Governor of Punjab reported to the Viceroy that the demands made by Jinnah were quite preposterous. Same was the report from Sindh and Assam where with a transient coalition Muslim League ministry held power. 332 From Bengal, Steven reported that Muslim League should be viewed in the right perspective. In recent Calcutta Municipal Corporation elections Muslim League won only 17 out of 32 seats, they

331 Wavell's general entry in the diary on 14th of July carries the conversation with Jinnah cited by private secretary Evan Jenkins on Viceory's note of important interviews, April - July 1945, Circuit House Simla.
332 See Fortnightly Reports opcit 310, 315, 316.
got less than fifty per cent votes cast by the Muslims in the city. He added that Muslim League's stock was at its lowest and Jinnah's power was on the wane. The ministries in Punjab, NWFP and Bengal were out of Muslim League's orbit. It had been proved that they could not maintain themselves anywhere without considerable support from the Congress. This was evident in Assam and Sindh, even in Bengal its pretension to represent a powerful section of Muslims was doubtfully true. In the end, Steven records, apart from Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, the entire Muslim League was just a disorganised rabble. 333

Even after receiving such negative report, Wavell thought that the conference should not break down before every possible effort had been made. He had received conflicting reports from the Governor of Bengal and Punjab. The Viceury did not like to have a council dominated by the Congress and wanted it to be balanced by the Muslims and the schedule caste. So he was hesitant at the formation of the executive council without the Muslim League whose status as the national party was growing over the years. 334

333 Bengal Governor Casey's diary records Stevens observation on the political situation in India, seen at the India Office Library London.

334 Pendral Moon in the autobiography records the predicaments of Wavell at the Simla Conference; The Viceory's Journal (revised edition published from Delhi in 1968) pp144:
Wavell reacting to this situation records that Viceroy can only make attempts for the formation of the executive council which was to be representative in character and to the satisfaction of all the parties, but could not compel a person or the party to cooperate if they did not wish to do so. 335

In accordance with his original plan, Wavell made the last desperate bid by preparing a provisional list of the executive council. Viceroy told LS Amery that he had plans to invite Gandhi (Congress) Jinnah (Muslim League) Tara Singh (Sikh) Firoz Khan Noon (non-League Muslim) a non-Congress Hindu and representative of the schedule caste beside MN Roy to represent labour. 336

The Secretary of State LS Amery wrote to Wavell about the difficulties the cabinet was faced in pursuing the latest scheme. The list was to be put before Jinnah to seek his approval about the representation of the Muslim League and later to be send to other leaders. Amery suggested to the Viceroy to see Jinnah and, anyhow coax him to step into the executive council. 337

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335 General entry of Wavell on 16th of July is cited by private secretary Evan Jenkins on Viceory's note of the emerging situation, April - July 1945, Circuit House Simla.

336 Wavell to Amery LPO\&J 8\524\File No 32\Simla July 1945.

337 Amery to Wavell to Amery LPO\&J 8\524\file 32\14 July 1945 Simla, Transfer of Power Series volume 5.
So, once again Wavell persuaded Jinnah to put forward the names or accept his suggested list. Jinnah knew that he would be made scapegoat of the failure of the conference remained adamant not to give up the claim. He rejected the list shown by the Viceroy and refused to budge from the position to represent all Muslims. 338

Jinnah, even did not want to discuss the names unless given the absolute right to select the Muslims and a guarantee that any decision, that Muslim opposed, should only be passed by a two third majority. In fact, a communal veto for the Muslim League. In his last meeting of the conference held on July 14, 1945, Jinnah claimed parity inside the council with all the other parties combined. 339

Wavell now doubted Jinnah’s motive, he commented "if Jinnah never had any intention to accept the offer, then why did he really came to Simla at all." 340 He had really gone far to meet Jinnah's demand even at the risk of antagonising the Congress by excluding nationalist Muslims.

To the Viceroy, Congress list was equally disappointing. It displayed the desire to dominate the executive council and the tendency to put forward stooges from the minority community to enhance its secular image. At this juncture, Viceroy also

338 Note of Important Interviews recorded by Evan Jenkins, private secretary of the Viceory. Evan Jenkins dwells at length about Viceory's interview with Jinnah, in July 1945, Circuit House Simla.
339 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
thought unwise about Maulana Azad's move to garner support of smaller parties against the Muslim League.  

Wavell observed that Jinnah obviously was in a great difficulty which was of his own making. The list shown to him could have given him complete domination over the council. Viceroy felt that Jinnah made a tactical blunder by scuttling the issue as he was not sure of his position and image among the followers.

Wavell could discern that majority of the educated Indians wanted the proposal to be accepted, but ill feeling between the parties and long habit of non-cooperation made any settlement difficult proposition. The only way to go ahead was to persuade Jinnah to be cooperate but when he was found unyielding, Viceroy was compelled to close the conference.

Wavell shouldered the responsibility of the failure of the Simla conference, but admitted that the root cause was Jinnah's intransigence. Though, he confessed that this represented a real fear among the Muslims. Similar views were subscribed by those who did not support Jinnah but were apprehensive

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341 Minutes of the Final meeting of the Simla conference held on 14th July 1945 gives the detailed account of the complecity before the Viceory LPO&J\ 8\ 524\ File 32\ Transfer of Power Series volume 5.

342 Ibid.

343 Note of Wavell dwells at length about Viceory's interview with Jinnah, on 14 July 1945, Circuit House Simla.
of Congress domination. This they regarded was equivalent to "Hindu Raj".\footnote{\textsuperscript{344}}

MAH Isphani told Governor Casey: "it was foolish for Jinnah not to agree to the Viceroy's proposal. Though he lamented very gloomily that Muslims had no friends in India except the British, and they could not even expect in hell from the Congress to be generous."\footnote{\textsuperscript{345}}

It was doubtful that Jinnah ever wanted a settlement. Khaliquzaman a prominent member of Muslim League from UP told Home Secretary Francis Mudie that Jinnah was anxious to get out of the Simla parleys. He was afraid that if Muslim League stepped into the central government, could prejudice his Pakistan demand. Muslim League was obviously frightened by the eagerness shown by the Congress to step into the conference. Khaliq pointed out how Congress had thrown overboard their previous promises and would go to any length to destroy the Muslims. He was more frightened by the Congress statement that viceroy's veto was harmless and could not be exercised in practice. \footnote{\textsuperscript{346}}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{344}}Note of Wavell dwells at length about Viceory's interview with Jinnah, on 14 July 1945 and the various complexity in constituting the executive council, Circit House Simla.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{345}}Bengal Governor Casey's diary records industrialist Isphani observation on the political situation in India, seen at the India Office Library London.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{346}}Enclosure by Home Secreatry Francis Mudie to Private Secreatry Evan Jenkins, July 15 1945, Transfer of Power Volume 5.

173
Wavell was of the opinion that it was pity that Jinnah did not accept his offer as he could have held the balance to safeguard Muslim interest. Many educated Muslims in Sindh and Punjab were disappointed at the breakdown of the conference, while in United provinces and Bihar the outcome was reported to be welcomed. Muslim League press accused Congress Muslim dummies and Khizar- Glancy combination for the failure of the Simla conference.\textsuperscript{347}

Henceforth, the chance of resettlement was postponed till the mandate of the general election was known.

\textbf{Discussion}

Jinnah's rejection of the Wavell's plan reflected a profound change that was seen in the Indian Politics since 1942. At the time of Cripps Mission, Jinnah was prepared to go the extent of committing Muslim League's participation in the central government provided given permission for the provinces to opt out of the Indian dominion. Jinnah reported to have said that Pakistan could be shelved provided Muslim League was given satisfactory position in the executive council and the right of the secession of provinces be granted through a suitable procedure. When Congress rejected the Cripps offer, Muslim League did like wise though for different reasons. It objected to

\textsuperscript{347} Pendral Moon in the autobiography records the predicaments of Wavell at the Simla Conference; The Viceory's Journal (revised edition published from Delhi in 1968) pp144.
British proposal of a single constituent assembly and the issue of secession of the provinces to be decided by general residents. Muslim League demanded that it did not comply to Muslims demand who alone had the right to decide their future.

In February 1944, Jinnah stated that HMG should now frame a constitution dividing India into two sovereign nations Pakistan and Hindustan for an unspecified period till the settlement and adjustment between both the nation takes place. The length of the period would depend upon the speed with which the two parties adjust to the new constitution. He wanted during such an interim period. British authority over defence and foreign affairs would remain intact over the Indian subcontinent.

Ever since his arrival in India, General Viscount Wavell sincerely strove hard to search an amicable solution to resolve the political deadlock. He recognised the revival of the Cripps offer and the formation of an interim government though for an interim period as necessary because this would certainly stop the separatist politics that had crystallised Muslims mind since 1940. Simla conference was convened by Wavell was an attempt to scuttle Muslim League's demand for Pakistan by creating a coalition government at the centre. Viceroy was convinced that Muslims would eventually accept some loose form of Indian federation on the basis of communal cooperation evolved at the central government.
Wavell got bogged down with the predicament of construction of the executive council to be preceded by a communal agreement between Muslim League and Congress. Viceory wanted one Muslim representative to be from Punjab while Congress wanted one Muslim to be nominated from its rank. Jinnah on the other hand was adamant to nominate all Muslims from the Muslim League alone. Jinnah was fearful that Congress would consolidate its position during the interim arrangement and gradually strangulate the Muslim League as it tried to do so in 1937. There was a genuine fear amongst Muslim League's ranks and file that Congress would combine with other minorities to outvote them. Jinnah's attitude hardened during the conference, probably due to Congress anxiousness to accept the offer and the arrogant comments made in the Congress press.

Wavell could discern that there was a real distrust among the general Muslims against the Congress. They feared Congress would penetrate in the entire administration by parading its secular character using Muslim dummies. The thrust of Jinnah's argument was, all other minorities in India with the exception of the Muslims shared Congress line of thinking which would naturally reduce the Muslims to the position of subservience, destroying any semblance of parity in the proposed council. This was the crux of Jinnah's intransigence and could not be discard as an obsession, felt the Viceroy. However, it was impossible for Wavell to accept Jinnah's demand for the nomination of the Muslim candidates exclusively from the Muslim League.
In accordance to the realities of the provincial politics he was compelled to insist that one of the Muslim representative must come from the Unionist of Punjab. Viceroy was compelled to reject Muslim League's insistence on communal veto as he could not give more than what was deserved. Nevertheless, Viceroy had the satisfaction to make his best effort to resolve the problem and since the parties themselves did not cooperate, he decided to close the conference.

The equation that existed after the Simla conference was, there lay an obligation between British and the Muslims to protect the minority interest. A minority which was as strong as 90 million and from whom British had wrested power in India. They had been acknowledged by giving communal electorate and safeguards in various spheres of life. They had been repeatedly assured of being given a just treatment when British were to relinquish power.

On the other hand Congress by its own act of omission and commission led to the monstrous growth of Muslim League which challenged its supremacy as a national party. It demanded parity and an agreement on communal safeguards prior to the formation of the constituent assembly. While Congress contention was, formation of a single union first and then to look into adequate protection of the minorities interest.

On the contrary Muslim League was almost convinced to deny Congress absolute supremacy.
of whole of India. It wanted Muslim dominated provinces to be accepted as Pakistan first which would enter into an alliance with Hindustan on the basis of reciprocity and parity at the centre as well as in the provinces.

Some attempts were made by the British government to strike a compromise and arrest the tendency of divergent politics pursued by Congress and the Muslim League. This was first through Cripps proposal and later by Simla conference. Cripps proposal was rejected by the Congress as "a post dated cheque of a crushing bank" while Muslim League rejected it on the grounds it right of national self-determination was not unequivocally recognised. Wavell's failure underlined what was apparent, during the Cripps negotiation, that the British had no longer the capacity to enforce their will but could only offer their good office.

Simla conference was sabotaged by Jinnah seeking parity against the combined opposition. This perhaps was deliberately done, to enhance his dwindling fortune and then to buy time. He thought that once he secures a base in the north and east region of Muslim dominated provinces in India to be called as Pakistan, then he would extract the best deal from the Congress and the British for the Muslims in their minority provinces by entering into a treaty with Hindustan. This was by seeking parity at the centre as well in the provinces. Jinnah was convinced that since no one would be a willing party to destroy the unity India, he would eventually make his contenders bend to
his own game plan.

It was during the war period that very shakily Muslim League was getting entrenched into the provincial arena. The absence of Congress from the political arena left the space wide open. They were also encouraged by the British government to maintain a semblance of order due to war time consideration. It was from ignominity in 1935 Muslim League had become the main contender of power on the Indian political scene in 1945.

Organisationally, Muslim League had opened its offices down to the subdivision level in the provinces. It had well-knit cadre who were periodically holding meetings on the through-fares of the towns and cities. The crescent and star flag was flying aloft on many north-Indian houses. Its national-guard was doing regular drills in far-flung area of the countryside. The vast network of Urdu press beside Dawn, an English daily published from Delhi had become its mouth piece. Never before Indian Muslims had shown such a sign of regimentation as the movement for Pakistan was gathering storm.

Jinnah kept on raising his demand every time since 1940 even at the cost of being rebuffed by the Congress. First he put a ban on the Muslims to take office in the National Defence Council, then clinged to the idea for Muslims alone to decide upon the provinces to opt out. Jinnah then put the condition of nominating all the Muslims in the executive council to step into the executive council. At Simla conference, Jinnah sought parity first in the council with the Congress and then raised it
to seek parity against the entire opposition, a sort of communal veto for the Muslim League.

The failure of the Simla conference added to Jinnah's prestige. His dwindling fortune got a shot in the arm. He was hailed as Quaid-e- Azam, the great leader. Since then, Jinnah stature sky rocketed and he was seen as a saviour of the Muslim community. With his invented sherwani and cap, Jinnah was seen as the messiah of Indian Muslims.

As a pied piper he was playing the tune of "Pakistan a panacea of all ills", the entire Muslim community humming in one voice behind him without knowing actually what it means. Though there were some exception who thought differently.

The failure of Simla conference distanced Congress and the Muslim League further. Ever since, the idea of united India and Pakistan began to harden and communal feeling became quite wide and deep in the country.

Henceforth, the chance of resettlement was postponed till the strength and weakness of the contending parties was known through the results of the general election. The mandate in 1946 election gave a new turn to the Indian politics.

The fifth chapter contains the summery and the concluding remarks of all the four chapters. In the end it also contains the major findings of this dissertation.